



Refractive Spatialisation:

The Digital Picturesque, the Online-Reality Gap and Gentrification in Seoul

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Abstract

Building on the work of Henri Lefebvre, this research introduces the concept of *refractive spatialisation* in describing and articulating the deep interconnections between urbanisation, online space, social practices, and the relational (re)making of place-images as a result of technological innovations in information, communications and vehicles. The concept is coined in reference to the process through which symbolic space (online blog spaces) and physical space (the built environment) become co-dependent and co-generative in terms of rapid urban transformations driven by the touristification of previously mundane spaces. In relation to Seoul, South Korea these processes are shown to alter the built environment and drive processes of gentrification in tandem with state-led infrastructure projects: Airport Railroad Express (AREX) and Gyeongui Line Forest Park (GLFP). Focusing on Yeonnam-dong (total population of 15,769), a neighbourhood of Seoul, the research shows how urban regeneration, the consumption tastes of competitive young urbanites, and the representation and rearrangement of place-images online (led by online influencers) interact in the re-making of place. This involves a transformation in the place-image of Yeonnam-dong from an everyday “hidden”, working-class neighbourhood to an Instagrammable space produced and re-valued in relation to other places. The thesis analyses urban regeneration efforts in Yeonnam-dong from 2010-2018, online blog data (2,425 posts) over the same period, and qualitative interviews with 42 interviewees from six categories: 1) 20-30s millennials; 2) Business owners and artists; 3) Property experts and local agencies; 4) Blog influencers; 5) Local residents; and 6) Seoul Metropolitan Government officials. The research articulates a new process of the uneven production of contemporary urban space influenced by the reconfiguration of spatial characteristics, property values, economic systems, social practices, and online imagery and preferences, based on the symbolic and information economy in post-industrial cities. In the new process of gentrifying Yeonnam-dong, refractive spatialisation functions as a key driver for interconnecting spatial change with new practices (aesthetic tourism and the digital picturesque), flows (selective online data of translocal representations), and logic (capitalist dynamics of aesthetic and hyper-realistic space triggered by the gap between online images and physical spaces – the online-reality gap).

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Research Context: Technologies and Spatial Changes in South Korea

During South Korea's rapid economic growth between 1960 and the 1990s, following the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War, new technologies played a decisive role in export-led industrialisation and urbanisation (Berardi, 2015; Castells, 2010). With the strong support of the South Korean government, Korean conglomerates (*Chaebol*), latecomers to global manufacturing, expanded and devoted massive investment to the major high-tech manufacturing sectors (Castells, 2010, Yun, Lee & Lim, 2002). For example, Samsung and LG in electronics, Hyundai and KIA in the vehicles, Samwhan and Hyundai in the overseas construction, Samsung, Hyundai and Daewoo in shipbuilding, and POSCO in steel had been incentivised by the state's initiatives (Castells, 2010; Yun, Lee & Lim, 2002). In order to balance regional development with industrialisation, the state had supported the location and development of heavy industries in major Korean cities under the Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plans of South Korea (1962-1996). For example, textiles were located in Guro District in Seoul, electronics in Gumi, steel-making in Pohang, automobile manufacture in Ulsan and shipbuilding in Geoje.

Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the South Korean government has concentrated on the ICT (Information and Communications Technology) industries to overcome the severe economic and social damage caused by the crisis (Lee & Hong, 2011; National Information Society Agency, 2019; National Information Society Agency, 2020; Son, 2000; Yim & Lee, 2002). Several major companies (*Chaebol*) collapsed, and there was mass unemployment (Harvey, 2005; Yun, Lee & Lim, 2002). As cutting-edge technologies, the ICT industries were expected to lead a remarkable recovery and did actually bring about a period of high growth in the 2000s (National Information Society Agency, 2019; National Information Society Agency, 2020) and now South Korea has the highest broadband penetration in the world due to digital infrastructure and high-speed Internet services (Partington & Grierson, 2019). After setting up the ICT infrastructure, the government started to support Internet-based start-up companies with tax benefits and low-interest loans, resulting in about 7,700 new start-ups between 1998 to 2002 (Yun, Lee & Lim, 2002). Fuchs (2017) shows that the Korean companies' websites were listed among the world's top 20 in 2002, based on the total number of visitors. Whilst the ICT business has played a crucial role in South Korea's economic drive, the focus on national broadband coverage means that Korean millennials

have come to rely heavily on Internet data in their everyday lives (National Information Society Agency, 2019; National Information Society Agency, 2020).

In the 2010s, digital technologies began to have an influence on urban spaces as well as on people's lifestyles. The government employed new technologies to build the Songdo International Business District (Songdo IBD) – known as South Korea's first smart city development – that focused on futuristic strategies for green and low-carbon growth using ICT (Townsend, 2013). This smart city symbolises a transition from the 60 years of manufacturing dominance of the economy urban space to high-tech urbanisation. Whilst the government paid attention to the physical development and redevelopment of smart cities by means of ICT, Internet media was closely associated with the rearrangement of urban place-images, especially in the so-called "coolest neighbourhoods" in Seoul. Zukin (2010) claims that people's tastes in authentic cities, coexisting with diverse cultures, are reflected into the web-based media's language with self-referential online information, contributing to producing urban images. In Seoul, the reconfiguration of urban images caused a sudden influx of younger tourists who pay increasing attention to online blog posts identifying "authentic" and "unique" neighbourhoods. In fact, these kinds of neighbourhoods became recognised as tourist hotspots and were rapidly gentrified by the new consumption cultures, with creating soaring property prices and ruthless displacement of the original residents. However, despite the prominence of smart city projects planned or undertaken by the state in accordance with to new national strategy for the high-tech industry, there has been little empirical examination of the changing form of gentrification derived from online-based reconfigurations of place-images and cultural practices. In considering the historical relationship between technologies and spatial practices, this thesis aims to understand the role of online information in the gentrification of Yeonnam-dong in the 2010-2018 period, one of the fastest cases of gentrification in Seoul. In this period, Yeonnam-dong had been transformed from a quiet working-class neighbourhood into the most popular and "trendy" neighbourhood in Seoul. This rapid change was driven by online bloggers in pursuit of "shareworthy" and intriguing spectacles for attracting more attention from online followers as well as tourists. However, this transformation involves highly complex dynamics in incorporating spatial practices, conceptions, imagery and virtuality in global networks and time-space compression (Castells, 1991; 2010; Sassen, 1991; Harvey, 1990; Low, 2017; Sheppard, 2006; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 2010). This new gentrification process, reconfigured in South Korea's digital society, requires an innovative and alternative approach to relational transformations in the multi-level spaces decoupled from existing logics of traditional spatialisation in contemporary Seoul.

1.2 Research Overview and Key Concepts

This research focuses on the interdependence and dynamics between physical and online space via cognitive and imaginary transmission of individual experiences and emotions in understanding the new gentrification in Seoul. It develops the concept of *refractive spatialisation* in theorising this complex process which gradually shrinks the *online-reality gap* - the gap between online images and physical space - as physical spaces come to reflect the *digital picturesque* imagery of the staged online world. *Refractive spatialisation* is the integration and realisation of online space in the contemporary production of urban space – conceived, perceived and imagined spaces (Lefebvre, 1990). It seeks to capture the *online-reality gap* that is manifested in the displacement of spatial context, local customs and collective histories in the rearrangement of place-images, which differentiate real space from online space. The gap contains what is considered to be “unattractive” reality and routines which are not likely to be selected as place-images shared in online space – for example, the typical working-class red-brick houses of Seoul, quiet and mundane streetscapes, shabby local eateries, and old markets. These places and their images hinder young tourists’ emulation of hipsters’ trendy appearances and extraordinary experiences that are accentuated by online platforms like blogs and Instagram through “likes”.

Online platforms give Korean millennials plenty of opportunities for virtual cognition and vicarious experiences of photo-perfect spaces and cultivate new visual tastes and values worth sharing, which are conceptualised as the *digital picturesque* in this research. This new spatial awareness and knowledge ushers the millennials into risk-free, selective and limited practices and spaces, concentrated on impressive Instagrammable images which accelerate commercialisation and gentrification processes in contemporary urban space. Small business owners feel the need to orient the physical settings and “vibes” of their businesses toward online tastes and values in order to maximise business profits by shrinking the online-reality gap and re-creating the digital picturesque in physical space. The shifts centre on the way in which imagined space is visualised and disseminated through exaggerated spaces of staged authenticity (e.g. Instagrammable spaces and performances), in a similar vein to religious or social spatialisation (Shields, 1989) – e.g. churches (sacred faith), palaces (royal power and glory), modern skyscrapers (wealth and finance), and shopping malls (thematic fantasies of spectacles).

In refractive spatialisation however, the proliferation of online space facilitated by digital technologies re-formulates, visualises and valorises a highly selective and seductive collection of imagined spaces that contribute to the production of real space. Spectacular and powerful references in online space inform social practices in, and affect the materiality of, real space, thereby shrinking the online-reality gap. Under conditions of refractive spatialisation, digital-picturesque spaces both produce and are produced by the merging of real space and online space. Spatial refraction arising from the online-reality gap seeks to satisfy aspirations of many different social actors – tourists, online bloggers, small business owners and landlords - in the new gentrification of Seoul.

The new global urbanism involves interconnected systems of diverse economies (symbolic and information industries), a reconfiguration of global industries, online networks and digital communication technologies. Contemporary post-industrial cities undergone dynamic transformations of urban spaces and new logics, flows and systems developed from changing capitalist relations, urban cultures, imagery (symbolic system), and flow of information (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Castells, 1991; 2010; Harvey, 1990; 2001; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; Sassen, 1991; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Thus, contemporary spatial changes - driven by new logics of values, localities, mobility, capital accumulation, a virtual cognition, and cultural practices in the relational interactions between reality, conception, imagery and virtuality – cannot be captured within the original term ‘gentrification’ as coined by Ruth Glass (1964). Even though there is a discernible gentrifying process of geographical and demographic changes in a socio-economically neglected neighbourhood, much more is going on in contemporary Seoul. Contemporary gentrification takes place and functions through a relational and dynamic mechanism of spatial, conceptual, cultural, imaginary and online practices involving time-space compression, the network society, the symbolic economy and alternative value systems of individuals (Berardi, 2015; Baudrillard, 1994; 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Castells, 1991; 2010; Goffman, 1990; Harvey, 1990; Lash & Urry, 1994; Zukin, 1998; 2010).

Although the urban studies literature provides separate concepts for understanding particular aspects of socio-spatial changes in globalised post-industrial cities, it lacks a coherent integrated approach to synthesising different spatial mechanisms. This disaggregated approach can also be seen in the South Korean state’s stance on gentrification which, due to a lack of understanding of the diverse and complex mechanisms of gentrification, sits between physical improvement of the built environment and displacement of lower-income residents. In contrast to ambitious state-led ‘blue-print’ smart city projects such as Songdo IBD, in relation to gentrification, state policies are confusing and ambiguous and are

ineffective in dealing with rapid socio-spatial neighbourhood changes (Mo, 2017; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Townsend, 2013).

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

The overall aim of this research is to examine empirical evidence of the new gentrification that has been created out of the reconfiguration of spatial characters, property values, economic systems, social practices, and online imagery and preferences. The study of these processes is based on an exploration of the symbolic and information economy in Seoul, a post-industrial city in South Korea. Ultimately, this research aims to clarify how a new flow of capital liquidity and financialisation of the built environment in advanced capitalism are promoted by online networks and impacts on commercial production systems, tourist mobility, decision-making processes and consumption patterns. Refractive spatialisation in this new form of gentrification in Seoul transforms residential localities into the “world’s coolest neighbourhoods”, a translocal space shared in blogs and social media. New technologies have not only been key drivers in South Korea’s urbanisation, but also lead to new logics and systems of spatial strategies, such as smart city projects. However, the effects of online space on neighbourhoods are little understood, and either overlooked or ignored by the Korean government and urban scholars in South Korea. This is despite the fact that Korean millennials are widely viewed as over-dependent on online information – 94 per cent of their Internet use is related to leisure activities – for reliably cheap and enjoyable leisure activities on their tight budgets in the sluggish economy (Berardi, 2015; National Information Society Agency, 2019; 2020). The majority of the news media suggests, despite lack of empirical evidence and understandings, that social media platforms drive rapid gentrification in Seoul’s residential neighbourhoods – recognised as so-called ‘trendy tourist hotspots’ among Korean millennials.

This hints at a certain relationship between gentrification and online information, but no empirical research or qualitative inquiry has focused on these shifts. For this reason, the research questions developed in this thesis respond to this gap by providing empirical evidence and understandings of the new gentrification which has transformed urban spaces in the contexts of global networks and online information. The questions form a framework for addressing the dynamic relationships between: (a) online data and gentrification; (b) spatial changes, online space and new value systems; and (c) social actors and bloggers in the new configuration of gentrification.

The key research questions are:

1. How does online data impact on Yeonnam-dong's gentrification?
2. What are the spatial changes in Yeonnam-dong to satisfy the changing value system for spatial fantasies that is reconfigured from online space?
3. How do landlords, business owners, artists and tourists interact with online bloggers and what role do these interdependencies play in Yeonnam-dong's gentrification?

1.4 Research Design and Contributions

In responding to the gap in the evidence base, this research is designed to establish methods of blog content analysis (online space), semi-structured interviews (physical space) and a documentary case study (conceptual space) for approaching the dynamic transformation across multi-level spaces, based on the dialectical theories of Henri Lefebvre and Rob Shields. It aims to provide a more relational and reality-congruent articulation of Seoul's new gentrification incorporating spatial practices, strategies, imagery and virtuality in a concept of trans-spatialisation (see Chapters 2 and 3).

These three research methods of relational ethnography are employed in capturing changes in online, physical and conceptual spaces. Though historically informed, the empirical focus of the research is on Yeonnam-dong's nine years of gentrification between 2010 and 2018: a process that South Korea's news media regards as "new tourism gentrification" mediated by blogs and social media information. In this view, it is assumed that the new gentrification is caused by a complex relationship between Korean millennials and online data that affects particular gentrifying neighbourhoods (the so-called 'trendy hotspots') in Seoul. Yet, the "siloes", compartmentalised research on social media data patterns, or on gentrification of the built environment in South Korea captures little evidence of these transformations. For this reason, the three qualitative methods of blog content analysis, semi-structured interviews and documentary case study are used to penetrate the new spatial dynamics of gentrification by means of the two-tier framework that is established from the literature review in Chapter 2, and discussed in Chapter 3.

The Lefebvrian dialectical circuit of spatialisation – conceived, perceived and imagined spaces, with the addition of online space – is put to work in developing new analytical concepts in articulating the recent and complex transformations in Yeonnam-dong: 1) financial triggers, 2) new system of spatialisation, 3) demand for hyper-real space, 4) alternative value system of individuals, 5) attention-driven consumer cultures, 6) spatial formation of symbolic values, and 7) valorisation of hybrid space. Although different social theories in the framework collide in incompatible perspectives, these theoretical foundations for interpretation of space function as a wide-angle lens for deciphering the complexity of urban spaces, discussed in Chapter 2 and detailed in Chapter 3. The empirical findings chapters (5, 6 and 7) are structured according to the four dialectical levels of space in a Lefebvrian approach to examine the mechanisms of spatial production in Yeonnam-dong. The seven foundations are used to set up in-depth discussions of the new gentrification from a Lefebvrian perspective.

The main data were collected from 2,425 blog posts (selected from a total of 7,616 identified posts) on Yeonnam-dong, 42 interviewees grouped into six types of respondents, and four categories (eight sub-categories) of the case study documents. The collected data is interpreted through relational ethnography from three approaches (fragments, boundaries and gaps) drawing on Foucault (1972; 1988), Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b)(discussed in Section 3.2). These approaches are used to focus on three different dynamics between reality and virtuality of Yeonnam-dong: 1) digital fragments of spatial narratives (blog content analysis); 2) boundaries between online and real practices (semi-structured interviews); and 3) gaps in spatial transitions (documentary case study).

The key findings from this research, discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, suggest that over the nine-year gentrification period, refractive spatialisation in Yeonnam-dong has been driven by tourists, small business owners, artisans and artists, local landlords, investors, the state (SMG), and bloggers. This period has been divided into three phases: 1) 2010-2012; 2) 2013-2015; and 3) 2016-2018. The dynamic relationship among the social groups had transformed Yeonnam-dong's spaces from peaceful neighbourhoods to aesthetic and trendy tourist hotspots in pursuit of the different and changing values of the groups – for example, successful experiences and extraordinary impressions (tourists), profit maximisation (business owners), unique and authentic cultures (artisan and artists), commercial properties and higher rents (investors and landlords), and urban renewal (SMG). During the nine year period of gentrification covered in this thesis, in order to satisfy the millennials' place-image fantasies, refractive dynamics transformed Yeonnam-dong into sensational, hyper-real and Instagrammable spectacles, derived from online reference

images. The key findings theorised in Chapter 8 provide an in-depth understanding of the complex and relational mechanisms of the new gentrification examined from a Lefebvrian framework with a relational ethnographic approach.

This research represents a major contribution to a fuller understanding of the spatial dynamics and interconnections between reality, conception, imagery and virtuality and their effects on gentrification. This approach critiques existing gentrification research and builds on the work of Lefebvre and Shields in providing an account of the new gentrification in Seoul's highly digitalised society. This drives the relational (online-reality) gentrification that displaces mundane and unattractive spaces (the online-reality gap) and transforms Yeonnam-dong into hyper-realistic and Instagrammable spaces (the digital picturesque): in this process, gaining more "likes" in online space becomes a new logic of refractive spatialisation. The research seeks to clarify the process of transmitting the built environment (reality) from place-images (imagery) to spatial strategies (conception) through the selective and uneven flow of online data (virtuality) during refractive spatialisation. The contribution to understanding these complex mechanisms is made by the key findings that weave fragmented empirical narratives collected from the blog content analysis, the interviews and the case study, together with the key concepts of theorising refractive spatialisation, the digital picturesque and the online-reality gap.

A contribution to an innovative research method is made by establishing relational ethnography as a suitable approach to studying the spatial dynamics and interconnections between reality and online. The relational ethnographic approach combined with the theoretical framework allows an analysis of empirical practices of real and online spaces in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong that addresses the research questions.

A final contribution to the research field is made by pointing to the importance of refractive spatialisation to the processes of the new gentrification in Seoul – the most digitally connected society in the world (Berardi, 2015; Evans, 2015; National Information Society Agency, 2020; Partington & Grierson, 2019). By answering the main research question, 'How does online data impact on Yeonnam-dong's gentrification?', the key findings clarify new logics of production of urban space: the attention-driven symbolic economy, "share-worthy" impressions in new value systems of the younger generation, pre-planned and aesthetic tourism, online reference spaces, and Instagrammable business strategies. This empirical knowledge can contribute to national or local policies and strategies for post-industrial cities in order to address the new gentrification in contexts of the increasing effects

of global online networks, international tourism and online platforms (e.g. Airbnb, Uber, Netflix and Amazon).

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Following on from this introduction, this thesis proceeds through a review of the literature and relevant theories, the methodological approaches established by the framework, the relational context between online and real practices, and the empirical study of nine years of gentrification in Seoul.

Chapter Two discusses the literature to identify the main themes – capitalism, culture, imagery and information – and identify gaps in these research approaches: it then develops an alternative bridging theory based on the Lefebvrian perspective. The identified gaps in the literature draw are grouped in terms of seven key concepts that are then framed as an analytical lens for weaving these compartmentalised approaches into the Lefebvrian framework suitable for undertaking an in-depth study of the new gentrification in Seoul.

Chapter Three details the methodological approach to conducting the empirical research. This includes: the rationales for the approach; the relational ethnography in three dynamics (fragments, boundaries and gaps); and the two-tier framework (the dialectical circuit and the theoretical foundations). Drawing on relational ethnography as a core methodological idea in developing a Lefebvrian approach narrows the scope of the spatial dynamics to be examined, and focuses the multi-qualitative methods: blog content analysis (online information), semi-structured interviews (physical practices), and documentary case study (conceptual documents).

Chapter Four sets modern Seoul in the context of its relational dynamics between online and real spaces. The documentary sources of the case study outline the continuity of Seoul's spatialisation from three perspectives: 1) differences in the capitalist spatialisation of Gangbuk and Gangnam; 2) differences in cultural spatialisation among Korean millennials; and 3) differences in informational spatialisation between online information and leisure practices. This chapter provides an overall understanding of Yeonnam-dong's spatialisation in the context of the dramatic transformations of modern Seoul.

Chapters Five to Seven explore how Yeonnam-dong had been transformed over the nine-year period of gentrification covered in this thesis. Yeonnam-dong's spatialisation is examined from the perspectives of the foundations of the dynamics (multi-approaches of relational ethnography), in the dialectical circuit of spatialisation (four levels of space) and in three periods (2010-2012, 2013-2015, and 2016-2018). The major findings clarify the new mechanism of refractive spatialisation that is driven by Yeonnam-dong's relational (online-reality) gentrification that creates a gap between mundane and "unattractive" spaces (reality) and out-of-the-ordinary, attractive online place-images (the online-reality gap) which transforms Yeonnam-dong into hyper-real and Instagrammable spaces in the new taste for the digital picturesque.

Chapter Eight reflects on the main findings of the examination of the process of refractive spatialisation and answers the research questions. Presenting a number of conclusions can dismiss the study of refractive spatialisation to address the dynamic transformations of Yeonnam-dong under gentrification and online networks. Instead of a fragmentary question by question approach, this chapter focuses on a comprehensive understanding of the theory of refractive spatialisation formed from key findings. Thus, it aims to map key findings, which are examined from the empirical study of Yeonnam-dong, onto the dynamics of refractive spatialisation based on the Lefevrian dialectics.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature on modern spatialisation that is the basis of the research questions, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches in this thesis. The chapter is divided into three sections: 1) establishing the theoretical framework; 2) reviewing thematic gaps in concepts of relational spatialisation; and 3) articulating critiques, questions and approaches. This review addresses four themes: the spatialisation of capital; culture; imagery; and information, to clarify conceptual differences and gaps in theoretical approaches. The critiques considered in this overview contribute to an alternative approach to the integration of theories based on the work of Lefevre and Shields to bridge gaps in the debates and research in order to respond to the changing logics and systems of spatial production in a digitally connected society. The chapter argues that a Lefebvrian framework is a methodological solution that also clarifies the research questions in this chapter, dialectical frameworks in methodology chapter (Chapter 3), relational context between online and real spaces in Seoul (Chapter 4), and empirical approaches to new forms of spatialisation in Seoul (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). In particular, the current chapter provides a rationale for why many different theoretical perspectives are drawn on to decipher the complex transformations of contemporary urban spaces.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section aims to establish the conceptual cornerstone of this research. Drawing on approaches of Henri Lefebvre and Rob Shields, this section articulates seven key foundations for interpretation of urban space and weaves them into a discussion of the dialectics of spatial transformations in contemporary cities. This discussion supports the addition to the Lefebvrian theory of space of the effect of online space on the built environment. The discussion emphasises how the current theories and concepts need to take into account new logics and systems of contemporary space; and sets out an alternative and innovative approach to the interconnections between real space and online space.

2.2.1 Approaching an Alternative Framework of the Lefebvrian Perspective

Before reviewing the literature on relational spatialisation from four main perspectives – capitalism, culture, imagery and information, this section sets out an alternative conceptual framework for articulating the production of space that is developed from Lefebvrian concepts synthesised with the work of Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b), Bourdieu (2010a; 2010b) and Foucault (1998; 2002; 2020). The theory of the production of space is the theoretical foundation for approaching the complex spatialisations of modern geography in relation to the research questions posed in this thesis. The literature review in Section 2.3 will clarify thematic gaps in the fragmented approaches to spatial transformations that will be integrated in the Lefebvrian framework of this research. Thus, the conceptual framework developed from the Lefebvrian three-part dialectics provides an valuable and practical lens on the spatial dynamics of three different levels of space: 1) spatial logics and knowledges strategically organised to regulate spatial practices (representations of space/conceived space); 2) spatial assemblages and practices derived from societal formations and individual dispositions, culturally formed in dominant systems of space (spatial practices/perceived space); and 3) imagined flows of representations of desired space derived from historical sediments of spatial meanings, oriented toward symbolic solutions to daily routines in space (spaces of representation/imagined space). In order to justify the conceptual framework, this section reviews the Lefebvrian foundation that is rationalised by Shields, Bourdieu and Foucault.

According to Lefebvre's (1991) dialectical materialism, spatial logics and knowledges in 'representations of space (conceived space)' are developed as practical spatial systems (e.g. plans, polices and laws) in order to improve 'spatial practices (perceived space)' in capitalist cities – Harvey (2001)'s spatial fix and Smith (1996; 2008)'s rent gap. Spatial flows of imagined and desired representations, such as Bourdieu's (2010a) distinction and Baudrillard's (2017a) sign-value, both produce and are produced by societal formations and individual dispositions in 'spatial practices'. Thus, 'spaces of representation (imagined space)' transform spatial arrangements and systems into a new logic – for example, Low's (2017) translocality, MacCannell's (1973; 2011) staged authenticity, and Urry and Larsen's (2011) tourist gaze –suitable for changing social and cultural demands. The changing systems and practices of the reconfiguration of space derived from globalisation and neoliberalism since 1980s are clarified by Castells' (1991; 2010) information city and network society, Sassen's (1991) global city, and Harvey's (1990) time-space compression. 'Representations of space (conceived space)' are pressured to reflect the new

transformation of contemporary space, resulting in symbolic solutions – Zukin's (1998; 2010) Disneyfication and Baudrillard's (1994) simulacra – through 'spaces of representation (imagined space)'. Accordingly, the spatial operations and transformations reviewed in following sections are conceptualised by the Lefebvrian foundation and examined through the theoretical framework.

Lefebvre's (1991) theoretical framework is advanced by Shields' (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b) notion of social spatialisation. In Shields' (2013a) book, *Places of the Margin*, his theory of social spatialisation, developed from Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space, is also inspired and reinforced by Bourdieu's (2010a; 2010b) habitus and Foucault's (1998; 2002; 2020) *dispositif*. The theoretical justification for the new logics and practices of modern geography is provided through Shields' case studies of economic, political and social transformations viewed from a Lefebvrian perspective: 1) representations of space (conceived space); 2) spatial practices (perceived space); and 3) spaces of representation (imagined space). Bourdieu (2010a; 2010b) addresses spatial issues involving social and cultural practices and structures in relation to individual dispositions formed from social status, class, education, nationality and religion. In his view, particular types of space contribute to the 'habitus' that has been socially imitated and diffused in embodied cultures, behaviours, ideologies and values derived from accumulated social representations. In a similar vein, Dawkins (2016) conceptualises social transmission of cultural dispositions as the 'meme' of cultural genes inherited from previous generations, an idea that was articulated by Blackmore (1999). Habitus as a cultural gene is socially imitated and embodied according to cultural domains. It is transmitted to societal members, who become habituated to thinking and reacting in a homogenised way. In opposition to Lefebvre and Shields focusing on spatial production influenced by social practices, Bourdieu conceptualises a socially inheritable disposition of individuals due to a habitus developed and shared in a particular condition of space. This is the sense in which Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b) draws on the concept of habitus (Bourdieu 2010a; 2010b) in proposing that social spatialisation is regulated by individual social responses with changing spatial meanings and logics as a result of technological innovations and paradigm shifts.

As an empirical case of Lefebvre's production of space, Foucault's (1998; 2002; 2020) *dispositif* provides an understanding of spatial control for maintaining power relations and structures in society, which is in contrast to Bourdieu's habitual practices in response to cultural dynamics of space. The *dispositif* is conceptualised as a social apparatus for manipulating powers in urban space. It takes advantage of regulatory strategies, jurisdiction and legislation drawn from knowledge, techniques, institutions, architectural forms, moral

proposition and desires that have been established in everyday life (Foucault, 1998; 2002; 2020; Mills, 2003; Shields, 2013a). This systemic control is spatially designed to achieve social or institutional aims in the production of relational territories annexed by complex practices of power (Foucault, 1998; 2002; 2020; Mills, 2003; Shields, 2013a). For example, the Panopticon was designed by Jeremy Bentham, an English philosopher, in the 18th century. The structure of buildings was a typical *dispositif* controlled by architectural techniques in pursuit of cheap and effective institutional surveillance in prisons, hospitals, military camps, factories and schools. The surveillance system of the Panopticon had been conceived of to improve security in prisons providing efficient management with a small number of security guards at a cheap price. A guard was to be posted in a tower at the centre of a circular hall with a 360-degree view of all inmates' cells which were visible through steel bars, but the inmates would not be able to identify whether or not a guard was on watch because of an intended contrast between bright cells and a dark surveillance tower (Foucault, 2020). Thus, inmates in the Panopticon prison would assume themselves to be always watched and would fear the hidden power of invisible surveillance (Foucault, 2020). This architectural *dispositif* spatialises power as the Panopticon was designed to enable institutions or autocrats to maintain their power structures and practices efficiently, cheaply and with a small number of guards (Foucault, 2020). From a Lefebvrian perspective, Foucault's *dispositif* is would be enacted by incorporating Bentham's design of the Panopticon (representations of space), in a prison realised, built and managed a government (spatial practices), creating in the inmates a constant fear of being exposed to invisible power (spaces of representation) (Foucault, 1998; 2002; 2020; Lefebvre, 1991; Mills, 2003; Shields, 2013a).

Debord (1977) claims that contemporary consumers are seduced, dominated and exploited by commercial spectacles such as media advertisements and displayed goods. The spectacles function as a consumerist *dispositif* that is devised by the capitalist class to maximise their profits in the spectacle economy through a similar mechanism to that of the Panopticon, operating in a power-related spectacle unilaterally observed by invisible guards and officers. Contemporary society of the spectacle is performed effectively by inescapably attracting the attention of consumers (in the reverse direction from the prisoners). Themed restaurants, cafes, hotels and shops commercially aestheticised by entrepreneurs (the capitalist class) stimulate consumers to fix their gaze on irresistible spectacles by transmitting an infinite flow of captivating images from online platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram ads. From a Lefebvrian view, this steady gaze of consumers performs a

crucial role in strengthening power relations due to specialised spaces reinforced by aesthetic solutions in pursuit of logic of capitalism: a cheap and effective way of spatial monetisation.

A Lefebvrian framework for understanding the complex production of contemporary space, mainly conceptualised by Lefebvre and Shields, is also related to Bourdieu's habitus and Foucault's *dispositif*, address political, social and economic forces in three ways: 1) spatially strategic and technical responses to power-related needs; 2) socially inherited activities of cultures in spatial routines; and 3) economic solutions developed from selective spatial meanings of individual imaginations. The spatial dynamics of contemporary transformations will be articulated in the following section.

2.2.2 Locating Fragmented Perspectives on Spatial Transformations

This section articulates the disparately fragmented literature on the spatial transformations that have occurred in post-industrial cities, particularly those reshaped by the 1980s neoliberal economic system and globalisation – for example, Thatcherism in the UK and Reaganomics in the US. Before detailing the different angles taken on capitalist transformations in Section 2.3, seven main concepts are presented to clarify the analytical perspectives explored through a Lefebvrian framework in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The seven foundations are organised from the literature on four perspectives – capitalism, culture, imagery and information – according to the new logics and systems that reviewed in Section 2.3:

- 1) **Financial Triggers:** Harvey's (2001) spatial fix and Smith's (1996; 2008) rent gap as a spatial mechanism in capitalist cities related to social, cultural and imaginary dynamics.
- 2) **New System of Spatialisation:** Castells' (1991; 2010) information city and network society, Sassen's (1991) global city and Harvey's (1990) time-space compression as a spatial pattern of new economic systems in a reconfiguration of global industries and market as a result of ICT innovations.
- 3) **Demand for Hyper-realistic Space:** Zukin's (1998; 2010) Disneyfication, Lash & Urry's (1994) symbolic economy, Debord's (1977) society of the spectacle, and

Baudrillard's (1994) simulacra as a hyper-realistic visualisations of imaginary signs and symbols oriented toward the profit maximisation of capitalist logic.

