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Illegal Hidden Cameras in South Korea: The Impact of *Molka* on Young  
University Educated Women and Gender Relations

Master's Thesis

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## **Introduction**

This thesis focuses on the issue of illegal secret camera filming in the Republic of Korea (later South Korea or Korea). The illegal filming crimes have become prominent in Korea in recent years as secret cameras are being placed into public spaces where privacy is expected. Cameras are placed in locations such as public bathrooms, dressing rooms, motels etc. The issue has manifested itself in a multitude of ways. Along with the practice of placing secret cameras into hidden places, a practice of taking upskirt photos on the metro or on an escalator has become commonly associated with the secret camera crimes alongside hidden camera filming. The hidden material is then posted onto the internet, for various probable reasons which will be discussed in detail later in later sections of the thesis. While it is clear that the victims of secret filming crimes are the most prevalent group affected by the issue, this thesis indicates, that non-victim women also suffer as a result of this problem. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the correlation between the phenomena of illegal secret camera filming or photographing, and the effects it has on women's behavior and gender relations: how women navigate their bodies in public space and how this issue affects women's day-to-day lives and relations with men in the Korean society.

My fieldwork lasted from August 2021 to July 2022, with the financial support of Republic of Estonia Education and Youth Board. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this thesis, as the capacity of this research only accounts for the experiences of a narrow group of women. The participant selection for this research paper were women aged between 20 and 30 years old, who had obtained at least an undergraduate degree or were currently in training to obtain their undergraduate degree. The specific details about the participant selection will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

## **The Aim of the Research and the Research Questions**

The aim of this thesis is to reveal the ways how the issue impacts women's behavior and relations between men and women in Korean society. The thesis will approach this problem through theoretical analysis, with a look into feminist surveillance studies. This work will analyze the problem of secret cameras through the lens of gender studies by using ethnographic

research, through which material was gathered from the field. As mentioned above, the limitations of the thesis need to be addressed, as the capacity of this research only considers a narrow group of women. This thesis does not argue that the problem of secret cameras does not exist anywhere else in the world. This became evident in one of my personal conversations with a Japanese colleague, who pointed out that Japan has faced a similar problem (September 2022). However the Human Rights Watch (June 2021) published a report naming South Korea the leading country in the world when it comes to the spy camera crimes. Therefore in this thesis, I will focus on South Korea and Korean women's stance on the matter.

Due to the extent of this research paper the selection of informants was specified by age range and educational status to be able to provide sufficient analysis. However it should be noted that the given research only reflects the views of women from a certain age group and educational background, and outcomes may vary between other age groups and people from different educational backgrounds. Given selection was chosen firstly due to accessibility and secondly considering a group from which conclusive analysis could be drawn on. Considering the language barrier and access to information as an outsider, finding informants with tertiary educational background was the most accessible option for me. As shown by OECD (2021) data on education attainment by gender, Korean women between ages of 25-34 are one of the highest among OECD partner countries, that have received tertiary education. Therefore the amount of young highly educated women is gradually increasing in Korea. There is a market demand for pornographic material of young women. Therefore women in their 20s are subjects to frequent sexualization which is likely to make the women in this age group feel most affected by these crimes. Thus young adult women with university education were chosen to be the focus of this thesis, as they represent a fixed group of people to gather data from in order to conduct conclusive analysis.

The secret cameras are placed in public spaces where the subjects expect to have privacy, therefore I will refer to these places as public places with expected privacy. These places can include restrooms, dressing rooms, hotel or motel rooms, shower rooms etc. It should be noted that in most cases, the secretly filmed material is uploaded online for the purposes of extortion, revenge or profit making. However, as the internet has a vast capacity, it can reach a large amount of audience outside of the Korean borders, due to the easy accessibility to devices that

carry internet connection. Therefore, even though this problem might seem distant for readers outside of Korea, it is not only a Korea problem. I reckon the possibility to view this sort of illegally recorded content is possible for both viewers seeking illegally filmed content, but also unsuspecting viewers who might mistake given content for a consensually filmed one. I see value in spreading awareness on this matter as it could possibly help people become more cautious as well as acknowledge the possibility of such crimes happening elsewhere. The cameras are easily accessible, and sold for a relatively cheap price in various shapes and sizes, which makes camera detection all the more complicated.

Thus, this work focuses on the experiences of Korean women, focal point being on how this problem affects their everyday lives, how does this problem influence gender relations, do women feel endangered by this problem and what can women do to protect themselves from becoming victims to secret camera crimes. Therefore the main research questions for the given research paper are:

1. How do women feel affected by this issue, and does this problem affect women's everyday lives and women's navigation of public space?
2. What practices and strategies have women adopted to protect themselves from becoming victims of the spy camera crimes?
3. How does this issue affect gender-based relationships between men and women in Korea?

An important value when doing ethnographic research is an ethical approach which I have taken very seriously. Therefore no personal details will be shared when it comes to the informants, in order to make sure this thesis will not harm anybody's personal privacy or have a negative effect on the informants who participated in the research. Due to this matter, I have opted for using pseudonyms for each interviewee. For the sake of the informants' privacy any personal information including which university they attended will not be disclosed in this paper. Since all sixteen informants were native Korean speakers they answered the interview questions in Korean or English. Therefore their answers have been translated into English or their English answers have been adjusted grammatically if necessary. The changes were kept as minor as possible to

align with the ethical approach to research, and to make sure that the informants messages have not been misconstrued or taken out of context when used for this research.

Many suggestions for further research were given by the informants such as questioning women from a different age groups or diverse backgrounds, asking men about their perception on the matter etc. These are all valid suggestions that this thesis alone will not be able to touch upon, but at least it shares a perspective of one group. This paper only scrapes the surface of the problem so there is inarguably room for more development and an in-depth look at the issue at hand.

### **Reaching the Research Topic**

Reaching the research topic is merely a reflection of my own background and personal interests as well as values that I believe are critical and important to speak about. This research has been conducted with the age group that I belong to myself, due to which I feel a stronger personal connection to the research as well. The issues tackled by this thesis are the ones I feel are important to discuss and challenge. I have focused on gender studies for my previous degree as well, and it has always been a mayor point of interest and value to me. I wish to contribute to the development of gender equality and human rights by hopefully raising awareness and discussion with my work.

The interest in East Asia stems from my previous studies as well. During my bachelors studies I minored in East Asian languages and cultures program where I mainly focused on Korean language, culture and history. Korea is a country like no other with its rich history and unique geopolitical situation. Naturally, I was drawn to the gender problems apparent in the country, firstly through feminist literature which was introduced to me by my Korean studies professor Park Jung Ran who also assisted me later on in my fieldwork process. Through her I was introduced to literary works by Han Kang and Cho Nam-Joo. In Cho Nam-Joo's novel *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* a scene with a secret camera crime is described, which sent me on a search to find out more about the matter. Although had heard about it previously, with just a small amount of searching, a galore of information and news came about. I was unaware of the severity of the situation surrounding the crime and I saw it as an intriguing yet severe issue that I wanted

to learn about more. This is a very condensed version of how I arrived at my research subject and decided to pursue the topic at hand.

## **Glossary**

Illegal secret filming – another way to refer to *molka*, word illegal was suggested by my interviewee, who argued, that we should emphasize the illegality of this secret filming, in order to not minimize the severity of the problem.

*Molka* (몰카) – Korean abbreviation from a Korean word *mollaekamera* (몰래 카메라), it was first used in Korean secret camera pranking tv shows, however in recent times, *mollae kamera* or *molka* has acquired a new much more negative connotation, as it is used to refer to the illegal secret camera crimes. (Wilder 2018, para.7)

Spy cam / spy camera / secret camera / hidden camera – all are diverse ways the sources refer to illegal secret cameras.

Private spaces – places not available for public use

Public spaces – places for public use

Public spaces with expected privacy – in this thesis public spaces with expected privacy are spaces which are located in a public space, but the use of said places comes with an expectation of privacy, such as toilets, shower rooms, dressing rooms, hotel and motel rooms (bedrooms and bathrooms).

Sexual surveillance – based on theories of panopticism and surveillance studies, I use this term to refer to a form of surveillance, that the illegal hidden camera phenomena creates. By making the subjects feel constantly exposed and having no control over when they are surveyed or not.

Body surveillance – Taken from the article of Lin et al. (2023) *Life history strategies, body surveillance, and online interpersonal sexual objectification on women's body shame*, a way in which women become hyperaware of their bodies and self-impose a form of surveillance onto

their bodies to be socially acceptable, attractive or in the case of this topic, to avoid getting filmed by secret cameras.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis has been divided into four main sections. In the first section I will focus on the introduction to the problem, as this complex problem of secret filming crimes in South Korea might be unfamiliar to some international readers. The section is largely introductory and will work to build a general framework for understanding the secret camera issue by analyzing some real-life cases of secret filming crimes, as well as offering a cultural context on gender perceptions.

The second section will go over the process of gathering research materials from the field. I will give an overview of the source materials gathered from the field through different ethnographic research methods as well as giving descriptions of my own participant observation experience. This section will touch upon my individual experiences and dilemmas I faced during my fieldwork process on all levels of material gathering as well as introduce the interviewees to the readers in more depth.

The third section will focus on the theoretical background of the problem, by applying and analyzing the theoretical materials I used for my research. Mainly exploring the theories in correlation to illegal secret filming through an ethnographic and gender studies lens. This section will take a look at secret filming crimes as a form of sexual surveillance among other theoretical approaches.

The fourth section will focus on the analysis of empirical material. The section will focus on the analysis of the interviews, but also provide comparisons to the theoretical perspectives. I will pay special attention to gender relations in Korean culture and find correlations to gender theory with the help of the interviewees answers.

## 1. The Problem of *Molka*: Cultural Framework of the Secret Filming Crimes

The given paragraph is oriented on a general overview of the problem as well as some of the key cases that have sprung from the secret camera pandemic in Korea, by bringing examples from popular media covering real life cases, as well as the issue being discussed in fictional literature that sparked heated discussions in the Korean literary scene. Also providing supporting evidence by academic reports on the matter. South Korea has faced a problem of production of illegal pornography in past years, as private spaces have been equipped with secret spy cameras that are meant to target unsuspecting subjects in hopes of capturing explicit material that can later be sold or spread as pornographic material. The phenomenon is called *molka* in Korean. “*Molka* (the word comes from a 1990s *Candid Camera*–style prank show) is not new, but advances in technology have made it more prevalent.” (Wilder 2018, para.7). To give a broader overview of the issue, the cameras can be purchased for an insignificant amount of money on several widely known websites such as Alibaba, Amazon or eBay. Cameras can portray a variety of household objects such as alarm clocks, lightbulbs, smoke detectors, shirt buttons, and even soda cans.

Regardless of one’s daily schedule or lifestyle, the problem of illegal camera filming is hard to miss in Korea. There are many ways to learn about this issue, on the news, online blogs, social media as well as through social interactions. But in reality, no social interaction is needed to see the first signs of an underlying problem. While entering a public restroom, you will be greeted with a variety of signs warning of the danger, or reassuring that the restroom has been checked for cameras. These signs are apparent in almost every publicly shared location, from subway stations to university campuses, shopping malls, museums, the list could go on. The issue has become an underlying knowledge that simply becomes a part of everyday life, which in turn affects Korean women’s daily schedules on an everyday basis. Although these signs in the restrooms have become an everyday phenomena, the problem should not be equated with a general social normalcy. As the participants of this research have argued, while these stickers and signs in the bathrooms have become a common phenomenon in public restrooms, there is more to be done in tackling the issue at hand. It should be noted that *Molka* is only a small fragment of a larger social structural problem, where women’s rights are systemically limited or crimes against women are not taken seriously. The issue is not limited to the walls of the public

bathroom stalls, it reaches much further. The issue is apparent in other public spaces with expected privacy similar to public restrooms, such as the dressing rooms, shower rooms and motel rooms.

Here, an explanation is in order to conceptualize and differentiate between a Korean love motel (모텔) and a general concept of a hotel or motel. Since in a traditional Korean family, many generations of the family live in the same household together, young couples in search of intimacy go to motel rooms, where they can rent the room by the hour, to have some privacy together. Such motels are common and widely used by couples in Korea. Therefore motels have become one source of fear for Korean couples, especially women, as they have no control over the visibility of their intimate acts, be it purely natural bodily functions or sexual desires. In these public spaces the perpetrators are unknown. Even an intimate partner can become a suspect, as one of the driving motivations of secret filming is revenge porn, filmed secretly by the sexual partners. Therefore in a Korean language and context motel is commonly understood as love motel.



**Figure 1.** Photo of a general Korean motel parking lot, tassels on the top of the parking lot entrance block the guests faces as they are exiting their cars in the parking lot to provide more privacy for couples. Author: Susanna Homuha 2022

Although camera crimes can happen to both women and men, women have become the main victimized group, as they feel affected by the secret camera problem on a daily basis. As it has

been stated by Gabriel Wilder (2018, para.4): “/.../ the overwhelming majority of *molka* suspects are men, and the overwhelming majority of its victims are women.”. Human Rights Watch (2021: 2) has pointed out the increasing number of secret filming crimes: “In 2008, less than 4 percent of sex crimes prosecutions in South Korea involved illegal filming; by 2017 the number of these cases had increased eleven-fold, from 585 cases to 6,615, and they constituted 20 percent of sex crimes prosecutions.”. Furthermore their report states that “the overwhelming majority of the people targeted in digital sex crimes are women—80 percent in spycam cases. The overwhelming majority of perpetrators are male; in 2016, 98 percent of perpetrators in spycam cases were men.” (HRW <sup>1</sup>, 2021: 3) It is up to debate why such an extreme measure for capturing non-consensual clips has surfaced. Access to pornography in South Korea is largely blocked or limited, production and selling of pornographic material can be fined or punished with a prison sentence. As the Article 243 (KLT<sup>2</sup> 2019) states: “Any person who distributes, sells, lends, openly displays or shows any obscene documents, drawing, pictures, films or other things, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than one year or by a fine not exceeding five million won.”. Therefore even consensually recorded clips would, by law, be prohibited.

Statistically Korea is a safe country, where people can feel at ease and leave their wallets and purses unattended at public places without worry of theft. According to Numbeo (2023) South Korea’s safety index is 74.55, with rates of most crime categories being low. While living there, I felt relatively safe at most locations. Yet, crimes against women, especially sexual crimes, stalking etc. can go unrecognized by the authorities. Perhaps the issue lies within the cases when a crime does happen, it is difficult to get justice or to be taken seriously as a woman. Getting justice for victims can be an exhausting and complicated process, as another issue worth noting is that given illegal pornographic material can be passed around as amateur porn, which according to Paul B. Preciado, has become popular with the larger use of the Internet. The illegal porn sites work also in support of sharing revenge porn that can easily pass as amateur work. As reported in The Korea Herald: “Such contents have also been created and shared online by victims’ ex-boyfriends, typically in retaliation with the intent to damage the women's future job and marriage prospects.” (Lee, 2018. para. 2). Therefore determining whether the victim gave or didn’t give consent for filming such clips can be difficult to prove. Such material is not only

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviation of Human Rights Watch (HRW)

<sup>2</sup> Abbreviation of Korea Legislation Research Institute (KLT)

hurtful to the victim mentally, it has the ability to affect their everyday life and status in the society due to deeply rooted patriarchal and Confucian beliefs in the South Korean society, which value the innocence and virtuousness of a woman. “Demand for this material should not be mistaken for acceptance, and victims can lose their jobs and social status.”(Wilder 2018, para.10).

Therefore this issue also uncovers a strong stigmatization when it comes to women’s sexuality or sexual activeness in South Korea. Korean culture is deeply rooted in the basis of Confucian values, along with which comes a deep sense of respect and hierarchy in society. Confucian ideology emphasizes the importance of self in a collective culture that is led by a patrilinear family model (Tsuya, Bumpass, 2004: 2). Chinese Confucianism has had an impact on the Korean society as well and one of the main principles of the Confucian values was a patriarchal family model. That leaves little room for freedom and self-expression for women as they are mostly confined to domesticity, being stay-at-home spouses and child nurturers. According to the Confucian values, elders and men are put first on the hierarchical ladder, which leaves women on a secondary level. Confucianism also builds upon a sense of obedience, especially to those who are ranked above oneself, elders, fathers husbands and so on. Therefore idealized image of a women is that of an obedient well moraled and calm wife. Womanhood has been strictly tied to domesticity and family affairs, while men dominate the public sphere. In modern Korea, the tides are shifting, but change does not come without conflict.

Romantic relationships have maintained a collective and family-oriented value. The value of children is one of the main aspects that makes for the marriage in a South Korean society. As the Korean Family Studies Association has stated:

Familism is composed of the ideas of putting family first, respecting parents, continuing patrilinear family relationships, and socio-economic ties among siblings and relatives. /.../ Children have special meaning within the family to the extent that the primary purpose of the marriage is to give birth to a child. In particular, from Joseon Dynasty until recently, a preference of boys has been pervasive in society in order to maintain the family lineage. (2011: 5-6)

If a woman wishes to maintain a job she is still expected to carry out all of her household responsibilities. Korean wives also have a considerably more limited market of employment options to choose from if they do wish to work (Tsuya, Bumpass, 2004: 112). As Korean Family Studies Association has described that “women often face a dilemma between childcare and

work upon marriage and childbearing. Traditionally it is common among Korean women to quit their jobs after marriage or conception in order to stay home and take care of their children.”(2011: 100). They have also stated and that “women’s conflict concerning the balance between work and family has deepened and there is a tendency of shifting toward choosing their work instead of the family.” (2011: 251). Men’s efforts in being main breadwinners in the traditional family model can surely be viewed as a sacrifice on men’s part. Yet, women tend to experience more limited freedoms and have less opportunities for self-accomplishments in a traditional marriage. These effects on the views on romantic relationships and marriage came up in the conducted interviews as well.

Korea is a country with complex history which has no doubt had social and cultural effects. Korea was under Japanese occupation from 1910 until the World War II. Shortly after that, the Korean War followed, leaving the country in ruin and famine. Korea went through a rapid economic growth between the years 1961 and 1996 (Seth, 2017). These changes worked to shape the cultural and social aspects of Korea as well. During the economic growth period chaebol (재벌) or family owned large corporations emerged, such as Hyundai, Samsung, Lotte, LG and others (Seth, 2017). With the rise of economic standards also came the need for education. To briefly summarize the detailed process to economic raise, Korea went through a remarkable economic development in a short period, therefore raising the value of education and value in wealth became one of the driving factors (Seth, 2017). With these developments, the improvement in living standards followed. With these developments came also raise in urbanization, education and a decline in birth rate(Seth, 2017). Yet social norms have not gone through the same rapid change and have been shifting at a much slower pace. Therefore while in the modern world Korea has become a well-recognized modern country, social attitudes have stayed true to the old Confucian teachings, and the gender and age based social hierarchies have persisted. Therefore due to these cultural concepts, men past their middle-age more likely to hold seats at influential positions as they are seen as the most respectable citizens according to Confucian customs. While middle aged or older men deserve to be represented as much as any other social group, the problem could lie within the fact that other groups are underrepresented (in the government, law enforcement, lawmaking etc.), and therefore their interests and worries too, have been overlooked. The overlooking of underrepresented groups may also not be

deliberate but rather unknowing. There are still deep-rooted roles and expectations that have been placed on both genders.

Women do carry a significant role as domestic managers in the context of a traditional Korean family model, and some women may feel empowered by their task as domestic managers. Many women, however, do not resonate with these expectations in a modern Korean society and job market. Depending on a partner for safe living space and income creates an undoubtable power dynamic within the relationship. Many Korean women prefer self-sufficiency in the modern days. Therefore Korean women have turned to preference of a childless and marriage free lives in order to prioritize their careers. To summarize a recent journalistic article published in BBC by Simon Maybin (2018), young Korean women are more career oriented and prefer to choose an independent and self-sufficient lifestyle, due to high domestic expectations and a significant level of discrimination women face in a marriage life in correlation to work life. Following an unconventional and untraditional path is still seen as somewhat radical, especially when it comes to sexuality or women's rights in Korea. These gendered roles and expectations therefore affect the public understanding of gender, which in turn also affects the perception of women when it comes to secret filming crimes. As Maybin (2018) points out an increasing attitude amongst young Korean women in his article: "It's not just that she is not interested in marriage, though. She doesn't even want boyfriends. One reason for that is the risk of becoming a victim of revenge porn, which she says is a "big issue" in Korea. But she's also concerned about domestic violence."

The problem of marriage or childbearing may not have a direct correlation with the secret camera problem; however it contributes to the framework of gender perception in Korean society. It has a profound effect on relationships between women and men. Especially since going against the societal norms is frowned upon in Korean culture. Therefore, from a conservative and Confucianistic perspective, the women who seek independence or get caught (through secret camera crimes) for participating in sexual acts are seen as undesirable or impure. There seems to be a lack of healthy communication and understanding between men and women on a social level in Korea. Women have therefore tuned to drastic measures as well, rejecting relationship and an idea of having a family altogether.

The issue of *molka* has even reached popular literature with Cho Nam-Joo's *Novel Kim Jiyoung, born 1982*, where she addresses the systemic misogyny women experience in all stages of their lives. The novel strikes a painful nerve. The subject matter of the novel created a fiery discourse over feminism. The image of feminism in the Korean society in general, is seen as a radical or controversial matter, which I will elaborate on in a later paragraph more in depth. A paragraph in Cho Nam-Joo's novel describes an incident where the main character discovers that there is a spycam in their office restroom:

“Jiyeong asked why Hyesu had taken a day off in the middle of peak season, and she said there'd been a scandal at the office. The Ladies' room turned out to have a spycam hidden in the cubicles. The culprit was the building security agent in his twenties. /.../ The more disturbing part of this scandal was how people found out. It turned out that the security agent frequently uploaded the spycam pictures on a pornography site, of which a male section manager at Jiyoung's company had been a member. It didn't take long before the section manager recognized the ladies' room structure and the women's clothing, and realized the subjects in the pictures were actually his colleagues. But rather than reporting this to the police or victims, he shared these pictures with his male colleagues in the office. No one yet knows how many men passed the pictures around, what kind of conversations they had about them, how many photos, or for how long.”(Cho, 2016:141-142)

The situation described in the novel points to several aspects of the secret camera issue, that my informants and interviewees also contended on, 1) secret filming crimes are often committed by people the victim personally knows, 2) the spycam problem makes women suspicious of all their male acquaintances, as they could be filming or viewing the spycam materials, 3) spycam crimes often contain a power relation where the culprit has some sort of power over the victims. All of these points will be explored in depth in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

### **1.1 Reported *Molka* Cases From Media and News**

In the following sub-chapters I will be bringing forth some catalyst cases of secret filming crimes that received considerable media coverage to build a better framework to understanding the issue of sexual surveillance and *molka*. In this section I have used popular media as one of my sources to document that these crimes are in fact frequent and publicly reported on, to show that it is not a trivial matter but rather a one that receives wide media coverage. Although social and popular media is not an academic source, it has become an inarguable source of information. The first two cases are influential as they could be considered catalysts of the secret filming and online crime cases in South Korea. I will also include two later cases that happened during my stay in

Korea, to document how I consumed the news in real time, and what the reaction was to those secret filming cases. Therefore I see value in the reports from popular media and news as it helps to build a framework for understanding the problem of *molka*. It is important to explore the secret filming cases that have been reported on, as it can show the reactions on a lawful level, but also provide a source of comparative analysis for the cases in question.

### **1.1.1 Two Catalyst Cases: the Burning Sun Scandal and N'th Room**

The issue of illegal secret filming has not only affected private civilians, the problem has made national headlines with some of the country's top celebrities being accused and prosecuted for the secret filming crimes. A nationwide famous Korean pop music group BIGBANG led by YG entertainment label, came under fire in 2018 after one of their members Lee Seung-hyn, better known for his stage name Seungri, was involved in a scandal with allegations of "sexual assault, prostitution, drug distribution, hidden camera footage, tax evasion and police corruption", as reported in *Billboard* (Kelley 2019). The scandal is referred to as the Burning Sun scandal, as this is the name of a nightclub many of the allegations concerned. *Los Angeles Times* has described the allegations as follows:

"In late January, after closed circuit television footage of a man's assault at Burning Sun circulated, South Korean news outlets published text messages allegedly from Seungri, one of the nightclub's board members, asking staff to hire prostitutes for investors. Seoul police charged Seungri with mediating prostitution and other crimes. Soon after, outlets alleged that several K-pop celebrities had shared sexually explicit hidden camera footage from inside the club in a private message group. Some messages allegedly discussed raping women at the club." (Brown 2019).

Alongside Seungri, members from other major K-pop groups were involved in the controversy. The singer Jung Joon-young in specific was prosecuted for a secret filming crime alongside other allegations, which he pled guilty to, and is currently serving a prison sentence for, while other men involved in the case were suspected or prosecuted for variety of differing crimes (Kelley 2019).

There are several aspects to why this case was an outstandingly shocking matter. Firstly the influence of Korean pop culture has become significant in recent years, especially in neighboring East Asian and Southeast Asian countries, therefore the K-pop groups too have an inarguable

influence in the region. When it comes to Korean pop music and the “idols,” as the members of the groups are called, are carefully managed by the industry in order to convey a clean and innocent image to the public. Which leaves an image of a seemingly perfect, innocent, mannerly, pure and good moraled persona of the K-pop idols which their dedicated fan bases believe in earnest. This case lifts the veil of corruption and power dynamics as the men involved in this case, were clearly from a higher social status than general citizens, having received public notoriety with their singing careers as well as wealthy lifestyles. “As TRT World’s Joseph Kim put it, “The core of the issue seems to remain in the ongoing abuse of power and the systems that permit it all.”” (Kelley 2019). Similar criticism on the matter has been written on Los Angeles Times: “This is a whole other beast, since it’s not about one man’s bad temper or sexual assault, but almost an industrialized state of things where many powerful men were enabled and bolstered up by their status to partake in illegal activities.” (Brown 2019). In the given case it is evident that the crimes went hand in hand with a certain power dynamic. Although not all secret camera crimes correlate with relationships that have power imbalances, it does appear to be one of the playing factors in a number of secret filming crimes.

This case is multifaceted as it tackles different allegations from tax evasion to sexual crimes, but the underlying issue of secret filming and the general perception of women in a Korean entertainment system has come under fire, thanks to this case being openly broadcast nationwide. As August Brown (2019) points to the mistreatment of women in the K-pop industry, as the women are subjects to sexual objectification and treated as “sexualized props”, furthermore it is concerning to think of the fans of the “idols” who could become easy targets for victimization in such cases of power imbalance. This case further shows that women are being used as sexualized items by men in powerful positions. This phenomena, using young and beautiful women as “sexualized props”, is not a stranger to Korean history. Sex work tourism was widely common between Korea and Japan between 1960 and 70’s. When offering Korean prostitutes were a common part of making successful business or political deals, as described by Caroline Norma (2014: 399-400).

Another recent case that made national headlines was an online criminal group active on a platform called Telegram, which was called the Nth room (N 번방 in Korean). This case is not a

classical secret filming crime, but a more elaborate online sexual crime ring, however it gained a lot of media traction, and it is one of the leading cases in Korea currently, which correlates with online sexual (filming) crimes and therefore is frequently brought up in the context of secret filming crimes as well. News coverage on the matter has been plentiful, with even a documentary film being published by The Korea Times (2021) called *The Nth Room case: The Making of a Monster* which has condensed the vicinity of the crimes committed into 50 minutes and sheds light on the crimes that took place. The Nth room case has in a way been a catalyst to national uproar about terminating the secret camera problem for good, and serves as one of the main public cases where the perpetrator was prosecuted with a harsh punishment. As reported in an article published by The Korea Times: “In July, 2019, two college students who call themselves "Team Flame" first broke the story of the "Nth room," a massive digital sex crime case where perpetrators blackmailed women including underage girls into performing sexually explicit acts on camera, with thousands of users paying in cryptocurrency to watch.” (Lee, Kim 2021). Two leading bodies were sentenced with harsh prison sentences for extortion and sexual harassment, Cho Ju-bin a 42-year sentence and Moon Hyung-wook for 34 years (The Korea Times 2022).

While the crimes do not perfectly align to those of secret camera filming crimes, as sometimes the victims were forced to film themselves knowingly, they share similar properties, such as using the explicit filmed material as blackmail or for scare tactics, by threatening to publish the filmed material to public online communities which could cause mental, social and even physical harm to the victims. Furthermore in the given case, the perpetrators targeted young women in vulnerable situations in terms of social support or financial stability. Reaching out for help can become extensively harder when in the absence of a proper support group or when one is feeling socially isolated, which these perpetrators preyed on. As previously mentioned, getting justice is a difficult and a laborious process since the perpetrator is unknown and anonymous, which makes them excessively harder to track down or catch and the crimes are carried out on online platforms. This case in specific became widely spoken of and very seriously taken due to many of the victims being underage, which has a correlation to the law enforcement and which cases are being more seriously considered in the court of law. “/.../Many countries have specific laws prohibiting child sexual exploitation materials, allegations involving sexual images of children receive a much more vigorous response from platforms. “So, it was very difficult for us

to convince them we need a response not just for the child but for others, especially women” (HRW 2021: 80). It is inarguable that children deserve firm laws in order to protect them in all cases, but that does not necessarily mean other groups should be neglected by law.

### **1.1.2 Factory Shower Room Case in Pocheon and Teachers Bathroom Case in Anyang Elementary School**

I will bring examples of two secret filming cases that happened during my fieldwork in Korea. One of the cases was a secret filming crime reported in a factory shower room in a city called Pocheon. Before this story came about on the news I had visited Pocheon myself and I must admit, I did not notice nearly as many signs for camera prevention as I have in previous places I visited, such as Seoul, Daegu, Andong, Incheon etc. Perhaps more secluded rural areas or smaller towns are less likely to conduct searches for cameras which make smaller towns more likely for spycam crimes. I will refer to another article by The Korea Times, as this is how I myself received much of the in the moment news in Korea. As reported in The Korea Times:

“The female worker from the Philippines filed a police report, Monday, after she noticed a suspicious flash in the mirror. Through an initial investigation, the police found the mirror to be two-way, appearing reflective on one side and transparent on the other, allowing a person from one side to see the other but not vice-versa. The police suspect that the factory owner filmed the victim with his phone while she was taking a shower.” (Lee 2021, para 3-5)

The police investigation was disrupted by a fire that broke out in the same factory building later, therefore much of the evidence was destroyed (Lee 2021). This case in particular stood out, as it targeted migrant female workers in Korea. In the given case the location of alleged crime took place in the workplace, which sets workplace locations with expected privacy as a potential location of danger. Furthermore it goes to show that this crime does not discriminate between the victims, foreigners are not safe from the cases of spycam crimes either. Although no conclusive evidence was gathered due to the fire damage, the case again points to a possibility of a person of power using the spycam in exploitation of their subordinates. As of February 2023 no prosecution has been made on the case due to the complexity of the circumstances of the given case.

A secret filming case in Anyang elementary school was another incident that came up in the news during my stay in Korea. This story gained understandable traction as it concerned a secret

filming crime in a school environment. As reported by Bahk Eun-ji(2021) in The Korea Times, the principal had placed a secret camera into the female teachers bathroom stall, into a tissue box. After the discovery of the camera the principal was arrested, and the teachers are calling for harsh punishments for him. Korean Federation of teachers put out a statement on behalf of its Gyeonggi province branch, arguing that this incident is most shocking and shameful non education related crime committed by the principle (Bahk 2021). According to the police, the principal admitted to installing the camera in the women’s restroom for “security purposes” and had no intentions of committing a sex crime (Bahk 2021). The article in Korea Times describes:

Police are conducting a digital forensic analysis of the camera and it hasn't been confirmed what kind of footage was found in it. However, a search of the principal's cellphone turned up six video clips and three photos of women's body parts which he allegedly shot secretly. These were not from the restroom, and police confirmed the identity of one of the victims. (Bahk 2021)

Following up with the prosecution of the school principal, he received a 2-year prison sentence with a restriction of working in any establishment meant for children for 5 years (Noh, 2022). The problem with the prosecution is that it “falls far short of the statutory penalty of imprisonment for up to 7 years (or a fine of up to 50 million won)” (Noh, 2022). This goes to show that as recently as 2022, the secret camera filming crimes, even in case of high-profile cases that receive a public uproar, can still go unpunished, or receive lax punishments that can seem as a slap on the wrist for the perpetrators. This could be due to variety of reasons, lackluster laws, complexity of the ever-developing technology and popularity of internet and online media which the lawmakers simply cannot keep up with, or the general attitude in the justice system towards sexual crimes. All four cases have especially similar characteristics in terms of power relations, and the two latter cases are alike in the aspects of workplace filming crimes, furthermore, the crime was committed by the person whom the victims knew in real life. If these exemplary cases of secret filming crimes have anything in common, it is that in all of the cases the people committing the crimes were in a position of power over the victims. It is impossible to fit all the secret filming cases into the same mold, but it does seem that some people in powerful positions tend to use secret filming to take advantage of their subordinates. Having power is most likely not the root cause that makes people want to commit secret filming crimes, but it could have something to do with the attitudes toward gender perception, status and reporting sexual crimes to the authorities in Korea. It is inarguably more difficult to report a crime committed by a person of power, as a

lot of the time they have more influence and a better financial situation, that can allow for better lawyers or other means of protection.

## **1.2 Social and Legal Reactions to Illegal Secret Filming Crimes**

Firstly to reflect on my personal experiences while staying in Korea, most of my peers, colleagues and friends, both men and women agreed that secret filming crimes are a problem and videotaping others in intimate or vulnerable situations is unethical and morally wrong. When I asked my local male acquaintances, both in their twenties, about the secret camera issue, one of my informants Park Dohyeon argued that he would not feel that affected if he got filmed, “I guess that clip of me would just be out there then” (September 2021). Other male informant Lee Sunwoo said that he is not able to comment on the severity of the problem of secret filming, as he is not a woman and is unable to estimate how affected women feel by this (September 2021). In these cases I did not emphasize the experience of women in the secret filming crimes. These statements seem to reflect that these two men did not feel as threatened by the secret camera problem, as their female peers might. Their use of language also indicates that they are excluding themselves from the secret camera problem by saying they cannot comment as they are not women. Which makes it seem, as they see the problem only affecting women and not so much themselves. That of course does not reflect the opinions of all Korean men.

My female informants reflected on much more serious sentiment when it came to social reaction to women being caught on secretly filmed tapes, especially in cases which contained sexual activities. Victim blaming and a strong double standard seems to exist when it comes to women’s sexuality in Korea. “Survivors often face stigma and blame, especially if intimate images were taken with their consent or depict the survivor engaging in sexual conduct. This stigma can harm women and girls’ access to education and employment, as well as their personal relationships.” (HRW 2021: 38) Furthermore Human Rights Watch (2021:38) quotes an unnamed expert: “So, they don’t see the victim from the perspective of the victim. Rather when that kind of thing happens, they see a woman as a dirty slut, and tend to criticize her.”. Such stigmatization is indeed harmful, as it could harm the persons livelihood and physical well-being, by affecting their finances, job and education opportunities. HRW (2021:39) further emphasizes that “stigma

encourages survivors to blame themselves.”. However, victims should not be pushed to take responsibility over their perpetrators actions.

Women and girls who have been the target of digital sex crimes face major barriers to justice. Police often refuse to accept their complaints and behave in abusive ways, including minimizing harm, blaming them, treating images insensitively, and engaging in inappropriate interrogation. (HRW, 2021: 5)

Reasons as to why men have conflicting attitudes to victims claims is a complex issue within itself and would need a separate section to explore. However it is evident that a dismissive attitude towards victims is unquestionably harmful. Furthermore, the subjects of secret camera filming crimes get filmed for both sexual and natural private activities. A qualitative study made by Eun-so Kim and Ji-yeon Lee points attention to the harmful effects of illegal secret cameras and the dismissive attitudes towards victim and non-victim women. “Woman’s fears of being filmed secretly are often invalidated or ridiculed by the fact that the hidden cameras are unseen, despite the fact that they can be aimed at anyone by anyone.” (Kim; Lee, 2021: 76). Kim and Lee (2021: 76) further argue that dismissive reactions to women’s worries on secret filming are a form of “microaggressions” and subtle gender discrimination against women. Due to the difficult nature of revealing the damage of a mix of cyber and sexual crimes, the cases of secret filming crimes are more likely to get dismissed (Kim; Lee, 2021: 77).

To conclude some other attitudes mentioned in the HRW report women have expressed fear of not being taken seriously or being partially blamed if they reported a crime in which they engaged in sexual activities (2021: 20). Another woman interviewed by HRW stated: “The law still says footage has to be exciting and humiliating, which is very victim-blaming. It should just be lack of consent,” (HRW, 2021: 23). Women also expressed that they would be blamed for suffering secret camera crimes due to their clothing choices (HRW, 2021: 39). Therefore young Korean people I personally spoke to seem to have an empathetic and understanding view of the victims of secret filming crimes. The institutional attitude towards victims seems to be slower to accept changes however, both in attitudes of justice system workers such as police officers or lawyers, as well as the laws. The laws do not often accommodate to the needs of secret camera victims to ensure that justice will be served. The next section will focus on the laws regarding cameras and legislations on sexual crimes in Korea in more detail.

### 1.3 Pornography and Technology: Perception, Legislation and Accessibility in South Korea

On March 2022, while having lunch with a male informant I had become acquainted with at the beginning of my arrival to Korea, naturally our acquaintance had become more friendly and open which had made room for more open-minded discussions. I asked him about pornography and consumption of porn. Dohyeon agreed that pornographic material in Korea is illegal by law. However he admitted that consumption of pornography is natural and common. As he stated, “If you watch porn, nobody is going to track you down and arrest you, the police officers watch it too.” (Dohyeon, March 2022). The similar sentiment was shared by several of my female interviewees.

When it comes to the selling of technology, it is a complex matter to regulate, which cameras can be legally sold and which not. During my fieldwork in March 2022, I had a look around in Seoul’s Saewoon Market (세운상가) with Park Dohyeon, who was my translator for the day. Saewoon Electronics Market is known for its large variety of different tech sellers, both antique and new. The place is also known for their advertisements of selling hidden cameras. We explored the market and asked around for small cameras. The first seller turned us away, saying he knew nothing of such cameras and where one could buy them. The second shop was located on the upper floor of the market in the far end side, where most of the other market cubicles were closed. A middle-aged male seller looked rather stern and unwelcoming as we asked for „tiny cameras“. He was quite upfront and asked us to speak forwardly: “You mean *molka*?”. We nodded in agreement. He then showed us the only small camera he had, which he pulled out from under the counter. The lens was about 1mm in diameter. The seller enthusiastically explained that although the lens is small, the quality of the footage is exquisite. The camera was not new, it looked worn and had residue of dried glue on it. The price for the camera was 65 000 won (around 46 euros), which is quite a hefty amount in comparison to spy cameras that can be ordered online in various shapes and sizes for less than 10 euros.

When we reached the third seller, we decided to change our tactics and just asked for *molka* straight away. The seller did not look surprised at our request, rather he seemed apologetic that he had not got the merchandise we desired. He said that nowadays it’s illegal to sell spy cameras, but suggested looking online. He even pulled out his phone and proceeded to suggest different types of small cameras you can order online and gave us suggestions which of the cameras are

good quality and which are not. For example you can get watch shaped cameras, but he said the quality of them is poor, so he does not recommend that specific one because the camera breaks easily.

Most of the camera selling shops were closed in the market, the sellers we spoke to were mostly surrounded by closed selling cubicles. The reason for why many of the sellers had closed their shops is up for debate, it could be due to covid-19 pandemic or just the fact that selling cameras is not that popular anymore due to the easy accessibility to tech on the online marketplaces. Dohyeon's assessment was that if the sellers can make money out of it, they will sell it. They do not care if it is illegal or if their products will be used for illegal means. The first seller might have had info on who is selling small cameras but might not have wanted to give business to his competitors.