- 4) **Alternative Value System of Individuals:** Bourdieu's (2010a) distinction, Baudrillard's (2017a) sign-value, and Goffman's (1990) impression management as social performance in particular spatial settings in pursuit of exclusive social status visualised by the value of exceptional materials and spaces.
- 5) **Attention-driven Consumer Cultures:** Low's (2017) translocality, MacCannell's (1973; 2011) staged authenticity, and Urry and Larsen's (2011) tourist gaze providing a new perspective on changing spatial systems developed from translocal and transnational information through global networks.
- 6) **Spatial Formation of Symbolic Values:** Lynch's (1960) five elements of the built environment linked with imageability to perceive urban spaces in a wayfinding.
- 7) **Valorisation of Hybrid Space:** Smith's (1996; 2008) uneven development and Boy and Uitermark's (2015; 2016; 2017) uneven networks of, and selective practices in, social media arranged by potential values of high productive and consumption in symbolic landmarks of urban space.

The seven foundations are incorporated and operated through the Lefebvrian framework. The theoretical categories are basically developed from rising monetary values of properties that have been inflated by individual desires for wealth accumulation under neoliberal logics and global networks. These provoke aesthetic imaginations of commodified spaces in consumer society and spatialises them within the post-industrial space reinforced by capitalism, culture, imagery and information.

However, none of these theoretical foundations displays an integrated understanding of how changing logics and systems impact on the comprehensive production of space in terms of the relational dynamics of advanced urbanism: the rise of global networks and the rupture of industrial logics and production systems based on local labour markets and material resources. An approach which incorporates these disparate contributions is needed in order to capture fundamental understandings of the complex and discursive relations of contemporary spatialisation. In this view, the three-part dialectics of space conceptualised by Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b) can be used to weave the seven foundations into the theoretical framework. In addition, a Lefebvrian framework needs to develop an approach to online networks in which massive flows of digital information

involve spatial transformations augmenting capital liquidity, as conceptualised by Castells (1991; 2010) as space of flows; by Boy & Uitermark (2015; 2017) as space for the segmentation of users; and Low (2017) as translocality.

The following section justifies synthesising the Lefebvrian framework with conceptualisation of online space to understand new dynamics of post-industrial urbanism advanced by information capitalism under the condition of translocality – the so-called ‘coolest neighbourhoods’ in which hipsters used to enjoy consuming unique art, music, fashion and food, but the media brings about gentrification and a sudden influx of tourists (Lash & Urry, 1994; Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Low, 2017; Shin & Lee, 2016a; 2016b; Zukin, 1998; 2006; 2010).

2.2.3 The Space of Flows: Synthesising the Lefebvrian Framework with Online Space and Translocality

The theory of the contemporary spatial dynamics of advanced information and communications technology (ICT) is articulated by Castells (1991; 2010), providing an understanding of how the information economy transforms post-industrial urbanism into the informational city that is restructured by global logics and systems under the new technological paradigm. The latest methodologies of data science have clarified the empirical interaction between geographical patterns of commercial activities and social media data (Boy & Uitermark 2015; 2016; 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda 2017, Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook 2015) (reviewed in Section 2.3.4). In other words, the impact of online space on the production of real space has been the topic of some academic research. However, the research focuses on defined spaces but globally known through online information and preferred by tourists, such as city centres, high streets, historic sites and trendy neighbourhoods, rather than ordinary neighbourhoods or suburban streets.

Developing a Lefebvrian framework to take account of online space has concentrated on limited and distinct conditions of urban spaces, especially in post-industrial and digital societies in which firms and institutions adopt ICT infrastructures to command their global or regional branches in monitoring global supply chains (Bell, 1973; Castells, 1991; 2010; Harvey, 1990; 2001; 2005; MacCannell, 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Deindustrialised and neglected neighbourhoods are transformed to translocal spaces with flexible and changeable urban cultures responding to prevailing global preferences and trends for

commercial activities, led by a younger generation who have grown up with digital devices and communications (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 2011; Shin & Lee, 2016a; 2016b; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2006; 2010). These younger tourists seek distinctive, extraordinary and risk-free activities that are guaranteed by online information. Translocality with trendy cultures and spaces is recognised as an effective means of drawing online media attention and revitalising local economies (Low, 2017; Shin & Lee, 2016a; 2016b; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 2010). Marcus (2019), a television news reporter for CNN Travel, suggests that the world's 10 "coolest" neighbourhoods are places that had not received much attention previously, but now are seen to be where 'the most interesting new restaurants, art galleries and coffee shops emerge' from old streets – for example, Embajadores (Madrid), Strasbourg-Saint-Denis (Paris), Historic Filipinotown (Los Angeles), Shimokitazawa (Tokyo) and Arroios (Lisbon): these locations are being gentrified as a result of their global popularity among the younger tourists. These coolest neighbourhoods identified by the major mass media as well as in social media are "Instagrammable venues" that are guaranteed to provide aesthetic and shareworthy images. In contrast to ordinary and "boring" streetscapes, these particular urban spaces, where hipsters and young artists trigger unique and exceptional localities and trends, interact with online practices through global networks. The selected specific neighbourhoods or streets function as translocal interfaces between online and urban spaces, they serve as important prerequisites to the research framework for synthesising the Lefebvrian theory and online space.

By including the concept of 'online space' in a Lefebvrian framework, this thesis seeks to capture the gap between online space and real space that produces a displacement of spatial context, local customs and collective histories from the rearrangement of place-images which blur the distinction between real space and online space. The gap is between "unattractive" reality and routines which are not likely to be selected as place-images shared in online space – for example, typical working-class red-brick houses, quiet and mundane streetscapes, shabby local eateries, and old markets - which might hinder young tourists from emulating the online images of hipster's trendy appearances and extraordinary experiences found by following "likes" on online platforms like blogs and Instagram though.

2.3 Reviewing Thematic Gaps in the Relational Spatialisation of Contemporary Cities

This section reviews the literature on four themes of spatialisation (capitalism, culture, imagery and information) in order to understand complex dynamics of spatial changes in contemporary cities. It aims to review the causal relationships between these four themes to discover research gaps which have been overlooked by previous studies. This review provides the basis for the development of the research questions and methodological framework.

2.3.1 Spatialisation of Capital

The flow and accumulation of capital on a global scale is a main factor driving the production of space, resulting in the spatial characteristic of contemporary capitalist cities in pursuit of high productivity and value on a local scale. Capitalist spatial transitions from the Industrial Revolution to globalisation have taken place as a result of new transport and communication technologies – the steam train, motor vehicle, electric telegraph, telephone and the Internet. Over the course of these technological changes, economic productivity and gross domestic product (GDP) have increased exponentially in developed countries, the Global North (Castells, 2010; Rifkin, 2014; Susskind, 2020). The prosperity of these countries depends on ceaseless economic growth (despite their recent sluggish economy), which is consolidated by technological innovations and leads to uneven development of urban spaces (Castells, 2010; Harvey, 1990; 2001; 2005; Sassen; 1991). According to Harvey (1990; 2005), capitalist spaces function with economic growth that was accelerated by a new manufacturing system – Fordism – that standardised mass production to improve productivity at a low cost and enabled unskilled workers to be deployed on automated assembly lines. However, underdevelopment or overaccumulation of capital in derelict sites triggers economic crisis and mass unemployment derived from rapid devaluation of land values without the expansion of the real economy and returns (Aalbers, 2008; Harvey, 1990; 2001; Smith, 1996; 2008). In the views of the Marxist geographers and urban sociologists – Manuel Castells, David Harvey, Saskia Sassen and Neil Smith – uneven production of space, conceptualised as ‘spatial fix’ by Harvey (2001) and the ‘tertiary circuit’ by Aalbers (2008), absorbs wealth into sites by (re)developing them and improving their performance in response to a restructuring of global market and industries. The global cities claimed by Sassen (1991) show how urban spaces are valorised and financialised through globalised networks of capital, labour and knowledge. Castells (2010) articulates financial relationships between space and information, showing that a new mechanism of spatialisation, driven by the global flow of foreign investment and elite labour migration, accelerates commercial

redevelopments and the gentrification of neighbourhoods on a local scale according to the rent gap between potential values of properties and current rental profits (Smith 1996; 2008).

The 1997 Asian financial crisis was a case of overaccumulation and devaluation of financial capital through a global network, resulting in extensive social and spatial changes. For example, rapid devaluation of properties, mass unemployment, displacement of the urban middle class, austerity, poverty, underdevelopment and economic polarisation occurred in Asian countries (Harvey, 2005; Krugman, 2008). This economic meltdown had started in Thailand and then spread to the neighbouring countries – Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Philippines as well as Hong Kong and South Korea (Harvey, 2005; Krugman, 2008), created by the asset bubbles and speculation in foreign exchange markets of the newly industrialised countries (NICs) (Harvey, 2005; Krugman, 2008). In practice, the serial crises were triggered by a sudden withdrawal of foreign currencies that had been concentrated mainly on Thailand's big export factories because of speculative attacks on, and drastic devaluation of, the Thai baht under the Thai government's fixed exchange rate system (Harvey, 2005; Krugman, 2008). Many foreign investors had rushed into the "Third World" after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the burst of Japanese bubble economy in 1992, and exceptionally low rates of bank interest in developed countries in the early 1990s (Glosserman, 2019; Krugman, 2008). The NICs had experienced rapid economic boom from speculative foreign investment in the export manufacturing industry, but the overaccumulation of foreign capital invested in residential and office buildings without an increase in production, raised the risk of the kind of deflation that Japan had experienced since the bubble burst in 1992 (Glosserman, 2019; Harvey, 2005; Krugman, 2008). The sudden devaluation of the Thai currency (Baht) and the spread of market disturbances across the South and East Asian countries resulted in the mass withdrawal of foreign investments, triggering the global economic collapse of 1997 (Harvey, 2005; Krugman, 2008).

The economic crisis that spread from Thailand had major effects on the built environment, policies and power in South Korea, physically distanced from Thailand, but linked in the Asian financial network that has been dominated in a neoliberal logic of the US and the IMF (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Glosserman, 2019; Harvey, 2005). This caused shutdowns of major South Korean companies and their factories, an economic meltdown of the middle class, a halt in housing and urban development projects in both public and private sectors, a reduction in national infrastructure plans, a devaluation of stocks and properties, an increasing rate of bank interest, economic stagflation, and privatisation of many public services (Harvey, 2005).

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 is an example of how the unbalanced flow and accumulation of capital through global networks are forged by time-space compression and the network society as a result of technological innovations in the mobility of information and digital communications as well as an advanced physical supply chain systems (Harvey 1990; Castells 2010). This global network based on the new technologies is connected to uneven development of urban space in capitalist cities, causing an economic crisis (overaccumulation and devaluation of capital) on a global scale and gentrification (a profit gap between different classes and the rent gap in properties) on a local scale.

Harvey (1990; 2001; 2005; 2019), Sassen (1991), Smith (1996; 2008) and Castells (1991; 2010) unfold the relationship between spatial changes and a reconfiguration of global industries. New production management systems based on advanced information and communications technologies realise larger profits than the traditional manufacturing economy did (Bell, 1973; Webster, 2014). There is a new spatial mechanism in the uneven production of neo-liberal, meritocratic and informational capitalism. Sassen (1991) and Harvey (1990; 2001) articulate a market-oriented restructuring of the service industries mediated by newly globalised production systems and centralised roles of cities in the neo-liberal economic logic. For example, whilst much manufacturing activities was moved to, or established in, China and the Third World, international financial centres are concentrated in London, New York, Tokyo and recently Shanghai. High-tech hubs have developed in Silicon Valley around San Francisco. Thus, contemporary urban spaces in capitalist cities are valorised by innovative production systems in the service and manufacturing industries through highly efficient networks of information and knowledge.

In the 19th to mid-20th centuries and before the 1980s globalisation and Thatcherism, manufacturing cities in the UK had focused on the efficiency of place-based mass production systems with local labour by taking advantage of national railway networks. This ensured low-cost and fast energy supplies from neighbouring coal-mining regions – for example, Sheffield (the steel industry) and Chesterfield (the coal production) (Chang, 2014; Rifkin, 2014; Schivelbusch, 2014; Susskind, 2020). In the 1970s and 1980s, the long-thriving British economy had experienced decades of economic decline during a reconfiguration of global industries derived from advanced production systems: a separation between the production and service businesses; the growing global logistics industry; and electronic communication technology (Castells, 1991; 2010; Chang, 2014; Sassen, 1991; Harvey, 1990; 2001; 2005; 2019). For example, Sheffield and Belfast had thrived with the 19th-century innovations in the steel and shipbuilding technologies – the Bessemer process in 1856 (a new mass production of steel) and a propeller-driven iron ship originally designed by an English civil engineer,

Isambard Kingdom Brunel, in 1843 (an innovation changing ship-building materials from wood to iron) (Kim, Yoon & Kang, 2014). However, over time the UK government had failed to encourage steady technological innovations in the manufacturing industry, and obsolescent facilities caused a sharp recession in the manufacturing-based economy of British industrial cities (Chang, 2014; Marr, 2017). In the meantime, the East Asian countries, South Korea, Japan and China, started to dominate manufacturing in the competitive global market by adopting new mass production systems – e.g. the LD steelmaking process and welding method in shipbuilding – that were operated with skilled but low-cost labour (Kim, Yoon & Kang, 2014). South Korea succeeded in rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in the 1970-1980s by investing heavily in new technologies: motor vehicles, electronics, semiconductors, steel, shipbuilding, construction and ICT (Chang, 2014). Technological innovations have led to significant improvement in economic productivity based on land (property), bringing about a dramatic valorisation of urban spaces on a local scale through a global shift in industry (Harvey, 2001). During the shift, Thatcherism was imposed on declining industrial cities in the UK, rebuilding a neoliberal economy that reinforced by privatisation of the nationalised industries – British Railways, Airways, Telecom, Steel and Petroleum (Seymour, 2012). Ultimately, this radical ideology of British politics and economic policy emerged to realise the ‘spatial fix’ that Harvey (2001) claims, reforming the obsolete production system in pursuit of profit maximisation and urban regeneration (Harvey, 2001; Herod, 2019; Zukin, 2006).

Uneven development is a systematic and structural geography created by the rent gap between potential values and real profits of properties (Smith 1996; 2008) which reinforces social polarisation and economic inequality derived from spatial stratification (Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008). With geographically unequal accumulation of capital, uneven valorisation or devaluation of lands becomes a key factor in determining characters of capitalist spaces (Harvey, 1990). Overaccumulation of capital brings about urban decay, deflation and mass unemployment in capital cities. Whereas Smith’s rent gap plays a key role in motivating the spatial valorisation of uneven development by processes such as gentrification, devaluation is resolved by a spatial fix that transforms derelict sites into highly efficient forms where capital can be newly accumulated to overcome problematic fate of capitalism: stagnation or stagflation. Thus, the spatial fix has created the contradictory production of urban space in the endless repetitions of destruction and construction to repair economic malfunction and devaluation in the contemporary circuit of capital. Yet, capitalism also faces a spatial dilemma between financial goals and community lives, setting socio-cultural rights and values – e.g. residential rights, cultural

diversity and historical context in inner-city neighbourhoods - against large-scale redevelopments (e.g. Jacobs 2016, originally published in 1961).

According to Smith (1996; 2008), large-scale developments are carried out in particular places to reduce the rent gap. The potential value of properties is assessed according to geographical accessibility and market places such as public transport, main streets and city centres with buoyant footfall of consumers. Smith (1996; 2008) explores empirical cases of uneven development of gentrification of the 1980s and 1990s driven by extensive privatisation, foreign investment and neoliberalism – Society Hill (Philadelphia, USA), Harlem (New York, USA), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Budapest (Hungary), and Paris (France). Although the cities had maintained a good balance between private markets and public services (social housing, public schools, and national health services), uneven development under neoliberalism converted the production of space into privatised projects and market-oriented policies in pursuit of high efficiency and profits (Chang, 2014; Marr, 2017; Smith, 1996). The case of New York City indicates that the central Harlem development of the 1980s displaced old and derelict buildings where mostly low-income African Americans had resided (Smith, 1996). Luxurious apartments and office blocks were constructed to monetise Harlem's potential values at a same level as the southern and western areas of Manhattan redeveloped and gentrified by private developer (Smith, 1996).

Castells (1991; 2010) disagrees with the term 'service industry' newly restructured in post-industrial cities. He redefines it as the information economy by exemplifying a vivid contrast between a financial analyst and a hamburger maker in the same service category. In the information economy, international firms centralised in urban centres take integrated command of managing their dispersed branches – e.g. global bank branches, chain stores, insurances and digital platform services (Uber, Deliveroo, YouTube and Airbnb) – based on copious flows of information collected from all business networks and analysed by headquarters in global cities. This information-driven industry is professionally run by highly educated elites in a meritocratic system, elites that Florida (2002; 2014) refers to as the creative class as a key driver of the global economy in a post-industrial era (Castells, 1991; 2010; Markovits, 2019; Sassen, 1991; Susskind, 2020). In contrast to Smith's uneven development and rent gap theories that describe the economic realisation of potential values through gentrification, Harvey (1990) and Castells (1991; 2010) highlight how flows of information and knowledge improve mobility and production systems of labour in urban space. In terms of information capitalism, the latest technological innovations are realised with digital devices and online services for banking, shopping, booking, working and learning. Information capitalism sets up cheaper, more efficient systems of economic

production by decreasing labour and energy requirements and increasing the speed and coverage of information without geographical barriers. The contemporary spatial fix driven by the information economy and communication technology increases the value gap between advanced technology institutions and small service businesses due to the destruction of the relational value of physical space over time (Harvey, 1990; 2001; Sheppard, 2006). It restructures a logic of industrial systems from labour-intensive production (manufacturing and agriculture) to knowledge-intensive production (communications, finance, software, education, and medical industries).

Technological innovations and advanced production systems valorise urban spaces that are dominated and gentrified by high-skilled elites who manage the information economy in close proximity to city centres (Florida, 2002; 2014; Harvey, 2005; 2019; Lees et al., 2008; Markovits, 2019; Sassen; 1991; Susskind, 2020). Once contemporary cities are reshaped by neoliberalism and are no longer subject of strong state regulation economic colonisation of urban areas by urban elites occurs (Atkinson, 2020; Minton, 2017). Atkinson (2020) articulates it as the 'alpha city' that is captured by the super-rich class. Although physical spaces are occupied and fixed "unevenly", the majority of wealth is dominated by the exclusive class "evenly" in the neoliberal logic of economic inequalities. Ironically, the creative class, who Florida (2002; 2014) claims is a barometer of socio-economic vibrancy in cities, displaces the unskilled and low-skilled working classes who had worked in under-paid, precarious and unstable jobs such as cleaners, caretakers, gatekeepers, construction labourers and bartenders (Florida, 2002; 2014; Harvey, 2005; 2019; Lees et al., 2008; Markovits, 2019; Sassen; 1991; Susskind, 2020). This brutal and ruthless displacement is justified by the aim of quick economic recovery. Redevelopments of the built environment temporarily solve the uneven devaluation of urban spaces by improving the financial performance of property. With increasing offshore investment, share trading and speculative construction, however, uneven redevelopment concentrates massive wealth and money power in the exclusive classes and their property, especially in the global cities like London, New York and Tokyo, in contrast to sweat equity in manufacturing cities driven by labour-intensive productivity (Atkinson, 2020; Castells, 2010; Chang, 2014; Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Minton, 2017). This spatially uneven and hierarchically exclusive accumulation of capital divides highly expensive neighbourhoods from the rest of the city – neighbourhoods that are formed as gated communities for the super-rich class or urban elites through a ruthless gentrification process of colonising lower price areas and displacing their residents (Atkinson, 2020; Harvey, 1990; 2005; 2019; Sassen; 1991; Smith, 1996; 2008). British sociologist, Ruth Glass (1964), coined the term 'gentrification' for the geographical shifts of socio-economic classes in the residential areas of the inner London in

the early 1960s. However, contemporary gentrification in post-industrial cities has been driven by the globalised and complicated dynamics of class, wealth, power and knowledge in the neoliberal and meritocratic competition for financial privileges (Aalbers, 2008; Atkinson, 2020; Castells, 1991; 2010; Harvey 1990; 2005; 2019; Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Markovits, 2019; Sassen, 1991; Smith, 1996; 2008; Susskind, 2020).

By facilitating the liquidity of capital in post-industrial cities, the spatial mechanism of knowledge-intensive production systems in global networks financialises the contemporary urban spaces of advanced capitalism. However, theoretical approaches that focus only on these economic processes are not fully able to explain the complex dynamics of contemporary spatialisation which also involve three further key aspects: culture, imagery and information. That is, capitalist spatialisation incorporates culture, imagery and information into the liquidity of urban spaces that are financialised through the spatial fix (Lefebvre 1991; Shields 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Harvey 1990; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2019; Castells 1991; 2010; Low 2017; Urry and Larsen 2011; Zukin 1998; 2006; 2010).

The importance of culture, imagery and information is discussed in the next sections to in order to clarify the spatial dynamics.

2.3.2 Spatialisation of Culture

Whilst the spatialisation of capital functions as the underlying mechanism creating the form of post-industrial cities, urban culture becomes a means of identifying spatial characteristics in the symbolic economy. Advanced capitalism sets the economic values of spaces by shaping distinctive qualities of urban cultures. The literature on spatialising urban cultures—focuses attention on how abstract cultures place financial values linked to concrete changes of urban spaces in pursuit of a spatial fix and liquidity (MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 1990, 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Harvey, 1990; 2008); Zukin, 1991; 1998; 2009; 2010; Lash and Urry, 1994; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Low, 2017). New urban cultures arrange both symbolic meanings and the visible shape of urban spaces. Cultures and images in urban space are transformed from invisible signs and transmitted into rapid and cheap capital flows of digital data – e.g. online deals from social media, OTT media platforms, e-commerce, property websites, etc.

In the network society, the symbolic economy aims to maximise financial values of and profits from the built environment through artificial visualisations or speculatively staged impressions of spatial cultures (Baudrillard, 1994; 2017a; Debord, 1977; Goffman, 1990; Lash & Urry, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 2003a; Zukin, 1998). For example, entertainment complexes, shopping malls and theme restaurants (e.g. Hard Rock Cafés) in Disneyland Parks, Universal Studios and the Fukuoka Canal City were spatialised to stimulate tourists' extraordinary impressions. The aestheticisation of the built environment, especially designed by star architects, is an effective spatial strategy for profit maximisation that, at the same time, destroys "unattractive" localities (Jacobs, 2016; Zukin, 1998; 2010) - translocal spaces dictated by staged authenticity (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Social, cultural and physical spaces are closely interrelated to increase the financial returns from urban space through the use of newly exaggerated place-images. Previous research has been ambiguous about, the relationship between urban cultures and the built environment, so this discussion focuses on this relation in in the symbolic economy.

Urban cultures produce representations of spaces developed by spatial imagery. Signs and images in space are used as spatial metaphors in visualising spatial meanings and cultures (Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 1989; 2003a; Lynch, 1960). According to Sheppard (2006), changing social constructions formed by collective experiences and emotions shifts a flow of capital to unique spaces that can satisfy social demands for attractive cultures. Thus, urban spaces are reshaped by cultures dominant in social relations and experiences. This new form of the production of physical spaces is regulated by new urban cultures and lifestyles through the global reconfiguration of industries and technologies (Shields, 1989; 1990, 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Zukin, 1991; 1998; 2009; 2010; Low, 2017; Urry and Larsen, 2011; MacCannell, 1973; 2011). Spatial branding of exclusive urban cultures and lifestyles – e.g. Starbucks, Apple Stores, and Raemian (A Korean brand of Samsung apartments) – intermingles the information economy and the symbolic economy to increase financial profits (Castells, 2010; Harvey, 1990; Lash & Urry, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Commercial branding of spatial meanings speculated by translocal cultures leads to rapid gentrification and the financialisation of neighbourhoods.

Attractive cultures enable spatial metaphors to valorise the built environment by evoking intense emotions such as fantasies and desires for experiencing spectacles and exclusive spaces. This link between social space (individual taste) and cultural space (authenticity) create fresh demands for appealing products and services in physical space - aspatial fix through the symbolic economy (Harvey, 2001; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 1990, 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998;

2010). Physical transformations of urban space are driven by the rent gap, but consumer demands for attractive spaces are satisfied by attractive cultures and dominant lifestyles. Consequently, urban cultures that strongly influence people's cognition and decision-making about spatial experiences are likely to widen the rent gap by boosting consumer spending in space. According to Zukin (1998; 2010), when living in old industrial lofts in New York became a fashionable housing culture for young artists, converting lofts to residential uses spread quickly among landlords who saw an opportunity to increase their profits. This cultural demand for the New York industrial lofts was at the basis of the development of ruthless gentrification, indicating that spatialising urban cultures is ultimately oriented toward profit maximisation no matter what the urban cultures are.

Inspired by French theorists like Bourdieu (*habitus*), Lefebvre (the dialectic of space) and Foucault (*dispositif*), Shields (1989; 1990; 2013a; 2013b) coins the term 'social spatialisation' to articulate the changing production of urban space driven by social reconstructions, cultural shifts and technological innovations. His case studies of Brighton (UK), Niagara Falls (Canada and US) and the West Edmonton Mall (Canada) examines how the meanings of these spaces had been socially altered by new cultural perceptions manipulated by the dominant place-images of Brighton and Niagara Falls or the artificially-staged authenticity of the West Edmonton Mall (Shields, 1989; 1990; 2013a). Holiday resorts, honeymoon hotels and entertainment multiplexes were developed to respond the new cultures and consumer demands of tourists influenced by advanced transport technologies – public trains, cruise ships, private cars and low-cost flights (Shields, 1989; 1990; 2013a; 2013b). Urry and Larsen (2011) also describe strong desires to seek authentic experiences that are culturally demanded in space and economically responded to by business. The cultural behaviour of tourists - the 'tourist gaze' (Urry and Larsen 2011) - and the cultural setting of the gaze is reflected in the business of creating 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell 1973; 2011). Social and cultural spatialisation aims to satisfy the tourist demand for extraordinary experiences in order to maximise business profits in the tourism economy. In this sense, the physical production of advanced capitalist spaces is carried out socially by the new cultural demands of individuals stimulated by authentic spectacles. The production of these spaces is ultimately oriented toward profit maximisation by directing demand into profitable and aesthetic settings of staged authenticity – light, furniture, pictures, sculptures, decorations, costumes, painting, cooking, dancing and singing.

In the process of spatialising urban cultures, the *flâneur*, (the stroller in French), plays a pivotal role as an explorer of city life. According to Shields (1989; 2013a) and Castigliano (2017), *flâneurs* not only aimlessly strolled through the labyrinths of the 19th-century Paris

streets, but also were dandified observers who detached themselves from social relations. Their cultural practices originated in encountering unexpected sights and sounds (spectacles) in the maze-like streets that existed before Haussmann's renovation of Paris (Castigliano (2017). In destroying and replacing the small medieval buildings and streets, Haussmann's boulevards signified Paris's modernity (Castigliano, 2017). *Flâneurs* were not only s urban observer of new cultures, but were also walking exhibitions of their own flamboyant and theatrical appearances (Castigliano, 2017; Shields, 1989; 2013a), were symbols of the modernity of the built form of Paris and of 19th-century urban lifestyle (Castigliano, 2017). Just as their urban explorations sought sensational and inspiring spectacles of modern fashion, design, food and architecture in the streets of Paris, contemporary hipsters, tastemakers and social media influencers lead young people into a new urban cultures, playing a ia similar role to the 19th century *flâneurs*. The massive prolific flow of digital images and information stimulates contemporary *flâneurs* to be obsessed with enchanting vibes beautifully situated in entertainment venues – e.g. cafes, restaurants, pubs, department stores, hotels and theme parks. Authentic and aesthetic spectacles in these spaces are presented to satisfy tourist fantasies (Debord, 1977; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 2010). Debord (1977) conceptualises the 'society of the spectacle' in which people crave glamorous visual experiences. Recent *flâneurs* have sought and consumed attractive, unique and distinct cultures in order to share their experiences with young urban tourists through their blog posts and social media feeds (MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 2013a; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin,1998; 2010. Zukin et al, 2009). Although hipsters do not want to be involved in greedy consumerism like the 19th-century *flâneurs*, they unintentionally set a pattern of trendy consumer culture in train by attracting more urban tourists to the featured neighbourhoods. This then leads to increased rents and the gentrification of the areas. For this reason, in Seoul hipsters are recognised as major originators of gentrification in transformations from houses to commercial buildings. Trendy bloggers have also become leading 'prosumers', (Toffler,1980), who simultaneously both consume and produce alternative urban cultures.

2.3.3 Spatialisation of Imagery

In the transition from traditional society to the advanced capitalist city, signs and images have become deciphered as dominant meanings of space rather than origins and context. For example, Shields (2013a) indicates how symbolic meanings of Niagara Falls had been

shifted from 19th century pilgrims seeing it as a sacred and ritualistic site to a fashionable honeymoon attraction in the 20th-century tourism industry. The earlier (European settler) place-images of Niagara Falls stemmed from a religious discovery by Father Hennepin in 1697 and then were strengthened as a natural shrine by rituals of pilgrimages in the 19th century. But the enormous wave of industrialisation in the early 20th century had transformed it from a preserved religious site to a heavy industrial area with cheap power from the Falls (Shields, 2013a). The transformation of the spatial roles and meanings resulted from changing practices in the social and economic transition from religious faith to industrial production. But in the post-industrial society, the earlier place-image of the sacred pilgrimage to Niagara Falls was transmitted to modern young people who had fantasies about the spiritual trip of a lifetime for their weddings (Shields, 2013a). Couples' spatial imagination, spurred by the modern tourism industry, pictured the pleasurable authenticity of their honeymoon (Shields, 2013a). Overwhelming meanings and place-images, driven by a ruling logic of space and time, reshape the production of space, no matter what origin of space is.

In the conceptualisations of contemporary cities in the 'consumer society' (Baudrillard, 2017a) and the 'society of the spectacle' (Debord 1977), place-images staged in pursuit of profit maximization have overwhelmed meanings and origins of space in order to stimulate consumers' obsessions with attractive spatial settings (Lash & Urry, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 2013a; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). The aestheticisation of buildings, or "Disneyfication" (Zukin, 1998; 2010), aims to make distinctive, unique and spectacular place-images in response to a propensity of young tourists in the symbolic economy (Harvey, 2001; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). According to Baudrillard (1994; 2017a), aesthetic place-images are decoupled from meanings and origins of space in reality, but they justify people fetishizing their fantasies about particular materials and spaces – e.g. theme parks, entertainment complexes, hotels, restaurants, cafés and luxury apartments. In examples ranging from a medieval palace to contemporary Disneyland, Baudrillard shows how manipulated place-images have played a key role as a highly reliable means of satisfying the burning desires of the ruling class for power and wealth (Baudrillard, 1994; 2005; 2017a; 2017b; Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 2013a; Zukin; 1998; 2010). Although spatial transformations have taken place in the period of transition to the contemporary consumer society, a system of spatial imagery is ultimately aimed at controlling people's emotions by taking advantage of faith, economic, military hegemony (e.g. nuclear arms in the Cold War), and technical knowledges (Baudrillard, 1994; 2005; 2017a; 2017b; Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 2013a). Therefore, staged imagery is aesthetically developed by the manipulation of spatial meanings and origins in the symbolic

economy. This system of space mediated by spatial imagery is conceptualised by Shields (2013a; 2013b) as 'social spatialisation', socially constructed and influenced by cultural shifts to capture the symbolic meanings of urban space.