**Figure 2.** A sign advertises selling of secret camera detection devices (몰카탐지기) as well as secret cameras (몰래카메라). Author: Susanna Homuha 2022

Our general assessment of the sellers was that even if they do have these cameras they seem reluctant to show them unless you specially ask. Even then some will turn you away, right after

they hear „secret camera“, others might show something from under the counter. The signs which pointed to selling secret cameras were also advertising the selling of secret camera detection devices, a rather discordant combination. They sold other ambiguous products along cameras such as Viagra, porn DVD’s, etc. It should be noted that while the Saewoon area is surrounded by bars, cafes and restaurants that young people frequent, the marketplace however was not popular amongst young customers, rather the directed clientele seemed to be middle-aged or older and mostly male.

Since this thesis focuses on pornography and illegally filmed material it is inarguably necessary to review the existing laws when it comes to pornography and spreading of pornographic material. Therefore I consulted the website of Korean Legislation Research Institute, Korean Law Translation (later referred to as KLT). Under article 44-7 point 1 it is stated that distributing “information with obscene content distributed, sold, rented, or displayed openly in the form of code, words, sound, images, or motion picture” (KLT, 2019) is unlawful for all persons through information and communication networks. Point two from article 44-7 further states that spreading “information with content that defames other persons by divulging a fact or false information, openly and with intent to disparage the person's reputation” (KLT, 2019) is prohibited by law. The Human Watch (2021: 47) report points out that making and changing the laws is a lengthy process, meanwhile criminals are quick to find their way around the slowly changing laws by coming up with new ways to work around them. Furthermore the way to prosecution and justice is not a linear process but rather a multiplex undertaking. As described in the report:

“A former government official said when they contact a website and request removal of nonconsensual images, whether the website agrees to remove them or not often hinges on whether the website operator perceives the content as illegal—so decisions about criminal law provisions affect not only whether people can be prosecuted, but also whether survivors can successfully request suppression of content.” (HRW, 2021:47).

HRW refers to Dahye Chang (2021: 48) argument that victims are left frustrated because the harm that was caused to them is not recognized as “sexual enough” by law to prosecute the culprits. Furthermore, audio recordings that have been recorded without consent are not criminalized (HRW, 2021: 48). HRW’s (2021: 50) report points out that South Korea has received criticism for inadequate response to the new forms of digital sex crimes that have emerged with the rapid development of technology, especially in terms of crimes against women.

When it comes to lawmaking and justice, the workforce is still largely dominated by male officers, prosecutors and judges, some of whom may have practiced secret filming themselves, therefore proclamation of justice becomes ever harder for female victims to achieve (HRW, 2021: 55). “Low sentences can make perpetrators feel they can commit further crimes with impunity even when they are known, and easily identified to law enforcement, by the women they target.” (HRW, 2021: 58).

Survivors who sought help from the police often described negative, and sometimes traumatic, experiences. (HRW, 2021:61) A lawyer assisting survivors cited abusive conduct by police as a major factor in women choosing not to seek justice: “Even if the victim knows the law she hesitates because of fear of a slow, difficult process,” she said.” (HRW, 2021:61) “There is the problem of secondary trauma. Investigators watch footage in front of the victim. They ask questions that are sexual harassment. For example, ‘The woman in the video has a mole on her breast—I need to see if you have one on yours’ and ‘Have other genitals been inside your vagina?’” (HRW, 2021: 61) A police detective echoed this, saying it is common for officers to pass nonconsensual images among themselves and laugh at them (HRW, 2021: 61).

The issue becomes ever deeper, as some of the law enforcement workers also portray misogynistic or otherwise harmful mindsets when dealing with sex crimes. As a female lawyer commented on the situation (HRW, 2021: 65): She said her friend worried for victims that male prosecutors would leak the footage. Survivors and others who spoke to Human Rights Watch (2021: 67) said that judges often seem more sympathetic to defendants’ arguments for leniency than to survivors’ arguments about the harm they suffered. “Even if there is evidence that a perpetrator distributed illegal footage, if he forcefully denies it, he might just get probation,” a lawyer representing survivors explained (HRW, 2021: 67). “If it is a first-time offender, and a student or has a job, he is likely to get probation.” (HRW, 2021: 67).

This example goes to show the deep-rooted systemic misogyny which empathizes with the male culprit while victim shaming and minimizing the crimes suffered by women. It seems stagnant to consider the criminals age, background and future prospects meanwhile disregarding the same aspects in the case of the victim. “The problem is not just with the law, but with the judges” (HRW, 2021: 67). While the Korean government officials had agreed that cybercrime cannot be stopped only by accommodating proper laws, but the change should begin from healthy cyber

use education (HRW, 2021: 76), however perhaps education should not only consider the use of cyberspace, it should also focus on teaching healthy gender dynamics from a young age. Providing education on sexuality and digital citizenship to children, from an early age, is urgently important, but adults, including those in all workplaces, including in the law enforcement and justice sectors, also need this education (HRW, 2021: 77). “Gender equality education should be mandatory in public education and for all public figures,” (HRW, 2021: 77).

Defamation law makes it harder for women to report the crimes. The perpetrator can pursue a defamation case at the victim, which is seemingly likelier to receive a prosecution than the reported sex crime (HRW, 2021: 50). Another problem is echoed by a lawyer “saying that it was almost impossible to secure cooperation from platforms outside of South Korea”(HRW, 2021: 81). If the videos are being spread on a foreign websites, the process of getting those videos taken down can become nearly impossible. While I am no lawyer, bringing out these laws help to illustrate some regulations that have been set in place and should work to regulate the cases of secret filming crimes as well. While I am perhaps not qualified to give an in-depth analysis on the laws and regulations and how effective they are, I can draw examples from my in-person conversations and interviews about the general opinions or perceptions on the legislations and consumption of pornographic material. These examples will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

This section has worked to build a general framework of the problem of *molka* by introducing the problem and bringing some examples from real life cases reported on the news. It brings forward the multifaceted sides of the secret camera problem in Korea which concern gender relations, social understandings of gender and sexuality, how sex crimes are handled by Korean law enforcement and much more. This section further elaborated on the cultural contexts of *molka* as a problem that has manifested in Korea. Different aspects from Korean history, culture, social context and systemic structures were used to help understand the secret filming phenomena in Korea. Finally the laws and regulations concerning sexual crimes were explored to understand the problem on a lawful level. The following section will give an overview of the materials and methodologies used for conducting research for this thesis.

## **2. Materials and Methodology**

In this section the thesis will focus on the methodology and empirical sources used for the research. I have taken an ethnographic approach to my research methods by conducting participant observation and interviews with young women in Korea. The given approach has provided me with a physical grasp of the field, and a comprehension of navigating the space as a woman. I also used methods such as keeping a research diary to write down any necessary observations, and conducted sixteen interviews to document personal experiences and thoughts of local women on the matter. I used online popular media as one way of doing online fieldwork. The aim of my research was to gather materials from the field and conduct interviews as well as put the different ethnographic research methods to use. Valerie J. Janesick (1983: 198) has written, that the best way to apply ethnographic methods is to do it practically. Researches outside the field of anthropology and ethnology too see value in such research methods, as Reeves et al. have written (2008: 512) ethnographic research carries a purpose to “document the culture, the perspective and practices, of the people in these settings. The aim is to ‘get inside’ the way each group of people sees the world.” That is done through “the collection of detailed observations and interviews” (Reeves et al. 2008: 512). The process of my fieldwork became multifaceted through different interactions, rejections and successes. Substantial part was not only the work done externally, but also the internal efforts to submerge myself into a field I had never experienced before. The following subsections will give a more thorough overview of some of the specific parts of the research.

### **2.1 Process of Fieldwork**

As previously mentioned in the first section of the thesis, my fieldwork took place from August 2021 until July 2022. During this time I was working on all of the aspects of my research, with a firstly more vague and later more sophisticated planned schedule. That was mainly due to the everchanging COVID-19 restrictions at the time of my arrival to Korea. The pandemic was one of the major challenges at the beginning of my fieldwork, but it pushed me to find alternative ways of doing my research in case of another lockdown. As the pandemic restrictions slowly

began to ease, in the end most of my interviews were done in person, and the pandemic restrictions did not limit my abilities of participant observation and interactions with informants.

While I had acquired the basic knowledge of Korean language, customs, history and culture. I entered the field as clean slate in a sense that I had never visited Korea before. While I was aware of my topic matter from the distance, I had no real-life connections to Korea or any Korean persons. Therefore, I had to build myself up from the ground by navigating the field while building a circle of informants around me, who could further help me with the research process and interviews. This undoubtedly created a sense of insecurity in terms of my research outcome, as I had no way to estimate the severity of the secret filming problem remotely. But in the end the material I gathered for my research turned out to be plentiful. Throughout my stay in Korea I documented signs related to the secret camera issue. The amount of such signs in public spaces, mainly restrooms, was extensive. Such signs can be found in most public bathrooms. In general carrying either a cautionary message or reassuring that the bathroom has been subject to routine checkups to make sure it is clear of the cameras. My assessment based on the signs was that it seems the penalties have toughened, as old signs state laxer punishment for the secret filming crimes while new ones state longer periods of imprisonment and larger sums of fines.



**Figure 3** Seoul, Dongjak-gu, nodeul station Signs reads:Report illegal activities to 112. Illegal shooting(filming) is a criminal act. Imprisonment up to 7 years, fine up to 50 million won. Personal information of the criminals is subject to further monitoring. Digital sex crime victim support center (number). Author: Susanna Homuha 2022.

I would divide my fieldwork into two main sections, first half of my stay was more focused on participant observation, building a social network and getting used to the environment. I used this time to get a better scope of the language as well as local customs to improve my access to informants. While the second half of the research period was more hands on, filled with meetings with informants and interviewees. That all went alongside with my studies at the Chung-Ang University for two semesters. The final materials I gathered from the field were interviews, observations, photos and written notes in my research diary.

### **2.1.1 Participant Observation and Fieldwork Diary**

Janesick (1983: 199) describes participant observation as a fluid process, from conceptualizing a research subject, to gaining access to the field, to submerging oneself in the field for observations, and finally allowing oneself at least the same amount of time for data analysis as was spent on the field doing participant observation. “Ethnographers typically gather participant observations, necessitating direct engagement and involvement with the world they are studying.” (Reeves et al. 2008: 512). In order to record the everyday observations and complexities of the field the ethnologists use fieldwork notes or a fieldwork diary (Reeves, et al. 2008: 512). It could be said that my everyday life in Korea was always a form of participant observation. Since I lived in the research environment for 11 months, each day provided me with details and different observations which helped me to gradually settle into the environment. While this method can appear passive it was one of the crucial parts of research. The observations help to build a thorough understanding of the surroundings and peoples cultural or social behaviors. These observations and conversations later help in the process of deeper ethnographic analysis when analyzing interviews and theoretical materials. As Reeves et al. (2008: 514) have explained: the use of participant observation enables ethnographers to “immerse” themselves in a setting, thereby generating a rich understanding of social action and its subtleties in different contexts.”.

The research diary turned out to be one of the more complicated tasks for me, which came as a surprise. I struggled to find time to write into my diary and neglected it from time to time. In general I think I wrote a lot about my inner world, feelings and thoughts while observing the field. In hindsight, these observations may not carry much weight for this thesis as I am not a

Korean woman and I cannot speak for their experiences, as mine as a foreigner might differ a lot from the local women's. Yet, even if the excerpts from the diary do not fit into this thesis directly, they helped me to refresh my memory and observations which is one of the core points of keeping a fieldwork diary. As written by Janesick (1983: 201), keeping the journal, or fieldwork diary, can help to provide another opportunity for reflexing on ones work and can improve the writing process.

### **2.1.2 Interviews**

The 16 interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured in form. I saw greatest benefit in conducting semi-structured interviews as it provided some room for casual added questions or a freer setting for the interviewees to open up. As Roeschley (2023: 4) has said that the semi-structured interviews are more flexible than the structured interviews, but they provide a more systematic approach to the aim of the conversation. The interviews were the most crucial part for my thesis, and they will provide the core material for this work. One of the most important values for me was to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the interviewees as the topic of the research is a delicate matter that some might feel uncomfortable sharing about. Therefore I also provided an alternative, online written interview for those interviewees who wished to share their thoughts but preferred to do it on paper instead. In the end 4 interviews were written and 12 were done in person. I provided questions in both English and Korean. My correspondent Professor Park Jung Ran helped me with translating the questions into proper Korean.

While selecting an interviewee group I tried to avoid selecting only activists or people from a similar field of educations, while some of the women had overlapping interests, they were from different backgrounds in terms of family situation, occupation or university major. However, it could still be that only women who had a specific interest to the topic agreed to participate in the interviews. My skills of interviewing improved substantially during this process as I gradually learned to adapt Korean mannerisms, language and social ques better. The interviews were conducted between April and July 2022. The interviews were generally around 50 minutes in length and with the consent of the interviewees audio recordings of the interviews were made,

which were later used to make a transcribed version of the interviews. Interviewees agreed that the audio files would only be reviewed by me or my translator. For future reference, I would certainly prefer to opt for in person interviews rather than written ones, as the difference in getting a personal contact and a better understanding of the persons background, beliefs and values came through much better with in person interviews, while the written interviews were less personal and more problem oriented.

I began interviews began by asking women, how widely *molka* problem is discussed among their social circles. Most women said that they do not talk with their parents or loved ones about the secret camera problem that much. They are more likely to share their frustrations and ideas on the matter with their female friends. Im Jimin and Gwon Jia said they think older generations have different interests when it comes to social issues. Jimin explained: “I never talked to my mother about illegal filming, I usually talk to my friends.”. Song Sua said she talks about the illegal filming issue with her sister, “I have a sister, so I share it with her whenever it’s on the news. I warn her to be careful.”. Gwon Jia, a sociology undergraduate said: “I’ve definitely discussed it with my university friends, because they have similar interests, they had similar fear as well. But not much with my parents, because we don’t really openly talk about sex or any crimes.”. Choi Gaeun said she doesn’t talk about the issue, as everybody knows about it, you can notice the stickers every time you use the restroom, so there is not even a need to talk about it anymore. Many women said they avoid the topic altogether or only share it with their close friends. It should be noted that although some women said they do not discuss about the issue with their loved ones on the regular, it does not exactly reflect that they do not see it as a discussion worthy subject. Rather it reflected in some interviewees answers, that it is due to a certain desperation, as the issue has become so widely spread, they feel hopeless to even talk about it anymore.

### **2.1.3 Participants and Approach**

I will introduce each interviewee briefly in this section. To build a better framework for their backgrounds and living situations which can help to better analyze and understand their answers and opinions on the matter in the later sections. From the 16 interviewees, 1 woman had suffered

a secret filming crime herself, three had found out about the issue through their friends or acquaintances, 11 women said they found out about the problem through the news, and one said she noticed the problem after the cautionary stickers started appearing in public restrooms. 4 of the women identified themselves as activists for gender equality or feminists, while others were simply interested in gendered topics, but did not label themselves as activists. All of the participants were aware of the problem and admitted that the secret camera problem affects their daily life to some extent.

In Korea it is not common to approach people on the street, and one can be met with a rather suspicious reaction as approaching a stranger can be seen as a scam or an unusual behavior. Still some interviewees I approached at random, while some of them were referred to me through mutual friends. Referring and introducing people within different friend groups is a common practice in Korea. Therefore it was the most natural way to find informants. Yet it may have created an echo chamber of sorts, as these people may have similar interests, socioeconomic backgrounds and statuses. I tried to keep the inclusivity in mind while selecting my interviewees, but there may still be some patterns of similarities in terms of interests, education and economic background.

Chong Yewon aged 22, a sociology undergraduate had an indirect experience with a secret filming crime in her high school. Although she was not directly victimized she said she suffered mental distress and this experience has stayed with her ever since. She comes from a safe family background and was living with her parents. She also reported that her parents took this incident very seriously and supported her and that her parents worried for her. They did not want her to suffer from a crime like this.

Park Subin, aged 22, was from Seoul and majored in material science and engineering. She was living with her parents and an older brother and was preparing for her exchange studies in Spain at the time of our meeting. She was the only one of the participants who said she does not feel deeply bothered by secret filming, or social issues in general. Yet she did say she is still cautious of the crime, checking the bathrooms before using them. She said she would rather use the restroom at home, if possible.

Gwon Jia, aged 22, from Gwacheon, Gyeonggi province was an undergraduate sociology student. She was one of the participants with whom I grew a closer acquaintance with, therefore information shared by Jia is abundant, as she was personally very interested in the topic. She also stated that she would consider herself an activist for equal gender rights. She had previously worked in Philippines as a short-term researcher and studied in San Diego for a year. Jia already had plans to move to Boston for her master's program after graduation from her bachelors studies. She said she comes from an economically safe background and is an only child and has a good relationship with her parents.

Kim Minseo and Cho Haeun did a shared interview together since they were a couple. They both said they would identify with being activists for women's and queer rights. Minseo majored in international studies. Haeun had majored in musical arts by playing violin, but she had recently changed her major to business administration. While Minseo was more private with her family affairs, Haeun admitted that she comes from an unconventional family and from a rather vulnerable household. She grew up in a household with no father, she has two younger sisters whom she feels responsibility for, which is also why she felt empowered to speak up about social issues. As she said she feels responsibility to make society a better place for her little sisters.

Song Sua aged 25, from Gyeonggi province worked in product design, having majored in mechanical design. She was one of the few who had already graduated from the university and was working full time. She preferred to answer the interview questions in written form. She lives with her parents and two sisters. In the form of written interview, fewer personal details were shared.

Choi Chaewon, aged 25 from Seoul was another participant who preferred a written interview. She was working full-time as a high school teacher. She said that she found out about the spy camera problem during her time in the university, through news reports and agreed that it is a severe problem. Again, fewer personal details were shared in written form.

Song Yejin, aged 22, was also a University student from Gyeonggi province. Yejin majored in cultural studies, in performative arts and minored in sociology. During the time of our interview she was partaking in an exchange program in the Netherlands, therefore our interview was conducted online. She explained that while living in Europe, she feels less bothered by the secret filming problem, while in Korea she would be more cautious of it. While Yejin too came from

an economically safe background, she went to gender mixed middle school where she reported having unpleasant encounters with male students. Yejin had not suffered a secret filming crime herself, but had close friends, who had become victims of spy cams.

Choi Gaeum, aged 22 was majoring in Chinese language studies. She was also interested in international studies so she had picked a double major in political and international studies. She said her ambitions were business oriented and she was ambitious to work at a startup company after her studies were finished. She was living with her mother in Gyeonggi province, as her brother was currently serving in the military and her father was working in Daegu. She was introduced to me by Gwon Jia as they were acquainted with each other.

Yun Yujin and Sin Yerin did a shared interview, as they were lab partners. They were both aged 24 and majored in mechanical engineering. Yujin was from Ansan and Yerin was from Seoul. Yujin said she can discuss camera crimes with her parents, which is something many interviewees said they would not feel comfortable doing with their parents. Yerin did not mention her family but had her opinions on the matter as she saw secret filming as a serious issue. Both women shared their fears and thoughts on the matter and how they think this issue could be solved.

Lee Soyul, aged 25, grew up in Gyeonggi province and majored in philosophy in her undergraduate studies. After graduation she moved to Busan and is currently working there as a language tutor. She had a personal interest in sexual crimes and found it to be a very serious issue. Soyul also preferred a written interview.

Im Jimin was one of the women who openly identified as a feminist. She majored in gender studies and was inspired by gender issues to enter the university all together. She came from a problematic household as she admitted to having an abusive father. Jimin had experienced online harassment, danger of stalking and doxing, due to her sharing her feminist ideas openly on an online forum. She was an active participant in the student council, focusing on gender issues and carrying out routine bathroom check ups for *molka*.

Lee Minji aged 21, was a university student from Seoul. She was one of the participants who preferred to answer via written interview, therefore her answers were also less personal and more problem oriented. She had a stable living situation and lived with her parents. She said she had

recognized the problem from an early age and the fear of cameras has followed her into adulthood.

Kim Daeun aged 24 is a Pharmacy major. She Grew up in Daejeon. Her relationship with her family is healthy and supportive, yet she did admit that gender topics are seen as a taboo in her household. She heard about the secret filming crimes from her friends after she had entered the university. She has no personal experience with a direct crime but said she feels scared of the issue regardless, as she notices the crimes being reported on the news frequently.

Sin Soyeon, is a 20-year-old university student in bachelor's studies from Gyeonggi province. In her earlier education she went to an all-girls high school. Since Soyeon was the only interviewee who had a personal experience with a filming crime, she preferred not to share too many personal details. She did indicate that she comes from an economically safe household where her relationship with her family has always been good. She had her family's support when she suffered the secret filming crime, yet she did not receive lawful justice and did not proceed to take her case to the court.

Based on the short introductions of each interviewee it can be concluded that most of the participants were from a comfortable socioeconomic background, many of the young women having studied or planning to study abroad, which shows a certain level of economic comfort. Only two of the participants admitted to being from a vulnerable background and a few preferred not to get too detailed about their family backgrounds. 2 women had finished their studies and were working full time. Yet, regardless of economic status, women seemed to agree that *molka* is a problem they feel affected by. Perhaps it may seem as this thesis has focused on only a tight group of women from decently privileged backgrounds, yet I find that regardless of that, their opinions are still valid. Since some many of the interviewees came to me through suggestions from local friends and acquaintances, many times I got to know their backgrounds when we met for the interview.

## 2.2 Reflexivity

Janesick (1983: 201) argues that reflection of a researcher is one of the key elements to writing a successful paper. Reflexivity works as an element of ethnographic analysis, which emphasizes the relationship between the researcher, the field and informants or interviewees, it helps to judge the impact the researcher has had on the study (Reeves et al. 2008: 513). It was a developing experience for myself as a researcher as this work also challenged me to let go of my personal perceptions or assumptions that could have tainted the research results. Coming from a western, individualistic culture myself, it is natural that perceptions fit for my cultural lens would not apply the same way in Korea. I tried to keep myself in check throughout the research process, in order to not let my perceptions influence the research outcomes. There was also a factor of potential risk at play. In reality, I have no way of knowing if I was a subject to such crimes myself, although I always practiced caution when in public places. Yet I lived in this environment for only a year, for the informants and interviewees, this is a reality of their everyday life.

My fieldwork process was undoubtedly an ambitious undertaking, in terms of the state of the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunities for fieldwork were limited or restricted in many ways. Therefore, in my own fieldwork too, I was unsure if and how I would eventually access my informants and interviewees. Naturally in the beginning of my research process many things were unclear and left at the mercy of the aforementioned current state of the world. In terms of that I could say that my research outcomes were satisfactory to me, as I did manage to build a network of informants and interviewees in a manner to gather sufficient material for my thesis. The process of conducting interviews was fluid and went without any unpleasant instances. No interviewees asked to withdraw from participating in the research after the interviews were done, although they had the right to do so if they for some reason felt it necessary. Rather many of the interviewees expressed interest in reading the thesis after it is done. Some even thanked me, for having research interest in this topic, as they saw it as a serious problem that needs more coverage. This is also the main reason I decided to write my thesis in English, to make sure that my informants can read it in a language they can understand. That being said, the process did not go without challenges. Yet, I would say I achieved all my objectives set for this research, and even exceeded my expectations in some parts. I can confirm

that my abilities improved in a major way during all processes of the research. The interviewing process became more dynamic and natural throughout time.

I tried to challenge my own perceptions and misunderstandings, which I did my best to reflect on and not let myself or my research get influenced by. I did of course experience rejections when looking for informants, but I would not count these as failures but rather as a natural process of the fieldwork. I tried to be wary of ethical problems and therefore only made interviews with informants whose answer was a clear “yes”. As I did not want to pressure anybody into participation. Prior to my arrival to Korea I had questioned the reasons for restricting pornography in the country, I wondered whether it would increase the desire to view illegally filmed content. On the field however, I realized that there is rather more benefit than harm in restricting pornographic material in Korea, in this time. That goes to show the importance of being on the field, interacting and perceiving the situation on site.

### **2.2.1 Research as an Outsider**

I must admit that my fieldwork results may be affected by the fact that I was an outsider on the field. Presumably, me being an outsider had both positive and negative effects to my research results. First to state the obvious, language barrier and the fact that I clearly am not a Korean woman may have turned some interviewees away from me, or limited my access to women who would have wanted to participate in the research. At the same time, I may have been free from some of the social restrictions or prejudices that Koreans would apply to other Koreans. Talking about sexuality, sex crimes is a taboo in Korea, and not a common conversations topic according to my informants and personal experiences. However, as an outsider the same expectations of modesty and not talking about certain topics was not applied to me, rather, it seemed some women enjoyed the judgement free environment to discuss their thoughts and ideas, they would not have voiced among their peers or family members. Since women are not only concerned with the judgements of men but also other women, they may feel reluctant to discuss topics that are seen as controversial. With a person whose background is different and who does not bear the same social constructs, it may have been easier to open up about their thoughts and ideas.

This concludes the section on materials and methodology used for this thesis. This section worked to give an overview of the ethnographic research methods, research process and participants of the interviews. It also touched upon my personal reflections of the time I spent on the field by trying to tackle my own shortcomings and successes while conducting the research. Ethical approach is another important value touched upon in this section. The upcoming section will move on to build a theoretical framework for the thesis and the subject matter at hand.

### 3 Theoretical Background

This paragraph works to explore the theoretical materials used for building the theoretical framework for this thesis. Therefore this paragraph has been divided into two subsections. Different forms of surveillance will become a dominant theme in this section moving from surveillance to sexual surveillance, to body surveillance. In order to explore the effects of these terms on women's freedom of movement and self-expression in the public sphere.

The first section focuses on the effects of media and pornography in terms of secret filming, through exploring the theories of objectifying gaze and sexualization. This section will also explore secret filming through Paul B. Preciado's article *The Pharmacopornographic Era*. I will explore the effects of male gaze and explore the secret filming as a form of unwanted gaze. In Preciado's text the profitability of human bodies will be looked into, and how this ties into what Preciado calls the "Pharmacopornographic regime". Then exploring the effects of gaze in more detail, it also provides a look into the correlation between Preciado's ideas and heterosexual gaze.

The second section focuses on the concept of sexual surveillance which I will explore through Michel Foucault's theory on panopticism as well as references to the theories of other academics when it comes to the surveillance. I combine the theory of sexual surveillance with the studies on geography of fear and body-surveillance to show a correlation between these concepts in regard to the illegal secret filming problem. I give an overview of the meaning of sexual surveillance and how I arrived at this term to be used in the context of my research. The second section brings attention to self-imposed body surveillance, which can also be considered a part of sexual surveillance. A behavioral pattern that women impose on themselves when they become overly aware of their bodies in a public space as a result of an objectifying gaze. I approach the problem of illegal secret filming through the theory of geography of fear to analyze how the fear of hidden cameras can affect women's use of space and women's feeling of safety in public places with expected privacy.

### **3.1 Media and Pornography**

In this section I will explore the effects of media and pornography in correlation. Media, especially the rise of social media has provided us with an ever more easy access to all sorts of online materials, pornography included. These sexualized perspectives have been built up through not only social media but imagery on papers and films for a long while. Therefore this thesis will have a look at how current day media feeds into unhealthy online behaviors when it comes to pornography consumption and how online materials could affect women who suffer from the gaze created by such imagery. I will do so by consulting theories of Laura Mulvey on gaze, Simone De Beauvoir on gender theories and Preciado's take on profitability of the sexualized bodies among others.

#### **3.1.1. Objectifying Gaze: a Stressor Leading to Body Surveillance**

One of the affecting factors in the problem of secret illegal filming could be sexualized or objectifying gaze, a perception of women in a way which objectifies or sexualizes the female body. I will explore this theory through some feminist theorists and try to point out the correlating factors within this theory and the secret filming problem. "Contemporary mass media and popular culture are saturated with highly erotic imagery of girls and women"(Moloney et al. 2014: 119). Gender interactions are affected by this normalization of the extensive portrayal of women's bodies as sexualized objects (Moloney et al. 2014: 119). This type of gaze separates men and women in terms of sexualization and reflects persons value based on external factors. The female "Other" has been explored by many feminist theorists, starting with Simone De Beauvoir in her work *The Second Sex*. De Beauvoir's works have been countlessly referred to, but that for a good reason, she builds a fundamental framework to feminist theory. She has defined the othering of women as follows:

"A man's body has meaning by itself disregarding the body of the woman, whereas the woman's body seems devoid of meaning without reference to the male. /.../ she is nothing other than what man decides; she is thus called 'the sex', meaning that the male sees her essentially as a sexed being; for him she is sex, /.../. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute, She is the Other." ( De Beauvoir, 2009: 6)

Laura Mulvey has followed up on the idea of male gaze in her work by examining the male gaze through cinema. As Mulvey (1999: 804) explains: "Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as

signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not the maker of meaning”. Mulvey (1999: 808) has explained this through the idea of scopophilia: “/.../ scopophilic, arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight”. Essentially scopophilia or the sexualized gaze create objects that can be looked at, rather than subjects who have their own voice. Both authors point to the fact that the sexualized and objectifying attaches meaning to the female body, which prior to the sexualized gaze seems devoid of meaning altogether. In the case of Korea, and secret filming, the environment is heteronormative, which means that the gaze women are subjected to in many cases comes from heterosexual men. As Mulvey explains it can leave women feeling objectified and subjects to the controlling gaze of the men. (1999: 804). “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female.” De Beauvoir (2009: 51-52) explains this as “hetero-erotic attitude that will link pleasure to an object, usually a woman/.../”. But De Beauvoir continues by saying that “woman’s consciousness of herself is not defined by her sexuality alone.” (2009: 63)

As Moloney et al. (2014: 119) explain, the sexualized gaze can lead to various personal, interpersonal and societal issues. The negative effects can cause young girls and women to determine their self-worth through self-objectification which can lead to several mental and physical complications such as eating disorders, low self-esteem, risky sexual behavior, depression and more (Moloney et al. 2014: 120). The problem is, as previously pointed out by De Beauvoir and Mulvey, that women or young girls are considered “objects, devoid of independence” and they can only receive their full potential through self-objectification (Moloney et al. 2014: 120). Furthermore, the heterosexual gaze, does not only apply in the heteronormative constructs, it extends to the sexual minorities. Women who are lesbians or bisexuals get sexualized by heterosexual men for the ‘girl-on-girl action’, therefore women who are sexual minorities might experience double sexualization, firstly for their female bodies and secondly for their sexuality (Moloney et al. 2014: 120). Moloney et al. (2014: 120) further argue, that media serves a critical role in reinforcing sexualized imagery of women and girls, much of the times media sells the idea that “women’s primary utility lies in being a sexual object”.

Moloney et al. (2014: 121) approach this problem of gaze through socialization theory, where girls and women learn about societal expectations and roles towards them through “direct social cues from parents, peers and other socializing agents”. They also mention objectification theory, in which “girls’ observations of their social world, combined with implicit and explicit sexualization cues, lead to an internalization of objectification and self-sexualization.” (Moloney et al. 2014: 121). By combining these theories, it seems natural that in the case of secret filming, women can internalize the problem at hand become hyper-aware of the potential sexualized or objectifying gaze of them while in the public place. Through social sexualization and objectification, women themselves may start applying the same concepts to themselves, seeing themselves only worthy as a sexualized body or feel discomfort from the objectifying gaze. That can result in women becoming overly aware of how they present their own bodies. Such effects can manifest in surveillance over one’s clothing, behavior or consumption habits. Thus objectifying and sexualized gaze, sexualized value of women’s body and objectification of women’s bodies can result in woman’s self-imposed body surveillance as they will try to make sure, that the way they present themselves will not fall subject to sexualized gaze. In the case of this thesis it can become evident in women’s behavior when they use a public bathrooms, dressing rooms etc.

### **3.1.2 Pharmacopornographic Regime**

In his text Paul B. Preciado(2013: 34-35) explores the way capitalism has affected the industries and media surrounding bodies, gender and sexuality, for which he has coined the term “pharmacopornographic system”, where economic benefit has been attached to human libido, gender, sexuality, psyche and so on. In relation to this thesis subject I will provide a closer look into Preciado’s perspective on pornographic industry. “The pornographic industry is currently the great mainspring of our cybereconomy/.../ a large part of it belonging to the porn portals of the Internet”(Preciado, 2013: 37). He continues by pointing out, that “the amateur portals are what constitute the truly emerging market of Internet porn” (Preciado, 2013: 38). Online amateur porn sites have become widely popular, with the rise of OnlyFans and other similar sites in recent year, where viewers can view different kinds of pornographic media via paid subscription.

Today, any user on the Internet who has a body, a computer, a video camera, or a webcam, as well as an Internet connection and a bank account, can create a porn site, and have access to the cybermarket of the sex industry (Preciado, 2013: 38)

In Preciado's theory, he calls it the "autopornographic body", which would apply for online sites where people post pornographic content of their bodies. In the case of *molka*, the circumstances are slightly different. In the case of illegal secret filming, the perpetrators have used these exact existing resources, readily available for most people in modern cities. The difference is, instead of using their own bodies as commodities, they have turned to profit of unsuspecting bodies in public spaces.

The sex industry is not only the most profitable market in the Internet; it's also the model of maximum profitability for the global cybernetic market/.../: minimum investment, direct sales of the product in real time in a unique fashion, the production of instant satisfaction for the consumer. (Preciado, 2013: 39)

While there is nothing wrong with this business model for people wishing to make money with their bodies, it can become a source of exploitation, as it has become with illegal secret filming. With minimal effort, then it is natural that perpetrators would not only target women in secret filming crimes due to their own sexual desires, but also as a potential resource for making money, with minimum investment and maximum profit. As mentioned in the chapter above, women's bodies often carry a sexualized meaning. Therefore it is no surprise that women in particular have become subjects to sexually exploitative crimes, such as *molka*.

Initially what Preciado points out in his article, is that a body carries a certain capitalistic value. We may even call it a capitalistic body. Therefore the body only matters if it is profitable, on one had profitable for the sex industry, but on the other had profitable to the pharmaceutical industry (2013: 52). Preciado (2013: 52) calls this a form of biocapitalism, with the increasing amount of online pornography the need for implants, supplements, Viagra etc. increases alongside. When we apply this theory to secret filming, the female body carries the sexualized value or the "ejaculation benefit" as Preciado (2013: 52) calls it. Judith Butler (1993: 16) has argued that gender transforms a person into a subject. In given context women have become gendered subjects who are being exploited through illegal practices which turn women's bodies into a commodity that can be made profitable and sold. It can possibly hurt their social status, income, and it can have a harmful effect on the perception of their own identity.

On the other side of the spectrum is the industry that now sells different sorts of merchandise in various forms of red plastic cards, mobile apps and camera detection services that are catered for, mostly women, to enhance the feeling of safety, from the secret filming crimes. The preventative measures are different, some have already made clever business projects out of exploiting the fear that sexual surveillance has placed onto women. “Those who are wealthy can pay a fee of \$3000 a month for an agency to track and remove videos from the web” (Wilder 2018 ). The market for secret camera detection devices has certainly flourished after the problem has become widely spread in Korea. I personally got gifted a red card, meant for secret camera detection to be used with the camera phone and flash turned on. The card had been produced as a collaboration item with Artbox, a major stationary supplies chain in Korea, which is popular for adults and children alike, carrying practical stationery supplies as well as cute and colorful supplies for all ages.



**Figure 4.** and **Figure 5.** (from left to right) Secret camera detection devices, red plastic cards or red film cards, located at Chung-Ang University Campus, in the women’s restroom. In the left photos upper right hand corner a red button can be seen which is called *bisangbel* (비상벨), an emergency button that one can push in case of an emergency to contact the nearest police station. Such buttons were widely popular in public restrooms. Author: Susanna Homuha 2022.



**Figure 6.** Testing out the red card with my supervisor in June 2022, in Seoul, by using phone camera and flash as instructed on the packaging. Author: Terje Toomistu 2022

This goes to show that even large brands or chains have started implementing *molka* prevention products into their production. The interviewees also mentioned the gadgets made for camera detection and many of them found it conflicting, that women have to pay money out of their pockets to protect themselves from this phenomena. Furthermore, several interviewees questioned the morale of the detection device sellers, saying they might be wanting to profit from other people's suffering.

### **3.2 Sexual Surveillance**

Surveillance in itself is an interesting term that can serve as a double-edged sword. Following the explanations of David Garland in his article *Panopticon Days: Surveillance and Society*. As Garland(1995: 3) defines: “Surveillance is viewed as a means whereby “they” control “us”.”. The general ideas of surveillance and the explanations Garland provides can be applied in the context of Korea and the secret filming crimes as well. Garland argues that surveillance in itself is not inherently bad, rather it serves a crucially important role in making the society safer and more functional for all. “The problem is not so much the relentless development of surveillance

technology or “power/knowledge” relations but rather the question of how to control the use of which these crucial resources are put” (Garland, 1995: 4). This argument by Garland indeed hits the crucial point when it comes sexual surveillance in the form of *molka*, which will be elaborated on in length in the next chapter. The problem is not the technology itself, but the way in which it has been put to use. As Nicole Shephard (2017) has written in her article *What is Sexual Surveillance and Why Does it Matter*:

Sexual surveillance potentially takes place anywhere surveillance at large takes place – be that mass or targeted surveillance by state actors, corporate surveillance for marketing purposes, or peers like family, spouses, friends or strangers monitoring one another. Sometimes it indeed takes the shape of men surveilling women. After all, surveillance has long functioned as a powerful patriarchal tool to control women’s bodies and sexuality.

Yet, Shephard also points to the fact that sexual surveillance is not only concerned with men and women, and it reaches further from the gender binary boundaries. “ Instead, we can think of the expression “sexual surveillance” as a shorthand to talk about an assemblage of several interdependent gendered, sexualised, and racialised modes and effects of surveillance” (Shephard 2017). Surveillance itself is not profoundly a negative term, but putting the surveillance methods into use in an oppressive manner can create a paranoid view of surveillance, which is very much the case in terms of illegal secret filming in Korea. The following section will explore surveillance through the ideas of Michel Foucault’s panopticism and combining his theory with the problem of *molka* and works of other gender theorists, to show how it ultimately relates to sexual surveillance and body surveillance.

### **3.2.1 From Panopticon to Sexual Surveillance, to Body Surveillance**

Foucault’s theory on panopticism has of course been applied to surveillance studies in a plethora of different ways. Since secret cameras are essentially a form of surveillance, this theory can also be applied in the case of secret filming crimes. The *molka* phenomena has turned into a form of sexual surveillance that works to victimize unsuspecting subjects and in process can damage their social status. I would argue that the given phenomena could be explored through Foucault’s idea on panopticism and that the network of hidden cameras indeed creates a form of a modern panopticon that practices sexual surveillance. The effect of the panopticon is to include

permanent visibility with which comes a sense of fear and shame upon a guilty inmate. The panopticon prison system invented by Jeremy Bentham is described by Foucault (1991: 197) as follows:

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at any point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the center and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead – all this constitutes a compact mechanism of the disciplinary mechanism.

As Dubrofsky et al. (2015 : 2) have referred to Foucault's theory: “/.../ he noted that this form of state security is not only the province of external forms of policing, but also of the internalized systems of discipline by which people come to police themselves”. Such internalized policing is precisely the effect *molka* has created in many women in Korea. Subjects to the hidden camera crimes have little control over their environment, and as previously stated, spotting such spy cameras is exceedingly difficult. Thus, women live in fear of being constantly spied on. Every public bathroom, changing room and a motel room becomes a potential space for sexual surveillance. It creates an unequal power dynamic where the surveiller, for a lack of a better term, holds all the power while the subjects are left scared to live freely without any of their daily procedures being used against them.