Baudrillard (1994) coins the term 'simulacrum' – that which is transformed from a real representation into a fictional symbol and image by being decoupled from its spatial origin and context. The fictional authenticity of simulacra – e.g. hyper-realism and Disneyfication – is relied on rather than reality and truth (Baudrillard, 1994; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Disneyland is an obvious case of simulacra visualised in childlike fantasies influenced by old European fairy stories and myths. It imitates existing European castles and urban landscapes, but entirely replaces their reality and meanings with fictional spaces in which imagined symbols and signs are aesthetically exaggerated along Disneyland principles (Baudrillard, 1994; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Similarly, Baudrillard argues, medieval churches had served as the simulacra for religious worship by creating and displaying sacred images – holy architecture, paintings, scriptures and books. Like the medieval church, the post-modernist simulacra of Disneyland are dedicated to dreams and hopes, but profits from their fantasies by selling hugely expensive tickets for the theme parks. Disneyland is an elaborate staging aimed at monetising people's fantasies in the symbolic economy of capitalism. According to Low (2017), translocal space embodied by a transcendent circuit of labour and residence in global networks incorporates diverse cultures and images into hyper-realistic objects. Recent Disney movies and animations, which are digitally transmitted to children around the world through their over-the-top (OTT) video platform, Disney+, have strengthened the simulacra that have been developed since 1955. The images of Disneyland on Disney+ are recognised as staged fictions differentiated from the real Disneyland in physical places and the medieval European spaces imitated by Disneyland. Thus, the Disney-style architecture is a highly effective means of setting up the translocal space.

Contemporary tourists and consumers desire to consume unique, authentic and aesthetic images of spaces or materials. Urry and Larsen (2011) conceptualise this propensity as the 'tourist gaze' that is derived from globalised tourist preferences and practices at leisure. The staged authenticity of theatrical spectacles and the simulacra of fictional depiction in the hyper-realistic transformation to translocal space is contrasted with non-tourist social practices in everyday life, especially at home and work (Baudrillard, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011). The physical spaces of tourism are profoundly transformed in response to changing tourist demands and practices. Zukin (1998; 2010) gives examples of aesthetically staged place-images of entertainment complexes, shopping malls, theme parks and theme restaurant chains in the symbolic economy. Urry and Larsen (2011) explore the

relationship between changing tourist practices and increasing use of low-cost airlines and mobiles. As Harvey (1990) and Sheppard (2006) describe, time-space compression shrinks relational distance between countries or cities through cheap flights and free digital data sharing, creating transnational or translocal place-images enticingly situated to draw more attention from increasing numbers of international tourists (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In the networked society connected through digital technologies like digital cameras, smartphones and online sharing platforms (Castells, 1991; 2010), and in contrast to traditional photo albums printed for an individual or family collection, people easily share a massive number of digital photos and videos with online strangers on global social media services like YouTube. Ultimately, a flow of diverse digital images and videos through online space stimulates people's desire to be socially and culturally distinguished in capitalist space.

Lacan (2004) claims that man's desire is satisfied by being desired by others, and in this sense, Baudrillard (2017a) argues that the transition of the economic system from production (manufacturing industries) to consumption (service industries) is based on ostentatious consumption driven by the gaze of other. Harvey (2001; 2009) describes shows how a growing desire for maximising the exchange-value of individual properties caused speculative investments during the spatial fix, while Aalbers (2008) sees the financialization of space as the quaternary circuit of capital. Baudrillard (2017a) argues that sign-value signifies wealth and social status by displaying symbolic materials and spaces – for example, a luxurious house and car, an elite university degree, a certificate of professional qualification and an exclusive club which people want to possess or belong to. Bourdieu (2010a) and Goffman (1990) conceptualise this social desire for sign-value as 'social distinction' and 'impression management' respectively.

Consuming aesthetic exclusive place-images becomes a means of social distinction and impression management whereby a person's activities are 'staged' to create a socially distinct impression on other people in face-to-face interactions with the aim of gaining their admiration and respect for that person's social status (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990). For example, the first-class service for exclusive customers in a fine-dining restaurant signifies privileged social status that is made visible as symbolic consumption. Performing good manners at a table (Goffman's front-region, face-to-face) creates a distinctive impression of someone who is eligible for exclusive social status (Goffman, 1990). Consuming exclusive cultures, lifestyles and images in contemporary consumer society is related to embodied practices of individuals in particular spaces situated for individual backgrounds – social class, status, religion, education and wealth - 'habitus' (Bourdieu

2010b). Occupying more desirable spaces – whether home, work or leisure - is closely associated with higher social distinction and habitus of individuals as well as creating better impression management. As discussed in the section on the spatialisation of capital, highly competitive property markets develop in response to growing consumer desires for status-maximising signs (symbolic social status) and exchange values (economic profits).

The literature on spatial imagery explores the relationship between spaces and imaginations, but the gap between abstract meanings and visible signs of the built environment is not often supported by analysis or empirical evidence. Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Goffman, Low, MacCannell, Urry and Larsen, and Zukin discuss symbolic meanings of urban space but do not clarify its connection with physical formations. An opposite case is Lynch's (1960) monumental work, *The Image of the City*. He focuses on physical forms of urban space in Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles using mental maps and identifies five empirical elements – paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks – that function as major urban forms involved in forming people's mental images of their experiences of urban space. Lynch's mental maps show how people transform physical elements of the built environment into imaginary forms during their wayfinding. However, although he articulates the cognitive conversion from physical space to spatial imagery in urban practice, symbolic meanings of space (of the kind subsequently included in concepts of place-image, representation, authenticity and simulacra) are not part of the empirical approach of his study. In fact, in his book Lynch (1960) points to the practical difficulty of connecting the mental mapping of urban forms to the symbolic meanings of spaces. People's cognitive processes are influenced by cultures, images, values, norms and desires in their urban practices, but these connections are not the subject of his study.

In brief, the literature on spatial imagery can be divided into two alternative approaches: symbolic meanings and physical formations of space.

2.3.4 Spatialisation of Information

After the decline of Fordism, the reconfiguration of socio-economic production systems in post-industrial cities has been oriented toward the service industries and the finance sector in global networks. Castells (1991; 2010), Markovits (2019) and Susskind (2020) claim that new urban elites, in contrast to the traditional ruling class, have used advanced knowledge

of and skills in data processing to cement their superior status in the meritocratic system of the information economy, supported by the increasing use of information technology by banks, international firms, financial institutions, global retail chains, law firms and online platforms. The Information industry differs from the commercial service economy like local retail shops and the hospitality industry, by drawing up effective strategies for profit maximisation and global coordination of branch operations through collecting and processing extensive data (Castells, 1991; 2010). The majority of institutions and firms benefiting from the information economy are concentrated in city centres, especially in the global cities (Sassen, 1991). Spatial hubs of information, knowledge and technologies have been developed as new central business districts (CBDs), playing a leading role in managing local and overseas offices and attracting highly trained elite labour to urban centres (Florida, 2002; 2014, Zukin, 2010). The information industry and network society privilege the new elite class who are competent at data processing and management, and who displace middle-class residents who work in less professional or at routine administrative tasks which could be automated by artificial intelligence (AI) system (Castells, 1991; 2020; Susskind, 2020). The knowledge-intensive industry operated by information elites has rearranged urban spaces through gentrifying neighbourhoods during the rapid transition to the information-driven service economy.

As Baudrillard (2017a) suggests, the 'consumer society' commodifies urban space to stimulate consumers to spend money on distinctive atmospheres with service, performance, light, scent, music and architectural design. Using digital devices to produce and share information across online platforms accelerates a dramatic shift of consumer cultures in urban space by exaggerating spatial images (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017; Castells, 2010; Low, 2017). Online space is linked and extended to everyday practices in urban space, rearranging the relationship between social practices, spatial cognition and spatial imagination. It is recognised as a newly-extended space that affects the built environment producing a new production of physical space (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017; Castells, 2010; Low, 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). The literature on urban space and social media examines how online space translates actual social practices – daily routines, leisure activities and individual emotions – into online data and how selective imaginations in the flow of online data distort practices (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). This field of research shows how online data about particular cities – Twitter and Louisville (Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015), Instagram and Amsterdam (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017), and Foursquare and Alicante (Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017) – is created from selective social practices of

the younger and creative class. The selective data is established in distinct structures in urban space such as historic or cultural landmarks; tourist attractions (public squares, palaces, cathedrals, castles, parks, gardens and museums); and hipster places (markets, restaurants, cafés and pubs). According to Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda (2017), this spatial pattern of online data is related to user preferences, reinforced by online practices: check-ins, geotags, likes, shares and hashtags. Boy & Uitermark (2015; 2016; 2017) contribute to an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between the city (Amsterdam) and social media (Instagram) in the uneven and selective incorporation of spatial information, imaginations and consumer practices: 1) filtering spatial and social practices (Instagram's gaze); 2) stratification of spatial imagination (uneven attention); and 3) segmentation of spatial consumption (selective hot spots). However, their research has few discussions of the empirical impacts of online data on the built environment that indicates a new mechanism of urban transformation linked with online practices.

Low (2017) describes the 'translocal space' that is linked to and influenced by different localities, people and cultures through the simultaneous exchange of digitalised texts, images, voices, videos and money with multiple cities or countries. Translocality involves the multiple spaces, cultural practices and social constructions that have been incorporated into a transcendent composite with instantaneous communication technologies (Low, 2017). Castells (1991; 2010), Low (2017), Urry and Larsen (2011), Zukin (2010) and Boy & Uitermark (2015; 2017) also focus on the relationship between spatial changes, information proliferation, global networks, and social practices in contemporary cities. But the concept of "translocality" allows the study of flexible and changeable formations of urban practices that are digitally linked to, and influenced by, virtual reproduction of selective realities in online networks. This is in contrast to cultural centres of fixed localities, such as New York and London, where multiple socio-cultural practices of different ethnicities and generations are mixed and interact (Low, 2017; Zukin, 2010). From a similar perspective,

Castells (1991; 2010) provides an understanding of a new processes of change in contemporary capitalist cities as a result of massive flows of information and knowledge through global networks - the 'space of flows'. Urry and Larsen (2011) describe how increasing information from online messages, photos and videos shifts tourist gaze (an attention and demand in the tourism industry) to staged authenticity distorted by translocal imagery. Zukin (2010) captures a shift of authenticity of Williamsburg in New York that was discovered by insiders (local newspapers, blogs and wiki) and exaggerated by outsiders' media during its gentrification process. It transformed Williamsburg into a translocal neighbourhood for attracting the outsiders' gaze of young international tourists or elite

workers. Boy & Uitermark (2015; 2017) examine empirical evidence on how Instagram data reconfigures localities in Amsterdam. The data flow produces both heterogeneity and homogeneity of cultural practices at the same time though discovering diverse spaces and filtering out mundane spaces from them (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017). It shows how small clusters, which are accentuated by social media users, are refined into a few and selective hotspots through uneven networks and socio-spatial inequality. Online data flows incorporate diverse localities into a few spatial commodities, accentuating authentic, unique and distinctive practices in a homogeneous way.

From a sociological perspective, Berardi (2015) and Ko (2020a; 2020b) examine how and why contemporary South Korea, and Seoul in particular, has been transformed into translocal space linked to online information and digital practices – social media, blogs, messengers, mobile apps, online banks, online-based taxi services, digital food delivery platforms, and media streaming services. In arguing that South Korea and Seoul are advanced examples of the network society and the information city, these researchers not only explore the social division between the real and the virtual lives of Koreans, but also clarify new cultural practices that are extended to, and sometimes dominated by, online space. Berardi (2015) provides an understanding of how South Korea's society has been highly digitalised and networked after a turbulent transition to becoming an independent democratic and industrialised country. In the 20th century, Koreans suffered severe historical hardships in political and economic turmoil – the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), the Korean War (1950-1953), the military dictatorship (1961-1993), and the Asian Financial Crisis and the IMF's control of Korean markets (1997-2001). According to Berardi (2015), South Korea is not only the 'ground zero of the world', but also a 'blueprint for the future of the planet'. These catastrophic historical experiences of brutal loss and demolition now liberate contemporary Koreans from past cultural traditions and social restrictions (Berardi, 2015). As Harvey (1990) shows, Haussmann's renovation of Paris in the 19th century was the introduction and reflection of 19th century modernity, Korean modernism likewise started by carrying out "destructive creation" (adopting new technologies) as well as a "creative destruction" (discarding old practices). This is a principal reason why South Korea was able to be converted to a digital society so readily (Berardi, 2015). Most Koreans are obsessed with Samsung smartphones and use them to simulate digital lives in order to escape from real everyday routines (Berardi, 2015). The wired virtuality enables them to overcome and transcend physical limitations (Berardi, 2015). In addition, Hangul (한글), the Korean writing system, is an effective text-input tool ideally suited for digital communications (Berardi, 2015). This form of writing was devised in 1443 King Sejong to create an easy Korean alphabet system that could be learned quickly by ordinary people, in contrast with the

complicated Chinese characters mainly used by privileged Korean nobles. The simple letters used in Hangeul are conveniently arranged on smartphones or computer keyboards to send text messages, and are much easier to adapt than Chinese and Japanese writing systems based on a logographic. But the take-up of digital technologies has also been required by high-tech companies and cities in South Korea to increase productivity and success in the fierce competition for achieving national goals and competing in the global market (Berardi, 2015). Contemporary Korean individuals are virtually wired up through digital practices – messages, tweets and games with strangers, but they are actually isolated from society through “desertification of reality”, as evidenced by South Korea having the highest rate of suicide among OECD countries (Berardi, 2015; World Health Organization, 2018).

From a perspective drawing on Bourdieu’s “distinction”, Ko (2020a; 2020b) shows how the cultural practices of Korean millennials in Seoul have become intermingled with online imaginations and influenced by social media, particularly Instagram. Historically, the spatial boundaries of young Koreans’ cultures shifted from Seoul’s old centre, Myeong-dong, in the 1960s to places at the edges of Seoul like Hongdae, Garosu-gil and Itaewon in the 2000s (Ko, 2020a; 2020b). From the 2010s, spatial boundaries start to transcend physical geography and extend into online space (Ko, 2020a; 2020b). Whilst residential neighbourhoods were converted into gentrified commercial properties, the younger tourists commodified the streets by sharing social media hashtags: #hotplace, #hotspot #hipplace and #instagrammableplace and gentrifying neighbourhoods become tied to social media keywords. In a similar view, Berardi (2015) highlights the social division between real lives and virtual simulations that occurs in high-tech capitalist cities in South Korea. Many Koreans are absorbed into their virtual world (digital simulacra), such as online games and social media platforms, in order to be emancipated from the harsh realities of their everyday lives.

In brief, online imaginations are developed from multiple but selective cultures, localities and individual desires in global networks, but physically reflected in several neighbourhoods at the same time. Berardi (2015) and Ko (2020a; 2020b) provide an understanding of Seoul’s new spatialisation reconfigured by online information and practices from a socio-cultural perspective.

The literature on the spatialisation of information addresses three key points. Firstly, the information economy can be divided into two aspects: production and consumption. The elite information class produces huge profits from their businesses by taking advantage of exclusive data processing for commanding global and local branches. Online influencers

lead distinctive and selective trends in commercial activities by sharing selective online data on social media – e.g. Instagram, Twitter, Foursquare which attracts young consumers to stratified and segmented spaces: tourist attractions and hipster hotspots. Secondly, spatial patterns of production and consumption in the information economy are closely related to gentrifying neighbourhoods from which original residents and businesses are displaced by the information elites and tourists. Lastly, the flow of information leads to spatial changes which produce both a spatial fix and profit maximisation.

However, even though this literature examines the spatial characteristics and structures influenced by online data and how online data influences spatial patterns of individual practices, the research has not paid much attention to the possible empirical links between information and the (re)production of space in gentrification processes. Further study needs to be conducted on the wider sources of influence on processes of spatial change under gentrification that are mediated by online space.

2.4 Critiques, Questions and Approaches

In this section, critiques developed from the literature review are drawn on to justify the research questions and the methodological approaches in this thesis in relation to: methods, context and spatial practices. The section sets up the rationales for the methodology (discussed in Chapter 3); the online-reality context in Seoul (covered in Chapter 4), and refractive spatialisation (set out in Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

2.4.1 Alternative Methods: Dialectical Discussion and Framework

The literature provides in-depth but fragmented understandings of four themes: the spatialisation of capital; culture; imagery; and information. There are few theoretical linkages made between these themes and the research offers disconnected and limited perspectives on the relational dynamics of contemporary urban spaces. Harvey (2019) highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to fragmented ideas to weave social, economic, cultural and imaginary spaces into an integrated perspective of urban geography. He raises a challenging question about how to establish a conceptual lens combining at least the four themes to explore practical spatialisation. As discussed in Section 2.2, Lefebvre and Shields show that a dialectical approach can uncover the relational processes of contemporary spatialisation by articulating contradictory formations and interactions between the different

forms of space – conceived space (spatial knowledge and strategies), perceived space (the built environment) and imagined space (place-images).

With the support of the empirical literature on informational spatialisation (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017; Castells, 2010; Low, 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015), Lefebvrian theory of the production of space and consideration of contemporary online space can be incorporated into a dialectical framework. However, extending Lefebvrian theory to better incorporate the online world requires a methodological framework that grapples with different theoretical perspectives (the seven foundations in Section 2.2.2) in order to include within the Lefebvrian dialectic the complex factors of contemporary spatial transformations. The Lefebvrian relational approach and methodological framework developed in this thesis is discussed and clarified in Chapter 3.

2.4.2 New Context: Translocality and the Online-Reality Gap

With the importance of a dialectical approach to creating an integrated perspective, a key question arises about what effects online space has on the built environment. This research focuses on spatial boundaries in which traditional spaces collide with new logics and systems in spatial transformations resulting from globalisation and technological innovations. Thus, translocality, or hyper-real space, emerges from these transformations, decoupled from its historical origins and contexts and reorganised as a universal and multiple form for satisfying both cultural desires and financial goals at the same time (Castells, 1991; 2010; Desmond, 2014; Harvey, 1990; Low, 2017; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b). The literature captures the emerging context which distorts reality and accentuates virtuality at the boundaries. In the research for the thesis, the boundaries between reality and virtuality are conceptualised as the “online-reality gap” that deviates from the translocal transformations. For example, ordinary houses and mundane streets are detached from people’s desires, fantasies, interests and tastes in a digitally networked society. This new context of the capitalist, cultural and informational spatialisations in contemporary Seoul is examined in Chapter 4.

2.4.3 Relational Practices: Selective Information and Stratified Space in Unevenly Networked Society

The literature focuses on new logics and systems in the production of urban spaces in post-industrial cities. New logics and systems lead to new transformations such as translocality and hyper-realism. Globalisation and technological innovations in the 1980-90s oriented cities toward a post-industrial economy (service, information and symbolic markets), privatised developments, financialised spaces, globalised industries and gentrification. The literature conceptualises the new logics and systems of the post-industrial cities – Castells' (1991; 2010) information economy, Sassen's (1991) global city, Harvey's (1990; 2001) spatial fix, Baudrillard's (1994) simulacra, Lash & Urry's (1994) symbolic economy, MacCannell's (2011) new ethics of sightseeing, and Urry and Larsen's (2011) tourist gaze. Thus, understanding the spatial transformations newly reconfigured in a global logic and the flow of advanced capitalist systems requires comprehensive and integrated approaches to interpreting dynamic factors and processes in urban space.

Research indicates that unevenly accessible online data and networks contribute to selective practices of consumption cultures in urban centres and historical sites (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). Boy and Uitermark (2015; 2016; 2017) examine empirical findings on the relationship between uneven networks, segmented information and stratified spaces in Amsterdam. However, their research gives little evidence of a link between the spatial transformations and online data because they do not address the different complex meanings attached to online and real spaces by different groups, actions and formats: e.g. data producers (blog and social media influencers); younger tourists; cultural practices; place-images; and business strategies. In contrast to the in-depth theories of the 1980-90s reconfigurations conceptualised by Castells (1991; 2010), Sassen (1991) and Harvey (1990; 2001), the 2000-10s transformations of urban spaces in digital society are less articulated through qualitative and relational approaches. Accordingly, this research focuses on the qualitative links between selective online information and stratified spaces in unevenly networked society.

The following chapter (Chapter 3) sets out the qualitative methods of this study, Chapter 4 provides background and context for the research on Seoul, and empirical evidence for the new spatialisation is presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature review clarified the conceptual gaps in relational dynamics of contemporary spatialisation: advanced capitalism, urban culture, individual imagery, and online information. By bridging these gaps, Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b) develop an alternative approach to spatial transformations at the three level of space (conceived, perceived and imagined spaces) before the emergence of online space. This chapter aims to justify and clarify three different methods in the relational ethnography inspired by the Lefebvrian perspective and shaped by the two-tier framework of online-reality interfaces. It shows how three methods (Section 3.4 Methods) are complemented through the framework (Section 3.3 Framework) to penetrate traditional barriers of the literature and approach the online-reality interfaces (3.2 Rationale) that have been neglected by the literature (See Figure 3-1). Material gathered to answer the research questions has been assembled to examine three different aspects of three different types of spaces: 1) blog content analysis in online space; 2) semi-structured interviews in physical space; and 3) case study in conceptual space. By establishing a relational ethnography, the methods shed light on marginal spaces in online-reality interfaces (fragments, boundaries and gaps) in which the relational transformations of Yeonnam-dong took place.

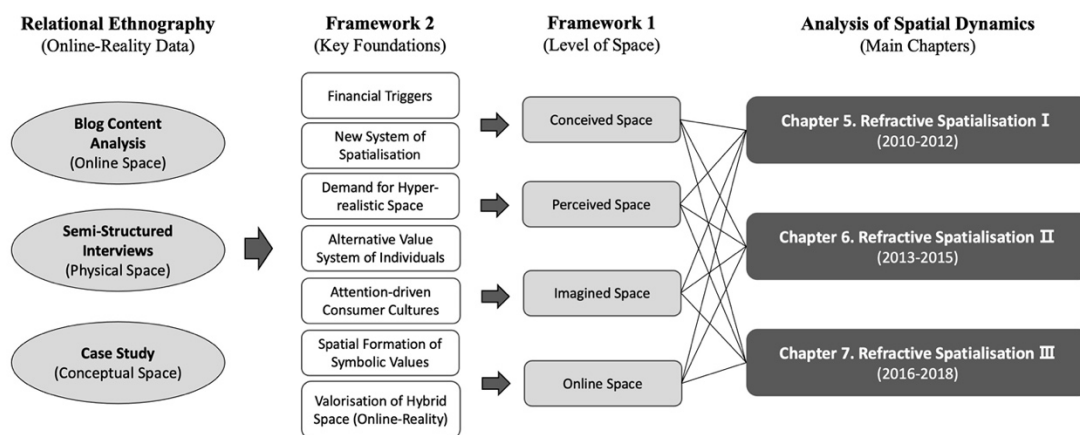


Figure 3-1. Flow Chart of Research Methods and the Analytical Framework

3.2 Rationale

3.2.1 Relational Ethnography in Contemporary Cities

Hine (2000), Whatmore (2002) and Desmond (2014) criticise overinterpretations mainly focus on a narrow range of research objects and are restricted to subjective approaches. Although contemporary cities have been transformed by the complex dynamics of a variety factors relating to globalisation and technological innovations, traditions of social sciences – sociology, ethnography, geography and urban studies – have overlooked new triggers and mechanisms of social processes (Desmond, 2014). Novel and alternative approaches are needed in order to clarify emerging dynamics in urban spaces: e.g. the interaction between cultural practices and online communications (Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2015); the ‘interface between social and natural worlds’ (Whatmore, 2002); or the incorporation of changing industries into social spatialisation (Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b). Such approaches shed light on relational transformations elicited by emerging factors in society and space – human desires, online platforms, capitalist flows, linguistic signifiers, industrial machinery and non-human territory. Contemporary urban space is not only decoupled from traditional practices, logics and systems, but is also reconfigured by the dynamic spaces of ideological, imagined and symbolic practices. Comprehending these changes requires establishing new methodological approaches in social sciences to understand the emerging layers hidden in everyday lives.

The importance of macro-historical forces to sociological thought and ethnographic explanation is indisputable, but ethnographers need not relegate the study of social processes to comparative-historical sociologists alone; need not be the humble servant to a “macro explanation,” patching holes here and there; need not cede expertise to theorists of the social world who hardly have walked its streets. (Desmond, 2014, p.565)

Relational ethnography in urban space attempts to understand relational transformations in complex triggers and mechanisms. As discussed in Chapter 2, contemporary cities have been restructured by global markets and networks, creating a new flow of spatial logics and systems: translocality or transnationality. Whatmore (2002) unfolds the ‘hybrid geographies’ of empirical processes in the relational interactions between natures and cultures, materials and social practices, and technologies and spaces. The concept of ‘hybrid geographies’ articulates the post-modernist interfaces in which a variety of factors and actors are intermingled and incorporated. Yet, relational transformations take place in unpredictable ways and locations, so relational ethnography is referred to a research method for seeking

the erratic interfaces in urban space and clarifying the mechanisms under complex dynamics. Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b) pay attention to the marginal spaces that had been ignored for a long time but which provoke the relational transformations between abstract and real spaces in changing social and cultural structures—e.g. shopping centres, seaside resorts and derelict neighbourhoods. By capturing complex combinations and ramifications in contemporary cities, the relational ethnography, as an alternative approach, contributes to identifying the new triggers, such as online space, which take place in relational interconnections in marginal spaces.

3.2.2 Conducting Relational Ethnography for Online-Reality Research

This section aims to justify and articulate how three research methods in relational ethnography examine marginal interfaces that elicit relational transformations in a contemporary urban space, Yeonnam-dong. It also shows why the methods are needed in the context of this online-reality research on gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. As discussed in Section 2.2.3 and Section 3.2.1, relational ethnography is relevant to online-reality research that traces marginal spaces reshaped by emerging fragments, boundaries and gaps in the clash between the reality and the virtuality of contemporary urban spaces (See Figure 3-2). Ultimately, this section clarifies how the online-reality research is complemented by three methods in three marginal spaces.

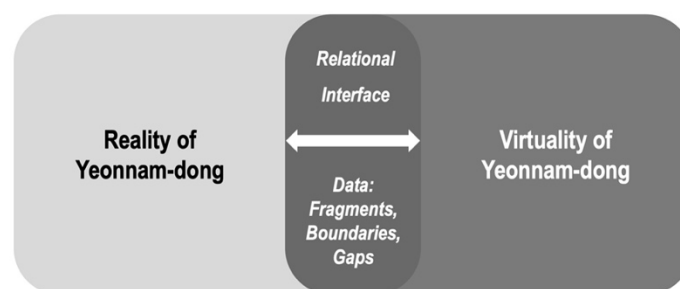


Figure 3-2. Research Scope of Relational Ethnography

Digital Fragments of Spatial Narratives

From extensive archives, Foucault (1972; 1988) collects fragmented records of historical descriptions of how society had responded to insane people in order to clarify changing

meanings of madness in history. He tries to destroy the absolute truth of madness by discovering the contextual dynamics of its different meanings. He shows how, truth and meanings in everyday lives have been transformed under changing social processes and structures. In Foucault's (1972; 1988) research method, collecting fragments of social and spatial narratives is an effective approach to uncovering hidden meanings in stored knowledge, stories, maps, policies, laws, diaries, news, pictures, and so on. This method can be adopted to examine online records that are fragmented and scattered over blogs and social media. Online fragments represent neglected breaks or bursts of spatial meanings that have been captured by individual bloggers. The data can be refined from individual experiences to uncover digital narratives that trace Yeonnam-dong's spatial and symbolic changes (See Table 3-1). Blog content analysis is used to collect the fragmented narratives from individual blog posts and reconstruct descriptive dynamics of Yeonnam-dong's spatialisation over nine years of gentrification.

Boundaries between Online and Real Practices

The collected fragments provide an understanding of the spatial dynamics, but it is also important to trace the cultural and spatial practices in Yeonnam-dong that are exchanged between real and online spaces. Employing virtual ethnography and 'netnography', Hine (2014) and Kozinets (2015) explore the boundaries between society and virtual communications. Emerging practices at the boundaries are captured and extended from online representations to new urban preferences influenced by the uneven online network (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). Thus, the boundaries between social/physical and virtual space constitute the new logic and flow of Yeonnam-dong's relational spatialisation. Data relating to these boundaries can be built up from interviews to articulate online-reality interfaces in which social, cultural and economic experiences in Yeonnam-dong are converted to digital texts and images in blog posts (See Table 3-1). Interviews serve to confirm empirical findings from the fragments of online comments of by social actors – tourists, business owners, artists, estate agencies, residents and Seoul officials. These actors have roles in negotiating the online-reality boundaries, because the process of Yeonnam-dong's relational transformations reflected in the fragmented narratives of blogs is derived from these boundaries.

Gaps in Spatial Transitions

Gaps take place with disjointed contexts of space – e.g. wars, industrialisation, economic crises, urban developments and gentrification. It brings about relational transformations in a sudden clash with new logics, systems and people. According to Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b), the rapid shifts in the gaps are triggered by modern norms, values, structures and technologies in the symbolic economy (e.g. tourism and shopping malls), in extraordinary opportunities (e.g. carnivals and bank holidays) and in new means of transport (e.g. railroad networks). These gaps were not only formed by modern transitions or conflicts, but were also accelerated by the emerging boundaries between traditional processes and game changers – e.g. new vehicles, symbolic industries or the Internet. The focus of relational ethnography on historical triggers provides contextual understanding of the relational transformations in Yeonnam-dong. In order to trace the gaps in the spatial transition, a case study is an effective approach to documentary sources – public projects, plans, policies, statistics, news archives and individual publications. In a similar way to how Foucault (1972; 1988) excavates evidence in traditional archives, this method contributes to discovering historical transitions that were not in the subject of online blogs (See Table 3-1). The case study aims to clarify disparate contexts that create the fragments and boundaries of Yeonnam-dong during the spatial transition to gentrification.

Table 3-1. Methods of Relational Ethnography

Domains	Dynamics	Collected Forms	Methods	Aims of Data Analysis
Fragments	Neglected breaks or bursts	Descriptive records on spatial and symbolic changes	Blog Content Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction of descriptive dynamics of spatialisation
Boundaries	Logic and system between online and reality	Online-reality experiences in cultural and spatial practices	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of key findings through the interview data
Gaps	Disjunctions in different periods	Documents of the context	Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of disparate contexts in the spatial transition

3.2.3 Why Blog Content Data, not Geo-tagged Data from Twitter or Instagram?

A pilot study of big data analysis for this research had been carried out from October 2017 to February 2018 by trial and error, but resulted in critical problems for, and limitations on, answering the research questions. Initially, basic codes of Python, one of the most popular

programming languages, were used to collect geo-tagged data on Twitter but caused technical errors. Firstly, access to open data of published tweets through the Twitter API (Application Programming Interface) was restricted to the latest data. Technically, only tweets produced within a week were available for data mining. Moreover, the collection through the API allowed samples of the whole tweets. Thus, researchers would be at risk of shrinking data access because Twitter data mining relied solely on Twitter's data policy. At the time, Instagram banned access to its API, so data mining was temporary impossible. Secondly, Twitter allowed 280 characters in a tweet. Even if access to multiple tweets was possible, one tweet only contains limited information which is a serious limitation in this research. The restriction on the number of characters means it is impossible to gain understanding of users' meaning-makings derived from individual narratives. Thirdly, the geo-tagged tweets about Seoul collected in the pilot study had low reliability and validity. Between one to two per cent of tweets had geo-tagged locations, and 10-20 per cent of them were plotted in wrong locations out of Seoul, such as the US or South Asia. This would have resulted in a misinterpretation of the geographical patterns and low reliability of the geo-tagged tweets. Lastly, writing programming codes for dealing with big data requires expert skills in computer science. Revising Python codes would have been a critical process to correct data mining errors and produce reliable research findings. But importantly, critical difficulties and limitations of handling the professional codes in response to technical errors during data collection could have derailed this research meeting the fixed timescale of my PhD program of 3 or 4 years.

Due to these critical limitations, shifting a main research method from the quantitative data analysis to qualitative content analysis was necessary in order to follow the narrative links of individual bloggers rather than deal with big data visualisations. As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature on social media data is limited when considering the empirical relationships between geographical data patterns and tourists' preferences in urban space. Results lack qualitative evidence and are not persuasive enough. The limited qualitative analysis adopted in the studies provided general knowledge about social media users rather than tracing causality between data contents and real localities in online-reality practices.

For this reason, Korean blog services (Naver, Tistory, Daum and Egloos) have key advantages over geo-tagged tweets in uncovering narratives of Yeonnam-dong. Korean millennials have used blogs in their decision-making processes for their leisure activities for some time (as discussed in Chapter 4). In South Korea's culture, blog posts are recognised as a major informational tool for seeking worthwhile leisure spaces. Blog posts contain diverse and detailed narratives of individual experiences of specific localities, delivering a

vicarious sense of reality in a virtual way. Therefore, rather than analysis of generalised social media, blog content analysis is implemented in this study to solve the serious problems which were discovered in the pilot study.

3.2.4 Case Study Location: Yeonnam-dong, Seoul

Yeonnam-dong is in Mapo District, one of the 25 districts of Seoul and located in the north-western area, created in 1975 in response to the urbanisation of Seoul, when the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) divided Yeonhui-dong into two neighbourhoods: Yeonhui-dong and Yeonnam-dong (Mapo-gu Office, 2020). Yeonnam-dong is a traditional working-class residential area of 0.64 km² with 15,769 residents in June 2020 (Yeonnam-dong Community Service Centre, 2020). Since the urban redevelopments and infrastructure construction in Mapo and Seodaemun districts in the 1970s, affluent dwellings have been mixed with working-class and Chinese migrant houses in Yeonnam-dong (Kim, S-S., 2013; Park, E-S., 2014). However, this community had been geographically hemmed in by two railways: Gyeonghui Yongsan Line and Sinchon Line (to Seoul station). They had been socially and economically neglected by the state until the construction of Gyeongui Line Forest Park (GLFP) in the 2010s transformed the railway into above-ground green spaces and underground railway lines (see Figure 3-3).



Figure 3-3. Location of Yeonnam-dong in Seoul (Source: Google Maps)

Yeonnam-dong was a typical residential neighbourhood in which houses and shops accounted for 84 and 14 per cent in 2011 respectively (Yoon, 2016). Until the middle 2000s, commercial properties like hair salons, dry cleaning shops, flower shops and Chinese eateries had been rented by local businesses to serve the local community (Yoon, 2016). Seventy-five per cent of residents were renters/tenants, and single family or two-family dwellings accounted for 79 per cent of residents in the early 2010s (Kim, M-K., 2013; Kim, S-S., 2013). This data shows that property rental had become a major local industry before the 2010s, booming with the rapid growth of the Seoul population in the 1960s – 1980s (Kim, M-K 2013).

In the 2010s, rapid spatial changes and rising rents took place in the neighbouring areas of gentrified Hongdae. Young office workers, publishers, artists and students paid noticed the cheap streets in Yeonnam-dong in close proximity to Hongdae-based cultural supports and networks. Yeonnam-dong has good public transport links, especially through Seoul Subway Line 2, that are connected to the city centre and the major urban areas – the central business districts (Gangnam and Yeongdeungpo), Hongdae, Shinchon and Paju Book City (over 250 publishers). But, Yeonnam-dong's rents were affordable because the properties were hemmed in by the railways (Park, E-S., 2014). Many artists, artisans and small business owners who had been displaced from gentrified Hongdae moved into cheap and neglected streets in Yeonnam-dong. They cultivated their unique and authentic cultures in close proximity to Hongdae and main markets – Namdaemun and Dongdaemun markets. In addition, the small, diverse types of houses in Yeonnam-dong satisfied young residents' bohemian lifestyles, mixing home and office working –flexible shared offices, music studios, ateliers, galleries and publishers (Kim, S-S., 2013; Park, E-S., 2014). Their alternative cultures attracted the younger tourists to the quiet streets.

Increasing numbers of shops and tourist footfall in the late 2010s transformed this peaceful neighbourhood into one of the trendiest streets in Seoul (Yoon, 2017). The unique cultures and spaces of the young and creative incomers were commercially consumed by young tourists looking for alternatives to already over- gentrified Hongdae and Yeonnam-dong started to become commercialised by a sudden influx of trend seekers. Figure 3-4 below details the soaring property prices in Yeonnam-dong, compared to neighbouring Hongdae and Seoul as a whole. House prices in Yeonnam-dong and Seoul remained at a similar level between 2010 and 2013, but Yeonnam-dong prices had risen sharply since 2013 continuing steadily until 2018, in contrast to the fluctuating prices of Hongdae. This indicates that Yeonnam-dong gentrification had been sparked by the construction of the GLFP project which started in 2013.

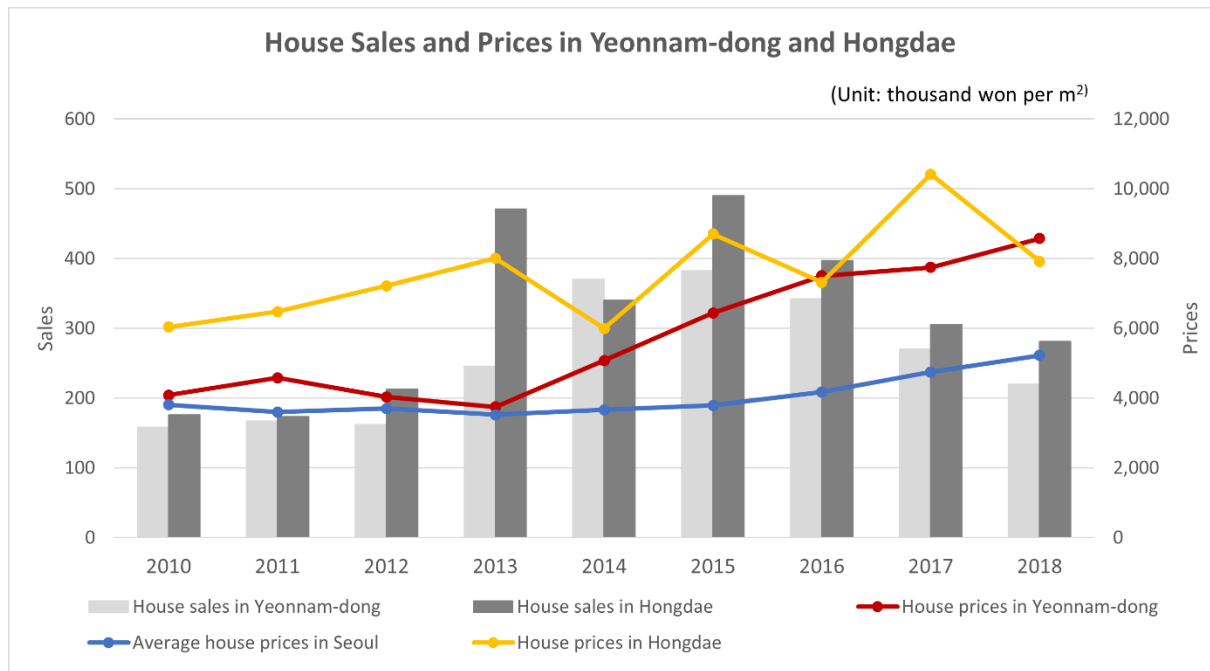


Figure 3-4. House Sales and Prices in Yeonnam-dong and Hongdae
 (Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport)

3.3 Framework

This section provides a two-tier framework for researching relational ethnography. By integrating the literature into a comprehensive framework, it aims to decipher and understand the relational dynamics of contemporary spatialisation from a Lefebvrian perspective. The first tier of the framework consists of the four forms of space: conceived, perceived, imagined and online; while the second-tier framework considers the seven key foundations operating in the dialectical circuit of spatialisation. The four levels of space function as a conceptual pathway to the relational spatialisation that will be deciphered through the key foundations: 1) financial triggers; 2) the new system of spatialisation; 3) demand for hyper-realistic space; 4) the individual's alternative value system; 5) attention-driven consumer cultures; 6) spatial formation of symbolic values; and 7) valorisation of hybrid space. The two-tier framework is adopted in the analysis chapters (5, 6 and 7) to examine the spatial dynamics of online space gentrifying Yeonnam-dong.

3.3.1 Use and Application of the Two-Tier Framework

In order to decipher meanings and systems in the complex and relational dynamics of contemporary spatialisation, the framework in this research is divided into two tiers: the dialectical circuit and the seven key foundations. Based on the work of Lefebvre and Shields, the first-tier framework adopts a dialectical approach to the changing meanings and systems of spatialisation in the advanced capitalist and digital technologies. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Lefebvrian theory of the production of space structures the relational ethnography set out in the main chapters, 5, 6 and 7. The dialectical approach frames the relational transformations over the nine years of gentrification in Yeonnam-dong considered in this thesis. The seven key foundations of the second-tier framework are developed from the literature as a thematic tool for interpreting the relational dynamics of urban space and provide a framework for understanding the interactions of diverse drivers within the dialectical circuit of spatialisation (the first-tier framework).

3.3.2 The First-Tier Framework: Dialectical Circuit of Spatialisation

The first-tier framework aims to clarify changing formations and relations of different levels of space in the specific transition to an online-driven selective context. By examining the dialectical circuit of spatialisation influenced by online networks, this framework not only provides an understanding of contemporary spatialisation, but also develops a methodological approach to relational ethnography for online-reality research more generally (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Stanek, 2011) (See Table 3-2).

Conceived Space: Conception

Conceived space is the dominant ideology of space. Space has been conceptualised as spatial strategies – knowledge, technologies, plans, policies and maps – for perpetuating the values of a society, religion and monarchy over history. It not only influences the physical spatial expression of an ideology, but also shapes distinctive styles of the built environment in response to changing values, belief, laws, ethnics, and social norms. In other words, conceived space operates to regulate perceived space (spatial practices). For example, Christian churches in Europe, Confucian castles and palaces in East Asia, industrial factories and railroads in manufacturing countries, and the skyscrapers of the financialization of advanced capitalism. In all of these examples, ideologies are at the base of what designers, planners, policymakers and decision-makers produce in the built environment.

space not only causes the conceived space as a system of spatial knowledge, but also is arranged by experts who embrace the dominant discourse on space in conceived space.

Perceived Space: Reality

As a result of the physical production of conceived space, perceived space is organised as spatial practices – buildings, streets, parks, infrastructures, etc. – and operates in economic and political systems of capitalist cities. The physical geography of the built environment is not only formed from the integrated knowledge of spatial techniques, skills, methods and processes in production system of conceived space, but is also regulated by a social system of rules – laws, policies and ethics. These spatial practices are a spatial agglomeration of materials for accommodating the everyday lives of individuals. Thus, the operating systems and formations of perceived space are set up by conceived space through the transmission of social values from people's minds to the built environment.

Imagined Space: Imagery

Imagined space is located between conceived space (conception) and perceived space (reality). It plays a role of an imaginary passage in the interaction between spatial practices and a system of understanding and thought. As a result of experiences of physical spaces, imagined space is developed from individual emotions and creates linguistic or pictorial representations – novels, poems, articles, paintings, photos and movies. The production of imagined space transforms individual experiences and emotions to an imaginary form, influencing the desired quality of urban cultures, drawing on not only the mobility of place-images, but also the imaginary residues of individual practices. Representations of imagined space are perceived as spatial ideals or solutions. Thus, conceived space and perceived space are influenced by the linguistic or pictorial representations developed through imagined space. In people's cognitive processes of conceived and perceived spaces, imagined space is reinforced, exaggerated and distorted by the desires and fantasies of individuals. Accordingly, imagined space has effects on social spatialisation in the transmission of individual values from people's minds to the built environment.

Online Space: Virtuality

As discussed in Section 2.2.3, online space is able to operate in exceptional translocal and hyper-realistic spaces of attractive consumption in cool and trendy neighbourhoods. Online space is a new source of spatial arrangement in 21st-century cities as a result of innovations in digital technologies. This spatial virtuality can be incorporated into the three-part

Lefebvrian dialectics of space as translocality. Online space is not simply the virtualisation of the three-level circuit of spatialisation, but additionally encourages ideal representations of spaces actively selected from online space. Online practices create and share digitalised posts, messages, photos, voices and videos about spatial experiences and emotions that are chosen and curated from exceptional spaces. Global networks enable Internet users to have vicarious and selective experiences of the ideal representations anywhere in the world. Thus, the online-based emulation of selective practices transforms real spaces into selective, situated and stereotyped place-images through filtered, stratified and segmented information (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017).

Table 3-2. Forms, Places, Systems and Productions in Four Levels of Space

Level of Space	Forms	Places	Systems	Productions
Conceived Space	Conception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minds (intentions) of Experts, authorities and stakeholders • Discourse on space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial strategy • System of knowledge and thought on space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws, policies, plans, technologies, skills, knowledges, maps
Perceived Space	Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual spaces • Practices of discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial apparatus • Formations of built environment • Spatial systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings, streets, infrastructures
Imagined Space	Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual minds (desires) • Discourse of space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginary residue, ideals and solutions of space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-images, authenticity, cultures, fantasies
Online Space	Digital data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet network • Online Discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual space • Vicarious experiences • Emulation of selective practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalised posts, messages, photos, voices, videos,

Operation of the Dialectical Circuit in Online Space

New logics and systems of translocal and hyper-realistic spaces are established through online space. In contrast to traditional spatialisation operating in historical context, the operation of contemporary spatialisation is shaped by uneven online practices that filter, stratify and segment traditional spatialisation within selective, situated and stereotyped contexts. The real spaces in, for example, a cool and trendy neighbourhood dominated by attractive urban cultures, are selectively filtered through the hyper-realistic context of online

space derived from individual desires and fantasies. From this, the stratified and segmented information in online space restructures traditional spatialisation within ideal logics of the virtual environment that are independently developed from the interaction between online influencers and data consumers (see Figure 3-2). Accordingly, online space becomes a key factor in the operation of translocal and hyper-realistic spatialisation in the rapid transition to a globally and digitally networked society. To understand the in-depth mechanism of the dialectical circuit with online space requires examining the seven foundations of the second-tier framework, which are discussed in the following section.

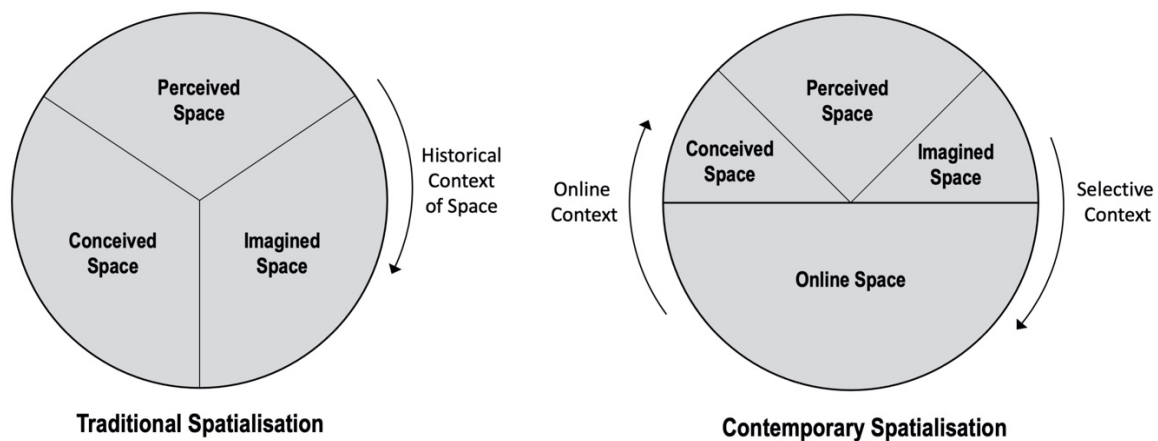


Figure 3-5. Transition of Spatialisation to Online-driven Context

3.3.3 The Second-Tier Framework: Theoretical Foundations of Relational Ethnography

The second-tier framework establishes structures of how seven concepts play a principal role in interpreting contemporary spatialisation in response to the dialectical circuit of the four spaces: conceived, perceived, imagined and online spaces. Locating the seven key foundations within a Lefebvrian perspective provides a conceptual approach to the relational ethnography of online-reality dynamics of contemporary urban spaces (see Table 3-3).

The financial triggers of spatial and demographic changes are set up by the state's principal objectives of revitalising a local economy - conceived space in the Lefebvrian perspective (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Stanek, 2011). However, state-led projects establish contradictory relations between productivity and

displacement in space. While achieving a 'spatial fix' (improvement of spatial productivity), such projects can also result in gentrification (displacement of the working class) as a result of the rent gap created in perceived space (Harvey, 2001; Herod, 2019; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Smith 1996; 2008).

In terms of the new system of spatialisation, communication technologies decrease relative distance due to reducing the friction of mobility of information and knowledge. It takes place in online space and functions effectively in the imagined space derived from individual experiences of spaces. This new system mediated by the information economy accelerates a process of spatial change, especially in gentrification, through interconnecting online space with imagined space in global networks of the Internet (Castells, 1991; 2010; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Low, 2017).

In forging the financialization of space, the production of aesthetic and hyper-realistic space (e.g. Disneyfication) takes place in the symbolic economy (Baudrillard, 1994; 2005; 2017a; 2017b; Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Zukin, 1998; 2010). The changing space of imagination is an important aspect of the (re)production of perceived space, and the demand for hyper-realistic space influences the transformation of the perceived space into symbolic spectacles (simulacra).

The alternative value system – sign value that is oriented toward creating distinctive impressions and social status – justifies the demand for hyper-realistic space that is decoupled from its origin and context. Individual desires for sign-value and social distinction become a cultural trigger for the hyper-realistic spatialisation combined with the rent gap. Aesthetically-staged settings of space that satisfies the desire of sign-value are easily consumed by individuals in the symbolic economy (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a, Debord, 1977; Goffman, 1990, Lacan, 2004; Lash & Urry, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). In sign-values (social status) and exchange-values (profits), Lefebvre's (1991) four levels of space – conceived, perceived, imagined and online spaces – are competitively driven by the desires of individuals to acquire a distinctive and privileged status in social and economic practices.

Attention-driven consumer cultures reinforce hyper-realistic space. Thus, it is not only adopted by business owners as a spatial strategy in conceived space, but also contributes to the gentrification of residential neighbourhoods in perceived space (Lefebvre, 1991; Shields; 1989; 2013a; 2013b; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Consequently, it transforms local neighbourhoods into translocal spaces that are reorganised as a universal form for satisfying both cultural

desires (social distinction) and financial desire (profit maximisation) through instantaneous communication technologies and social media on a global scale (Baudrillard, 1994; 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017; Castells, 1991; 2010; Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1991; Low, 2017; Shields; 1989; 2013a; 2013b; Smith, 1996; 2008; Zukin, 1998; 2010).

As Lynch (1960) suggests, the five elements of (actual) urban forms – paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks – can be assessed in terms of the imageability of space: similarly, the spatial formation of symbolic values, visualised as a hyper-realistic spectacle of newly-staged Instagrammable authenticity, aims to improve imageability by traversing the demarcation between real and online spaces (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shields, 1989; 2013a; 2013b; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). This symbolic and distinctive formation aims at being easily discovered and consumed by attention seekers. Thus, the new spatial formation – the Instagrammable spectacle - incorporates symbolic visibility and hyper-realistic authenticity to evoke distinguishable images of space desired by others. It is perceived as the new imageability, utilised as a design apparatus (e.g. Foucault’s spatial *dispositif*) in pursuit of creating an outstanding images of individuals and successful socio-economic business practices.

The valorisation of hybrid space refers to a new system of spatial consumption in the hybrid interaction between online and reality. Spatial consumption means that events, relations, experiences, emotions, impressions (images) and memories take place in a particular space by performing commercial activities. In order to encourage successful spatial consumption, hybrid space valorises filtered, stratified and segmented spaces in which selective, situated and stereotyped practices and place-images take place through uneven online networks (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017). By converting a system of spatial consumption into online representations, and creating interconnections between real and online spaces, uneven online data exchange is bound up with uneven development and the spatial fix (Smith, 1996; 2008; Harvey, 2001).

Table 3-3. Theoretical Foundations of Relational Ethnography

Concepts	Theories	Spatial Roles	Aims	Origin of Space
Financial Triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial fix • Rent gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logic of spatial change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Profits 	Conceived space
New System of Spatialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information city • Global city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of relative distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in productivity 	Conceived space

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-space compression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information economy 		
Demand for Hyper-realistic Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disneyfication • Symbolic economy • Spectacle society • Simulacra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification of symbolic space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfying individual desires and fantasies 	Imagined space
Alternative Value System of Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinction • Sign-value • Impression management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial settings for individual impressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment of exclusive social status 	Imagined space
Attention-driven Consumer Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translocality • Staged authenticity • Tourist gaze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver of creating translocality and hyper-realism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraordinary experiences • Other's attention 	Perceived space
Spatial Formation of Symbolic Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five elements of cities for imageability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial strategy for symbolic space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation from individual fantasies to spatial profits 	Perceived space
Valorisation of Hybrid Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven development • Uneven networks • Selective practices in social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interconnection between real and online spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion of system of the spatial consumption to online representations 	Online space

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 Research Strategy

The relational ethnography of spatialisation set up in the two-tier framework enables answering the research questions that focus on how Yeonnam-dong's gentrification has been influenced by online space. Methods in this research aim to identify interconnections between different spatial practices in terms of Lefebvrian spatial theory. In order to approach the online, physical and conceptual spaces of relational spatialisation, three primary methods – blog content analysis, semi-structured interviews and a case study – are utilised in this online-reality research.

Blog content analysis examines the imaginary dynamics that interconnect real spatialisation with online space. It aims to understand how individual experiences of the built environment are transmitted to online data and then how the data influences consumer cultures and spatial practices. This aims to answer the first research question: How does online data impact on Yeonnam-dong's gentrification? This reciprocal exchange of digitalised place-images is traced to individual narratives of blog posts. This relational ethnography of blog content analysis collects fragmented narratives of space from blogs and merges them to examine the relational transformation of gentrifying Yeonnam-dong (See Table 3-4).

Semi-structured interviews aim to demonstrate key findings from the blog content analysis. The interviews match blog information with empirical evidence of spatial practices. Whilst the blog analysis was conducted to collect fragmented posts of spatial meanings, the interviews sought contextual and empirical clues about these fragmented meanings. The interview data links the blog narratives with spatial, social and cultural practices in Yeonnam-dong in order to answer the second question: What are the particular spatial changes in Yeonnam-dong that aim to satisfy the changing value system for spatial fantasies reconfigured from online space? (See Table 3-4). Interviews with Korean millennials unfold a pattern of socio-cultural practices and provide understanding of the relationships between social actors – landlords, business owners, artists and tourists – and online bloggers. Interview data for socio-cultural relations between the stakeholders and bloggers also addresses the third question: How do landlords, business owners, artists and tourists interact with online bloggers, and what are their interests and roles in relation to Yeonnam-dong's gentrification (see Table 3-4).

The case study provides an understanding of the historical context and spatial strategies carried out by the state. It examines the conceived and perceived spaces that are reshaped by the dialectical circuit and result in Yeonnam-dong's regeneration projects: AREX and GLFP. The case study of spatialisation from a conceptual perspective (conceived space) complements the understanding of the process of Yeonnam-dong's spatial change that were initially from the blog content analysis and the semi-structured interviews (See Table 3-1). The findings relating to spatial origins and context show how Yeonnam-dong's gentrification has been decoupled from these origins and oriented towards a logic of the forms of online practices identified in the findings from the blog content analysis. The case study focuses mainly on how state-led urban projects acted as spatial triggers for Yeonnam-dong's gentrification and sheds further light on the first and third research questions (See Table 3-4).

In summary, the blog content analysis deciphers narrative fragments of changing meanings of perceived space accumulated in online space during the nine years of gentrification. The interviews clarify the narrative fragments of blog posts by exploring the socio-cultural boundaries between online and real spatialisations. They trace empirical evidence of social actors' behaviour in relation to perceived space and the transition to online space via imagined space. The case study matches and links these fragments to the spatial context of Yeonnam-dong by examining overall transformations. Each of these research methods aims to articulate the relational spatialisation derived from fragments, boundaries, gaps and margins of urban space, which have been overlooked in the literature (Desmond, 2014; Hine, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Whatmore, 2002).

Table 3-4. Methodological Approach to Research Questions

Research Questions	Methods
1) How does online data impact on Yeonnam-dong's gentrification?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting fragmented narratives of space from blogs and merging them into identification of relational transformation of gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. • The case study focuses mainly on spatial triggers to Yeonnam-dong's gentrification created by urban projects.
2) What are the spatial changes in Yeonnam-dong to satisfy the changing value system for spatial fantasies reconfigured from online space?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing for contextual and empirical clues about the fragmented meanings collected from blogs and blog content analysis.
3) How do landlords, business owners, artists and tourists interact with online bloggers and what role do these interdependencies play in Yeonnam-dong's gentrification?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing to identify the socio-cultural relations between stakeholders and bloggers. • The case study of the spatialisation from a conceptual perspective complements the understanding of the process of Yeonnam-dong's spatial changes initially examined in the blog content analysis and the semi-structured interviews.

Data collection was carried out in Sheffield and Seoul between June 2018 to April 2019 (see Table 3-5). Firstly, searching for blog posts identified by the keyword 'Yeonnam-dong (연남동)' which was conducted in Sheffield from July 2018 to January 2019 after a pilot case study of Yeonnam-dong in June 2018. These posts were saved as a PDF file format. Secondly, in order to complement the blog data, semi-structured interviews were arranged and carried out with 42 interviewees in six groups in Seoul from August to December 2018.

Supplementary observations were conducted to support the interviews – e.g. leisure activities, street cultures, main businesses and a rough estimate of the footfall in Yeonnam-dong. Thirdly, from January to April 2019, blog data was processed to sort out the relevant posts that describe individual impressions, experiences and emotions of Yeonnam-dong. This identified the spatial narratives in posts and linked them to the main findings of the interviews that indicate an understanding of spatial changes and socio-cultural practices in Yeonnam-dong. Lastly, from May to June 2019, documents for the case study were collected in order to understand the spatial context of Yeonnam-dong. There were four sources of information: 1) public records; 2) websites; 3) media; and 4) publications. The analysis of documents aimed to provide the historical, economic, spatial and general policy background in order to contextualise the data from the blog content analysis and the semi-structured interviews.

A review all the data collected from the blog content analysis (online space), the semi-structured interviews (physical space) and the case study (conceptual space) was carried out in Sheffield from April to August 2019. It established thematic frames and key foundations, (discussed in Section 3.3), to trace the complex relations between different data sets and sharpen key conceptual points in preparation for analysis and writing.

Table 3-5. Overview of Data Collection

Space	Methods	Location	Period	Data
Online Space	Blog Data Collection	Sheffield	July – August 2018, January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blogs about Yeonnam-dong posted between 2010 and 2018
	Blog Data Processing	Sheffield	January – April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posts involving spatial changes and socio-cultural practices in YD
Physical Space	Semi-structured Interviews	Seoul	August – December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 interviewees in six groups
	Supplementary Observations	Seoul		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure activities, street cultures, shops and footfall
Conceptual Space	Case Study	Sheffield	June – July 2018 (Pilot study), May – June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public records: project plans, policy manuals, reports, statistics • Websites: Non-profit organisations • Media: news archive • Publications: journal articles, PhD theses, books

-	Conceptualisation	Sheffield	April – August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic frames and key concepts
	Analysis & Writing	Sheffield	September 2019 – September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamics of spatial change between 2010 and 2018

3.4.2 Blog Content Analysis

The blog content analysis collected fragmented and scattered narratives of space constructed from individual experiences, in order to reveal the spatial meanings of blog texts and images. A major difficulty in conducting this method was how to handle a large number of blog posts efficiently in a tight timescale for the research. It is impossible to access all blog posts written by individual users in South Korea. In addition, the Naver search engine, which has the biggest market share of search engines in South Korea (71 per cent in 2019) and is more optimised for Korean content than Google, restricts a blog search result to a maximum 1,000 posts, so that it can deliver quick and reliable results for keyword searches (National Information Society Agency, 2020; BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers). Thus, the scale of blog data collection for this research was determined by Naver’s policy on the maximum number in a search result. For example, a maximum of 1,000 blog posts about Yeonnam-dong in 2010 (any one year or any accessible period) can be accessed through the Naver search engine in one search. With this scale of data collection, four stages were set up to implement a systematic approach to the spatial narratives deciphered from individual blog posts (see Table 3.6). Given a manual process of checking and processing the blog posts, a strategy for the four research stages was designed to narrow down the data to a number which could be handled in a qualitative analysis.

The first stage of the blog content analysis established a raw data set that captured nine years of records of gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. From a total of 9,000 posts from nine searches (one for each year) allowed by Naver for the maximum numbers in one search result, 7,900 blog posts were selected. The search keyword was ‘Yeonnam-dong (연남동)’ in Korean over the period 2010 to 2018. Of the 9,000 posts searched, 2,100 posts were under wrong categories – e.g. phone numbers, weather, firms, delivery addresses and job titles – not related to comments about Yeonnam-dong’s spaces, and so were deleted from the raw data set. This manual process took two months (July to August 2018) and was very time-consuming but allowed me to see the kinds of texts and images bloggers produced to

produce their own meaning-making from their spatial experiences. In this way, establishing the raw data set was the cornerstone of approaching spatial narratives of Yeonnam-dong.