The system keeps the subjects under constant fear of being spied on that establishes the undeniable power of the surveiller over them. As Foucault (1991: 200) has described the prisoners kept in the panopticon prison: “He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject of communication”. When observing this theory from the context of secret filming, constant visibility produced by the panopticon can induce fear of constant visibility, and shame over one's actions. The absence of communication further establishes the fact that material filmed by the spy cameras is non-consensual and leaves no room for the victims to, in reality, effectively protect themselves from being victimized. Another description from Foucault further establishes the feeling of having no control and power over the surveiller as he describes: “Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic function of power” (Foucault, 1991: 201). The shame induced by visibility in private but natural bodily functions or actions can induce a similar factor of guilt as a prisoner being observed for their wrongdoings. For many, the

body carries shame, especially in the context of sexual acts. The spy cameras have an ability to induce the same kind of fear and feeling of permanent visibility to women. The meaning is implied in the term itself, secret filming, it is secretly done and therefore difficult, if not impossible, to estimate when one might be caught on a secret camera tape. The panopticon was initially used to insert power over the inmates. Now in the age of advanced technology it has moved to different areas of life and camera surveillance is inarguably a new form of panopticism. As Foucault (1991: 224) himself has written: “At this point, the disciplines crossed the ‘technological’ threshold”. With the help of spy cameras the power of surveillance is in the hands of anyone. This easily maintainable power limits the liberties of many others, however. The power holders of sexual surveillance not only have the ability to significantly hurt a woman’s status, they have the ability to turn women’s bodies into products from which monetary gain can be made. As it was stated above, some illegally filmed pornography can pass as amateur porn, so it could be that some viewers are not aware that they are in fact viewing something criminal and illegal. Here the arguments of David Garland perfectly apply, it is not essentially the panopticon, surveillance, or the camera, that is a source of oppression. It is the matter of who holds the power of surveillance. Therefore I would define sexual surveillance in the context of this work as a form of surveillance where the surveiller holds a certain power over the subjects ability to feel freedom over their bodies, sexual activities and revealing actions, due to the sexualizing gaze that is imposed by the secret cameras. By such sexual surveillance, the cameras incuse a feeling of constant visibility, fear and shame in the subjects.

Moving on from the idea of sexual surveillance, the constant sexualization and objectification of women’s bodies can lead to a form of self-objectification in women (Lin et al. 2023: 2). By being constantly viewed as a sexual object women adapt the awareness in which they become hyperaware of their appearance, thus looking at themselves through the lens of objectification. While Lin et al. (2023) argue that this form of self-objectification is applied by women in terms of trying to appeal more pleasant to sexual partners, I see that this theory can also apply in the context of illegal secret filming, where women are forced to see their bodies as sexualized objects that can be captured by secret cameras. Therefore they become hyperaware of their bodies, their means of dressing and fashion choices, when in a public space. This can become a form of self-inflicted “body surveillance” (Lin et al. 2023: 2). As Lin et al.(2023: 2) have explained: “Body surveillance is a self-objectification behavior involving a persistent focus on

one's body and predicting how others will evaluate it." As it will be discussed in the next section by my interviewees, women have internalized the sexual gaze in a way in which they become cautious not only about their clothing, but also about going about their natural daily procedures such as using a bathroom or moving freely in the public space.

### 3.2.2 Geography of Fear

In this chapter the thesis will focus on the theory of geography of fear. More specifically, the geography of women's fear and how women navigate the public space due to their perception of which locations are safe and which are not. In the context of *molka* I will look into which public spaces women feel uncomfortable in and which locations are perceived to be more dangerous than others. Firstly, I will introduce the concept of geography of fear through the theories of Valentine Gill and Nalini V. Khurana. And then elaborate more on the correlation between geography of fear and the secret filming phenomenon.

Women are the gender more fearful of crime, which can be due to the perceived idea that women are physically less strong than men, especially when it comes to sexual crimes, rape and murder. (Gill, 1989: 385). Since there is the perceived notion of women as the weaker gender and the gender more susceptible to suffering from (sexual)crimes a harmful reaction of victim blaming has emerged. As Gill(1989: 385) explains, women's fear of male violence has a direct correlation to their use of public space, as victim blaming has received a reaction as if a woman is allowing the predators to kill, hurt or rape them by occupying a dangerous space, this has led to women's perception that she is "responsible for her own fate by putting herself in such a situation."

"Public blame of victims who were in public spaces, for being in a dangerous or inappropriate place when they were attacked, encourages all women to transfer their threat appraisal from men to certain public places where they may encounter attackers." (Gill, 1989: 385)

Such blaming of victims inserts a sense of responsibility over one's safety into women who are occupying public spaces. Unfortunately, such blaming is the case in regard to the problem of secret camera crimes as well. While in Gill's paper the main focus why women derive from using certain public spaces is the fear of male violence, in the case of secret camera crimes the fear is shifted onto the constant vulnerability and visibility to cameras. Since one response to geography of fear is to avoid the dangerous spaces Gill (1989: 386) has argued that women

“develop individual mental maps of places where they fear assault”. It is likely that many women use these “mental maps” in their everyday lives in order to protect themselves from a plethora of different dangers. Sometimes, however, the dangerous spaces cannot be avoided.

Nalini V. Khurana has explored this concept of unavoidable public spaces that may be dangerous through the use of metro. Metro stations are indeed something, that is also widely associated with *molka* crimes. Metro is a cost and time sufficient mode of transportation, which many use due to reasons related to time schedule or economic purposes. In Seoul certainly, taking a metro can be much faster than riding a car due to heavy traffic. Therefore many women opt for the metro, regardless of the associated danger. If we look at the article by Khurana (2020), in the context of Delhi metro, which has proven to be a location of danger for women, adding a woman’s only cart to the metro train. While it serves as an instant fix to the problem of harassment on the public metro, it does not fix the problem at its root. Rather it is a temporary solution, as these carts can be seen as special treatment to women by their male counterparts which deepens the separation and conflict between genders. Generally speaking, women are not asking for special treatment in a public setting, rather, they are asking to simply have an equal and safe access to public spaces.

A crowded metro is not a problem unique to only Korea alone of course, Nalini V. Khurana (2020) has applied the concept of geography of fear similarly to the Delhi Metro. While her subject matter is different from the concept of secret filming, it goes to show that a crowded metro cart can easily become a source of danger and it is a commonly used space that may be difficult to avoid for many women living in large cities. In the case of Korea, women are conscious of the people taking upskirt photos or videos on the crowded metro. This could be one of the reasons that for Korean smartphones, it is impossible to turn off the shutter sound when taking a photo or a video. Which is supposedly enacted due to personal privacy issues and to let the bystanders know that a photo has been taken. An attorney Lee Geun-Woo(2019) has explained, that although the camera shutter noise rule is not deliberately enforced due to *molka* crimes, it is considered a national standard since 2011 to have the shutter noise on the camera phone while taking a photo or a video. Yet Lee (2019) points out that there are many applications available, for turning off the camera shutter noise, and the use of such applications is not regulated by law. Lee (2019) further elaborates, that this shutter noise is indeed bothersome in

some instances, yet he sees a value in enduring this minor inconvenience for the greater good and feeling of safety for others, as he describes:

“Even now, ‘hidden camera’ cases using camera phones are frequent, and there is no change in the situation where camera phone recording sound had to be made a national standard. Then, even if it is a little uncomfortable in everyday life, it is necessary to keep the ‘click’ camera sound as it is, and it seems undesirable to neutralize the sound using an application.”

There were also educational materials in the metro notice screens, teaching people about the general metro etiquette with cute cartoons. Rules such as no running, cutting in line etc. One of such cartoons caught my attention on Seoul metro line nr. 2, where cute colorful cartoon characters were used to enact a scenario of illicit photo taking on the metro. Urging victims and eyewitnesses to report the secret filming crimes to local authorities. Therefore, there have certainly been attempts to draw attention to the problem at hand, but in the current extent, it seems to have been less effective than desired. Women can still feel uncomfortable while inhabiting public spaces, regardless of current regulations, the geography of fear is very much evident especially in public restrooms and metro stations. Most common reaction to such fear is related to Gill’s idea of “mental mapping”, where women chart locations and their actions in given locations based on their perception of fear or safety. Many women have turned to not using the metro restrooms, while some might avoid public bathrooms altogether.

This section has worked to provide theoretical approaches to engage the problem of *molka* in an academic discourse. Sexualization and objectification of women’s bodies was explored as one of the theories which will become one of the prominent theories in the next section. The profitability of bodies that was explored through Preciado’s theory, pointing to the multiple forms of capitalistic profitability when it comes to the *molka* problem, which certainly becomes one of the focal points to why this issue has perhaps surfaced in the capacity that it has. Through the theories of surveillance the effects the secret camera crimes can have on women can be explored in multiple levels. The following section will provide a look into the experiences of Korean women when it comes to *molka* crimes, and how they tie into the theoretical approaches as well as affect women, gender-based relationships.

#### **4 Experiences From the Field: Korean Women's Perception on the Problem of *Molka***

In this section, the thesis will take a thorough look at the conducted interviews by introducing the interviewees and their thoughts on the matter, as well as sharing my personal experiences and interactions from the time of being in Korea. This section is divided into three main parts based on (1) women's experience, (2) intergender relationships and (3) the ways women protect themselves.

When I arrived in Korea in 2021 August, I had no previous experience in the country, neither did I have any local contacts to lean on at the time. All I had was the preparations and research on the matter that could be done remotely. Thus, I did not have anybody to teach me any tips or methods for camera danger prevention, yet it proved to come quite naturally once one the field. Seems as basic knowledge on the matter is enough to get the quintessential idea of how to go about the problem. Generally speaking, I felt safe and well taken care of in the public spaces in Korea. The public transportation is modern and clean, people treat public space with respect, are generally quiet and keep to themselves. During my time there, I grew to love and respect the local customs, and adapted the general behavioral patterns for camera prevention in a similar way. As a woman living in a foreign country alone, there were certain situations which induced fear or a sense of danger, usually drunk older men on the metro, or rush hour on the metro, when it is physically impossible to maintain any sense of personal space. At such moments I was especially wary to cover myself well in order to avoid getting filmed. A 360-degree checkup of the bathroom stall became the norm. Same goes for checking for any tiny holes in the bathroom wall. Preferably selecting a stall that has a non-occupied stall next to it. When in the metro, I minded my outfits, and made sure to cover my bottom well while on the steep escalators when exiting the metro. It became a subconscious habit to prefer metro carts inhabited by more women if possible, and I became wary of people using their phones on crowded metro carts. Yet, all of these habits became almost subconscious as mentioned.

One of the main environments that became commonly mentioned in my interviews besides metro stations and motels were educational establishments. This could be due to the fact that many of the participants were still university students and had not entered the job market yet, but education does carry a substantial meaning in the lives of Korean youth. A look into the attitudes

towards education in Korea can further build a framework for understanding the problem of *molka* and how young women perceive this issue within educational establishments. Education is valued highly in a Korean society. Therefore young people spend much of their time in educational facilities. Yun Yujin expressed an important aspect on the matter: “In Korea, high school students tend to focus on their studies rather than social problems because they are busy preparing for the college entrance exams. After I came to college, my friends told me to check the subway toilets.”. That’s when she really started acknowledging the problem seriously. Korea is known for having a highly competitive and high-pressure education system. Students often study for long hours until the late night and indeed do not have much time to focus on other matters. Korean students spend a lot of time on studying outside of the classroom as well, in private after school programs, tutoring classes or other forms of self-studying (Sorensen, 1994: 33). The young students do not only feel pressure to perform well in school for their own benefits but there is also the pressure of having to take care of their parents once they become elders (Sorensen, 1994: 34). As Sorensen (1994: 34) has written: “/.../ in Korea’s increasingly competitive society, where education is virtually the only gateway to success and high status”. This helps to build an understanding of Korea as a heavily education and success driven society. With that being said, some women reported not having heard of the camera issue before entering the university, while others became aware of it in middle school or high school. Korean school system is split between gender mixed schools or all girls and all boy’s schools. Based on the answers of my interviewees it appeared that women who attended all girls schools during primary education were less likely to have experiences with secret filming issues, and reported feeling more comfortable in the school environment in general.

**Gwon Jia:** “I was a bit indifferent about this issue in an all-girls school because nobody cared. We could change our clothes in the classroom, girls would even throw sanitary pads between the friends. Like ‘Do you have an extra pad?’. But after I transferred to the co-education school I became more aware about what I am wearing or how I am covering myself.”

Kim Daeun described a situation in her high school, where a boy had taken a photo of another girl and posted it online with some dirty words. “The police got involved and he transferred to other school”, she explained. Choi Gaeum agreed that girls who attend mixed schools during primary education might experience more unpleasant encounters with the opposite sex, as she shared a story from her high school where boys would take pictures of girls secretly and share the photos in their group chats, commenting on the attractiveness of girls. Chong Yewon had a

secret camera crime in her high school, which will be later elaborated on in the chapter 4.1.2. This goes to show, that school is one of the main environments that my interviewees, had experienced. Therefore, the school environment will become a recurring location that the women mention, since many of them were still full time university students.

#### **4.1 How Hidden Cameras Affect Women as They Navigate the Public Space.**

In this chapter geography of fear will be one of the main theories that intertwines with the interviewees answers. Kim and Lee(2021: 89) explain women's reaction to secret cameras: "fear of hidden cameras limits the scope of their personal boundaries", saying that women respond in "fear of sexual assault, sacrificing their behavioral freedom to deal with the fear". This could certainly be the case with sexual surveillance and one means to protect themselves from getting filmed can be manifested as self-imposed body surveillance. I asked women which locations they perceive as most dangerous when in the public space. All young women generally agreed that public bathrooms and motels are perceived as dangerous in terms of filming crimes. Another place, which in the case of many women, is difficult or even impossible to avoid is public transport. More specifically, the metro or subway. Of course there are alternatives to using the metro such as taking a taxi or bus etc., but depending on one's schedule, location or income, choosing an option other than the metro might be impossible for some.

I will view this situation through the perspective of living in a city of almost 10million people. Since I lived in Seoul for almost a year whilst doing my research I used my fair share of public transportation on a daily basis. The Metro was by far one of the most cost and time efficient ways to travel any distance within the city. While the Seoul metro became a transportation of choice for me due to its general efficiency and cleanliness, in a megacity like Seoul, naturally the metro carts get crowded during the rush hour. In that swarm of crowd, people push against each other to fit into the metro carts, which provides a ground for secret filming crimes to happen. Metro line nr. 9 was the one I most frequently used, that same line was also notorious for getting overcrowded during the rush hour as it passed some of the key locations along the side of Han River, such as Gangnam and Yeouido to name a few. Many women expressed that they are especially cautious of their dress code and bodies in the metro.

**Gwon Jia:** “I started avoiding wearing short skirts or anything revealing. /.../ When I’m taking the stairs in the station I cover my back and thighs with the backpack, or with some clothes like shirts or jackets. But I don’t want to make it too obvious, to make them (men) think I see them as potential offenders. I try to make it natural, but I always get cautious of it.”

Jia also expressed that she feels more uncomfortable by middle aged men, as their behavior is different from men in their 20s or 30s. She explained that they do not hide their gaze and it makes her feel uncomfortable due to which she has to mind her clothing when taking a metro. Many women also expressed that they check the compartments next to the toilet stalls they plan to use when in a public restroom, to make sure nobody else is in there while they use it. Kim Daeun and Choi Gaeum both pointed out the holes that are in many of the bathroom stall walls. Both expressed that these holes in the walls make them uncomfortable. Somebody could have hidden a camera there. These unexplained holes in the bathroom walls were indeed quite frequent and unexplainable. I found myself wondering, by whom and why these holes were made.



**Figure 7.** and **Figure 8** Holes on the walls are stuffed with toilet paper. Small holes are subjects of fear as they serve as perfect spots for secret camera placements. Author: Susanna Homuha 2022.

Park Subin was the only one from my interviewees who said she does not feel deeply affected by social issues and the secret camera problem, yet she did admit that she too avoids the public bathrooms in the metro and she said she would not use a bathroom that is gender neutral and used by both men and women. Unisex restrooms in general were perceived as especially

dangerous by my interviewees. Lab partners Yun Yujin and Sin Yerin both agreed that they would not use unisex bathrooms and expressed that these types of restrooms are especially popular in *suljjip*'s (술집), which is a word used to refer to Korean bars.

In their article, Kim and Lee (2021: 78) point out, that “the hidden camera phenomena could have a negative psychological impact on women through gender microaggression, suggesting that this problem be viewed and resolved from a social justice counseling approach.”. These microaggressions can indeed affect women’s psychological health as well as their general attitudes towards social problems. One of such microaggressions can be dismissive or downplaying attitude when it comes to the fear and stress women experience due to the secret filming problem. “Women’s fears of being filmed secretly are often invalidated or ridiculed by the fact that the hidden cameras are unseen, despite the fact that they can be aimed at anyone by anyone.” (Kim and Lee, 2021: 76). The denial to recognize these crimes as prevalent by men were common amongst my interviewees experiences. Yet, Choi Chaewon disputed their dismissal by saying: “The problem is serious enough to have measures against it on a national level”. Referring to the public bathrooms getting periodically checked for secret cameras.

Song Yejin, who was an exchange student in the Netherlands at the time of our interview, brought out the difference she feels while staying in Europe in comparison to Korea. She said she does not feel worried about secret filming in the Netherlands but that in Korea she would take precautionary measures to cover herself up more when taking a metro. She would also check the bathroom stalls before using them. Kim Daeum said that among the commonly mentioned locations she had read a news story of a driving instructor who had placed a camera under the drivers seat of the driving school car. Daeum also said that if the journey to her home takes less than 1 hour she will just wait until arriving home to use the bathroom instead of using a public restroom. As she said, nothing major has affected her in terms of *molka* crimes, but it is “the little things”. Song Sua expressed concern for her future: “I think it’s a serious situation. If it is an environment where you cannot go to the bathroom freely, I don’t think it’s an environment where you can raise children freely..”

Lee Minji shared a story of a time she had to stay in a motel on a field trip: “My friends and I gathered, and we were so worried about the secret camera and checked it together for each room.

We checked the suspicious holes in the bathrooms, behind mirrors, behind tv's and paintings. We couldn't find a camera, but we were very worried about it.”. Lee Soyul also expressed worry on the same topic: “Criminals install cameras in public facilities, or even accommodations such as motels. I remember feeling worried every time I went.”. Im Jimin said she is aware of her clothing when in a public setting, to not draw unwanted attention on herself.

Choi Chaewon pointed out another problem, the housing prices are rising rapidly and in many cases young people need to opt for cheaper living situations, such as share houses or *goshiwons* (고시원), which are small rooms that include the basic essentials such as bed, table and a bathroom and shower room. The rooms are around 6-10 square meters in size and the living space is limited, therefore usually kitchen area and sometimes laundry room is shared with other *goshiwon* tenants.

**Chaewon:** “Since I have to do most of my personal activities such as showering and changing clothes in that room, on the day of moving in, I wondered if the former tenant or the landlord had installed a hidden camera and I checked every corner.”

Although my work mainly focuses on cameras in the public space this brings light to the issue of secret cameras being placed in peoples private living spaces. While I did not focus on the cameras in private space in depth it is an important aspect to take note of for sure. And although Choi Chaewon was the only one to point out the fact that these cameras may also be placed by landlords it can definitely be one form of the secret cameras entering a persons home, if they live in a rental apartment or *goshiwon*, especially if the accommodation has a frequent rotation of tenants.

These examples from my interviewees point to the multitude of reactions that women could have to the secret filming problem, precisely in terms of preventing becoming victimized. They navigate the public space by avoiding certain locations or altering their behavior to feel safer in certain spaces. Many reported on feeling a considerable amount of fear due to the issue. Women are also very aware of their bodies and how they appear in a public setting which relates to the body surveillance theory, through which they try to avoid being caught on cameras by controlling their appearance in certain situations.