The second stage of data preparation was to remove advertisements or text that was too short to allow insight into understanding blogger experience in Yeonnam-dong. By skimming through each post in a manual way, 284 posts were excluded from the data set. Finally, the 7,616 remaining posts were downloaded as PDF files onto my computer to be analysed using NVivo 12 – computer software for qualitative data analysis in coding interview transcriptions, journal articles, YouTube videos and social media. In contrast to the manual process, automatic filtering of the data, especially with the Python programming language for social media mining, text analysis, time series analysis, etc., enables researchers to obtain quick results in response to certain keywords or numbers, but has limitations in assessing qualitative meanings – individual emotions, connotations, symbols and signs (Bonzanini, 2016). The programming codes for an automatic operation require professional knowledge of computer science. Thus, despite its time-consuming process over several months, this manual method has the rationale for clarifying the subjective and symbolic data collected from spatial and cultural practices. This process of refining the blog posts contributed to creating conceptual categories of spatial meanings that aimed to organise narrative materials of spatial experiences and emotions according to the two-tier framework discussed in Section 3.3. However, the labels were rough and broad at this stage, so it was used to extract meaning-making phrases and sentences from the data set, which were moved to Nvivo12 to analyse in the third stage.

The third stage from January to April 2019 focused on data selection and categorisation based on the labelled categories before conducting any interpretation. Initially, relevant posts that reviewed or commented on their own leisure experiences – commercial activities, walks, cycling, cultural events and social conversations – in Yeonnam-dong were selected to build on the detailed and obvious labels. By skimming all texts of the spatial and cultural reviews, broad categories (the early form of the label) were arranged within the Lefebvrian forms of space: ideologies, practices and imaginations. These fragmented categories were rearranged and articulated into the four levels of space (conceived, perceived, imagined and online spaces) and the three periods of gentrifying Yeonnam-dong (2010-2012, 2013-2015, and 2016-2018). After the labels were matched with the second-tier framework of the seven theoretical foundations, any labels that did not fall into one of the foundations were eliminated. The material in the PDF files relating to spatial meanings was highlighted in the different colours assigned to the labels and coded separately in NVivo 12. Coding in NVivo

involved the 2,425 posts that contained materials coded by the seven sub-labels (the second-tier framework) and the four primary labels (the first-tier framework).

After the data had been refined in this way, the fourth stage provided the final 131 quotations¹ with the labels. The coded materials in 2,425 posts were arranged in NVivo 12 according to the sub-sections (the second-tier framework) and sections (the first-tier framework) of main chapters 5, 6 and 7. By deciphering and interpreting the material, quotes from the 131 posts that best exemplify the characteristics of the framework were quoted directly in order to provide empirical evidence in the main chapters. The selection of these quotes was carried out from a Lefebvrian perspective, drawing on debates discussed in the literature review, but researcher’s bias inevitably exists in the labelling and selection process. In order to minimise the gap, semi-structured interviews were conducted in the time between the blog collection (July to August 2018) and the analysis (January to April 2019). This improved the understanding of blog posts by examining the relationships between six social groups in reality and bloggers in virtuality. The material from the interviews in Yeonnam-dong, with their repeatedly convincing evidence of spatial meanings, meant I was confident of my interpretations of the blog data.

Table 3-6. Qualitative Processing of Blog Data

Stage	Data Processing	Blog Posts	Methods	Targets and Aims
1	Data Collection	7,900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Naver search engine to display a data set of blog posts in response to the keyword ‘Yeonnam-dong’ A maximum of 1,000 blog posts available from each search result for a keyword in a year or years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of raw data set about Yeonnam-dong for nine years. 7,900 posts collected from total 9,000 posts in nine search results
2	Data Preparation	7,616	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing advertisements and short text Downloading the posts onto a computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptualising labels of meaning-making
3	Data Selection & Categorisation	2,425	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting narrative posts to identify Yeonnam-dong’s spatial and cultural practices Coding the selected posts in the seven sub-labels and four labels in NVivo12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorising blog materials according to Lefebvrian theory Articulating labels in the framework
4	Data Refining & Interpretation	131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choosing the most obvious materials associated with the framework (categories/labels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking direct quotations as empirical evidence in main chapters

¹ See blog references in Appendix 1

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews were conducted to minimise researcher's bias 	
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3.4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews aim to minimise the gap between any selection bias of blog data and meanings associated with real spaces of Yeonnam-dong by seeking to connect practical processes and key factors of Yeonnam-dong's transformations with blog information. A strategy for interview questions was designed to approach fragmented evidence of respondents' experiences related to Yeonnam-dong's transformations. Thus, different detailed questions were asked of different by groups. the interviews were carried out between August and December 2018 after blog data collection. Interviews were arranged with stakeholders in Yeonnam-dong, who were identified by the blog content analysis and the case study location. The stakeholders were categorised into six groups according to their roles, occupations and experiences in relation to Yeonnam-dong's spatialisation: 1) Korean millennials; 2) business and culture; 3) property; 4) blog influencers; 5) residents; and 6) Seoul Metropolitan Government officials (See Table 3-7). Korean millennials were a major tourist group seeking new and captivating experiences and leading new cultural trends in Seoul (Kim, Y-T., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Small business owners and artists in the business and culture group transformed Yeonnam-dong from a quiet residential area into a bursting commercialised neighbourhood in response to cultural demands of the millennials for unique, authentic and desirable experiences (Kim, Y-T., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). During the spatial and cultural interaction, property investors and property agencies, paid attention to rapid fluctuations in Yeonnam-dong's property prices (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Yoon, 2016). These investors anticipated that information about Yeonnam-dong, widely disseminated by blog influencers, would affect millennials' decision-making about leisure activities and draw them to Yeonnam-dong (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2017; Castells, 2010; Lee et al., 2016; Low, 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013; Urbanplay, 2017). Since many local landlords in Yeonnam-dong had sold their houses to speculative investors, most renters and tenant who had lived in these properties had to leave because of conversions to commercial uses (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Yoon, 2016). Despite the rapid

gentrification and ruthless displacement, the Seoul Metropolitan Government did not change their official stance on gentrification because they perceived it as a result of free property markets as well as a new opportunity for improving the local economy (SMGO01; SMGO02; SMGO03; SMGO04, Seoul Metropolitan Government officials).

The total number of participants was 42 divided into six groups. Their mobile numbers and emails for interview requests were mainly collected from social media, blogs, business webpages, books, news, personal networks and the Yeonnam-dong community centre. Requests for interviews were made by phone calls and emails. The first contact with 15 Korean millennial participants and four SMG officials resulted in successful interviews because I drew on my personal networks to approach them. This was particularly helpful in the case of SMG officials who normally hesitate to express personal ideas about ongoing political debates and public projects.

I visited the Yeonnam-dong community centre without an appointment and was able to meet a representative of the Yeonnam-dong community even though many journalists and researchers would like to talk to her but are seldom able to. Gentrification is an unwelcome issue for the community because it creates negative impressions. Fortunately, I met her and gave a brief explanation of my research: she introduced three residents, so four participants were arranged. In addition, one 20s resident was contacted through his blog and participated in the interview.

However, it was not so easy to approach small business owners, artists and local property agencies who had already been asked by many journalists and researchers. They did not want to expose Yeonnam-dong's real situations and their personal emotions in relation to increasing rents and risks that could impact on their future businesses. I sought their own social media accounts or blogs and sent messages to more than 50 business owners and artists who run shops, restaurants, cafes and art studios in Yeonnam-dong which were popular among bloggers. Eight of them accepted the invitation to be interviewed, and I persuaded two artists, who hesitated about doing face-to-face interviews, to answer written questions through email. Two property experts in research institutions agreed to be interviewed, but more than ten local agencies refused interviews because they thought previous TV and newspaper interviews had exaggerated the changes in Yeonnam-dong and contributed to an abnormal increase in property prices. For this reason, the only two local agencies, who seemed worried about Yeonnam-dong's prices skyrocketing too quickly, agreed to be interviewed to talk about how residents had suffered many hardships as a result of gentrification.

More than 30 blog influencers were contacted through blog messages, but the only three responded to my requests. They did not want to expose their real identities – names, faces, jobs and personal opinions – because of their considerable influence on commercial businesses.

Interview venues and schedules were decided by participants. Each interview took about 50 to 70 minutes. The Interviewer outlined the main questions according to particular experiences and roles of different participants but allowed them to talk about any additional issues with regard to Yeonnam-dong (see alternative main questions in Table 3-7). When answers from face-to-face interviews required more information, additional questions were asked by emails.

The Korean millennial consisted of three participants in their 20s and twelve participants in their 30s who had experiences in touring Yeonnam-dong. Many participants in this category² had professional training related to space: 1) architect or landscape architect; 2) urban planner or researcher; 3) journalist; and 4) film-maker. However, some participants held non-spatial jobs such as office workers. In addition, two Japanese tourists were interviewed about the ease of understanding information sources and their decision-making processes on international tours compared to Korean domestic tourism. The leisure activities of all these participants had been influenced by online information. The main questions focused on patterns of participants' spatial experiences and decision-making processes with regard to online practices: 1) what they experienced in Seoul tours; 2) what impressions of the area they had gained from Seoul tours; 3) how their leisure activities were organised, and what activities they performed; 4) where had they collected information from about spaces for their leisure and commercial activities; and 5) how their tours were influenced by online data, and what online practices led to particular spatial experiences.

Ten participants in the business and culture category had contributed to attracting many millennial tourists to quiet Yeonnam-dong so were involved in the process of the Yeonnam-dong gentrification. There were two types of business and culture participants: five small business owners and five artists (including one arts and culture organisation). They were young incomers locating their businesses or art workshops in Yeonnam-dong and relied on Hongdae-based networks which had been affected by the commercial gentrification brought about by the influx of chains of fashion brands, cafes and restaurants. Most of this group ran shops, cafes, restaurants and ateliers which were popular in blogs and social media. They

² See interviewee information in Appendix 2

were selected according to their popularity in online, because this was relevant to the sudden influx of the younger tourists and the gentrification this led to. They were selected for providing an understanding of how their businesses brought about cultural and spatial changes in Yeonnam-dong. During the interviews, observations were conducted to explore real practices – leisure activities, street cultures, shops and footfall – in the narrow streets of Yeonnam-dong. The main questions arose in relation to the relationship between their activities and online information: 1) what place-images of Yeonnam-dong had been viewed; 2) what spatial factors attracted tourists to Yeonnam-dong; 3) how blogs influenced their businesses or artworks; 4) what was the relationship between Hongdae and Yeonnam-dong; 5) how Yeontral Park influenced their businesses or artworks; and 6) what were the relationships between residents, artists, small business owners, states and bloggers.

The property group interviews also included two types of participants: real estate researchers (three participants) and local property agencies (two participants). These interviews aimed to understand how consumer cultures, digital technologies, state regulations and public projects were interwoven and affected property values during gentrification (see Table 3-7). The real estate researchers had worked for research institutions specialised in regional economics and property appraisal. The participants provided an understanding of the economic dynamics in which property values reacted to the relationship between tourist mobility and online data. They recognised a new pattern of spatial change related to online space but did not believe that online space determined rapid changes in the built environment. Two participants from local property agencies shared their experiences of how the Internet encouraged business diversity and a sudden influx of the younger tourists producing soaring property prices in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. However, they were very not to talk about exact property prices and questions in the property interviews were more focused on the process and key factors in the changing property values and prices.

Even though the blog influencer category hoped to explore the experiences of key actors in this research, access to them was very restricted due to their characteristics of the powerful influence on commercial businesses and properties. For example, Naver stopped awarding the title of *power blogger* (파워블로거) of the year in 2016, because many bloggers had abused their online influence to make profits from hidden advertisements in their blog posts. Originally, the title had been awarded by the major Korean blog service companies (Naver, Tistory, Daum and Egloos) according to post excellence, information credibility and communication skills (Naver, 2016). The interviewees were chosen from among people who had earned Naver blog influencer titles before 2016, which meant they had had a large

audience for their blogs and had clearly been very influential. The main questions for participants in this category addressed the relationship between their posts and spatial changes: 1) experiences, purposes and motivations of blog posting; 2) influences on commercial businesses – e.g. restaurants, cafes, shopping malls, hotels and tourist attractions; 3) place-images of Yeonnam-dong in their posts; 4) Korean millennials and their dependence on blog data in relation to Yeonnam-dong tours; 5) social relations with business owners; and 6) strategies to keep blog loyalty and reliability. The majority of blog influencers refused to have interviews because they were afraid of the risk of exposing their actual status (job, sex, age, and appearance) outside of online space. Only three participants were available for interviews even though it was not enough numbers of cases.

Questions for participants in the resident category aimed to examine actual transformations of the community and streets in the interaction between real Yeonnam-dong and blogs. Interviews with four residents were carried out in the community centre, plus a resident in his 20s who was contacted through his blog was interviewed in a Yeonnam-dong café. Questions were focused on their experiences in Yeonnam-dong: 1) history of the community; 2) positive aspects factors of living in Yeonnam-dong; 3) social relations with neighbours; 4) changes to images of Yeonnam-dong; 5) opinions about young incomers (artists and small business owners); 6) influences of the increasing numbers of tourists and their leisure activities on residents' everyday lives; 7) influences of the Internet on the community; 8) changes in property prices and kinds of residents; 9) relationship between residents, Hongdae and Yeontral Park; and 10) state policies in response to Yeonnam-dong's gentrification.

Participants in the SMG official category were chosen from Seoul Metropolitan Government officials in urban development, planning and regeneration departments in relation to their specialised knowledge. These interviews aimed to understand why SMG had overlooked the negative impacts of urban renewal projects on Yeonnam-dong's community, especially when renters/tenants were vulnerable to sudden increases in rents during gentrification. In order to address multiple facets of this issue, this group comprises three professions: 1) a researcher who worked on large-scale urban development projects; 2) an urban planner who drew up comprehensive urban strategies – e.g. land uses, master plans and revitalisations of Seoul's neighbourhoods; and 3) project managers who supported community-based renewal projects. The four participants had Master's degrees in architecture, urban design and planning and had worked for national research institutions in relation to public buildings, housing policy, regeneration and tourism before moving to SMG. Interview questions were more academic and professional than for the other groups, focussing on SMG's stance on

and strategies for: 1) gentrifying neighbourhoods including Yeonnam-dong in Seoul; 2) socio-economic influences of SMG's renewal projects on Seoul's neighbourhoods – e.g. property prices, displacement and class conflict; and 3) practical problems arising from SMG's urban projects. These interviews mainly contribute to an understanding of conceived space (policies, plans and projects) in Yeonnam-dong's spatial changes.

Table 3-7. Interview Groups and Main Questions

Groups		Interviewees		Main Questions
Korean millennials	20s	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences of spaces in Seoul tours • Impressions of spaces in Seoul tours • Leisure activities (cultural practices) in Seoul • Collection of information about spaces for leisure • Online practices in relation to spatial experiences
	30s	12		
Business & Culture	Business owners	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-images of Yeonnam-dong • Spatial factors in attracting tourists to YD • Influences of the Internet on businesses / artworks in YD • Relationship between Hongdae and YD • Influences of Yeontral Park on businesses / artworks in YD • Relationships between local residents, artists / business owners, states and bloggers
	Artists	5		
Property	Property researchers	3	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital technology and property values • Local cultures and property values • Gentrification, state regulations and projects • Place-images of YD • Digital technology and YD property values • YD cultures, artists, hipsters, and property values • Hongdae, Yeontral Park and YD property values • State policies in response to YD gentrification
	Local agencies	2		
Blog influencers		3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences, purposes and motivations of blog influencers • Relationship between blogs and physical space (e.g. restaurants, cafes, shopping malls, hotels and tourist attractions) • Economic influences of blogs on spaces and property values • Place-images of YD • Blogs, Korean millennials and YD • Social relationships between bloggers and business owners • Strategies for blog loyalty and reliability
Residents		5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of YD community • Satisfaction with living in YD • Relationships with neighbours • Changes in YD images

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions about artists and business owners in YD, especially Dongjin Market Street • Opinions about tourists and their activities • Influences of the Internet on YD community • Changes in property prices and types of residents • Hongdae, Yeontral Park and residents • State policies in response to YD gentrification
SMG Officials (Urban Planning & Regeneration)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMG's stance on gentrifying neighbourhoods in Seoul, including YD • SMG's urban renewal projects' socio-economic influences on neighbourhoods • Practical problems arising from SMG's projects
Total	42	-

3.4.4 Case Study

In order to capture effective data from the blog content analysis and the semi-structured interviews, the case study of Yeonnam-dong aimed to provide compelling evidence of the link between conceptual plans, public projects and real changes in Yeonnam-dong. It clarifies that the spatial dynamics of Yeonnam-dong examined through the data set of the two methods – blog analysis and interviews – had operated in the context and projects highlighted by the case study. Data was collected from three sources in order to understand multiple facets of Yeonnam-dong's context and transformations: 1) public records; 2) websites; 3) media and 4) academic publications (see Table 3-8).

The public records examined consisted of project plans for urban renewals and national ICT developments, government policy manuals, institute reports, and national and global statistics. These sources provided reliable official data published by Korean government departments, research institutes and global organisations. The project plans fall into two categories: 1) the regeneration of Seoul's neighbourhoods; and 2) national ICT (Information Communications Technology) developments. The renewal plans of the 2000-2010 period had been devised by SMG to regenerate Yeonnam-dong and neighbouring areas: these plans included the Airport Railroad Express (AREX); Gyeongui Line Forest Park (GLFP); the Yeonnam-dong Chinatown Development; the Huimangji Urban Renewal project; the Human Town projects; and the New Town redevelopments in Seoul. The ICT plans had been drawn up to develop Korea's ICT industry in the 1980-2010 period: the Cyber Korea 21 plan; the Gangnam Development plan; the Super Highway Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan; and the e-Korea Vision 2006 plan. This data had been published by

national agencies and institutes – Seoul Institute (SMG’s think tank), Seoul Solution (SMG’s online information platform), Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG), Seoul Urban Regeneration Centre (SURC), and National Information Society Agency (NISA). Policy manuals provided the information about laws and policies which supported urban renewal projects and national ICT developments. These policy manuals related to: the Gangnam Development plan; the Huimangji Urban Renewal project; the Human Town projects; the New Town Redevelopments in Seoul; the Information and Communication Network Promotion Act in 1986; the Informatisation Promotion Act in 1995; and the Telecommunication Act in 1983.

Reports contained reviews and analysis of the projects and policies: history of Korean economic development; history of national informationisation and Internet; socio-economic polarisation and jobs in Seoul; the Gangnam Development project of the 1970s; the Seoul metro line developments; and the Two Million Housing Drive and New Town Projects (1980-90s). It had been officially published by Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS), Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS), Mapo Art Centre, National Information Society Agency (NISA), Seoul Institute, and SMG.

The policy data accessed through national online information platforms – Seoul Solution, Jeongbu24(Gov.kr), Open.go.kr and Open Data Portal. National and global statistics gave an understanding of the online-reality context: property prices; education and jobs; the penetration rate of PC; Internet broadband and smartphones; purposes of Internet use; world GDP ranks; and the world suicide rates.

Statistical data was obtained from the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), Statistics Korea, Korean Appraisal Board, Korean Education Statistics, WHO, IMF, and Korea Employers Federation, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT).

Websites provided official information about non-profit organisations in relation to Yeonnam-dong’s renewal projects, focussed on organisations for cultural and art movements – Sungmisan Maeul and Living & Arts Creative Centre. This information contributed to an understanding of the latest activities, with changes updated on the web pages on a regular basis. However, the webpages did not offer detailed materials, and was supplemented with local news articles.

The news media data contributed to collecting comprehensive and empirical evidence for the overall context, especially in Chapter 4: the context of Yeonnam-dong; Hongdae and

Hongdaeification; Korean economic development; Korean millennials; Korean social status, and Gangnak vs Gangbuk cultures; Seoul gentrification; and the Asian financial crisis and its social impacts in 1997. This material was retrieved from the Naver News Library and the Korean News Paper Archive.

Academic research papers by authors with specialised and interdisciplinary approaches relevant to the research questions were studied. These publications were from three major sources: 1) journal articles; 2) PhD theses; and 3) printed books. This information addressed the overall economic and social context of Seoul, Korean online cultures and Yeonnam-dong’s practices which form the basis of the material discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Table 3-8 below shows the main authors and keywords searched for sources of information for the case study.

Table 3-8. Collected Documents and Main Data

Types	Documents	Institutions / Authors	Main Data
Public Records	Project Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seoul Institute • Seoul Solution • SMG • SURC • NISA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AREX • GLFP • The Chinatown Development in YD • The Cyber Korea 21 plan • The Gangnam Development plan • The Huimangji Urban Renewal project • The Human Town projects • The New Town Redevelopments in Seoul • The Super Highway Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan • The e-Korea Vision 2006 plan
	Policy Manuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seoul Solution • GOV.KR • NISA • Open.go.kr • Open Data Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gangnam Development plan • The Huimangji Urban Renewal project • The Human Town projects • The New Town Redevelopments in Seoul • The Information and Communication Network Promotion Act in 1986 • The Informatisation Promotion Act in 1995 • The Telecommunication Act in 1983
	Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KEIS • KRIHS • Mapo Art Centre • NISA • Seoul Institute • SMG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Korean economic development • History of national informationisation and Internet • Socio-economic polarisation and jobs in Seoul

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gangnam Development (1970s) • The Seoul metro line developments • The Two Million Housing Drive and New Town Projects (1980-90s)
	Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KOSIS • Statistics Korea • Korean Appraisal Board • Korean Education Statistics • Korea Employers Federation • MLIT • WHO • IMF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penetration rate of PC, Internet, broadband and smartphones • Property prices • Purposes of Internet use • Education and jobs • World GDP ranks • World Suicide rates
Websites	Non-profit Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sungmisan Maeul • Living & Arts Creative Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and art movements in YD
Media	News Archive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naver News Library • Korean News Paper Archive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of Yeonnam-dong • Hongdae and Hongdaeification • Korean economic development • Korean millennials • Korean social status, and Gangnak and Gangbuk cultures • Seoul gentrification • The Asian financial crisis and its social impacts in 1997
Publications	Journal Articles & PhD Theses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahn & Chun (2007) • Buin (2016) • Cho & Song (2020) • Choi, J-H (2011) • Ha et al. (2019) • Han & Hwang (2017) • Hong & Kim (2019) • Kang et al. (2020) • Kim & Cho (2008) • Kim & Yu (2006) • Kim, D-W (2006) • Kim, J. et al. (2008) • Kim, K-J. et al. (2008) • Kim, M-H (2014) • Kim, S-S. (2013) • Kim, T-K. et al. (2018) • Kim, Y (2008) • Kim, Y-H (2018) • Ko (2020a; 2020b) • Kwon (1984) • Lee & Chung (2014) • Lee & Hong (2011) • Lee & Kwon (2020) • Lee & Sung (2015) • Lee et al. (2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changing tourist hotspots in Seoul • Context of Yeonnam-dong and Hongdae • Creative class in YD • Cyber Korea 21 project • Cyworld Mini Blog • Electronic, word of mouth and place-images in Korea • History of South Korea's IT industry • History of cultural space and the Korean younger generation • Hongdae cultures • Instagrammable space and marketing strategy in Korea • Korean blog culture and space • Korean millennials • Place-based cultures and images in Seoul • South Korea's new urban middle class and their cultures • Social media and leisure spaces in Korea • Social polarisation of Seoul

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lee et al. (2016) • Lee, B-K et al. (2020) • Lee, S-A. (2017) • Park, E-S (2014) • Son, N-H (2011) • Son, S-Y (2000) • Yim & Lee (2002) • Yoon (2016; 2017) • Yu et al. (2018) 	
	Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berardi (2015) • Fuchs (2017) • Gelézeau (2007) • Harvey (2005) • Kim et al. (2018) • Kim, Y (2019) • Krugman (2008) • Lett (1998) • Shin & Lee (2016a; 2016b) • Son, J-M (2003) • Urbanplay (2017; 2019) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of Yeonnam-dong • Digital technology and Korean history • History of Seoul's developments • Korean housing policy and culture • Korean millennials and their cultures • Korean social status • Local cultures of Korean neighbourhoods • Seoul and Asia gentrification cases • Social media and social space • Socio-cultural trend of Korea in 2019 • The Asian financial crisis and its impact on Korean society in 1997

3.5 Practical Considerations

This section considers the limitations, difficulties and ethical issues in conducting the three methods for examining online-reality interfaces. The relational ethnography in this research was designed to extend beyond the margins of contemporary urban studies, especially in relation to gentrification with digital technologies. However, the identification of exact points of practical contact between online, imaginary and real spaces from a Lefebvrian perspective was limited by constraints on data access, selection, translation and interpretation, which are discussed in the next section.

3.5.1 Access and Research Ethics

Physical contacts with key social groups – residents, business owners, artists and blog influencers – were crucial elements of data collection, but many of the potential participants hesitated about exposing their opinions and situations in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong because of the intense media attention on these issues. With many rejections, someone who wanted

to complain about their issues or introduce their own businesses accepted their participations. They were open-minded and passionate in answering questions, but some were biased against Yeonnam-dong's projects; some wanted to promote good impressions of Yeonnam-dong in general or their businesses in particular, with their own social or economic benefits in mind. Some interviewees tended to overstate their positive or negative experiences – rents, profits, number of tourists, gentrification, online influence. For this reason, I tried to approach their individual experiences and narratives with my knowledge of Yeonnam-dong's transformations, gained from blog data and the case study, rather than accept their specific viewpoints, emotions and personal goals at face value. When they became aware of my detailed knowledge of Yeonnam-dong, their responses shifted from exaggerated anecdotes to focused facts, guided by my questions in fact or figure-based directions.

In May 2018, before the field work for the semi-structured interviews in Seoul, the research project and field work plan were approved through the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure. This procedure reviewed: the purpose of the research: the invitation to participate: the selection of participants: possible disadvantages and risks, possible benefits: the legal basis for processing personal data: the consent form; and the assurance of anonymity for participants. When I contacted interview participants, this research project and all procedures of interviews – purposes, anonymity and confidentiality of private information, records, questions, and consent forms – were fully explained to them in everyday terms by email. In the face-to-face interviews, these issues were briefly explained again prior to starting voice recordings and asking questions. During the interviews, anonymity was necessary for participants because they were likely express private thoughts and feelings in relation to property prices, rents, business profits and displacement. At the end of each interview, participants signed their consent forms and were guaranteed the confidentiality of their personal information – names, businesses, job titles, property prices or rents, and addresses. Their voice record files are stored and protected in my memory stick that is physically disconnected from the Internet physically.

The blog quotes selected from the 7,900 data set were coded with post year, serial number by year, category, URL, and name of blogger (see Appendix 1). These file references are separate from the reference list (the Harvard style) to clarify blog data positions. Photos in blogs were not referenced to protect their copyright. I photographed Yeonnam-dong's streets, shops and Yeontral Park in the 2018 fieldwork, which are referenced as the Figures in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

3.5.2 Data Selection and Researcher Bias

It was a tricky and time-consuming process to build causal links between fragmented blog materials, diverse positions in the six categories of participants, and the extensive information collected from documents. Key concepts drawn from the data was the cornerstone to articulate Yeonnam-dong's dynamic spatialisation in online-reality interfaces. Although Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b) has researched and discussed alternative geographies of modernity shaped by empirical case studies of the social transformations, research methods for spatial links between the online and real practices involved seeking a vague and broad scope. Identifying the key but ambiguous points from Yeonnam-dong's dynamics by the three methods was an arduous task. In order to narrow the research scope, the two-tier framework clarified detailed standpoints of what materials should be selected from the wider data within the four levels of spatialisation and the seven foundations. During several months of trials and errors, preliminary compounds of materials derived from the united standpoints had been narrowed down to approach the relational interfaces between the three methods. This unification of different standpoints under the framework reduced the gap between researcher bias and reasonable data selections.

3.5.3 Blog Translation and Interpretation

Blog posts were written by individuals who had different backgrounds and used informal Korean expressions. Many of the collected blogs had incorrect Korean grammar and ambiguous sentences, although I could understand the general meanings of their posts. However, a major problem was accurate translation from ambiguous Korean into clear enough English for academic research. All blogs were translated by me, but some expressions were paraphrased for clearer meanings in English. The readability of the blog quotes in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 was affected in some instances where a straightforward translation from Korean to English was not possible. Nevertheless, as a native speaker of Korean, I focused on delivering bloggers' voices in the quotes and took care to interpret the spatial meanings of Yeonnam-dong in their blogs.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has established the methodological approach to the relational transformations of contemporary urban space in Yeonnam-dong, in the tension between virtuality (online) and reality. It discusses how online-reality interfaces brought about the relational transformations suggested by the framework, which are indispensable for examining the research questions.

The chapter had three main sections: 1) rationale; 2) framework; 3) methods; and 4) practical considerations. The rationale justifies the research scope of the approach - methods, data and location in relational ethnography - by discussing relevant methodological debates. The framework offered conceptual guidelines based on a Lefevrian theory of spatialisation and the seven foundations of the literature, in conducting data collections and methods. The first-tier framework outlines the dialectics of contemporary spatialisation (conceived, perceived and imagined spaces) that are newly related to online space in Shields' developments of Lefebvre's theories. The second-tier framework allows in-depth interpretations of the fragmented but interactive data organised in line with seven concepts: 1) financial triggers; 2) new system of spatialisation; 3) demand for hyper-realistic space; 4) alternative value system of individuals; 5) attention-driven consumer cultures; 6) spatial formation of symbolic values; and 7) valorisation of hybrid space.

The discussion of the methods provides a relational reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of each method and how they work together to complement each other in the online-reality interfaces. Practical considerations discuss limitations, difficulties and ethical issues in relation to the three methods for conducting this research. This alternative approach using multi-layered qualitative methods aims to activate the two-tier analytical framework for deciphering the relational transformations of Yeonnam-dong's gentrification which are discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 4. The Online-Reality Context of Seoul

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the relational context of contemporary Seoul from three perspectives, which: 1) examine capitalist spatialisation in Gangbuk and Gangnam; 2) compare cultural spatialisation by Korean millennials with authentic cultural practices; and 3) compare informational spatialisation of online information with leisure practices. It aims to clarify the relational transformations of Seoul's urban spaces on five different levels: 1) capital value (economic space); 2) generations (social space); 3) urban cultures (cultural space); 4) online information (online space); and 5) decision-making processes (mental space), drawing on the literature review and the methodological framework. The contradictory relationships – Gangbuk vs Gangnam; emancipation vs emulation; personal space vs social norms; reality vs virtuality; and diversity vs standardisation – in the online-reality context had generated relational spatialisations. This chapter focuses on articulating the dynamic boundaries of colliding with new factors: the Gangnam New town, millennials, alternative arts, ICT, PC, online platforms, “room culture” and smartphones. The chapter aims to provide an understanding of how relational transformations, triggered at the online-reality boundaries, affected urban spaces in Seoul in order to present a context for the empirical study of Yeonnam-dong.

4.2 Capitalist Spatialisation: Gangbuk and Gangnam in Seoul

4.2.1 Modern Seoul: Gangnam Newtown, Power and Wealth

Since 1392, Seoul had been the capital of Joseon dynasty (1392-1897) and the Korean Empire (1897-1910), and since the Korean War, the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) of the border with North Korea located a short distance (approximately 60 km) away. Until the 1960s, five bridges had connected the north (Seoul) and south banks of the Hangang River but (Seoul Infographics, 2018) during the Korean War, many refugees failed to cross the river and several hundreds of people were killed when the South Korean army bombed the Hangang Bridge in an attempt to delay the North Korean attack. Controversially, it is claimed that a military adviser from the US Army ordered South Korea's military to fire (Jeong, 2020).

With this brutal experience in which South Korea's innocent civilians died in the bombing of the bridge by the South Korean army, the Korean government feared that Seoul's citizens were exposed to potential danger by living so near the border with North Korea (Jeong, 2020, Son, 2003). Old Seoul surrounded by the Hangang River was geographically vulnerable to North Korea's pre-emptive attack in the aftermath of the War. Since the population of Seoul had increased from 1 million to 2.4 million in the 1960s, the Gangnam New Town Plan for accommodating demographic and geographical expansion was imperative to secure the future of the country.

The authoritarian state -32 years of military dictatorship - carried out top-down plans for transferring major government buildings, national infrastructures, and public and private schools to the South New Town (Kang, 2016; Kim, Y-T, 2018; Son, 2003). The Legal Court of Korea, the Supreme Prosecutors' office, the Seoul express bus terminal and 15 high schools, as well as sizeable nightclubs and bars in the old urban areas of Seoul had been moved to the newly developed areas on the opposite side of the river (Kang, 2016; Kim, Y-T, 2018; Son, 2003). The movement of the state's main facilities to the New Town aimed to disperse residents of overpopulated areas to Gangnam (the south riverbank) in order to protect them from possible attack by North Korea attack, while at the same time, tackling the shortage of housing, water supply and roads (Kang, 2016; Son, 2003; Yi et al., 2019). However, the large-scale urban developments, which included major transport infrastructure such as the Gyeongbu Expressway (between Seoul and Busan) and Seoul Subway lines, had been initiated by the Korean government with little regulation of the property market or the skyrocketing property prices in Gangnam. For instance, land prices in Hak-dong and Sinsa-dong in Gangnam had increased more than 1,000 times from 1963 to 1979 (Son, 2003). Since then, Gangnam has been a focus of property investment, symbolising the wealthiest neighbourhoods in Seoul. Whilst growing public and private investment facilitated by economic deregulation, have been largely concentrated in Gangnam property, residential areas in Gangbuk have been neglected socially and economically (Harvey, 2005; Son, 2003; Yim & Lee, 2002).

Since the 1970s, the successful development of Gangnam fostered the strong belief that the value of Gangnam's properties would never fall: capital investment in Gangnam is considered a "safe bet".

Under the Roh Tae-woo government, South Korea's two million housing drive (1988-1992) constructed 2.1 million units. Roh Tae-woo (1988-1993) was a former army general and the last president of the 32-year long military dictatorship (Gelézeau, 2007; Son, 2003). This last

military government aggressively pushed national-scale housing construction, and high-rise apartment complexes justified the ruthless bulldozing that destroyed much low-income housing in the Seoul metropolitan area (Gelézeau, 2007; Son, 2003). Gelézeau (2007) conceptualises South Korea's spatial context as the 'republic of apartments' - similar size and style apartments created by the authoritarianism governments and the construction conglomerates (*Chaebol*) (Samsung, Hyundai, LG, Daelim, and Daewoo) in pursuit of power and profit. During the ruthless and harmful top-down construction of housing projects, South Korea's architects, planners, professors, and relevant experts were just onlookers who remained silent about the problematic constructions under threat of the authoritarian state (Gelézeau, 2007). The Gangnam New Town project was unexceptional in these circumstances. High-rise apartment complexes became the overwhelming context of urban space in Gangnam (Gelézeau, 2007; Son, 2003). The standardised housing type, which can be easily appraised and exchanged for cash in the financialised housing market, promoted financial transactions and speculative investments. These developments have created intensive capital accumulation in Gangnam and have accelerated the financial polarisation of Seoul.

4.2.2 Socio-economic Polarisation of Seoul

This spatialised faith of investors has sustained the social and economic polarisation of Seoul between the North (Gangbuk) and the South (Gangnam) : wealth, education and lifestyles (Lee, S-H, 2019; Buin, 2016; Buin et al. 2010; Kang, 2016; Yim & Lee, 2002). Figure 4-1 below illustrates the increasing gap in average house prices between Gangbuk and Gangnam between 2012 and 2018. Average house prices in Seoul are located at the median point between the North and South. Three figures indicate similar patterns of changing prices, but the relative gaps have remained. Even though the price differential between the North and South fluctuated between 157,776 and 217,446 thousand won, all patterns and gaps are sustained over the six years. In brief, the economic polarisation between Gangbuk and Gangnam has not been eased. Furthermore, the price gap had been maintained by a particular social class. According to Yim and Lee (2002), the polarisation of Seoul is accounted for by the gap in property incomes rather than the wages of residents. Soaring prices enable a high-income class to keep their exclusive status in Gangnam (Yim & Lee, 2002). By taking advantage of real estate profits, they expand their investment portfolios and obstruct by newcomers entering their economic territories and taking part of their wealth away (Yim & Lee, 2002). As a result, Gangnam has been socially demarcated and economically colonised by the class who had reaped substantial property profits (see

Atkinson (2020) for an extreme account of what he terms property-driven “city capture” in central London which transforms the built environment).

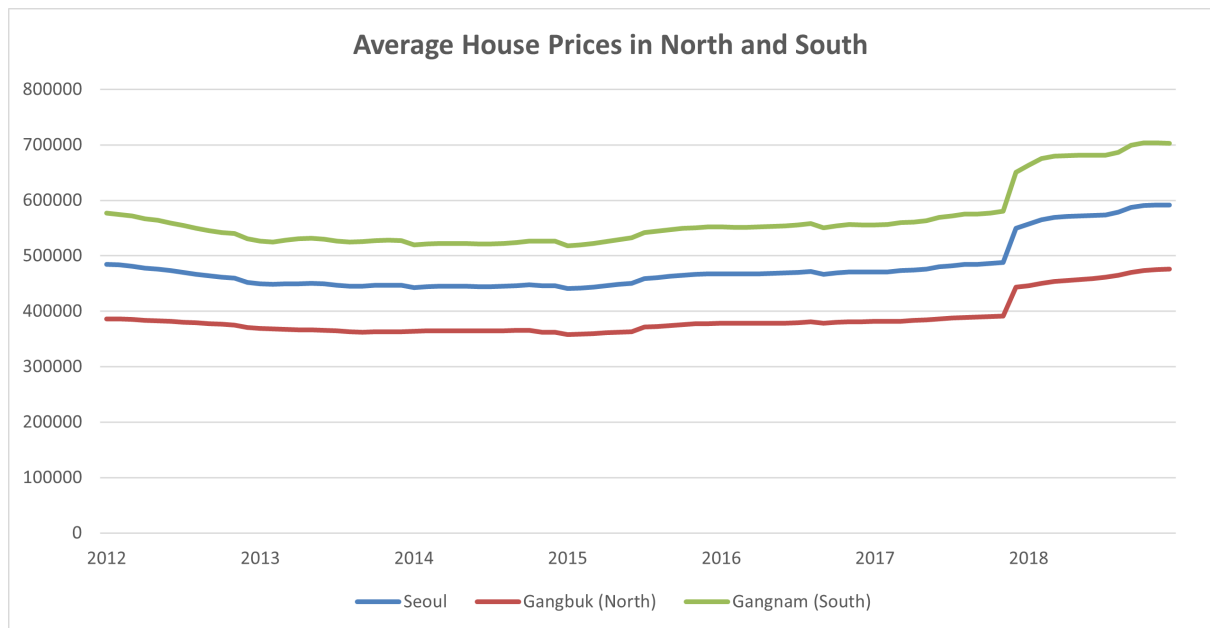


Figure 4-1. Average House Prices in South and North of Seoul (Source: Korea Appraisal Board)

The analytic mapping in Figure 4-2 below (adapted from Lee, S-H 2019), clarifies where the educated and privileged class has bolstered their economic power and status in relation to spatial advantages of the Gangnam Newtown project. Uneven urban structure, the upper ranges of which are mostly concentrated in Gangnam, is beneficial to this class. For example, about 30% of Lines 2 and 3 stations of the Seoul Metro are located in Gangnam (Yim & Lee, 2002); and the 8th school district with prestigious high schools that were transferred from Gangbuk contribute to the higher property values in the Korean belief that better education ushers in access to the middle or upper class (Lett, 1998; Yim & Lee, 2002). In Figure 4-2, optimised hotspot analysis of Geographic Information System (GIS) information shows how variations in income, education and job status map onto neighbourhoods in Seoul and demonstrates spatial divisions between red areas (high index groups, wealthier, higher educational attainment) and blue areas (low index groups, more deprived, lower educational attainment). The map shows the socio-economic polarisation between Gangbuk and Gangnam derived from Gangnam’s spatial advantages in creating higher property values and profits, which reflected in the better education and jobs of the area which strengthens residents’ economic power and status. This polarisation has widened since the Asian financial crisis in 1997 that devastated the overall Korean economy with the massive bankruptcies of companies (11 of the top 30 Korean firms collapsed) and

savage cuts to average wages (Harvey, 2005; Yim & Lee, 2002). The higher property values in Gangnam alleviated losses and helped to maintain their advantageous position. According to Harvey (2005), the crisis resulted in serious income inequality and impoverishment in South Korea. And this socio-economic polarisation has also differentiated the cultural spaces and practices of Gangbuk from those of Gangnam.

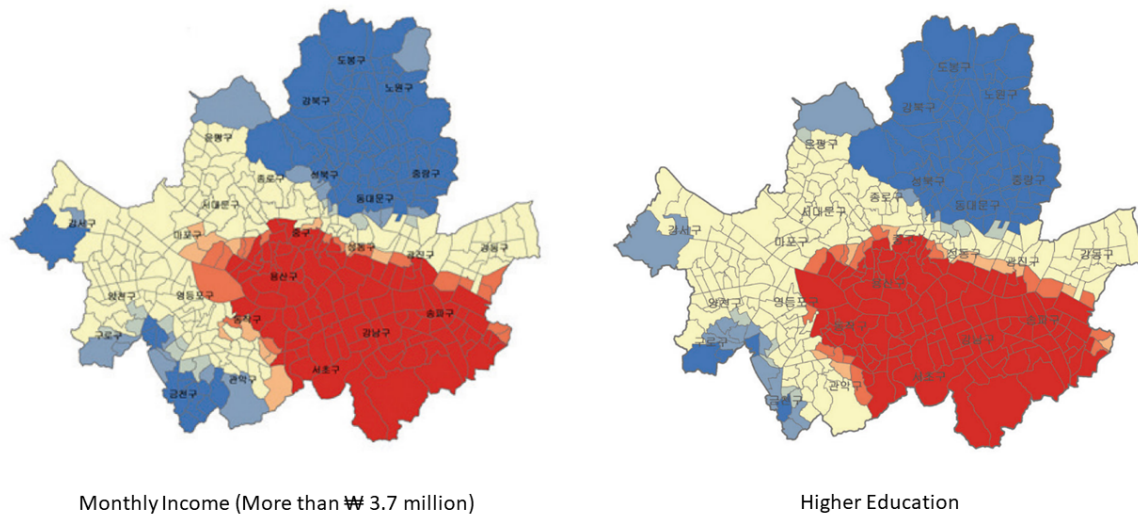


Figure 4-2. Socio-Economic Polarisation of Seoul (Lee, 2019)

4.3 Cultural Spatialisation: Korean Millennials and Cultural Spaces

4.3.1 Korean Millennials

Korean millennials, widely defined as the generation born between the early 1980s and the late 1990s, have become a primary influence on economy, culture and politics in Korean society and have become key taste makers in spaces of consumption (Kim, Y., 2019). Most millennials are children of the baby boomers who had contributed to the dramatic economic growth of South Korea in the post-World War II period, making South Korea 12th largest world economy based on GDP (International Monetary Fund, 2019). The millennial generation grew up with excellent educational opportunities, living standards and leisure activities in a period of peace and prosperity that had been created by their parents. In 2015, 69 per cent of 25-34-year-olds studied at higher education institutions (Korean Education Statistics Service, 2015). In 2017, 89.3 per cent of 20-year-olds and 94.6 per cent of 30-year-olds worked in full-time, good quality jobs (Korean Statistical Information Service, 2018). However, the highly competitive nature and extremely fast pace of Korean society has also caused the fourth highest suicide rate in the world and the highest among the

OECD countries (Berardi, 2015; Lee, J-H., 2020; Park; 2020; The Economist, 2020; World Health Organization, 2018): nearly 27 per 100,000 of the Korean population took their own lives in 2019 (Lee, J-H., 2020; Park; 2020; The Economist, 2020). It is argued that the roots of this phenomenon are to be found in social fragmentation, a weakening of the social safety net, an increasingly low income, unstable job market, and slower economic growth (Berardi, 2015; Lee, B-M., 2020; Lee, J-H, 2020; Park, 2020; The Economist, 2020; World Health Organization, 2017). Korean millennials are situated within this contradictory society, wealthier but more distressed.

Contemporary Korean society has suffered a generational conflict between baby boomer collectivism, which had contributed to the rapid economic growth of the 1960s-80s, and millennial individualism, which developed in the affluent and democratic society of the 1990s-2000s. The collectivism emphasises a strong sense of social cohesiveness between members of society through dismissing individual tastes and values in pursuit of common goals – the first of which is economic growth (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). For the baby boomers, improvement in the efficiency of economic production is the most important ethic, rather than diversity, tolerance, justice, fairness and dignity as socio-cultural values. In South Korea's modern history, most Koreans had had to show endless patience and diligence to overcome national crises such as severe famine, poverty, disease and war damage. The baby boomers' ethic was influenced by their experience of the political and economic turmoil over the course of their generation – the Korean War (1950-1953), the military dictatorship and democracy movements (1961-1993), the industrialisation in the 1960-80s, and the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. Their cheap and efficient labour had produced strong export performance that had allowed them to survive in a globalising capitalist economy. These conditions created the strong work ethic among Korean baby boomers.

In contrast, the millennials were born after the dramatic economic reconstruction of the 1980s, called 'Miracle on the Hangang River' after the Korean War. The millennials' parents, the baby boomers, concentrated their energy and wealth on their children (generally, two or three in smaller family units than had been traditional before the War). With the great care and extended interests, they tend to be self-absorbed and self-assertive and focussed on personal goals, but at the same time, also take part in civic-minded activities that promote public values and show concern for global issues – for example, climate change, human rights, social justice, anti-war protest and child poverty (Kim, Y-T., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). They advocate diverse cultures and tolerant communities while competing better social positions – education, jobs and leisure. When their personal interests or values collide with their work, they do not always prioritise economic benefits. Despite a highly competitive job

market, some millennials do not hesitate to withdraw their labour from inappropriate workplaces seen to be in opposition to their values. In 2016, 27.7 per cent of young employees left their workplaces within a year of being hired (Korea Employers Federation, 2016; Kim, Y., 2019). Millennials are stigmatised as the “most impatient and selfish generation” among Korean social groups (Kim, Y., 2019), but nevertheless, their individualism plays a leading role in encouraging new, diverse, unique and authentic cultures in Korean society.

The millennials tend to pursue individual satisfaction and happiness in the present moment, rather than make financial preparations for the future like their parents’ generation. Although they were born in South Korea’s economic heyday, they experienced severe Korean economic crises – the Asian Financial crisis in 1997 and the Global Financial crisis in 2008 (Harvey, 2005; Yim & Lee, 2002). The 1997 financial crisis had a devastating effect on Korean society, with mass unemployment, business bankruptcies, family breakdown, and high rates of suicide (Harvey, 2005; Yim & Lee, 2002). The sense of social panic in a sluggish economy with unstable employment continued after the crises, escalating a fear of the unexpected future among the millennials. The majority of millennials dread a bleak prospect in opposition to previous affluent lives the baby boomers had achieved and enjoyed, believing that they will become much poorer than their parents (Kim, Y., 2019). Hence, they derive certain satisfaction from knowing that cheaper, smaller experiences could make them happy enough at the present time, rather than preparation for uncertain prospects – for example, the long-term savings or investments in self-development of their parents.

“Work-life-balance” becomes a crucial value for millennials to manage their time at work and leisure properly. they aim to maximise individual satisfactions from small happenings in daily experiences rather than financial rewards like salaries, investments and mortgages (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). The influence of low economic growth on Korean cultures means the millennials focus on “small but certain happiness”³ to satisfy their demand for cheap and simple but high-quality goods and services (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). Small cafes, bakeries and restaurants in narrow streets reflect the cultural preferences of millennials for consuming affordable and worthwhile experiences in search of certain happiness in the present. For instance, freshly brewed coffee, well-baked bread, favourite books and retro music in cosy spaces are similar to *Hygge*, a Danish and Norwegian term for cosiness and

³ Japanese novelist, Haruki Murakami (1986), mentioned this term, “small but certain happiness (小確幸)”, in his book, *Afternoon in the Islets of Langerhans*, for the first time.

comfortable conviviality –a woolly jumper, hot tea and relaxing candles (Parkinson, 2015; Zukin et al., 2009). The new leisure tastes and practices of the millennials impact on the urban the built environment in response to their cultural demands.

4.3.2 Relational Urban Cultures in Seoul

In contrast to the massive flow of investment into Gangnam property, Gangbuk's neighbourhoods had been neglected for three decades between the 1970s and the 1990s. As these neighbourhoods remained relatively affordable due to the lack of public and private investment, unique and authentic cultures for millennials could be developed independently in Gangbuk (See Figure 4-3). Other areas had developed particular social and economic characteristics during the economic recovery. Hongdae, in proximity to the major universities, had developed alternative arts – music, films, fashion, design, publication and artworks (Choi, J-H., 2011; Park, E-S., 2014; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016; 2017). Itaewon, where the U.S. army base, Yongsan Garrison, and the Seoul Central Mosque had been located, created multicultural spaces filled with western food and fashion cultures influenced by the presence of U.S. military personnel (Kim, T-K. et al., 2018; Shin & Lee, 2016a). In contrast, young artists, artisans and small business owners, who had graduated from local universities or had a great affection for tolerant and emancipated communities, gathered in the cheap and quiet neighbourhoods in Gangbuk (Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016; 2017). This creative class created spaces for unique alternative cultures, such as art workshops, studios, design offices and publishers. These contrasted with stylish, glamorous and extravagant tastes displayed in the European-style cafes, French and Italian restaurants, antique furniture stores, fancy flower shops and boutiques of Gangnam (Buin, 2016; Buin et al. 2010; Kim, T-K. et al., 2018; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Zukin et al., 2009).



Figure 4-3. The Coolest Neighbourhoods for Millennials in Seoul

Buin (2016) contrasts traditional scenes in Gangbuk with glamorous, bohemian and global scenes in Gangnam, and distinguishes the cultural neighbourhoods – Hongdae and Itaewon – from historical sites and the old city centre in Gangbuk. The so-called ‘coolest neighbourhoods’ were formed by young and creative incomers who were rejecting conventional norms and values. In the 1990s, Hongdae was perceived as a cultural shelter where the younger generation could be emancipated from suffocating social norms, providing alternative, non-mainstream and diverse cultures in music – rock, jazz, hip hop, techno, house and EDM (Bugs, 2017). In contrast, young tastemakers in Gangnam, who were born into Gangnam’s affluent families and had experienced American cultures through studying in the US (and hence known as “Oranges” like oranges imported from California), reproduced ostentatious US cultures through material symbols. Large cheques, sports cars, luxury fashion brands, hip-hop fashion styles, Scotch whisky, recreational drugs, nightclubs and extravagant hotels were symbolic markers of the wealthy urban spaces in South Seoul in the 1990s (Gangnam-gu Cultural Encyclopedia, 2020; Hankook Ilbo, 1992; Maeil Business Newspaper, 1994). The “Oranges” developed luxurious and exclusive spaces influenced by glamorous American pop cultures, and paid no attention to cultural uniqueness and diversity of Seoul (Buin, 2016; Buin et al. 2010; Hankook Ilbo, 1992; Maeil Business Newspaper, 1994). These differences meant that cultural spaces in Gangbuk and Gangnam established different relational identities and place-images, but both of which diverged from

traditional norms under the influence of the financial polarisation in Seoul – Gangbuk’s alternatives (emancipation) and Gangnam’s substitutes (emulation).

As cultural neighbourhoods, Hongdae and Itaewon had been locations for the creation of unique, authentic and alternative spaces, but since the 2000s have been commercialised and gentrified and the creative incomers and their cultures moved to neighbouring areas. This spill-over into neighbouring areas occurred in the main cultural neighbourhoods – from Hongdae to Yeonnam-dong and Mangwon-dong, from Itaewon to Gyeongnidan, from Kondae to Seongsu, and from Sinsa to Garosu (See a map in Figure 4-3). Figure 4-4 shows that property prices in the new neighbourhoods – Yeonnam-dong, Seongsu (2-ga) and Mangwon-dong where young incomers had spread from gentrified neighbourhoods – not only exceeded average prices in Seoul, but also approached fluctuating prices in the old coolest neighbourhoods (gentrified areas) – Itaewon, Hongdae and Shinsa-dong. In brief, the second waves of gentrification hit the new neighbourhoods immediately as the gentrified neighbourhoods created spill-overs to neighbouring areas.

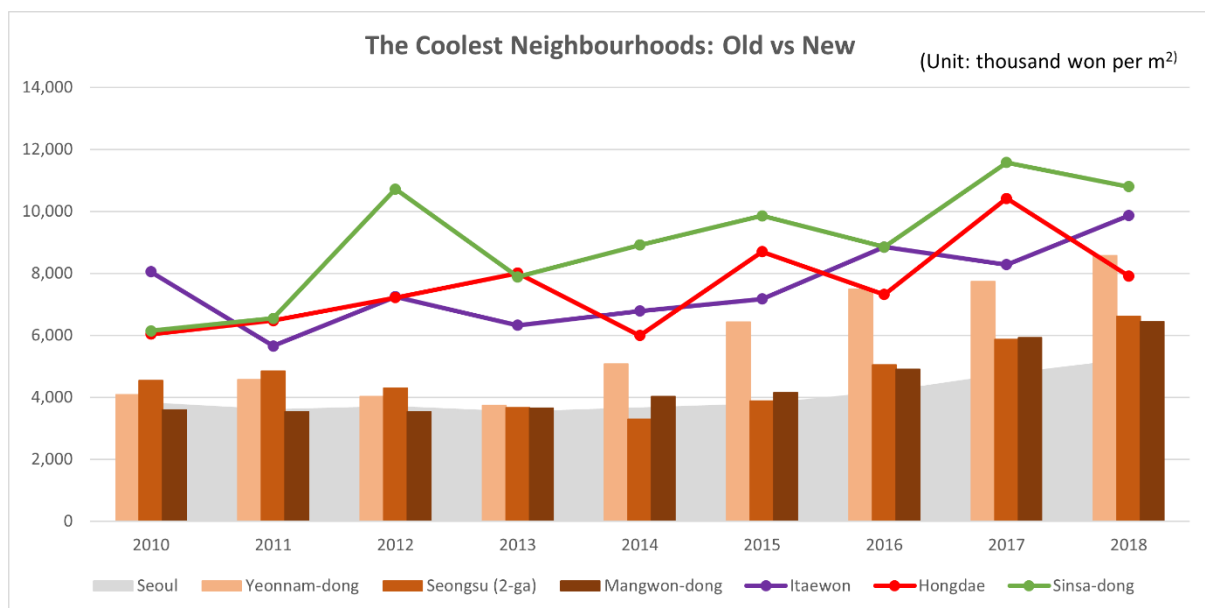


Figure 4-4. Old and New Cultural Neighbourhoods
(Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport)

4.4 Informational Spatialisation: Online and Leisure Practices

4.4.1 Context of Online Space in the 1980s-2010s

South Korea transformed into a manufacturing country in the 1960-1970s, the government wanted to develop advanced science and technology – semiconductor, computer, shipbuilding, steel, motor and chemical – in order to be an economic powerhouse on the front line of the Cold War against North Korea (Jo, n.d.). Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was the backbone of the high-tech industry such as electronics – the origin of Samsung smartphones, LCD and DRAM (Berardi, 2015). ICT became one of the major industries backed by massive government investment with the aim of joining the ranks of advanced countries.

In the 1980s, South Korea legislated for an emerging ICT industry and established national organisations. It started preparations to convert the country from manufacturing to become a science and technology powerhouse. The National Assembly drew up the legislative basis for the public and private projects. The Telecommunication Act and the Information and Communication Network Promotion Act were passed in 1983 and 1986 respectively (National Information Society Agency, 2019; 2020). National organisations and research institutions were established to promote and develop these technologies: –Korea Telecom (1981); Korea Electrotechnology and Telecommunication Research Institute (1981); Korea Data Communication Corporation (1982); the National Network Mediation Committee (1984); the Korea Computerization Agency (1987); and the Computer Network Mediation Committee (1987) (National Information Society Agency, 2019; 2020). With the state's substantial support for ICT, South Korea secured the core technologies for information and communication hardware – TDX-1 (Digital electronic telephone switching system), 4M DRAM (semiconductor), 32-bit PC, mobile telecommunication service, Internet and email services, and PC banking service (Lee & Hong, 2011; National Information Society Agency, 2019; 2020).

After the establishment of ICT policies and organisations in the 1980s, the Korean government supported investment in broadband and mobile infrastructures in the 1990s. Most importantly, the Ministry of Information and Communication was founded in 1994, followed by the Informatisation Promotion Act, the Korea Internet Safety Commission, and the Super-Highway Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan in 1995 (Lee & Hong, 2011; National Information Society Agency, 2019; 2020). These specialised arms of government, law and planning contributed to setting up high-speed broadband networks and services for households and firms rapidly and efficiently. In particular, beginning in 1999, the 'Cyber Korea 21' plan was implemented to improve national ICT infrastructures: this plan focussed on the speed and coverage of the nationwide broadband network; access to personal computers (PCs); education for individual information-processing abilities;

computer education in schools; and e-governance and e-business (Son, 2000). South Korea achieved the world’s fastest broadband network and highest penetration rates of the Internet in 2001 and 2002 (see the rates in Figure 4-5). Consequently, the 1990s policies and investments in broadband and mobile infrastructure led to a variety of Internet providers and services – Kornet (KT), Boranet (Dacom), Nurinet (Inet), etc. – and increased the numbers of Internet subscribers and mobile users to 19 million and 20 million people respectively (40 and 43 per cent of South Koreans) in 2000, compared to 26.82 per cent (Internet) and 47 per cent (mobile) of the UK in 2000 (Lee & Hong, 2011; Statista, 2020; 2021).

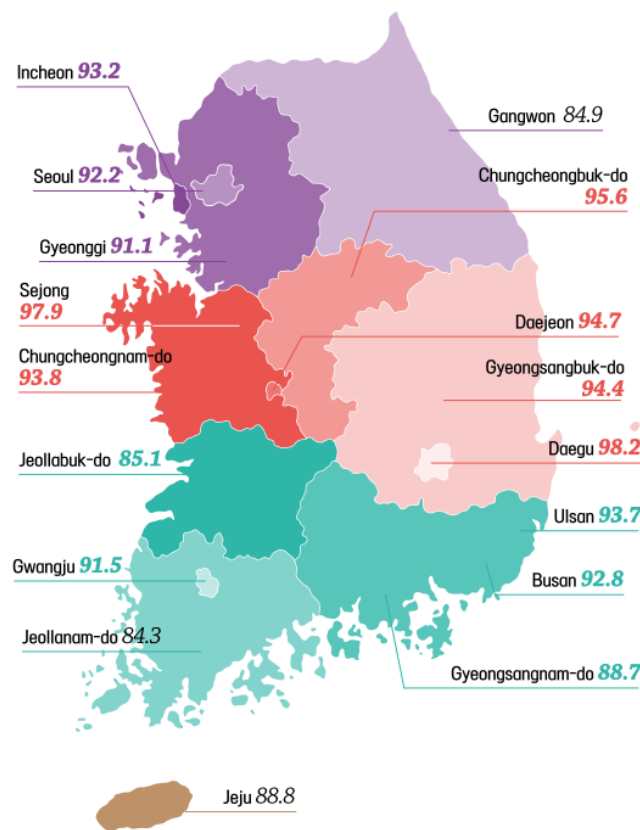


Figure 4-5. Internet Usage Rate by Region (%) (National Information Society Agency, 2020)

The high-speed broadband industry had been supported by the e-Korea Vision 2006 plan in the 2000s. The increasing numbers of Internet subscribers led to thriving industries in e-commerce, web portals, video games, music streaming and social media services in a private market. Examples are: Interpark (e-commerce, 1997); Daum (Web portal, 1997); NCSoft (Game, 1997); Naver (Web portal, 1999); Cyworld (Social media, 1999); Sayclub (1999); Netmarble (Game, 2000); Bugs (Music, 2000); Nate (Web portal, 2001); and Neowiz (Game, 2007). According to Fuchs (2017), six Korean websites founded between the late 1990s and the early 2000s were ranked in the world’s 20 most-viewed websites surveyed in

2002 (see Table 4-1). With the development of online content and broadband networks (see Figure 4-6), Internet cafes, known as “PC bang (피씨방)”, had spread nationwide and popularised e-sports such as StarCraft, Warcraft and Lineage. PC bang, charging a low rental fee (1,000-1,500 won / £ 0.7-1 per hour), came to be perceived as a cultural space for the younger generation. President Kim Dae Jung (1998 - 2003) promoted investment in infrastructure and technology to support the entertainment industry in relation to K-pop, K-movie and K-game. State support and the tech industry boom related to online services triggered significant growth in the entertainment industry. South Korea’s physical cultural spaces for young people, including Internet cafes and E-sports stadia, began to be influenced by online platforms and content due to the growth of ICT industries. Furthermore, an online salon culture for sharing individual opinions was developed through virtual forums provided by Daum and Nate. These online spaces, in which people could freely share their interests, knowledge and opinions stimulated real (i.e. physical) social gatherings of the younger generation in cultural neighbourhoods like Hongdae, Itaewon and Gangnam.