#### 4.1.1 Sin Soyeon: Perspective of a Victim

Sin Soyeon, a 20-year-old university student from Seoul, was the only one of my interviewees who had suffered an illegal secret filming crime directly herself. I met her through a mutual friend, during my time in Korea, and she kindly agreed to share her experiences in the interview. When asked about how she found out about the illegal secret filming problem, she admitted that it had been through her personal experience in a *dokseosil* (독서실), a private study room facility that Korean students use, to study after their school day has ended. It is common to stay in such facilities until late hours in the evening.

**Soyeon:** I actually experienced it when I was 18 years old. I went to a private studying room (독서실). In the restroom there, I saw a camera peeking into my stall from under the sidewall of the next compartment. I slammed the wall of the next-door compartment and told the person “I know you are inside filming”. The person who came out of the toilet stall turned out to be my male friend. At the moment I was so shocked and didn’t know what to do. I swore in front of him and said: “let’s never see each other again”. I reported the situation to the manager of the place. It was around dawn when that incident happened. I also told my parents the next day, they were shocked too. My parents went to the same private study room to meet the criminals parents. They made a deal not to report the crime to the police with an agreement to reset the phone (that was used for filming) completely by a specialist, so none of the files could be redeemed.”

She elaborated that perhaps on her case, she did not get any lawful justice due to the fact that they were both students at the moment, but she also argued that this forgiving attitude towards a criminals young age might be the reason there are still secret filming crimes happening. Sometimes such cases can be settled out of court by criminals paying a satisfactory sum to the victim or their family. Even if the case was handled out of court with a sum of money paid to the victims family, the perpetrator can feel a sense of safety in the fact that their crimes can be covered up if they have enough money, with no damage to their future prospects. Furthermore, as pointed out in the HRW (2021: 49) report: “Survivors of digital sex crimes often face financial harms resulting from lost employment, being forced to move, or having to pay for services to seek removal of images or detect spycams. Judges can fine perpetrators but even when a perpetrator is forced to pay a fine, that money does not go to the victim.”

**Soyeon:** After I experienced the camera crime I felt like I could trust no one because it turned out to be my friend. Now, I don’t think like that, but still I assume that there might be some weirdos in my friend group.”

This experience left her traumatized and affected her way of navigating the public space with utmost caution moving on. She took to avoiding public restrooms, using only the restrooms that had no gap at the bottom of the stall walls. The Gangnam metro station bathroom murder case followed shortly, after that she started avoiding public restrooms altogether. “For me, I don’t use

bathroom outside,” Soyeon explained. This behavior is not only stressful mentally but can pose a threat to one’s health. In the study conducted by Kim and Lee (2021, 82), some women had suffered from a bladder infection due to holding their urine in fear of using the public restroom. Soyeon said that public bathrooms need remodeling, to make them feel more safer to women. As for getting justice, Soyeon said that she is not scared to report the crimes, yet she is unsure if she would receive proper justice.

**Soyeon:** I don’t feel scared to report to police, but I expect they will not solve the problem as much as I want. I think everybody(women) would agree with my opinion.”

As described and shown in previous sections of the thesis, the stickers in the bathroom stalls should serve a purpose of some sense of safety. Soyeon said that the stickers alone do not give her too much assurance but seeing the workers actually checking the bathrooms for cameras makes her feel safer. She also pointed out that many public restrooms are in a poor conditions which also make women feel less safe.

**Soyeon:** “ There are too many holes in the walls and free space at the bottom of the stalls. Women feel unsafe because very few of the bathrooms are getting fixed.”

When asked about which locations she feels most endangered in Soyeon said that it would be metro stations, not only bathrooms but also escalators, she said her friend had an unpleasant encounter while going up the escalator in the metro. She stated that in her friends group this problem is a common subject of discussion, however only in cases when there are no men around. Most commonly women share encounters they had to go through with their female friends. It seems a pattern can be drawn from the conversations women have about the secret filming issues, that being that men largely get excluded from those conversations. It is understandable why women feel discomfort in discussing subjects as such in presence of men, especially if it is presumed that a man would have opposing views on the matter. However on the other end, men getting excluded from these conversations contributes to their apathy or false assumptions that these crimes are not frequent or do not happen all together.

**Soyeon:** When I was in the women’s university, there were always people who stood up for their rights. But since the community has closed characteristics, it seems that the voice is not well conveyed to the outside world”

Soyeon also pointed to the possible reasons as to why such crimes have surfaced and her explanations could be supported by the theory of sexualized gaze. As she explained: “the effect of the media is huge. /.../ Humans get stimulated and triggered more by things when they are

banned from doing something. So it might increase the curiosity of women's bodies, but the main problem would be the pornography itself. Showing women in a certain perspective and emphasizing sexual value or illustrating weak and passive traits." While pornography is not the only form of media that sexualizes the female body Gwon Jia also pointed out the popularity of pornographic scenarios with submissive or passive female and a dominant male, and acknowledged, that these clips can be harmful. While I think there is nothing wrong with consensual legally filmed pornography, clips containing material that builds a misleading understanding of sexual encounters can indeed be harmful. Especially when there is an absence of healthy sexual education, and young men and women get much of their education from the internet or pornography, these scenes can build false and harmful understanding of intimacy.

Soyeon's case can perhaps point to a significant issue within the systemic reactions to sex crimes in Korea. While in general Korea is reported to be a safe country, the issue lies within the handling of sexual crimes, if they do happen. Soyeon was fortunate to have her family's support in resolving the secret filming crime that happened to her. Yet it also seems as older generations tend to acknowledge this issue only in terms of it happening to their loved ones and they do not apply it on a larger scale, due to which in usual situations, conversations about secret filming or sex crimes are not common among families.

#### **4.1.2 How *Molka* Effects Women Who Have Not Experienced Secret Filming Crimes Directly**

Fear was one of the main emotions women expressed in terms of illegal secret filming. As Gwon Jia said: "Yes, I definitely feel objectified and the fact that there's always a 1% chance of me being captured in those cameras really terrifies me." The secondary effect of these filming crimes seems to especially affect women, whose close ones or peers have suffered the *molka* crime. Or they are aware that the environment which they frequent has had a secret filming case in the past. These effects seem to extend to people surrounding the women too, as their worries for a loved one may increase. Chong Yewon, an acquaintance I met through my studies, said that her parents care and worry about her a lot, so they talk about the illegal filming crimes frequently. She also talks about it with her friends. "I talked a lot about fear with my friends," she explained.

There was a secret filming case in Yewon's high school while she was a student there, while she herself did not get filmed, but she was subject to the fear and shock of the crime happening to her friend.

Chong Yewon was a third-year high school student, when one day, the police showed up to her school. As it turned out, there had been a secret filming crime in her high school. Yewon's friend was using the girls restroom when a boy entered the bathroom and took a video of her. The friend got shocked and reported the boy to the police. "The police suddenly came to me and told me about the incident, what happened, what the follow-up would be like," she explained. Although she herself was not filmed she experienced secondhand distress from her friend suffering such a crime. Furthermore school was a space where any girl could have ended up victimized in a crime like this. "We'll take care of it well," the police officer had told her, "I think he tried to make me feel safe in that situation. He helped me relax and explained the situation.," Yewon explained.

Yewon shared her frustrations about the school's attitude towards resolving the issue. "The school didn't want to give much evidence", she explained, as the school was more concerned by their tarnished reputation after a crime like this. "I'm a bit disappointed because I think there are a lot of people who to cover their eyes". Since the boy was still a high-school student, the he did not face harsh prosecution. "Many girls were angry and worried about the decision.", Yewon said. She stated that even though girls did not suffer the crime directly, the incident caused them great distress and changed their attitudes towards using public restrooms from that point on. "In that sense, I think that fear is now greater for many people because it actually happened within the school, even though it didn't cause direct harm for most people."

On one hand, a secondary effect can cause psychological distress even for non-victimized women, but it also poses a very valid fear for one's reputation. . "A woman's position in society is lower than a man's and her reputation, which can impact her access to employment and her personal relations, depends largely on maintaining an image of "sexual purity."”(HRW 2021: 2). There is a notable double standard in the Korean society when it comes to sexuality. Therefore getting filmed in an intimate or revealing setting can be a major source of danger for the women's livelihoods. Song Yejin explained that if a woman had experienced a filming crime, the feeling of shame is overwhelming, so even if she did not get fired from her job due to the video,

she might quit the job herself, out of the deep feeling of shame. Women are aware of the harsh circumstances they might face if they do get filmed, it can affect their access to education, job market and social connections. Therefore it is a major stressor for women, not to get caught in the secret cameras.

This fear that women experience due to the secret cameras can be used as another exploitation tactic by the criminals. Kim Daeum said that the criminals reach out to women and taunt them with messages, saying they have secretly filmed footage or photos of them, and unless the women do as the criminal says they will release the illicit materials to public. In many cases the criminal may not even have the photo or the video in the first place but they are weaponizing the fear that women feel in order to exploit, manipulate or blackmail. As Song Yejin said, it is not only the direct crimes that affect women, but it is also psychological effects of the potential crime. “The men always say they don’t understand why we are women so afraid if a crime never happened to them, it’s a big issue,” she explained.

#### **4.1.3 *Molka* as a Heterosexual Gaze on Non-heterosexual Women**

I met Kim Minseo and Cho Haeun through a mutual friend who introduced the couple to me for my research purposes. Minseo and Haeun kindly accepted my offer for the interview as they both saw the topic of secret cameras as important to talk about. Both women were students at a same university but attended different majors. Minseo was especially interested in social problems and women’s rights topics, as she herself was from a vulnerable background, being raised by a single mother and feeling responsibility for her little sisters safety and wellbeing. Being raised in a all women household can certainly be seen as a vulnerable state in a Korean society as it is patriarchal and patrilinear in nature, moreover, single mothers have a hard time maintaining family and work life due to social constructs that support a working husband and wife who mainly takes care of children and their schooling. Haeun was a sociology major and therefore naturally felt interested in social problems, especially ones that affect her everyday life.

Both women expressed that their views might be different from a general Korean women due to them being a minority. They expressed that being queer can still be seen as a negative aspect by

people with conservative mindsets, therefore they were careful about being public with their relationship as well. Mineso was wearing a more feminine look while Haeun wore a more androgynous style of clothing and had a short haircut. Due to Haeun's androgynous style the women said they can pass as a straight couple on the streets and that makes them feel more comfortable to be out in the public space together. Yet they would still practice precaution.

To tie this section together with a theoretical section on sexualized gaze. While all women expressed a certain discomfort from the male gaze but my interview with Kim Minseo and Cho Haeun, a lesbian couple, pointed to some aspects that affects their relationship as female lovers and how the fear of *molka* correlates in some forms as a fear of male gaze and sexualization. They were both aware of their position as a female sexual minority in the Korean society, and admitted, that their statements may be harsher due to this, as they are sensitive about the queer representation in Korea. Kim Minseo pointed out, that the fear of secret cameras affects their intimate relations as a queer couple.

**Minseo:** “I think one of the reasons we were really concerned about going to the motel was that maybe if we were videotaped then we would become like the new super-super-duper famous thing on Pornhub or something”

**Haeun:** “Because we are lesbians.”

**Minseo:** “Like “*Two Korean university lesbians having a hot night*” and that would be the end of our career.”

**Minseo and Haeun:** [both laugh]

**Minseo:** [her face losing the smile and becoming more serious in an instant] “As a queer couple, this can be kind of an issue. Yea so that’s one point about being queer and being exposed to secret cams.”

The couple used to work together at a *haniwon* (한의원), a Korean traditional medicine clinic as part-timers and explained the discomfort they experienced at the employee changing rooms. “We both used to work there as desk workers, we had to change into our work uniforms, and we got nervous that the doctor might have a spy cam in the employee changing room. So we would just wear our uniforms before going to work, so that we wouldn’t have to take off our clothes there. Just to make sure,” Minseo explained.

Their experiences reflect both the effects mentioned by Moloney et al. (2014): body-surveillance, and the sexualized gaze which can be placed on female sexual minorities. It becomes evident

through their fear of using a motel. Both of them felt unsafe in a work environment, even though the dressing room could be seen as an accommodating factor to the workers benefit. Secret filming crimes make women wary of their surroundings and force them to apply a form of body-surveillance in which they try to shield themselves from any revealing encounters in the public space.

Secondly the Haeun and Minseo expressed the fear of their safety in terms of having intimate relations, as previously mentioned, it is common to live with ones family until marriage in Korea, therefore young couples seek intimacy elsewhere. But for Haeun and Minseo finding a safe space is difficult, as they feel both threatened by the heterosexual gaze and the threat to their livelihood in form of homophobia. As Minseo stated, they get both fetishized for being women who like women, but if they ever got caught in an intimate act it would end their careers and pose a great threat to their safety and livelihoods.

#### **4.2 How Hidden Cameras Affect Gender Based Relationships**

This chapter will have an overview of how the *molka* phenomena can affect gender-based relationships. While my objective was by no means to emphasize or create an opposition between men and women in this thesis, there does seem to be a certain opposition when it comes to gendered topics in Korea. On one hand it certainly relates to the Confucian customs that still work to shape much of Koreas social norms and understandings. While talking with one of my local acquaintances Dohyeon Park, he gave me an example of the mindset. If he were to ride in a car with his family, his father being the driver, he would not correct his father even if he did take a wrong turn on the road, as that would be seen as him embarrassing his father in front of the other family members or passengers. Such sense of respect and knowing one's position seems to run deep within Korean social constructs, both on interpersonal and institutional levels. Therefore open communication and attitudes towards change depend a lot on the higher standing persons personal perceptions and attitudes. While many young women might have progressive mindsets to gender-based topics and sexual crime prevention, it can be hard to communicate such values to a person of power with a differing mindset. This could be one of the reasons why gendered topics and sexual crimes have become a point of conflict in current day Korea. There is

a lack of representatives to speak for women's rights and a lack of understanding of problems that affect women on a daily basis. It seems that there is a need for more inclusivity in parts of both genders to build a healthy understanding of each other's needs and problems.

It should be noted that preventative measures are being taken to prevent further crimes related to *molka*. In an Asian Boss (2018) street interview, an interviewee states that websites that distribute illegal pornographic material that are connected to the issue of *molka* use foreign IP addresses in order to make it more complicated for the South Korean police to track them down and remove the websites (3:09 – 3:20). Although majority of the *molka* crimes are carried out by men, there have been rare cases of women also being culprits in the *molka* crimes. “The catalyst for the grass-roots action was the arrest of a woman for the same crime: she had uploaded a video of a nude male model she secretly recorded during a drawing class at Hongik University. She was quickly arrested, her camera confiscated, and police presented her proudly to the media” (Wilder 2018, para. 3). An issue of unequal treatment surfaced with the arrest of said woman however, as “the woman was sentenced to a 10-month prison sentence, while a man in Busan, charged with similar offences against the woman, was fined \$2000.” (Wilder 2018, para. 6). This case was also mentioned by some of my interviewees, who contested that women are more likely to face harsher punishment for committing secret filming crimes, while they are also more likely to get dismissed in pursuit of justice. This has deepened the distrust in police with suspicion of unequal treatment to the victims and perpetrators. This is evident as Wilder (2018, para. 11) further states:

Organizers say issues lie not only at a policing level but also with the judiciary. When convictions are recorded, fines can be paltry: the maximum is \$9000, but in reality perpetrators often pay much less. Only about 5% serve jail time. The number of *molka* cases rose from 1354 in 2011 to 5363 in 2017. More than 95% of suspects were men.

The government has taken some steps to acknowledge the problem. “The government is also installing educational posters -- indicating “Illicit filming of others is a crime. So is watching the footage online” (Lee 2018, para.8). However it still seems that the perpetrators of such crimes get little to no punishment which in turn does little to prevent them from recommitting sexual surveillance crimes. Same sentiment is carried by the Korean Gender Equality Ministry. “We are trying to emphasize that it is also illegal to download and watch such contents online, on top of

filming and posting the so-called ‘spycam porn,’” said an official from the Gender Equality Ministry.” (Lee 2018, para.9).

Most of the interviewees agreed that these crimes should not be extended to the fault of all men, rather there is a group of individuals who have criminal intentions, unsettling sexual desires or other intentions that encourage them to film these kinds of material. Chong Yewon said “I don’t think the majority enjoy this unhealthy division in active form”. Park Subin agreed in a similar manner, “I think both men and women see it as a problem.”. However, what women did agree on, was that men should have a more understanding towards women in the suffering they experience through this problem, even if they do not experience the crimes first-hand. They expressed confusion at men’s hostility to women trying to speak up about this issue. Song Yejin said in regard to the illegal cameras “I think most of the men also agree that it is very bad and criminal behavior”. But she argued that men struggle to take this issue as seriously as women do. Perhaps this goes to show that there needs to be more education on the matter, to include men more in such topics to encourage social change and mutual understanding. I personally would see a great positive impact on the problem, with the inclusivity and alliance from men, as it would reduce gendered opposition and encourage possible positive change.

Im Jimin said that she thinks it is difficult to talk to men about the secret filming issue, because men do not understand why women feel threatened by the it. “I have a boyfriend I’m seeing right now, but can I talk to him about social problems? I don’t want to break the peace. But one day, we’ll have to talk about these things.,” she explained. Jimin’s explanation shows, that she is reluctant to bring up the topic of social issues with her male partner, as she sees it as a hostile act which could end their peaceful relationship. Im Jimin said that she thinks the reason why this lack of human morality is especially more common in men, is because women are socially forced to be more considerate and respectful, which injects the courage that men can do everything, especially when they are young. When a male student hits or grabs a female student, it is not called violence, but his expression of liking towards her. Young boys get excused with their behavior while young girls are taught to rationalize abusive behavior as caring. “In the past, a male student touched my butt and I talked to a female teacher to ask for help. I was told that he did it because I was cute. I think this atmosphere instills a false gender perception in men,” Jimin said.

It is an important factor that I'm Jimin brings forward here, as it ties into the gendered perceptions and sexualized gaze towards a female body. Kim et al. (2019: 47) point to the significant double standard when it comes to perception of sexual practices between young men and women. "Stricter norms are applied to women than men when it comes to sexual practices" (Kim et al. 2019: 47). Kim et al. (2019: 48) also claim that women are more likely to see sex as an ideology while men associate it more with accomplishments. These double standards can certainly affect both genders and women might even internalize these same standards which could later manifest through justifying sexual harassment or sexual crimes as it could lead to attitudes of victim blaming. If the standards of sexuality for women are stricter and a certain form of chastity is expected from them, it creates an environment where it is much easier to blame a woman if she does suffer from any sexual misconduct. Such attitudes can then directly affect the attitudes towards secret filming crimes and getting justice for victims as well.

#### **4.2.1 Effects on Romantic Relationships**

Korea has a very prominent dating and "couple culture," in which romantic activities for couples are heavily advertised. Indeed, during my time in Korea, there was a notable number of couples everywhere, businesses advertising themselves as couples activity cafes, couple clothing, and many other businesses like that were very prominent in the public spaces. As Gwon Jia mentioned in her interview, there seems to be a polarizing effect in the attitudes of women and men in Korea. While many young women seem to lean towards a more independent and self-sufficient idea of relationships these days, men in Korea seem to still appreciate the traditional values of a family model. That family model, in the eyes of many women benefits men more. The lack of complaisance between the wants and needs on both ends can then create a rather sharp opposition, which seems to be the case for Korea. Some women have rejected the idea of dating or marriage altogether, wishing to become self-sufficient.

The participants in Kim and Lee's (2021: 88) research "suggested the need for a space where women with changed perceptions of romantic relationships or marriage can depend on each other. In a society that encourages dating and marriage, such a space could help ease the anxiety that comes with choosing an alternative life and protect them from becoming socially isolated".

Korean family traditions are heavily based on gift giving. Adult family members are expected to give money as presents to their nieces and nephews on national holidays, such as Lunar New Year for example. This money-based gift giving benefits the marriage and family model, married partners give and receive the benefits from this tradition. Unmarried women, however, may feel a heavy financial burden from these traditions and not participating in the traditions could lead to induced stress due to social expectation or social isolation.