Table 4-1. Top 20 Websites on 9th December 2002 (Fuchs, 2017)

Rank	Website	Rank	Website
1	Yahoo.com	11	Sayclub.com (S.Korea)
2	Msn.com	12	Sina.com.cn
3	Daum.net (S.Korea)	13	Netmarble.net (S.Korea)
4	Naver.com (S.Korea)	14	Amazon.com
5	Google.com	15	Nate.com (S.Korea)
6	Yahoo.co.jp	16	Go.com
7	Passport.net	17	Sohu.com
8	Ebay.com	18	163.com
9	Microsoft.com	19	Hotmail.com
10	Bugsmusic.co.kr (S.Korea)	20	Aol.com

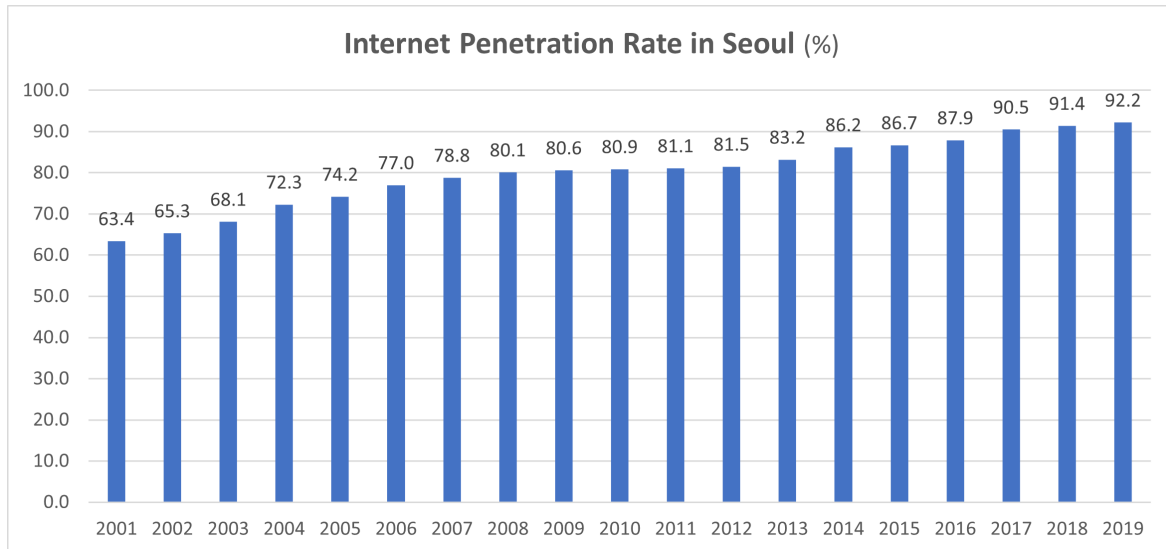


Figure 4-6. Internet Penetration Rate in Seoul (Source: Korean Statistical Information Service)

4.4.2 Dual Space: Cyworld Mini Blog and Room Culture in the 2000s

Whilst broadband networks and personal computers (PCs) had been widely distributed to households in the 2000s (see Figure 4-7), the younger generation's strong desire for their own spaces had penetrated into online platforms, especially Cyworld mini blogs. Cyworld was a leading social network service company founded in 1999 which provided a mini blog service, known as the *minihompy* (미니홈피) (Kim, D-W., 2006). This was the initial stage of South Korea's social media platforms before the emergence of US-based global services like Myspace (2003), Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006) (Hong & Kim, 2019). Cyworld minihompy gained massive popularity among young people in their 20s and 30s, having 20 million subscribers (over 40 per cent of South Koreans) in 2007 (Ahn & Chun, 2007; Kim, D-W., 2006; National Internet Development Agency of Korea, 2006). The younger generation launching and managing their own mini blogs became a social and cultural phenomenon called *Cyhollic* in South Korea (Ahn & Chun, 2007). About 4.5 million photos and 8 million comments were produced and 6.5 million people accessed Cyworld every day (Kim, D-W., 2006). This personal blog service commenced when, by the early 2000s, almost 80 per cent of Korean households owned personal computers and had Internet access(see Figure 4-7).

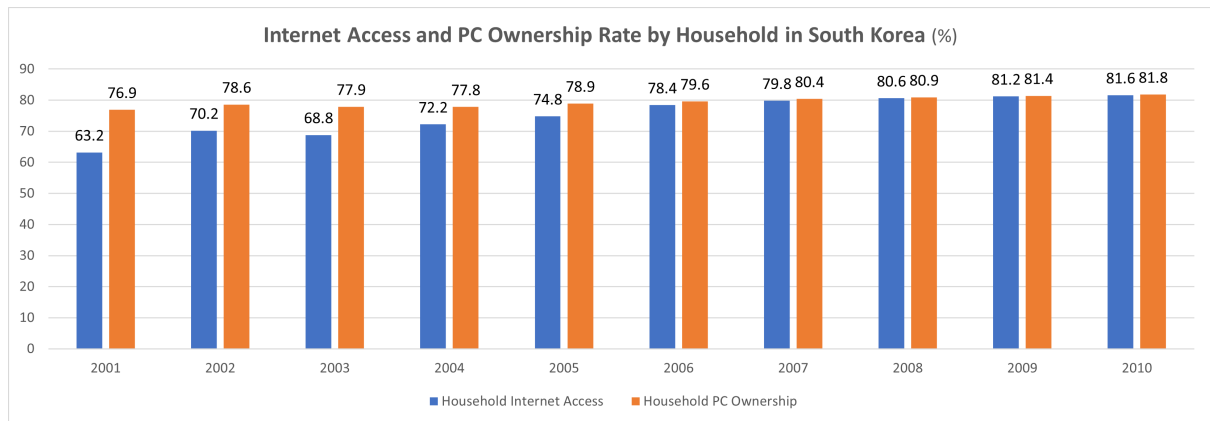


Figure 4-7. Internet Access and PC Ownership Rate by Household in South Korea
 (Source: Korean Statistical Information Service)

In contrast to Hongdae in the 1990s, where young people had sought alternative cultures and cultural spaces for music and arts, by the 2000s cultural spaces had changed from being located in areas or neighbourhoods into being scattered across individual spaces. The *bang* (one meaning for “room” in Korean) culture spread quickly and led to room rental businesses – for example, *PC bang* (individual PCs in an Internet café), *DVD bang* (rooms in a small cinema), *Norae bang* (rooms in a Karaoke), *Jjimjil bang* (rooms for sauna) and *Motel bang* (half-day or several-hour rooms in cheap hotels) (Son, 2011). These services reflected young Koreans’ desire have independent space where they could be emancipated from their family crowded in small apartments. The Korean *bang* culture provides temporary, cheap individual spaces for them. Whilst the room rental businesses developed from this demand for individual physical space, Cyworld mini blogs offered online individual spaces for self-expression and selective communication with chosen friends via social media networks (Kim, J. et al., 2008; Kim, Y., 2008; Lee et al., 2006; Son, 2011). The blog as a new media played the virtual role of an individual space open only to chosen friends and selected strangers who were matched with their interests (Kim, K-J. et al., 2008; Kim & Cho, 2008). Broadband networks enabled young Koreans to build virtual relationships separately from traditional circles and ethics. In assisting in building selective relationships in online society, Cyworld, was perceived as a trendy online entertainment in South Korea (Ahn & Chun, 2007; Kim, J. et al., 2008; Kim, K-J. et al., 2008), serving as dual space: a separate virtual society and an alternative reality distinct from unsatisfying daily routines and relationships. By the 2000s, online practices had been demarcated by virtual relationships and online persona visualised by avatars, wallpaper and background music.

However, Cyworld *minihompy* was a transitional service located between an informational role in individualised media and the role of forging interests and tastes in the virtual community. Cyworld highlighted conspicuous online images through personal exhibitions in virtual rooms – bed, furniture, decorations, pets, wallpaper, carpet and avatars which were aesthetically illustrated on participants' main pages – and a large number of online friends (Kim & Yu, 2006; Kim & Cho, 2008). The virtual exhibition space was called *Miniroom* inherited from the *bang* culture. *Miniroom* not only provided individual space online, but also valorised the traditional ethic of the importance of having a wide circle of relationships that signified successful social status in Korean society (Kim, J et al., 2008; Son, 2011). Bloggers' main pages on Cyworld accentuated have a wide range and large number of virtual relationships as a barometer of online social status. In contrast to global social media services (e.g. Facebook and Instagram) that enable self-expression and offer individual feeds, Cyworld services adopted South Korea's traditional value developed from the agrarian society (Kim, J et al., 2008; Son, 2011) and seemingly in contradiction to their desire to escape tradition, this feature of the virtual relationships was hugely popular among young Koreans. However, excessive interactions with online strangers encroached on the meaning of online individual spaces, which was recognised as a new online stress.

Commercial items – *miniroom*, avatar, background music and wallpaper for the purpose of aesthetically decorating the main pages – were sold at Cyworld's online market, helping young users to break from their actual lives and strengthen their virtual spaces. In the late 2000s, however, individual spaces commercialised by decorative additions were changed from being means of self-expression to becoming expressions of self-satisfaction gained from overspending on the conspicuous extras (Kim & Yu, 2006; Son, 2011) sold for profit by SK Communications, the owner of Cyworld. This blog service decisively failed to embrace new mobile platforms such as Android and iOS in the 2010s. With the high penetration of smartphones (over 90 per cent since 2017 see Figure 4-8), the attention of the younger bloggers turned to global social media services that were optimised for digital devices and private communications in ubiquitous wireless connections. Consequently, the Cyworld business rapidly declined rapidly in the face of the emergence of hybrid space between smart digital devices and real practices.

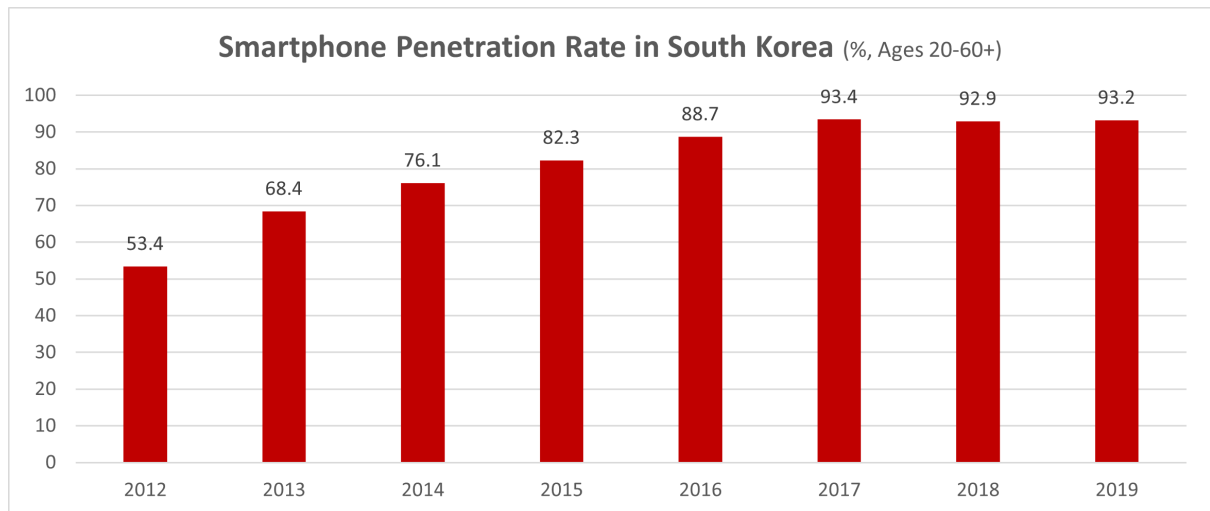


Figure 4-8. Smartphone Penetration Rate in South Korea (Source: Gallup Korea)

4.4.3 Hybrid Space: Mobility of Data and Leisure Footfall in the 2010s

Whilst the Cyworld minihompy service declined sharply in the 2010s, Korean online platforms divided into two media: Korean blogs (Naver, Tistory, Daum and Egloos); and global social media services (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). In contrast to Western blogs focusing on informational and objective contents, Korean blog culture developed into an alternatively individualised media building social networks and sharing subjective information (Lee & Sung, 2015). Korean blog services not only mimicked the features of social media in engaging with online followers, but also were influenced by the Cyworld mini blog in the context of Korean online space. As Cyworld had served as the biggest platform in South Korea in the 2000s, it had provided all-inclusive services – a blog, social media, virtual community and messaging (similarly, WeChat in China includes social media, messaging and mobile payment). Hence, many Korean firms imitated the Cyworld services which were already familiar to young Koreans and combined them with previous functions – virtual communities (followers) and self-expression (individual feeds). These firms were very careful not to be commercialised by advertisements and sales of decorative extras like Cyworld, and they optimised their services for new digital devices like smartphones, laptops and tablet computers. This strategy enabled them to keep their market share and survive the intense competition from global social media services. As a result, Naver has the highest share of South Korea’s major search engines on mobiles and PCs – 71.1 per cent in 2019 (National Information Society Agency, 2020).

Korean blog services and Instagram expanded their roles to become decision-making tools. Since launching its Korean service in December 2012, Instagram has become the fastest-growing global platform (Kim, Y-H., 2018), sharing the Korean online market with Korean blog services (Kim, Y-H., 2018). These platforms established their different roles in decision-making processes. Blogs produced detailed descriptions and images about personal experiences and information through documentary web pages, but Instagram stimulated an intuitive sense of what young people wanted to experience through captivating, sensational and inspiring photos known as “Instagrammable” visuals (Cho & Song, 2020; Lee & Kwon, 2020). For example, Instagram helped users to differentiate attractive photos of spaces from massive flows of online data, based on their intuition, and blogs provided sources of detailed information regarding the spaces preselected from Instagram (KM03, 30s architect). This combined process influenced the decision-making of the younger generation, especially for their leisure activities. Figure 4-9 shows that 94 per cent of the purpose in Internet use is for leisure activities. Because user-generated information covered wide-ranging types of specific spaces, the online platforms satisfied the diverse interests and tastes of the younger generation but led to a narrower range of practices in actual consumption. Young tourists relied on this information to minimise the risk that their leisure activities in commercial spaces – hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars and bakeries – might be disappointing or unaffordable (Arsal et al., 2010; Cho & Song, 2020; Fodness & Murray, 1998; Han & Hwang, 2017; Kim, M-H., 2014). Electronic “word-of-mouth” through the platforms gave the younger people more diverse, reasonable, attractive and safe options to consider in their decision-making, compared to traditional word-of-mouth (Han & Hwang, 2017; Lee et al., 2016; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013).

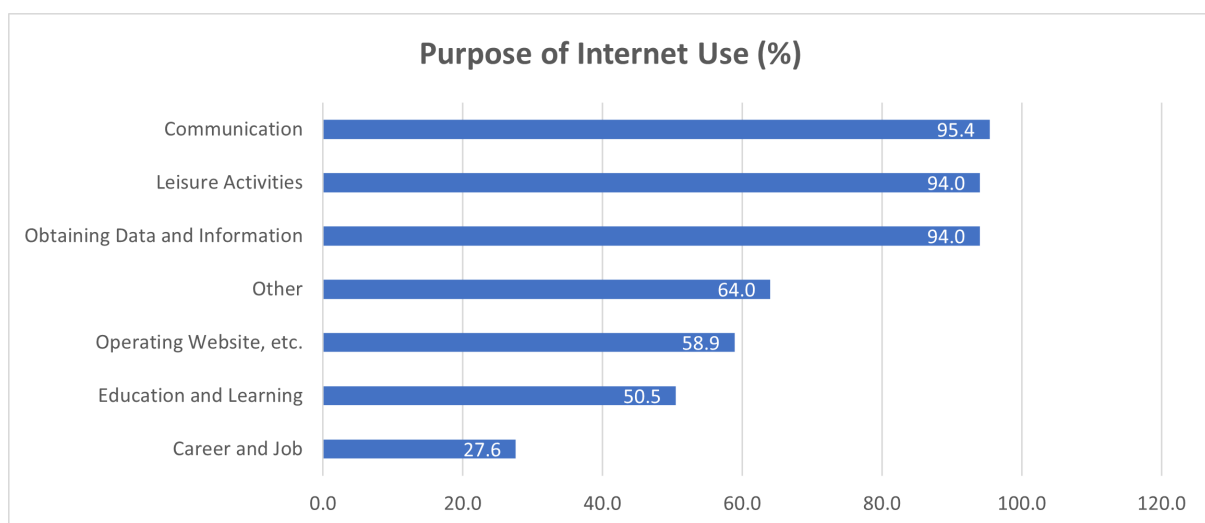


Figure 4-9. Purpose of Internet Use (Source: National Information Society Agency)

In their role as decision-making tools, texts and photos on blogs and Instagram transformed spatial experiences into digitalised place-images. Physical spaces not only produced place-images as online information but were also influenced by the information shared by electronic word-of-mouth (Lee & Chung, 2014). Tourists created individual images of their leisure activities and then shared them with others through online platforms (Lee et al., 2016; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). These selected experiences and impressions prompted others to emulate visibly attractive (also Instagrammable) achievements shared on blogs and Instagram with many “likes” (Kang et al., 2020; Lee & Kwon, 2020; Yu et al., 2018). In other words, place-image information ushered tourists into risk-free commercial spaces – restaurants, bakeries, cafes, bars and hotels – favourably reviewed by bloggers. Blogs and Instagram started to influence the flow of tourists, profits, labour (chefs, bakers, baristas and service workers in the hospitality industry), place-images and information: place-image streaming through blogs and Instagram became bound up with physical mobility and spatialisation in the 2010s urban space of Seoul.

Influencers on blogs and Instagram were key players in circulating attractive place-images and influencing tastes among young consumers. These powerful tastemakers shaped consumers’ brand awareness and decision-making, especially in the fashion, tourism and hospitality industries (Ha et al., 2019). For this reason, marketing firms devised new strategies in cooperation with online influencers to take advantage of how influencers’ online posts mediated patterns of consumption (Ha et al., 2019; Lee, B-K et al., 2020). The influencers transmitted highly selective place-images to a large number of online followers (Lee, S-A., 2017). This key group ushered young consumers into a narrow range of spatial practices reviewed on the online platforms.

Blogs and Instagram in 2010s South Korea created a hybrid space combined with online information. As place-images were implanted into the virtual spatial cognition and decision-making of young consumers, commercial spaces were driven by online influencers. The Naver blog service, the biggest online platform in South Korea, has halted certificates of blog influencers since 2016 because of their abuse of their influence on commercial marketing (Han & Hwang, 2017). This case indicates how directly influencers are involved in decision-making processes, for instance by recommending which restaurant to eat at. In addition, sharing Instagrammable images of unique spaces became a trendy pastime among the younger generation and contributed to rapid and wide-spread circulation of information (Lee & Kwon, 2020). The speed and range of information circulation correlated closely with the value of spaces derived from favourable tastes of tourists (Kim, E. et al., 2019; Lee, S-A.,

2017). In this way, the hybrid spaces of leisure –restaurants, hotels, cafes, bakeries and bars – were rearranged by the incorporation of selected experiences into online information.

4.5 Summary

This chapter articulates the relational spatialisations driven by the integrated but contradictory dynamics of socio-spatial changes: 1) the polarisation of Seoul; 2) alternative neighbourhoods for new urban cultures; and 3) hybrid leisure spaces in online-reality practices. By exploring the historical transformations of Seoul's efforts to flourish in the global economic climate, it shows that Seoul has been rapidly transformed by clashes with new ideologies, values and technologies since the "ground zero" of the Korean War. The relational transformations of Seoul occurred within the transitional context of colliding radical ideas and strategies: the Gangnam New Town Plan and the two million housing drive (high-rise apartment complexes) in the 1970-1980s; self-absorbed but civic-minded millennials and their alternative happiness in the 2010s; and government policies of promoting the ICT industries and infrastructure in the 1980-2010s. The integrated but contradictory context of Seoul indicates how relational transformations –polarisation of society, alternative neighbourhoods for new urban cultures, personal virtual space (Cyworld mini blog), room rental businesses, and hybrid leisure spaces with ubiquitous wireless connections – are related to the different levels of space: conceived space (state's policies and strategies), perceived space (new cultures and practices), imagined space (individual experiences and place-images) and online spaces (blogs and social media). By articulating these dynamic interactions in Seoul, this chapter has provided a context for the empirical approach to the relational ethnography of refractive spatialisation in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 5. Refractive Spatialisation I : Imaginary Polarisation and Spatial Stratification in 2010-2012

5.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this research is to explore refractive spatialisation of the nine-year history of gentrification of Yeonnam-dong in terms of the gap between reality and online imaginary. It presents an understanding of how the online-reality gap had triggered refractive spatialisation during gentrification and what refractive spatialisation is. In particular, this research draws on empirical evidence about the relationship between blogging (online space) and spatial change (physical space). In order to carry out an effective analysis of blog content, the nine years of changes in Yeonnam-dong have been divided into three analytical periods in relation to SMG's urban renewal projects; demographic factors (social actors), rearrangements of place-images and the changing focuses of attention by tourists and bloggers: 1) 2010-2012; 2) 2013-2015; and 3) 2016-2018.

This Chapter presents the research findings on refractive spatialisation in the 2010-2012 period. It aims to explore how rearrangements of Yeonnam-dong's spaces were mediated by the attention and representations of bloggers in response to the built environment, socio-cultural practices and place-images constituting the dialectical circuit of spatialisation (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Stanek, 2011). Alongside radical physical changes resulting from new projects, incomers and commercial properties, bloggers' information had influenced the consumption pattern of young tourists in Yeonnam-dong. Consequently, it created an imaginary polarisation between hidden spaces (new and captivating shops and ateliers) and forgettable spaces (old and mundane shops and houses), accelerating the cognitive stratification of streets according to financial values and cultural uniqueness. This relationship between bloggers and spatial changes was bound up with gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. Imaginary polarisation and spatial stratification are results of the first stage in refractive spatialisation, triggered by the online-reality gap in which tourist consumption preferences for real spaces – similar to online references to ideal spaces – was set up by bloggers.

The empirical material in this chapter is drawn from qualitative analysis of blog content and six social actor group interviews. These methods are utilised in capturing the relationship between real, conceptual and online spaces in contrast to quantitative data analysis for

simplifying patterns plotted on maps. In particular, blog data contains emotional and subjective conceptions of spaces, enabling an understanding of the invisible and relational drivers of tourist behaviour in space.

The three main analytical chapters – Chapters 5, 6 and 7 – are each organised around the four conceptual frames discussed in Chapter 3: 1) conceived space (spatial planning, knowledge and technologies); 2) perceived space (the built environment and spatial practices); 3) imagined space (place-images and cultural practices); and 4) online space (blogs and online practices). The main findings in Chapter 5 clarify how the imaginary polarisation, which bloggers (online) and tourists (reality) embarked on, intensified spatial stratification according to the gap between tourists' attention and spatial practices. Yeonnam-dong's streets had been classified according to captivating and inspiring place-images encouraging tourists spend as much of their money and time as possible on the tourists' expected and pre-planned spatio-cultural practices. The empirical evidence for the relationship between imaginary polarisation and spatial stratification contributes to an understanding of the new spatialisations in a new logic of the local economy.

5.2 Conceived Space: Five State-led Projects in Social Turmoil

According to Lefebvre (1991) and Shields (1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b), production of physical spaces is mediated by the latest expert knowledge, philosophies, science and technologies of spatial planning. For instance, scientific strategies for capitalist spaces transformed traditional cities into skyscrapers and high-rise buildings like contemporary global cities – the post-industrial cities since 1980s: New York, London, Tokyo and Seoul (GaWC, 2020; Sassen, 1991). It was believed that the large-scale redevelopments, which were famously advocated by Le Corbusier, were the most innovative and ideal plan for modern 20th century cities, in need of dramatic urban renewal and slum clearance. However, this new idea for utopian modern planning – e.g. post WWII western cities and 1980s neoliberal and globalised cities – was highly criticised by progressive activists and theorists like Jane Jacobs (2016), originally published in 1961, in favour of diversity and vitality in urban communities. In response to social values, political power, economic systems and scientific knowledge in each era, planning strategies have changed repeatedly.

In comparison to the 20th century dispute over urban planning, Seoul's urban regeneration policy and projects in the 2010s were influenced by controversial issues relating to top-down

infrastructure developments versus bottom-up incremental neighbourhood renovations (Gelézeau, 2007; Son, 2003; SMGO01, SMG's project researcher in large-scale urban developments; SMGO04, SMG's project manager in urban regeneration projects). This section provides an understanding of the shift in SMG's spatial strategies which quickly transformed Yeonnam-dong. The SMG's five urban renewal plans and projects all related to Yeonnam-dong in the 2010-2012 period. These strategies in conceptual space initiated Yeonnam-dong's dramatic changes in terms of real space, imaginary space and online space. The shift in policy was highly mediated by contrasting views of the two Seoul mayors, Oh Se-hoon (Grand National Party, 2006-2011) and Park Won-soon (Democratic Party, 2011-2020), according to their different political positions. The earlier and incoherent urban renewal projects – Chinatown Development, New Town Project and Human Town Project – caused turmoil for the local communities, economy and spaces. Since then, the two flagship infrastructure projects, AREX and GLFP, precipitated Yeonnam-dong's gentrification.

By collecting blogs on the changing plans and projects posted between 2010 and 2012, this chapter examines how the five state-led projects brought about a new cultural context in which real spaces, place-images and bloggers' attention were simultaneously rearranged and intermingled. In brief, the changing context of the local community, economy and spaces in Yeonnam-dong set new demographic and cultural trends in train, attracting more attention from tourists and bloggers. The findings of this section shed light on the impact of the state-led projects on the dynamic relationship between blogger's attention and new spatialisations in Yeonnam-dong.

5.2.1 Cancelled Plans: Chinatown Development and New Town Project

The Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG)'s policies of the 2000s had aimed to decrease economic inequality and spatial polarisation between the north (Gangbuk) and the south (Gangnam) of Seoul. The SMG set out the plans for the Chinatown Development and New Town projects to redevelop Yeonnam-dong in the north. In terms of economic development, the largely working-class community resident there had been neglected by the SMG for several decades. The Chinatown Development and New Town projects were intended to deliver a dramatic improvement in the local economy and quality of living.

However, Oh Se-hoon, the mayor of Seoul between 2006 and 2011, had neglected residents' voices in the decision-making process. The two plans were fully revised from a focus on tourism development to large-scale housing development, and then halted altogether prior to the 2011 Seoul mayoral election. This cancellation not only produced deep distrust of the SMG in local community (Oh-happyday, 2010-373), but also led to a decline in the local property market. This sudden economic shock to the neighbourhood and lower rents attracted young artisan and artist incomers who had been displaced from Hongdae, the well-known gentrified neighbourhood in Seoul.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) declared the plan for the Chinatown Development in 2006. Although the residents had been afraid that their livelihood would be abandoned, mayor Oh Se-hoon had pushed ahead with its district unit strategy. However, the SMG revealed the revised images of its master plan for the large-scale apartment development, in contrast to the first plan that aimed for the world-leading tourist attraction. Eventually, the SMG humiliated residents by declaring a deferral of the plan. Shin Han-sik, who attended the press conference with his neighbours, resented the fact that the residents' voices had been entirely excluded in SMG's two declarations for the Chinatown Development and its deferral.

(Oh-happyday, Member of Mapo-gu Council and personal blogger, 2010-373)

Before the young small business owner and artist incomers in the early 2010s, many Chinese migrants had lived in Yeonnam-dong since the 1970s. These first incomers established a relationship with the local businesses in the clothing and trade industry linking South Korean companies to Taiwan (Lee, K-W, 2015; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016). They had accomplished this harmonisation through cooperative businesses in the local community. According to Younghwan (2010-207), the Chinese community followed the movement that Seoul Overseas Chinese High School was relocated from Myeong-dong to Yeonhui-dong and started their Chinese restaurants and Chinese supermarkets for their livelihoods. From then on, Yeonnam-dong had created an independent culture mixing the Korean working class and the Chinese migrants. The Chinese restaurants had produced place-images of authentic Chinese food culture, attracting many tourists and bloggers to Yeonnam-dong.

The Chinese Embassy and the Overseas Chinese Primary School were on the Chinese street in Myeong-dong. ... Many Chinese people live in Yeonnam-dong's Chinese street in close proximity to Seoul Overseas Chinese High School. Yeonnam-dong became a centre of the Overseas Chinese community before the diplomatic relations between South

Korea and China ... Today the people in the trade industry with China seem to live around Yeonnam-dong, and many Chinese restaurants and shops for them are in the streets. In contrast to the ordinary Chinese restaurants for Koreans, Yeonnam-dong's restaurants tend to serve Beijing or Shandong food and attract many Chinese tourists.

(Younghwan, Korean heritage blogger, 2010-207)

The Chinatown Development project showed that the SMG conceived of Yeonnam-dong as a potential tourist attraction seeking to capitalise on the authentic Chinese culture of migrants. Whilst the working-class residential area was targeted in the New Town project, the Chinatown Development project was concentrated on the main commercial streets in which Chinese restaurants and markets, driver's cafes and small shops were located (Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016). The Chinatown Development aimed to transform local shops and restaurants into an international tourist attraction specialising in Chinese themed shopping malls, as opposed to traditional Chinatowns (Lee, Y-J., 2009). Given Oh Se-hoon's renewal plans focused on economic revitalisation of the north of Seoul, Yeonnam-dong, which had been neglected in SMG's previous projects, was an obvious target to achieve the new urban renewal goals through the Chinatown Development project.

The flagship New Town Redevelopment projects had been carried out in 26 areas of Seoul between 2003 and 2010, accounting for about 4 per cent (23.8 km²) of Seoul, and focused on derelict neighbourhoods (Jang, 2015). In particular, this multi-area project aimed to improve overall metropolitan infrastructures including transport, green spaces, schools, traditional markets, high streets, public buildings and pedestrian environments in the north of Seoul which had decayed since the Gangnam New Town (the south) developed in the 1970s (Jang, 2015). The 2000s New Town Projects had initiated large-scale redevelopments and demolition displacing low-income residents ruthlessly. Even though tenants constituted almost 70 per cent of all residents, the rates of social housing and the resettlement of locals were below 18 per cent in the completed neighbourhoods of the New Town projects (Heo, 2011; Jang, 2015). Yet, the SMG had not devised any strategies to protect socio-economically vulnerable residents. The New Town projects inevitably caused serious conflicts between the SMG and residents and between wealthy landlords and low-income tenants (Choie47, 2010-328).

It could escalate the tension between the different groups of residents. ... The Yeonnam-dong redevelopment projects started to demolish old houses and will provide new apartments for residents. It aims for a better living environment. But the residents excluded from the development organised a protest to appeal for their interests. It is hard

to reach total agreement between the opposing sides of residents, because of the huge gap in their interests.

(Choie47, Former civil servant of Yeonnam-dong and personal blogger, 2010-328)

5.2.2 New Mayor of Seoul and Human Town Project

In 2011, the newly-elected mayor of Seoul, Park Won-soon who was a former human rights lawyer and activist, transformed the SMG urban renewal policies from the large-scale redevelopment into neighbourhood plans to restore local communities and identities. As this shift in policy reduced property prices, it unintentionally contributed to low-priced spaces for the young incomers who had been displaced from gentrified Hongdae.

The Human Town project replaced the New Town project, aiming to improve the quality of housing and living environment rather than ruthless redevelopments and displacements. Mayor Park Won-soon focused mainly on resolving over 1,000 cases of conflicts from the former redevelopment areas of the New Town project (Kim, J-H. 2019). The alternative solution, the Human Town project, eased the conflict in Yeonnam-dong by eliminating the risk of displacing the local community. Yet, the new plan failed to engage residents because of the continuing distrust of the SMG. The revised strategies of the Human Town project restricted profitable entertainment businesses including bars, pubs, cinemas, night clubs and restaurants in the planned residential area (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016). Many tenants welcomed the restriction even though they devalued property prices (PELA05, Yeonnam-dong property agency). With the shift in the SMG's urban regeneration policy, the main commercial streets, which had been planned for the Chinatown shopping malls, were able to retain Dongjin Market, Chinese restaurants and drivers' cafes. Consequently, the streets previously earmarked for the cancelled Chinatown development became the key spaces of gentrifying Yeonnam-dong.

A limited number of blog posts on the Human Town project were produced because bloggers' imaginaries depended on concrete objects. Bloggers' lack of attention to the new project was closely bound up with the restriction on profitable businesses in the residential area of Yeonnam-dong. Unless the plan brings distinct advantages of financial incentives, a proliferation of its blog posts would not occur. Furthermore, the conceptual plans had a weak link to the production of blogger-generated information prior to physical outcomes. In other words, production of blog posts relies heavily on actual perceptions and experiences in real

space rather than conceived ideas in conceptual space. The majority of bloggers dealing with the Human Town project were estate agents commenting on the changing urban policies and property market dynamics (79webe, 2011-294). As spaces of consumption were prohibited in the residential area, there were limited opportunities for tourists and bloggers to experience or imagine the residential spaces. In contrast, the commercial streets attracted more interaction between shops and bloggers (which is discussed in 6.3 and 6.4 below).