Gwon Jia admitted she has a negative outlook on Korean men, due to the societal gender inequality and a common unequal treatment of women. Her partner was not a Korean citizen and they had plans of moving abroad after her graduation. “I’m not looking forward to living in Korea for the rest of my life, and one of the reasons is because of the sex crimes and gender discrimination,” Jia explained. My interview with Jia took place shortly after the presidential elections in Korea, therefore the topic of politics came up in our conversation. “I am shocked that the majority of men in their 20s voted for the conservative party, its not only a generational problem. I’m shocked that men think they are getting discriminated against,” Jia explained to me. She further said: “To be honest, this disagreement on gender issues between Korean men and women is leading to social polarization”: Indeed, there seems to be a trend amongst young well educated Korean women, who prefer to stay single. Perhaps this has become a response from women who are tired of a constant uphill battle against the patriarchic system.

**Gwon Jia:** “I don’t really picture myself dating Korean men in the future. It’s not because of their nationality, but because of their prevalent sexist behaviors that they don’t even acknowledge. If I have a baby in the future, I would feel more pressure to quit my job. I’m hoping to find a person who has grown up in a more equal society so I don’t have to debate about these issues.”

Jia reflects her fears about the future by looking at her own family’s dynamic: “Both of my parents were working when they married. Then they had me, my mom quit her job and gave up her PhD opportunity to raise me, because of course dad couldn’t. So I still have fear that I might be forced to quit my job to have a baby or do the house chores or whatever”. She admits that this is a way her family has affected her. “I’m kind of desperate to find a way to the top so no one can tell me to be a good wife, or a good mom, or anything like that,” Jia told me. Because of this effect from the society and her own family, Jia admitted she has a rather negative perspective on marriage and childbearing, at least in the Korean society. Such complete rejection can be seen as an unfortunate reaction to the opposition that has formed between the genders.

#### **4.2.2 Sexualization and Potential Danger From Intimate Partners**

The aspects of objectification and sexualization cannot be avoided in the context of this thesis. “The subject of hidden cameras is not only sexual activity but also the private daily activities of women. The use of hidden cameras in public restrooms and the prevalence of the sharing of these images in the male online community show that women are being sexually objectified in the course of their everyday lives.” (Kim and Lee, 2021: 76). Gwon Jia explained, that she thinks the lack of gender awareness and porn being consumed through only illegal roots can contribute to the unhealthy sexual desires of men. “Porn being consumed only through illegal roots, makes it more hidden, like a dark underground, and I think it gives some room to think in a creepiest way possible,” Jia explained. She also pointed out harmful effects of pornography which contains ambiguity around consent, scenarios when woman doesn’t want sexual intercourse, but the man pursues her regardless. “That kind of idea that women like it, secretly, that really shapes a wrong picture of women,” Jia continued. One of the problems Chong Yewon pointed out was that many online platforms offer the users to hide behind a veil of anonymity, which provides a suitable environment for the cybercrimes to multiply. Song Yaejin explained that the secretly filmed videos are sold on dark websites. She sees it as a big problem, as the punishments for such crimes, in her opinion, are too low. “Woman can be sold like a product,” she sighed. Jia further pointed out the factor of age when it comes to sexualizing women. “As a female in my 20s, it feels like I can easily become a target or being considered as a subject, maybe I feel more fear regarding that,” Jia said.

One of the factors that came up in my conversations and interviews was that women, to a degree, are scared even of their partners and the effects partners actions could have over them. Many said that their female friends had found, after breaking up, that their boyfriends had secretly filmed them and posted the video online for others to view. In other cases this material can be used as blackmail or distortion in order to influence the partner into doing what the illegally filmed video holder wants. The videos can simply be sold for monetary profit as well.

Cho Haeun explained that her friend was a victim of a spy camera crime. The friend's boyfriend had secretly filmed them having an intercourse and after the couple broke up, the man had posted

the video online, to their high school Facebook group. This was Haeun's first time finding out about the spy cameras. Song Yaejin also told stories from two of her friends who had suffered a secret filming crime. One friend had found out that her boyfriend had recorded them during sex and broke up with him because of that. But Yaejin's friend did not turn to police with the matter, because she didn't want to make this problem bigger than it already was. The other friend suffered the same crime of her boyfriend recording her secretly, that friend called the police, but was advised to try and settle the matter outside of court. As the police had explained to her that there is a chance of getting a small punishment for such crime, but it would be a long fight in the court. Park Subin echoed the same fear, although she had no connections to any victims herself: "Women behave more carefully because there are some boyfriends that try to film them secretly".

This might bring some insight into why some women in Korea have taken a negative mindset to dating. Perhaps the risk seems too great. Especially in the case of women who have experienced a crime firsthand or have had close friends whose boyfriend filmed them during an intimate act. Song Yaejin said she is scared that if she has a boyfriend and they have an intimate relationship he might record her in secret. This reflects that women have extended this fear even to their intimate partners, who generally would be someone trustworthy.

### **4.3 Strategies That Women Use to Protect Themselves**

Strategies for preventing getting caught in a potential filming crimes are likely to be a part of every woman's daily routine when in the public space. I myself adapted to some behavioral patterns quite quickly as well. Yet these habits get instilled in one quite naturally, as previously mentioned I did not have anybody who taught me how to be safe in the restrooms. I suppose one can learn by simply observing and paying attention. Little holes in the bathroom walls were stuffed with tissue paper, as a potential camera could hide behind the small hole, so I began doing the same thing. Stuffing the holes in the walls with tissue paper. Doing an overall up-and-down check of the bathroom stall and walls seemed natural before using it. I made sure to check my clothing before getting on an escalator in a crowded place. I would say my preventative practices were rather mild and became part of my natural daily routine.

My interviewees shared their opinions on their perception of public space use, and which places they feel most uncomfortable at. “In terms of behavioral changes, the participants reported that they avoided socializing or checked their own behavior to prevent being filmed by hidden cameras.” (Kim and Lee, 2021: 89). The same can be said for my interviewees. Most common behavioral patterns were to check the bathrooms stalls, not only the ones women planned to use but also the stall next door, to make sure there is no camera and also nobody hiding in the stall next to them. They tend to avoid metro station restrooms if possible and prefer to use restrooms that have walls from door to ceiling so there are no open spaces where phones or cameras can slide under. Many also said they avoid revealing clothes on the metro, especially short skirts, because they are scared of getting filmed while going up the escalator at the metro station. In general women felt more aware of their surroundings as well as of their own bodies and clothing.

Many women said that they felt more comfortable to use the bathroom which had stickers to confirm the bathroom had been checked for cameras. Yet many times it is hard to actually tell when this inspection was done. Stickers in the bathroom confirming that it has been checked for cameras is undeniably a source of at least a little bit of comfort for women. Yun Yuji and Sin Yerin pointed out an important problem with these stickers, however. They agreed that it is relieving to see the stickers in the restrooms with a certain date it had been checked. In many restrooms unfortunately, the stickers have not been updated for two years. Sin Yerin pointed out that in many bathrooms, the stickers have not been updated after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

While many women expressed their ideas on different ways to alleviate the problem, many agreed that updating sexual education for young students is necessary. It was pointed out several times by interviewees, that people in Korea do not talk about sexuality and gender openly, which can become harmful. It can lead to misinformed understandings of healthy sexual relationships and misinform people about consent. Im Jimin said that it is not a problem of one individual with bad intentions, it is a “social structural problem”. She further continued: “I think current form of preventing illegal filming is as absurd as telling women not to wear short skirts. As the world changes, sex education needs to change according to the times too.”. Chong Yewon stated, that in her opinion focusing on only updating the sexual education is not enough either. While she agreed that updated form of sexual education with special focus on cybercrime should be

included in schools curriculum, she further stated that the problem is structural. There needs to be an institutional improvement, in order to change the prosecutors mindsets on (online)sexual crimes. Lee Soyul agreed that discussing sexual topics is not common in Korea. “There seem to be more people with the wrong gender concept than I thought”, she explains. However, even if one is ignorant on the concepts of gender and sexuality, one cannot claim innocence because of their ignorance.

As previously mentioned the market for secret camera prevention items has grown, yet many women expressed reluctance to buy such products. They questioned the motives of the sellers. They suspected the company owners are trying to get monetary gain from women’s suffering by only seeing this problem as a business market. Therefore most of my interviewees said they had not purchased the secret camera detection devices for themselves. Most common of those being the red card. Yun Yujin and Gwon Jia however admitted that they had purchased the red card for themselves. Yun Yujin said: “I’ve bought the card before but it’s bothersome to carry it every time I use the restroom”. Gwon Jia said she had also purchased the red card for camera detection. “I actually bought this at the bookstore. And it was like an extra item I could exchange for gift points. There were lots of items to choose from, but the fact that I chose this over anything else already shows how deeply this issue has settled in my mind.”

Socioeconomic status of a woman, is another aspect that seems to play a role in the case of secret filming crimes and protecting oneself from them. While being from a certain background or monetarily safe household might not prevent women from getting filmed by the secret cameras, the aftermath of suffering a secret filming crime can be affected by the socioeconomic status of the woman who suffered the crime. It could be as simple as being able to use a private car instead of the metro to avoid certain locations of potential danger. To more complex and pricy services such as getting any videos removed from online or being able to afford good lawyers. That of course is not an option for every woman.

“In the absence of effective civil remedies and adequate levels of government assistance, many survivors are compelled to seek help from companies that have grown up to meet this demand, which include companies that remove non-consensual images, and companies that search for and remove spycams./.../ They charge clients 2 million won (\$1,200) a month and advise that removing content takes three to six months.” (HRW 2021: 73).

None of my interviewees reported having used this service. Gwon Jia pointed out that the justice system needs to do better and there is a systemic segregation in who can become a judge in

Korea. Usually Judges are rich privileged men who can afford the education. Jia argued that the judges from similar privileged backgrounds lack sympathy and understanding for female victims, especially if they are from a lower social status, which creates a bias within the courtroom. “Court definitely needs to do better, because in current situation men from rich families get to become lawyers and judges more easily. It will take a long time for women from low socio-economic background to become judges,” Jia said. Therefore there is only so much women can do on their own to prevent getting caught in secretly filmed content, without spending large amounts of money.

#### **4.3.1 Discussion on Activism and Why Women Do Not Label Themselves as Feminists**

Feminism is slowly gaining its momentum in Korea, yet it is still a strongly stigmatized and misunderstood term by many. Strong sexist and patriarchal beliefs clash with the views of women's rights activists and therefore their activities have been strongly criticized. Im Jimin was one of the women who openly said that she is a feminist and an activist for women's rights. Jimin explained that she noticed the differences in treatment of boys and girls from a young age, as she found it difficult to connect with her male counterparts. “I often played with girls, and had a lot of friction with boys” in the elementary school. She explained that she came from a home where the father used domestic violence, therefore she was no stranger to police and ambulance coming to her house from an early age. Jimin also explained that she had suffered verbal abuse and sexual harassment from her father. These aspects in turn, motivated her to study feminism and vouch for women's rights in Korea. As she explained: “I have been suppressed as a victim of the patriarchal system since childhood.”. She read the novel by Cho Nam-joo and reflected that the book gained negative uproar publicly at the time of its release and she saw this as a form of negative deception towards feminism. “I understood that the negative deception covered in the news was a method of mirroring and an attempt to raise a bad perception of feminism.”. Therefore she applied to the university with an objective to pursue feminism as her main research interest. “I wanted to pursue women's studies properly”, she explained and therefore pursued her studies in the sociology department which had a renowned professor in gender studies.

In Korean, there are two ways to get accepted to university. *Susi* (수시), a less common way of getting accepted to the university through an interview, and *Jeongsi* (정시) the most common way of getting accepted to school through test examination. Jimin was accepted to her university through *susi* and posted about it to the online community. Her post was forwarded to conservative men's online community where she faced online harassment and backlash. „One feminist got easily accepted to university“, the netizens argued. The harassment exceeded online boundaries and the hostile netizens attempted to dox her, she also suffered identity theft due to this online harassment. Her mental state suffered as she became paranoid to leave her house in fear of stalkers and she began having panic attacks. She had to call an ambulance and get medical treatment for her condition at some point, after which she had to take an academic leave and settle the problem by hiring a lawyer. She first tried to report her cyber harassment case to the police herself, but got denied for investigation, as her case was seen as an “individual problem”. Only after involving a lawyer, was her case taken up by the police. Her case began in April, and was concluded in October. While Jimin's story does not contain a secret filming crime in specific her experience reflects that openly sharing one's feminist views in Korea can actually become a source of danger for young outspoken women. It also reflects the dismissive attitude of police officers when it comes to cybercrimes. Although Jimin did not receive physical harm in her case, she suffered mentally and the course of harassment significantly affected her every-day life.

Im Jimin was not the only one who emphasized the problematic attitudes towards women's rights activism in Korea. “Activist movements are often seen as radical. This is why we need to pursue equalism,” Gwon Jia explained. Song Yejin agreed on the matter, saying that women discussing feminism is seen as radical by men. “They even call it a mental illness.”, Yejin said. It seems that there is a lack of understanding among men when it comes to women's rights activism and feminism, as it is often faced with opposition. Perhaps this issue could be alleviated by more thorough education on feminism, as according to my interviewees answers men tend to have a negative preconceptions about the term that may not actually reflect what feminism stands for.

Many women reported not having had sufficient education about gender dynamics, feminism and healthy relationship between genders. Many also stated that they had heard about feminism only after entering the university. Gwon Jia said she saw a condom for the first time, after she had entered the university, prior to that, she had had no sufficient education on contraception or healthy sexual relationships. She had only vaguely learned about birth and childbearing. Kim Daeun said she had never heard of feminism, before she entered the university and said that her female friends too had never encountered this term before. She was surprised that she had never learned about it earlier. She said for them the best source of information on the matter was the Internet. Which could point to one of the aspects of issue, there needs to be more specific education on gender and sexuality, where young people can learn about it in a safe environment.

This section of the thesis reflected on the real-life experiences of the participants of this research and uncovered multiple aspects from gender dynamics to systemic oppression that possibly contributes to the problem of illegal secret filming in Korea. It also worked to apply theoretical frameworks to the experiences of the interviewees.

## Conclusion

The central focus of this thesis was to explore the problem of *molka* in Korea. More specifically, to explore this problem through the effects it can have on young Korean women. The aim of the research was to explore three main aspects. Firstly, how women feel affected by this issue and how does it effect their every day lives and navigation of public space. Secondly what kind of strategies women can use to protect themselves from getting captured in spy camera crimes. Thirdly how does this issue affect gender-based relationships between men and women.

*Molka* has proven to be a socially charged problem in the Korean society as it encompasses multiple aspects that are specific to Korean cultural and social norms. The problem does not only lie within people who wish to record other illegally. It also encompasses regulation of pornography, technology and laws around sexual crimes. Although generally speaking, Korea is considered to be a very safe country, the issue seems to lie within the few cases when sexual crimes do happen. Sexuality and sexual acts are still relatively strongly stigmatized especially for women. It is exceedingly difficult to get justice for sexual crime cases. Due to Korea's complicated history and long running Confucianist beliefs, certain gender-based dynamics and roles have emerged that affect gender-based relationships and peoples reactions to sexual crimes. The same values have constructed the society in a form that is manifested today. Due to deep rooted hierarchical constructs mostly older men inhabit leading positions in many different state institutions, which can leave other groups underrepresented. Therefore when it comes to sexual crimes such as illegal secret filming, the laws and legislations often do not accommodate to the victims needs.

Ethnographic research methods were used for gathering information for the thesis which provided a detailed look into the problem and the field. Connecting with informants and conducting interviews with 16 young women helped to broaden the perspective on the problem from a Korean persons point of view. The interviews became a substantial asset for this thesis, as young Korean women shared their experiences, fears and concerns in relation to the *molka* phenomena in Korea. That combined with my personal experiences and interactions on the field helped to build a comprehensive understanding of the field and the problem at hand.

The theoretical approach worked to unravel some underlying motives that became prominent in terms of the secret filming crimes. Through Paul. B Preciado's (2013) theory on profitability of

human bodies an important theme emerged. The profitability of crimes such as *molka* became evident on multiple levels. Capitalistic profit can be made from selling the secret cameras, to then selling the material filmed by said cameras and finally by selling merchandise which is marketed to avoid getting captured by secret cameras. A business model of getting secretly filmed content removed from the internet has emerged as a possible service for customers willing to pay. Theoretical approach also explores gender theory and the sexualization of women's bodies and what kind of effects sexualized, and objectifying gaze can have on women. *Molka* can certainly be considered a form of a sexualized gaze which follows women into their private spaces. Such gaze can then be observed through the theories of sexual surveillance, as the secret camera problem has inarguably become a form of sexual surveillance which limits women's freedoms and navigation of public space. Women's navigation of public space was explored through the ideas of geography of fear, and how women may internalize the dangers which affect them in a public setting in a way that they start altering their behaviors, movement in public spaces and places they occupy. Furthermore women may impose body surveillance on themselves, by becoming hyperaware of their bodies and how their bodies appear to others at all times.

One of the major aspects of my thesis was to document not only the experiences of victimized women but to also draw attention to the effects the secret filming phenomena can have on women who have not experienced the filming crime firsthand. This thesis goes to show that non victimized women still feel a significant amount of stress and fear over the secret camera problem. Not all of my informants had direct or secondary connections to the secret filming crimes, but regardless of their direct experiences, the gendered notions applied to the female body have affected them in a negative way as the fear of getting captured in secretive sexual filming persists. Female bodies have been subjects to sexualized gaze which instills the fear of being sexualized even in the most natural activities. Living with the fear of getting captured and sexualized in secret can become a chronic stressor for the women in carrying out their every-day activities, such as going to the restroom. One does not necessarily need to experience the crime directly to feel sufficient fear while in the public space. The fear of the possibility of suffering a sexual filming crime is very much valid.

As mentioned above, the market for selling secret camera detection devices has expanded alongside the problem of secret filming. Most of my interviewees stated that they have never purchased a camera detection device and saw it as a conflicting matter, as they questioned the morale of the detection device sellers. The question of profiting from other people's suffering came up and some also saw it as a problem that they should pay money out of their personal pockets to protect themselves from secret filming. Although most interviewed women did not buy any camera detection products all of them had involved some strategical behaviors to feel safer in public space or to avoid suffering a secret camera crime. Simpler solutions included doing an overall checkup of the restroom stalls before using them, checking for small holes in the bathroom walls and filling them with tissue paper, avoiding restrooms which are used by both genders. In metro stations women were aware of their clothing and preferred to cover up in fear of under skirt photos or secret filming. More drastic measures included not using the restrooms outside of ones home at all, which could cause potential health issues.

The problem of *molka* also affects gender-based relationships. The perceptions of gender and sexuality were explored and one of the major factors seem to be sexual double standards. Much stricter standards of sexual expression are placed onto women, which could contribute to victim blaming attitudes when it comes to sexual crimes. Interviewees expressed a certain level of distrust in men and potential romantic partners, as even romantic partners can be culprits for secret camera filming. Another contributor to opposing attitudes between men and women is the lack of understanding between genders when it comes to the severity of *molka* crimes. Women reported differing attitudes from men, yet many agreed that men generally tend to minimize the problem and question the fear women feel because of this issue. Such minimization of other suffering can be harmful and naturally creates a form of opposition between both sides.

There have been efforts to solve and alleviate the secret filming problem in differing ways, which was evident through the inspections carried out in the public bathrooms, to different signs and posters warning of secret filming and stating the illegality of it. The efforts to solve this issue have not proven to be fully effective as the stream of sexual surveillance in South Korea continues. It seems that steps have been taken to alleviate the problem, however perhaps a more thorough review of the problem should be taken into action, after which actually helpful measures of prevention can be applied to avoid future cases of such crimes. The process to

solving this problem is likely not linear, as there are several aspects that contribute to the issue, such as the easy access to being able to buy secret cameras as well as the lackluster laws that seem to do little to provide actual support and justice to the victims. As long as the cameras stay readily available this form of sexual surveillance continues.

My Thesis reflects that women I interviewed had mostly experienced incidents or fear in school or educational faculties. This is likely be due to their age and exposure to the current surrounding environment and might not reflect that Korean educational faculties are the only places where the problem exists. Rather these women have had most exposure to educational locations in the public space as most of them had not entered the workspace yet. Yet there were women who expressed they would feel similar sense of fear and discomfort in the workplace. This thesis provides a look into the ways the secret filming has manifested itself in Korea, yet that does not mean Korea is the only country where such crimes take place. As mentioned in earlier sections as well, this thesis comes with its limitations and only explores a small section of a large multifaceted problem.

There is potential to explore this topic further in many ways. Perhaps a more thorough look through the lens of urban anthropology could provide sufficient solutions to ways of making the public spaces with expected privacy more accommodating and safer for women to use. The effects that secret filming has on women or victims could also be further explored through the affect theory. Mens thoughts and ideas on the matter should be explored more, why some men opt for viewing such material or how Korean men in general understand the problem of *molka*. Different groups of women could be included for future studies, different age groups, educational backgrounds and social statuses. Although my work only represents the thoughts and ideas of a fixed group of young women, I do see value in representing all groups and believe all sides deserve to have their voices be heard. Therefore hopefully my work can provide an introductory view onto the problem of illegal secret cameras, but the topic will continue to be explored from different sides to provide a sufficient solution to the problem at some point.

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## **Ebaseaduslikud salakaamerad Lõuna-Koreas: *Molka* probleemi mõju noortele naistele ja soosuhetele.**

### **Kokkuvõte**

Käesoleva magistr töö põhifookuseks on illegaalsete salakaameratega filmitud audiovisuaalse materjali levik Lõuna-Koreas (hiljem Korea). Viimastel aastatel on salakaameratega filmitud materjali levik saanud Koreas märkimisväärseks probleemiks. Salakaameraid paigutatakse avalikku ruumi, kohtadesse, kus inimesed eeldavad privaatsust, näiteks tualettruumid, duširuumid, riietusruumid, hotelliruumid jm. Probleem on osutunud mitmetahuliseks: lisaks kaamerate peitmisele ruumidesse, kus eeldatakse privaatsust, on levinud ka ebasüüdsate fotode salamisi tegemine. Fotode tegemiseks on kõige levinumad kohad tihedalt rahvastatud metroo rongivagunid ning metroojaamades asuvad eskalaatorid. Taoline (audio)visuaalne materjal levib internetis ning seda levitatakse erinevatel põhjustel. Antud materjali võidakse levitada rahateenimise, kättemaksu, manipulatsiooni või muude isiklike hüvede saamise eesmärgil. Antud fenomeni nimetatakse Koreas *molkaks*.

On ilmselge, et salakaamerad mõjutavad kõige enam otseseid ohvreid. Antud töö toob tähelepanu ka naistele, kes ei pruugi isiklikult salakaamerate ohvriks sattunud olla, et dokumenteerida seda, kuidas salakaamerate probleem, kui Korea kultuuriruumis esinev fenomen naisi ja nende igapäevaelu mõjutab. Uurimuses osalenud naised olid 20. aastates ning omandamas või omandanud vähemalt bakalaureusekraadi. Probleem kandub otsestest ohvritest kaugemale ning mõjutab naiste käitumist, suhtlemismustreid ning igapäevaseid toimetusi. Samuti võib probleem mõjutada naiste suhteid meestega. Magistr töö fookuses on kolm põhipunkti, mida laiemalt avatakse. Esiteks, kuidas antud probleem naisi mõjutab, ka neid, kes pole otseselt kaamerakuriteo ohvriks sattunud. Kuidas antud fenomen mõjutab naiste igapäevaelu ning liikumist avalikus ruumis. Teiseks, milliseid käitumismustreid on naised antud probleemi tõttu omandanud. Milliseid viise kasutatakse, et vältida kaamerate ohvriks sattumist. Kolmandaks, kuidas mõjutab antud probleem sugude vahelisi suhteid.

Välitööd kestsid 2021. aasta augustist 2022. aasta juulini. Töö valmimist toetas Eesti Haridus- ja Noorteamet. Uurimus on läbi viidud etnograafilisi uurimismeetodeid kasutades. Väljal viibimise

periood oli 11 kuud, mille vältel viidi läbi osalusvaatlused, täiendati välitööpäeviku märkmeid, suheldi informantidega ning viidi läbi intervjuud uurimuses osalejatega. Antud probleemi avatakse töös läbi soouuringute perspektiivi, kasutades erinevaid teooriaid järelevalveuuringute valdkonnas. Samuti vaadeldakse probleemi läbi hirmu geograafia teooria, et avada naiste liikumist avalikus ruumis ning analüüsida seda, kuidas antud probleem naiste liikumisi mõjutab. Töö eesmärk ei ole väita, et Korea on ainus riik, kus antud probleem esineb, kuid Human Rights Watch (Juuni 2021) nimetas Korea maailmas kõige rohkemate salakaamerate juhtumitega riigiks. Seega keskendutakse töös Koreale ning fikseeritud grupi naiste kogemustele.

Intervjuud viidi läbi 16 naisega, kellest ühel oli otsene salakaamera kuriteo kogemus. Kõik naised tunnistasid, et on probleemist teadlikud ning see mõjutab nende igapäevaelu ühel või teisel viisil. Passiivsel tasandil põhjustab antud probleem naistes hirmu teatud avalikus ruumis asuvate paikade ees, näiteks tualetid ja motelliruumid. Naised jälgivad oma riietumisstiili avalikus ruumis, et vältida võimalust sattuda salakaamerate ning pildistamise ohvriteks. Drastilisematel juhtudel üritavad naised avalikke tualette totaalselt vältida, mis võib mõningatel juhtudel kahjustada ka tervist. Salakaamerate probleem on potentsiaalne kroonilise stressitunde tekitaja, kuna naised kannavad kaamerate hirmu kas teadlikult või alateadlikult alati kaasas.

Teoreetilisel tasandil loomiseks on kasutatud soouuringute perspektiivi läbi objektistava pilgu ning seksualiseerimise vaatevälja. Teoreetika üheks domineerivaks temaatikaks on järelevalve. Kasutatud on Paul B. Preciado (2013) teooriat kehade kapitaliseerimisest ning sellest, kuidas inimeste kehad kannavad rahalist väärtust ühiskondlikus ruumis. Samuti on teoreetilisel tasandil fookuses Michel Foucaulti panoptikoni teooria seoses järelevalveuuringute raamistikule. *Molka* kontekstis seotakse Foucaulti teooriat seksuaalse järelevalve läbi. Seksuaalse järelevalve mõju saab omakorda seostada hirmu geograafia teooriaga, mis võib omakorda viia naiste poolt enesele suunatud keha järelevalve praktiseerimiseni.

Töö tulemusena võib täheldada, et *molka* on mitmetahuline probleem. Enne kõike on koreapäraseks probleemi muutnud see, kuidas kuritegudega toime tulla. Olenemata sellest, et probleemi lahendamiseks on tehtud panuseid riiklikul tasandil, ei ole antud panused olnud täielikult viljakandvad. Probleem esineb endiselt ning ühe potentsiaalse põhjusena võib välja tuua süstemaatilise lähenemise puudujäägid, kui probleemid puudutavad soolisi teemasid Korea

ühiskonnas. Korea on turvaline riik, kuid kui seksuaalkuriteod juhtuvad, ei leita neile efektiivseid lahendusi, kuna õigussüsteem on meestekeskne. See võib tuleneda Korea ajaloolisest ja kultuurilisest taustast, kuna tegemist on patriarhaarse ning konfutsianistliku ühiskonnamudeliga. Selle tulemusena on mitmed Korea ühiskondlikud süsteemid kujunenud meestekeskseteks ning naiste probleemid võivad märkamata jääda. Kuigi tänapäeval on antud kultuurimustrid muutumises, ei ole süstemaatilised muutused sama kiired järgnema.

Läbiviidud intervjuude põhjal sai kinnitust väitele, et salakaamerate probleem Koreas mõjutab negatiivselt ka neid naisi, kes otseselt kuriteo ohvriks sattunud pole. See väljendub läbi erinevate käitumisviiside ning hirmutunde, mis naisi avalikus ruumis viibides saadavad. Samuti võib probleem negatiivset mõju avaldada sugudevahelistes suhetes, kus puudub vastastikune arusaam ning mõistmine probleemi tuumast. Naised kardavad meestepoolset hukkamõistu või probleemi pisendamist, mille tõttu ei räägita probleemist vastassugupoolega. Probleemi lahendamiseks oleks oluline kaasata nii naised kui mehed. Probleemi lahendamiseks oleks oluline naisi ja teisi vähemusgruppe kaasata riiklike süsteemide kujundamises, et nende vajadused ei jääks riiklikul tasandil nähtamatuks. Läbi selle võiksid paraneda ka sugudevahelised suhted ning see võimaldaks naistele *molka* probleemi kontekstis turvalisemat keskkonda ning liikumisvõimalust avalikus ruumis.

## Appendix

### Interview Questions

Hello, I am Susanna Homuha. I am an Anthropology major at the University of Tartu. Currently I am studying at Chung-Ang University, and I am doing research for my master's thesis about the secret camera problem in Korea. My goal is to find out how this phenomena affects women's lives and how women feel about this issue.

안녕하세요. 제 이름은 수산나 Susanna 입니다. 저는 에스토니아 타르투대학교 대학원 석사과정에서 인류학을 전공하고 있고, 2021 년 9 월 부터 중앙대학교에 교환학생으로 공부하고 있습니다. 저는 석사학위 논문 작성을 위해 한국 공중 화장실 등에서 이뤄지는 불법 카메라(일명 몰카) 설치와 피해에 대해 연구하고 있습니다. 저는 이 연구 주제로 한국 여성들이 이 문제에 대해서 어떻게 생각하고 있으며 일상생활에 어떤 영향이 있는지를 알아보고자 합니다.

The Interview is fully anonymous. The information gathered will be only reviewed by me. In case you reply in Korean the answers will be reviewed by me and my translator who has agreed to the confidentiality of the information provided by you. Your answers will only be used for my research and the recording of our interview/written interview will be discarded after I have reviewed it for my research.

Please confirm that you have understood that participation in this research is fully voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in the research at any point. The information you share is fully anonymous and will only be used for my research.

인터뷰에 참여하시는 분들에 대한 이름, 나이 등 개인 정보는 물론 수집된 정보에 대한 비밀유지가 보장되며, 본 연구를 수행하는 본인만 자료를 열람할 것입니다. 인터뷰에서 한국어로 답변을 할 경우에는 영어로 번역하기 위해 비밀유지 서약을 한 번역가에게만 본

정보를 공개할 것입니다. 본 인터뷰 결과는 연구 이외에 다른 용도로 사용되지 않으며, 제 석사학위 논문을 위한 연구, 분석이 끝나는 대로 모두 폐기할 것입니다.

혹시 면담 중에 중단하시고 싶다는 생각이 드신다면 언제든지 면담을 종료하실 수 있습니다. 위 사항에 대해서 충분히 인지하시는 가운데 자발적인 참여를 원하신다면 면담을 이제부터 진행하겠습니다.

Sex:

성별:

Age:

나이:

City you are currently living in:

지역(도시):

### 1.1 Personal experience

1. Let's start by getting to know each other more, tell me about yourself a little bit. Where were you born, where did you grow up in, what kind of family did you come from, what kind of education do you have or what field of work do you work in, anything else you would like to mention about yourself?

우선 면담 참여자 분들의 개인적 배경에 대해서 질문드리고 싶습니다. 편하신대로 자신에 대해 간략히 소개해주실 수 있으신지요? 예를 들어 주로 어디에 거주하셨는지, 직업, 전공분야, 가족 등에 대해서 가능하신대로 말씀해주시길 부탁드립니다.

2. How did you first find out about the secret camera problem?

선생님께서서는 언제쯤 이 불법 카메라에 대해 알게 되셨나요? 또 어떤 경로로 알게 되셨나요?

3. When did you first start acknowledging the secret camera problem in your daily life (when entering a public space, toilet, metro, school, work etc.)?

선생님께서 주로 알고 계신 몰래 카메라 문제를 설명해 주실 수 있나요? ( 공공시설, 화장실, 지하철, 학교, 직장 등 장소에서)

4. How often and in which context does the topic of secret cameras come up in your everyday conversations with friends, family, partners etc.?

얼마나 자주 주변 친구, 가족 등과 함께 이 불법 촬영 문제에 대해 이야기하시나요

5. Is it common amongst women (you and your friends) to share stories or worries related to given issue?

이렇게 주변분들과 불법 촬영 문제에 대해 이야기 나누시는 것이 한국 여성들 사이에 자주 있다고 생각하시나요?

6. When in a public setting, do you feel vulnerable, exposed or like you are being watched constantly in regard to secret filming crimes?

공공장소에서 선생님 자신이 촬영당하고 있다는 생각 하거나 카메라를 의식한 적이 있으신가요?

7. Which places are most likely for such crimes to occur? Are there any specific locations you feel especially exposed?

불법 카메라 촬영 범죄가 일어나기에 취약한 장소는 어디라고 생각하시는지요?

여러 장소 중 선생님이 생각하시는 특히 더 위험한 장소가 있을까요?

8. Do you have any personal experience with this issue, finding a camera, hearing a story from a friend etc.?

혹시 선생님이 직접 불법 설치된 카메라를 발견하신적이 있나요? 아니면 선생님 주변에서 이런 경험을 들으 신적이 있나요?

9. How do such crimes affect your perception of yourself, do you feel objectified or commercialized?

직접 경험하신 경우에 한해 어떤 이런 사건에 대해 들으시거나 직접 경험하시게된 후 여성으로서 본인 스스로에 대해 어떤

10. What kind of ways do you use for protecting yourself from these crimes? What kind of preventative measures can you take in order to protect yourself from such crimes?

이러한 범죄로부터 스스로를 보호하기 위해서 하실 수 있는게 있다고 생각하시나요?  
예를들어 공중 화장실에 들어가시는 경우 어떻게 하시나요?

11. Have you bought any gadget that is commercialized as protecting against secret filming crimes?

시중에 판매중인 몰래 카메라를 감지하는 기구를 구매해보신 적이 있나요?

## 1.2 Opinion

1. What is your stance on the matter, do you consider this as a serious wide-spread problem?

한국 내 불법 몰래 카메라 촬영문제가 얼마나 심각하다고 생각하시나요?

2. Do you think this problem affects women's daily lives? If yes then please elaborate on how.

이런 불법 촬영 문제가 여성의 삶에 어떤 영향을 준다고 생각하시는지요?

여성으로서 일상적인 생활 측면에서, 또 좀더 넓은 사회적 측면에서 생각해 볼 수 있습니다.

3. What do you think is the reason for these sort of crimes, taking upskirt photos, secret illicit videos etc. give your personal assessment.

불법촬영이 발생하는 원인이 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?

4. Do you think enough preventative measures are being taken to protect women from further crimes like this?

여성에게 범위를 예방할 수 있는 조치가 시행되고 있다고 생각하십니까?

### 1.3 Discourse between genders

1. Are the camera crime perpetrators always men or could they also be women in your opinion, are victims mainly women?

불법 몰래 카메라 가해자와 피해자 성별을 각각 어떻게 생각하시나요?

2. How does this issue affect relations between men and women, please elaborate on how.

불법 몰래 카메라 문제가 남성과 여성 간 관계에 영향을 준다고 생각하시는지요?

그렇다면 구체적으로 설명해주세요.

3. Would you say genders are being treated equally when it comes to sexuality and sexual crimes in South Korea?

성범죄에 대해서 남성 여성 모두 동등하게 대우를 받고 있다고 생각하십니까?

4. Do you think men/women realize inequality if it does exist? Please elaborate.

성별 사이에 불평등이 존재한다면, 이러한 불평등에 대해서 사람들이 지각하고 있다고 생각합니까?

5. Has this issue created heated discourse between men and women in terms of gender equality, gender perception, gender rights etc.?

몰래 카메라 범죄 문제로 인해 여성들이 여성의 목소리 양성평등, 젠더 인식에 대해서 이슈화하는데 기여했다고 생각합니까?

#### 1.4 Phenomena

1. In regard to the problem at hand do you think women's voices are being heard?

정부, 사회적 차원에서 불법 카메라 촬영 문제 해결과정에 여성의 목소리가 반영되어진다고 생각하십니까?

2. What do you think, do police have prejudice against women who are victims of sexual crimes? Is it difficult to get valid help from the authorities?

경찰에게 몰래 카메라와 관련한 범죄에 대해 도움을 요청할 경우, 실질적인 도움을 받을 수 있다고 생각하십니까?

3. What do you think has contributed to this issue surfacing?

불법 카메라 설치 및 촬영문제가 사람들에게 주목받는 이유가 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?

4. Do you think this problem would be less prominent if pornography was not restricted in this country?

성인 동영상, 포르노를 나라에서 규제하는 것과 몰래 카메라 문제가 연관성이 있다고 생각하십니까?

## Photos From the Field

All of the photos below have been taken by me during my fieldwork in South Korea, to illustrate the phenomena and how it has become visualized in a public setting.



September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Seoul Forest park

“Emergency bell in the bathroom to report 112 for women’s safety.”



September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Seoul Forest park

Example of the emergency bell in women’s bathroom.

“It’s the 112 bell to report a crime. False reporting can result in criminal charges. In case of emergency, press the emergency bell.”



September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Chung-Ang University restroom

An old sticker confirming camera investigation was conducted.

“We are conducting a full investigation on illegal cameras.”



September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Bukhansan national park

“Emergency bell. If you press it in case of an emergency police will be dispatched. If you press it falsely you may face criminal punishment.”



October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Seoul Seocho-gu

“Emergency call. In case of an emergency or inconvenience, you can talk to the station staff by pressing the call button.”



October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: On way from Seoul to Daegu, Highway rest stop in Yeosu-gun

“Hidden camera detector is running in real time. No hidden camera crimes?”



October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: On way From Seoul to Daegu, Highway rest stop in Gumi.

“If you secretly take pictures and distribute them, you will be arrested. If you are caught committing secret camera crime you may be sentenced for up to 7 years of imprisonment and up to 30 million won fine, and you will be subject to personal information disclosure.”



October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Suseongmot lake, Daegu

“Emergency bell. Press it when in danger.”



Examples of tissue paper stuffed holes that could hide a secret camera in the bathroom stall wall.



November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location : Chung-Ang University campus

Old stickers confirming camera inspection had taken place.



November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

Location: Chung-Ang University campus

On the left: “Investigating all illegal cameras”

Right: “Emergency bell, safety zone.”



November 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

Location: Chung-Ang University campus

“Investigating all illegal cameras. Regular and unexpected inspections are underway. “



November 23<sup>rd</sup> , 2021

Location: Andong train station.

“No illegal filming. Safe women’s toilet. Date of inspection 2021.11.23.”



December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Dongjak-gu metro station

On the left: In this bathroom illegal camera detection equipment is installed.

On the right: Illegal filming prohibited.



December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Dongjak gu metro station

From top to bottom: “Illegal shooting if you do it you will be arrested.” (signs pointing out where illegal cameras can be placed).

“No body contact without permission. You can be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison or fined up to 10 million won. “

“For filming crimes you can be sentenced up to 5 years in prison or fined up to 10 million won.”



December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Dongjak-gu metro station

“Safe movement for women. Safe zone. Report to police 112, Women’s emergency number 1366.

Digital sexual crime victim support center 02-237-8994.”



January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

Location: Mapo-gu, Hongdae metro station

“Illegal filming is a serious illegal act. Imprisonment for up to 7 years or a fine up to fifty million won.”

With an illustration of cute police officers.



January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Location: Chung-Ang University library

A cluster of signs, several of them assuring that bathroom has been checked for cameras.

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Susanna Homuha

18.05.2023