The Human Town project areas were designed by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. ... This project will keep low-rise houses and improve local facilities such as underground cables, a senior centre, a nursery, reading rooms, CCTV and green car parks.

(79webe, Estate agents blog, 2011-294)

5.2.3 AREX and GLFP Projects

Airport Railroad Express (AREX) and Gyeongui Line Forest Park (GLFP), also known as Yeontral Park (연트럴파크), improve Yeonnam-dong's international and regional connectivity. These projects are railway-related infrastructures. AREX is owned by Korea Rail Network Authority which belongs to the Korean government. Airport Railroad Corporation operates the airport line as the first build-operate-transfer (BOT) project in South Korea. AREX links the two major international airports, Incheon and Gimpo airports, to Seoul station via Yeonnam-dong. On this airport line, Hongik University station in close proximity to Yeonnam-dong is recognised as the first gate to Seoul city centre among international tourists (See Yeonnam-dong close to gentrified Hongdae and Shinchon located on an east-west axis of the Seoul metro network in Figure 5-1).

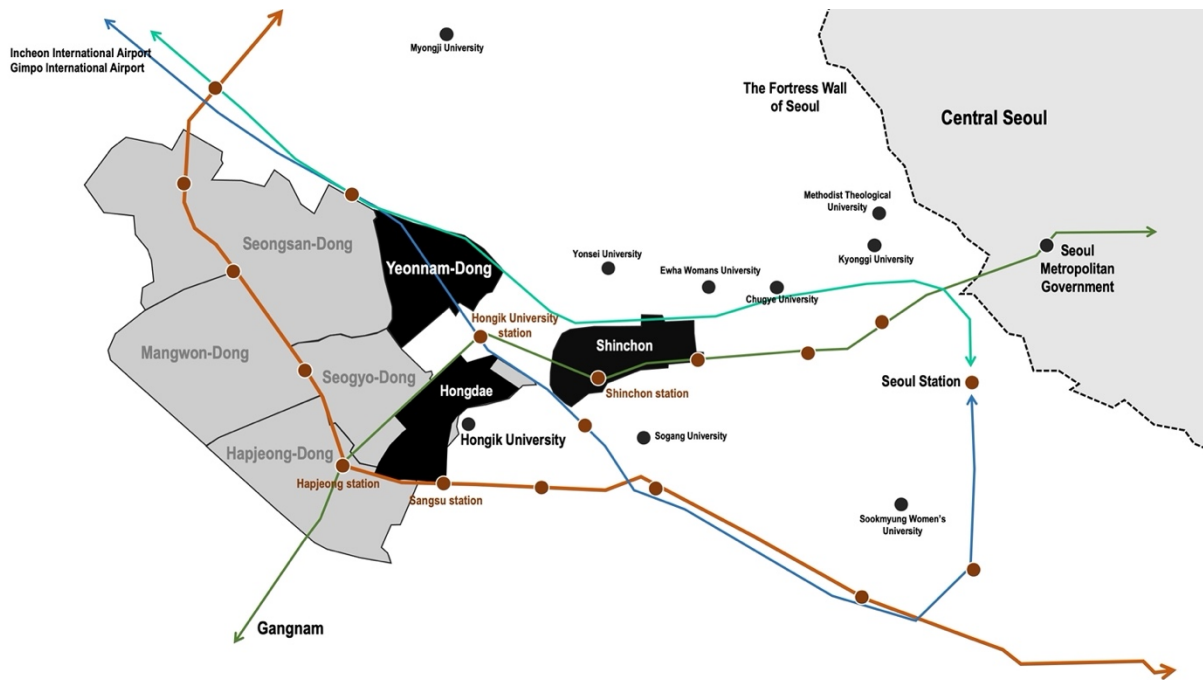


Figure 5-1. Yeonnam-dong, Gentrified Neighbourhoods (Hongdae and Shinchon), and the Seoul Metro Network

GLFP is the 6.3 km linear park which was created from the Gyeongui line railway, and the AREX when both were redeveloped as underground lines. In 2010, the Korea Rail Network Authority leased the former railway site to the SMG for 50 years. The SMG launched the GLFP project in 2009 to provide green spaces among dense buildings. This plan aims to revitalise decaying neighbourhoods that had been physically and economically isolated by the railways for a century. GLFP not only provides a strong axis of green spaces in the densely- built environment of Gangbuk, but also facilitates movement of people throughout the green passage between marginalised neighbourhoods. This park forms the green network of north-western Seoul following the east-west axis of the Seoul Metro from Gajwa station to Hyochang Park station via Yeonnam-dong. Together, the park network and the international and regional connectivity of the AREX and GLFP rail projects, have led to rapid transformations of the north-western neighbourhoods including Yeonnam-dong.

The improved accessibility to Yeonnam-dong encouraged inflows of diverse people, capital and cultures from gentrified neighbouring areas: Hongdae and Shinchon (See Figure 5-1). Increasing numbers of international tourists from the two airports chose to stay in Yeonnam-dong's reasonably-priced guest houses, converted from residential houses, rather than in expensive Hongdae hotels (PELA04; PELA05, Yeonnam-dong property agencies). As Yeonnam-dong was known as the "cheap and nice" neighbourhood among tourists, many trend seekers started to pay attention to Yeonnam-dong (Minj74, 2010-161). New cafes and

restaurants around guest houses opened to attract tourists (PELA04; PELA05). This shift of attention from Hongdae to Yeonnam-dong was influenced by the convenience of Hongik University station's links to AREX and GLFP lines. In the morning, tourists went to cafes and restaurants around their accommodations before visiting to Hongdae or central Seoul (PELA04; PELA05). Many landlords converted their properties from home rentals to commercial properties in order to maximise their profits. The physical connections enabled by AREX and GLFP were a significant driver of new businesses in Yeonnam-dong, building up the economic and cultural connections between Yeonnam-dong and neighbouring areas, especially Hongdae. Consequently, Yeonnam-dong was converted from the peaceful working-class and Chinese migrant neighbourhood into the alternative tourist spot to support Hongdae, which was an early sign of gentrification.

A beautiful café opens among taxi drivers' eateries (*기사식당*) in Yeonnam-dong. This Hongdae-style café between Chinese restaurants and drivers' cafes gives a feeling of strangeness and allure. I expect this café to become a splendid place with the upcoming new railway park [GLFP].

(Minj74, Travel blogger, 2010-161)

5.3 Perceived Space: Valorisation of Stratified Spaces

Spatial systems of the built environment are formed from perceived space (spatial practices) – streets, buildings, parks, transport, and markets (Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b). Perceived spaces are physical materials linked to social spaces in an invisible way to operate social, cultural and economic practices in cities. In other words, perceived space not only involves the visible changes to Yeonnam-dong's spaces, but is also characterised by invisible dynamics of capital, information, cultures, social relations and symbolic imagery.

Discussion of perceived space helps in understanding the spatial changes of Yeonnam-dong in terms of the movements of social actors, bloggers' attention and representations. In particular, it helps to examine how bloggers responded to the spatial changes and what impacts bloggers' attention created in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. Significant demographic changes brought about multi-layered spaces according to new tourist consumption patterns mediated by the attention of bloggers. Hongdae, the most creative and vibrant neighbourhood in Seoul, had been gentrified in the 2000s and the cultural actors had spilled

into neighbouring areas. They cultivated new and unique characteristics in the relational making of Yeonnam-dong, in distinct contrast with Hongdae.

In the spatial changes of the 2010-2012 period, bloggers captured how spatial stratification took place according to changing demographic features and how key spaces accentuated the attracting particular localities in the stratified spaces. In particular, key spaces of the young incomers developed a particular representation of Yeonnam-dong, and bloggers intensified this distinctive perception through their dissemination of some specific spatial practices whilst ignoring others. Exploring three main spaces (spaces of everyday life, Hongdaeification, and young incomer's spaces) shows how the attention-driven blogging patterns of perceived spaces were bound up with the one-sided spatialisations in Yeonnam-dong.

5.3.1 Spaces of Everyday Life: the Korean Working class and Chinese Migrants

Although for decades, everyday life in Yeonnam-dong had been symbolised by a peaceful, ordinary and mundane mood of low-rise red-brick houses and narrow streets, bloggers endeavoured to capture uniqueness of the nostalgic spaces. Because the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) had abolished the Chinatown Development project in 2010 and the New Town Redevelopment projects in 2011, the environment and mood of this peaceful neighbourhood could be preserved (Younghwan, 2010-207). Bloggers concerned with heritage, travel and restaurant reviews paid attention to the affective scenery of Yeonnam-dong's nostalgia, all the more nostalgic because so many of the old streets and neighbourhoods had been demolished and redeveloped in Seoul's urbanisation of the 1960-1970s.

The 1970s-style two-storey houses are common in Yeonnam-dong.

(Younghwan, Korean heritage blogger, 2010-207)

Bloggers were interested in the nostalgic townscape of working-class housing, evoked by old mortar and red brick walls, rusty iron gates, flowerpots, clothes lines in narrow streets and a tranquil traditional market (Azulejos, 2010-366; Matsooni, 2012-100). These were the affective spaces absent from contemporary Seoul. Bloggers valorised the once-ordinary but now-unique spaces in old Yeonnam-dong streetscapes. Ironically, this mundane but nostalgic scene was recognised as a staged setting, providing for tourists and bloggers a

sense of the missing spaces. It could be compared to the setting of *Coronation Street*, which depicts a British working-class community, broadcast on ITV since 1960. The experience of the “unique ordinariness” of the nostalgic scene was the first notable theme of which bloggers discovered in Yeonnam-dong.

Yeonnam-dong in close proximity to Hongdae has a row of multi-family houses in historical order, but some old houses are unidentifiable.

(Azulejos, Yeonnam-dong resident and travel blogger, 2010-366)

Yeonnam-dong was bigger than I imagined. There was a [Dongjin] market as if it had been ruined a long time ago. I saw green walls without flowers, plant pots with blooming flowers on iron gates, and several clothes lines under the sunshine.

(Matsooni, Restaurant review blogger, 2012-100)

In contrast to trendy and fast-changing spaces of Hongdae, old shops and restaurants in Yeonnam-dong appealed to bloggers’ demands for non-mainstream tastes and experiences. Yeonnam-dong was depicted as a quiet and peaceful working-class neighbourhood through blogs, but bloggers developed the affective streetscape and distinctive cultures for working-class leisure. “Old”, “peaceful” and “nostalgic” Yeonnam-dong was contrasted with “young”, “trendy” and “stylish” Hongdae. It was an attractive locality for bloggers. They captured calm and “boring” but distinctive consumer cultures created in their blogs by focussing on old spaces such as taxi drivers’ cafes and Chinese restaurants: many drivers’ cafes and Chinese migrant street restaurants provided cheap but high-quality dishes and services in this neighbourhood, establishing the daily routine of Yeonnam-dong’s community, whereas Hongdae was commercialised and standardised by the fashionable tastes of international tourists (Zoripong, 2012-462). Cultural practices of the nostalgic spaces with cheap but good quality food and services were prioritised by bloggers highlighting the concentrated on the “unique ordinariness” of the working-class consumer cultures.

Yeonnam-dong is a big residential area in close proximity to crowded Hongdae. There are a lot of restaurants such as drivers’ cafes and Chinese migrant restaurants serving quality food in this tidy neighbourhood.

(Zoripong, Professional travel blogger, 2012-462)

In contrast to Incheon Chinatown which has been the only official Chinatown in South Korea since 1884, the Yeonnam-dong Chinese community has never acquired an official status of Chinatown. The Chinese migrants of Yeonnam-dong and Yeonhui-dong moved to these neighbourhoods when Seoul Overseas Chinese High School relocated from Seoul’s city

centre to Yeonhui-dong in 1969. With the rise of the Internet, Yeonnam-dong's so-called "Little Chinatown" was the first exotic theme, producing online information and influencing outsiders' views of the area with descriptions of drivers' cafes and Chinese migrant restaurants. The majority of blog posts between 2010 and 2012 were dictated by the combined sense of these place: drivers' cafes and Chinese restaurants. In other words, bloggers concentrated on specific key spaces for deciphering the neighbourhood as a whole. (Such representations are discussed further in 5.4 below.)



Figure 5-2. Driver's Cafe in Yeonnam-dong

Yeonnam-dong was perceived as the Seoul neighbourhood for authentic Chinese food, and bloggers categorised Chinese restaurants according to their distinctive signature dishes and histories of specific outlets. In the small Chinese community, the migrants do not encroach on the key characteristic of another Chinese restaurant. In order to survive, protecting the distinctive styles of each Chinese business became the Chinese community's norms and business rules. Signature dishes were developed independently as a socio-cultural marker for identifying Chinese migrant spaces and family narratives. In the 2010-2012 period, professional bloggers who specialised in travel, food and restaurants captured the authentic differences of the Chinese migrant spaces. The bloggers examined family histories of Taiwanese migrants, how they started businesses in Seoul city centre near the Taiwan Embassy, and why they moved to Yeonnam-dong (Matsooni, 2012-100). As bloggers showed in these histories, the "Chinese" families were actually Taiwanese migrants.

Hyangmi's owner, the first generation of Taiwanese migrants, had managed his restaurant in Jongro for 40 years, and moved it to Yeonnam-dong 10 years ago. As far as

I know, the owner's son runs Hyangmi now, and the Myong-dong branch of Hyangmi is run by the owner's grandson.

(Matsooni, Restaurant review blogger, 2012-100)

Blogs on Yeonnam-dong's Chinese community fuelled tourist belief in the authentic Chinese culture. Long-established restaurants and traditional family-run businesses ensured a sense of quality, uniqueness and authenticity highly valorised by bloggers in opposition to standardised chains. Blog posts contributed to extraordinary cultural practices of consuming exotic Chinese food by the Korean working-class community (Baenamsan, 2011-107). Bloggers accentuated a spatial arrangement of the authentic Chinese migrants and Korean working-class spaces at a neighbourhood scale, contrasting the unique ordinariness of Yeonnam-dong's everyday life with Hongdae's fancy chains. This socio-cultural complex of the old but distinctive spaces in the historical narratives was distinguished from, and valorised in the contrast with the fast-changing and standardised spaces of contemporary Seoul.

A strong point of Haha [Chinese restaurant] is that a variety of dishes is offered at a reasonable price.

(Baenamsan, Chinese food culture blogger, 2011-107)

5.3.2 The Temporary Wave of Hongdaeification

Bloggers assumed that gentrified Hongdae had affected neighbouring areas, especially Yeonnam-dong. Property prices in Hongdae continued on an upward trend despite a downward movement of Seoul property prices overall in 2010 (See 3.2.4 and Figure 3-4). The contrasting patterns of their prices were a main impetus for rapid movements of Hongdae-style businesses – well-designed hipster restaurants, cafes, bars and shops – to the neighbourhoods in proximity to Hongdae (Hersuja, 2010-122; M25, 2012-596). In particular, many hipster business owners and artists left Hongdae for cheaper streets in neighbouring areas.

Prices for houses and commercial buildings in Hongdae don't seem to change. It is a big obstacle to attracting skilful and passionate people who want to start on their own businesses [in Hongdae]. That is a reason that neighbouring areas such as Yeonnam-dong, Mangwon-dong, and Yeonhui-dong are getting more attractive.

(Hersuja, Wine and restaurant review blogger, 2010-122)

Young artists and small shop owners who did not afford to rent shops in Hongdae and Garosu-gil are seeking cheaper shops on the edge of Seoul in order to run their own unique shops. ... The attention of the artists and shop owners is moving to streets in Yeonnam-dong and Donggyo-dong.

(M25, Lifestyle blogger, 2012-596)

As Hongdae's streets had been colonised by global coffee chains like Starbucks - obvious symbols of commercialisation and the loss of its distinctive characteristics (Hersuja, 2010-122; 2010-106). It was believed that the standardised coffee and food chains ruined the creative, vibrant and diverse cultures of Hongdae. As a result of the ruthless displacement, Hongdae's unique cultures and people were spilled into the neighbouring areas. The Hongdae-style spaces, such as artist's ateliers and hipster cafes, restaurants and bars, were reproduced in Yeonnam-dong's streets. This spillover into Yeonnam-dong created growing fears in the local community of being gentrified like Hongdae.

Blocks of both right and left sides on the way to Hongik University seem to be commercialised. Starbucks Coffee symbolises the maximisation of property prices. This commercialised neighbourhood is getting dull. Standardised services of chains such as Starbucks and Nescafe have never inspired me. Currently, [independent] ateliers and cafes, which look like treasures, have increased more and more in Yeonnam-dong and Seongsan-dong.

(Hersuja, Wine and restaurant review blogger, 2010-106)

However, there was a clear distinction between perceived spillovers and Hongdaeification. The spillover effects represented the comprehensive transfer of Hongdae's people, ateliers and businesses. By contrast, the "Hongdaeification" of surrounding neighbourhoods refers to imitating businesses in Hongdae's spatial practices. The commercial reproduction of Hongdae's practices and representations in Yeonnam-dong's streets is the superficial imitation of Hongdae without its origin and context of authentic, creative and vibrant cultures. In other words, Hongdaeification denotes the wave of hyper-realistic spacescopied from Hongdae, highlighting aesthetic settings of interiors and exteriors, rather than the cultural meanings of Hongdae. It is distinguished from Yeonnam-dong's indie cultures of artisans and artists.

Many bloggers described evidence of Hongdaeification as commercial expansion of Hongdae's businesses to residential streets, but they misunderstood them as a spillover

(Nokdu, 2011-189). As very particular physical characteristics of Hongdae's commercialised spaces were accentuated by bloggers, the originally authentic Hongdae cultures were neglected. Increasing hyper-realistic spaces of the imitated Hongdae style were incorrectly identified as the expansion of Hongdae's commercial area. In fact, the economic boom in Hongdae encouraged landlords and investors in neighbouring areas – Hapjeong-dong, Sangsu-dong and Yeonnam-dong – to transform their house rental businesses into the hospitality industry, aestheticised by Hongdae-style settings. The Hongdae-style businesses were emulated by Yeonnam-dong's landlords and investors, impacting on the local characteristics and built environment. Hongdaeification was manifested as temporary spatialisations for profitable businesses by setting up aesthetic environments in pursuit of a Hongdae-style economic boom. For this reason, Hongdaeification was captured as a spatial invasion as a result of shrinking the local economy.

Since the early 2000s, Hongdae's commercial area has grown for 10 years ... Recently, Hapjeong Station area is changing rapidly, followed by changes of Hongik University station and Sangsu station. These areas look like Hongdae. It could be said that Yeonnam-dong including Chinese restaurants and drivers' cafes comes under Hongdae's commercial influence.

(Nokdu, Blogger influencer of restaurant review, 2011-189)

Despite the fear of Hongdae's invasion, some bloggers welcomed the wave of Hongdaeification to Yeonnam-dong. They were very nostalgic for the spaces where they had experienced Hongdae's cultural diversity and uniqueness (Bruprin, 2012-369). In fact, they did not realise that the temporary spatialisation in Yeonnam-dong was aimed at the artificial emulation of Hongdae's appearances without origins and contexts of the authentic cultures. Bloggers focused mainly on a discovery of new Hongdae-style spaces rather than in-depth reviews of cultural differences among them (Bruprin, 2012-369; Moaol, 2012-743). It was the first process of commercialising Yeonnam-dong through transforming Yeonnam-dong's old spaces to an aesthetic spectacle for profitable businesses.

The only shops where can pay for expensive rents have remained in Hongdae, but increasing franchises diminish uniqueness of Hongdae recently. ... Yeonnam-dong's [Hongdae-style] shops remind me of original Hongdae.

(Bruprin, Restaurant review blogger, 2012-369)

Whilst territories of Hongdae have expanded infinitely, the atmosphere of Hongdae's café seems to be transmitted to Yeonnam-dong. It makes me happy.

(Moaol, Travel blogger, 2012-743)

The transitory spatialisations of the Hongdae-style shops were interpreted as an adverse signal of the restructuring of everyday life in Yeonnam-dong. The sudden increase in new buildings and shops led to an escalating fear that local residents and shopkeepers would be displaced (BOA06, art exhibition organiser). In contrast, the primary concern of bloggers was that their cherished mood, scenery and cultures in Yeonnam-dong would be ruined by this restructuring. According to Ancine (2011-199), displaced artists and publishers from Hongdae led to the re-spatialisation of Yeonnam-dong – the embodiment of upcoming gentrification there. The resemblance to gentrified Hongdae heightened their fear and anxiety.

Yeonnam-dong is becoming a new heart in close proximity to Hongdae. Artists and publishers who were displaced by a sudden rent increase in crowded Hongdae gathered in Yeonnam-dong. ... I worry that Yeonnam-dong would follow Garosu-gil dominated by conglomerates and franchises and then transformed into the crowded commercial area.

(Ancine, Yeonnam-dong's restaurant blogger, 2011-199)

5.3.3 Spaces of Young Incomers

In contrast to the process of Hongdaeification signifying the arrival of profit-seeking businesses, an inflow of unique and authentic artisans' shops and artists' ateliers restructured spaces of consumption in Yeonnam-dong. It was assumed by bloggers that the majority of the incomers had been displaced from gentrified Hongdae. Displaced small business owners and artists from Hongdae were four of ten interviewees in the Yeonnam-dong incomer group. The incomers were reluctant to leave Hongdae because of a network of place-based support in a tolerant ethos, guilds of independent small business owners and artists, liberated hipsters, aspiring musicians and designers, and creative students from Hongik University arts college (Shin & Lee, 2016a). But they were quickly priced out of gentrified Hongdae. Many were displaced to cheaper neighbouring areas in close proximity to Hongdae's networks and supports (Shin & Lee, 2016a). Dongjin Market, a neglected but affordable street in Yeonnam-dong, became the focal point of the incomers' spaces, drawing considerable attention from tourists and bloggers. Their presence dramatically transferred the blogger's gaze from the working-class and Chinese migrant spaces to the young

incomers' independent businesses (See Figure 5-3). Furthermore, the incomers' spaces diverted the attention of tourists and bloggers away from the imitated Hongdae-styled spaces and created more focus on their distinctive characteristics of cultural practices which were distinguished from Hongdae's cultures.



Figure 5-3. Atelier Street in Yeonnam-dong

The unique cultures of the artisans and artists were spatialised in the peaceful and mundane residential area. Bloggers drew attention to the unexpected spaces and the intriguing cultures incomers made. This new spatialisation of the incomers' cultures was rapidly valorised by bloggers. At the beginning of this change, the majority of bloggers had barely recognised Dongjin Market Street, the centre of the incomers, but paid more attention to the unique and attractive spaces (Ancine, 2011-199). On the neighbourhood scale, they highlighted the bizarre but alluring atmosphere and scenery in the multi-layered spaces of the the working class, Chinese migrants and young incomers. The valorisation of the multi-layered cultures gave distinguishing meanings to the neighbourhood, resulting in a spatial stratification of: 1) obsolescent spaces of the working-class residents and Chinese migrants; 2) prospective spaces of the state-led projects; and 3) spaces of the young incomers. through this shift of attention, the bloggers' discoveries not only valorised and stratified Yeonnam-dong, but also promoted "must-see" spaces like the incomer's interesting shops.

Yeonnam-dong was a marginalised neighbourhood even though it was close to Hongdae, Hapjeong-dong and Sangsu-dong. Yeonnam-dong was recognised as a dull and old neighbourhood because of dense multi-family houses, many drivers' cafes and Chinese

restaurants. Yeonnam-dong residents dreamt of the Chinatown development but eventually suffered from a cancellation of it. However, Yeonnam-dong is becoming a new heart in front of Hongdae. Artists and publishers displaced by a sudden rent increase in crowded Hongdae are gathering in Yeonnam-dong.

(Ancine, Yeonnam-dong's restaurant blogger, 2011-199)

Dongjin Market Street became a cultural incubator of uniqueness, authenticity and diversity in the mundane and static neighbourhood. The cheapest level of rent in Seoul attracted a variety of young artisans and artists and the independent businesses and artworks of the incomers were a necessary means of fulfilling their sociocultural desires for emancipated self-actualising activities as escapes from competitive, suffocating, repetitive and standardised jobs like low-level office work (Yoon, 2017). They had a strong will to shape their unique and creative ideas, but their expected profits were inadequate to run their businesses in most areas of Seoul. The neglected Dongjin Market Street in close proximity to Hongdae was a good option for those who needed Hongdae-based support and networks (Shin & Lee, 2016a).

Bloggers sought to shed light on the causes and the rearrangement of indie spaces in this derelict street and how the new businesses were successfully run by young incomers. The successful match between the incomer's poor financial situations and the reasonable rent of Dongjin Market Street was seen as the key reason for their moves (Neomawang, 2011-95). These characteristics of encouraged cultural diversity and exotic and eccentric spaces including: a brewed coffeehouse, a graphic novel bookshop, a small art gallery, a Thai restaurant, a Japanese curry house, a Japanese izakaya and plastic model kits shop (PlaceMAK, 2011-254). In particular, the decreased burden of rental costs enabled the skilful incomers to produce high-quality goods and services at cheap prices, intensifying the attention of tourists and bloggers. Some bloggers had responsibility for disseminating the unique but hidden spaces of the young incomers. It was evident that Dongjin Market Street became the ideal environment in which creativity and diversity could flourish. In turn, the creative, tolerant and skilful incomers developed the unique, authentic and not-for-profit cultures in the neglected street of Yeonnam-dong.

They [the incomers] definitely have excellent skills and use quality ingredients by benefiting from the cheaper rent than Gangnam and Hongdae. ... A function of blogs is to let more people know these valuable shops in order to help their businesses.

(Neomawang, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2011-95)

Dongjin Market becomes suddenly popular in Yeonnam-dong. An alternative gallery PlaceMak, Café Yisim and Japanese curry restaurant Himeji open in this street. The first branch of Inosisi and Thai restaurant will open here soon. You can find a plastic model kits shop as well.

(PlaceMAK, Yeonnam-dong's arts gallery blog, 2011-254)

5.4 Imagined Space: Imaginary Restructuring of Yeonnam-dong

In the production of space, imagined space develops from imaginary perceptions, preconceptions and misconceptions which are formed by direct experiences of spaces as well as vicarious experiences through texts and images in the mass media, books, paintings, music, films and the Internet (Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 2005, 2013a, 2013b; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Actual and virtual experiences of real spaces produce place-images of imagined space. The imagined space of Yeonnam-dong was made up of diverse place-images, based on experiences of the multi-layered spaces – the working-class residential area, drivers' cafes, Chinese restaurants, and the young incomers' streets. Under the gaze of strollers and bloggers, Yeonnam-dong divided into two distinct place-images: hidden spaces and forgotten spaces. This imaginary polarisation resulted in the stratification of real spaces according to the potential property value: 1) promising streets of upcoming Yeontral Park (GLFP); 2) inspiring streets of the young incomers; 3) nostalgic streets of the working-class residents; 4) streets of reliable services for drivers' cafes and Chinese restaurants; and 5) restricted streets of the Human Town project.

Through a discussion of imagined space, this section articulates how strollers (reality) and bloggers (online) contributed to the imaginary polarisation between hidden spaces and forgotten spaces. Based on future values of consumption spaces, these contrasting place-images divided real Yeonnam-dong into the five categories. The production of these contrasting place-images was related to the consumption trend of Korean millennials who were obsessed with low-cost, risk-free and extraordinary experiences of spaces like the hidden spaces in the sluggish Korean economy (Kim, Y-T., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019).

This articulation of imagined space captures, empirically, the role of place-images in changing Yeonnam-dong through social actors' activities of reinforcing place-images, and

the emotional work of valorising place-images. This section discusses the main arguments from three perspectives: 1) imaginary spaces; 2) imaginary activities; and 3) imaginary ethics. The findings of this section show how the gap between imagination and reality created the spatial stratification linked to the gentrification of Yeonnam-dong. In particular, this section sheds light on the dynamic relationship between place-images, spatial changes (gentrification), and the changing gaze of tourists and bloggers.

5.4.1 Imaginary Spaces: the Turmoil of Multi-layered Place-images

Forgotten Spaces

Yeonnam-dong's residential area was unintentionally displayed by bloggers, drawing on a sense of nostalgia for the lost scenery of Seoul's 1950-1980s period. Modernised working-class neighbourhoods in Seoul had been quickly developed in the historical upheaval of Korean industrialisation and urbanisation after the Korean War, but they were almost bulldozed by the 1990-2000s large-scale redevelopments. The 1950-1980s neighbourhoods had been temporary spaces to supply affordable houses for working-class residents during the period of rapid Korean economic development. As Yeonnam-dong had been marginalised geographically by the railways, its low feasibility for economic development meant that the neighbourhood avoided the huge waves of redevelopment. The surviving streetscapes and ways of life in this neighbourhood stimulated an affective response in tourists and bloggers prompting childhood recollections of their own lost neighbourhoods and communities.



Figure 5-4. Residential Area in Yeonnam-dong

Yeonnam-dong's place-images of the peaceful, mundane, warm and liveable neighbourhood drew on the old built environment of red brick houses, rusty gates, mortar walls, shabby shops and narrow streets. These place-images signified the lost scenery of Seoul working-class neighbourhoods. As most of these streetscapes had disappeared from Seoul, Yeonnam-dong's working-class spaces led to retro and nostalgic guided tours of the "my hometown" environment, which were discovered and valorised by bloggers (Gomasil, 2012-678; Eshita, 2010-164). In turn, these nostalgic place-images of lost Seoul streets created Yeonnam-dong's distinctive tourism culture through which strollers tried to discover and take pictures of images of missing, rare and hidden spaces in the maze-like streets.

Yeonnam-dong reminds me of the word, 'my hometown'. It is not a traditional or stylish neighbourhood. Yet, when I walked along Yeonnam-dong in a peaceful and calm mood, I became relaxed and sleepy. ... Despite Hongdae and Shinchon located in close proximity, Yeonnam-dong has still given a feeling of peacefulness from less developed spaces. ... This is the space filled with everyday life stories.

(Gomasil, Professional travel blogger, 2012-678)

Today, I walked along Yeonnam-dong with my camera. ... I captured nice houses with high walls, derelict but liveable houses and a laugh from a house. In a way, I loved this scenery so wander here and there for quite a while. ... Yeonnam-dong is a small, warm and liveable neighbourhood.

(Eshita, Cartoon blogger, 2010-164)

Although Little Chinatown had no physical boundary, bloggers arranged the imaginary territory of Chinese migrant spaces. Invisibly, these highly selective place-images pressured not only tourists to consume Chinese food cultures, but also business owners to set up new Chinese restaurants. Many bloggers depicted Little Chinatown as Seoul's cultural pride and the only neighbourhood serving genuine Chinese dishes in contrast to inauthentic Chinese restaurants serving food adapted to Korean taste (Ninano30, 2011-347). Along with the nostalgic place-images of the lost working-class neighbourhood, the image of Little Chinatown was intensified as the only neighbourhood with rare, hidden and authentic spaces and cultures in Seoul.

There is the quasi-Chinatown with quite decent Chinese restaurants. That is Yeonnam-dong! ... It becomes the only street in which Chinese restaurants provide authentic Chinese food. ... The decorations are very Chinese-style, and you would listen more to Chinese than Korean there.

(Ninano30, Restaurant review blogger, 2011-347)

Through blogger's analytical reviews of their history, these place-images signified the tradition of Taiwanese-based Chinese roots and their preservation of traditional home cooking. For the Chinese migrants, the tradition of authentic Chinese taste denoted their cultural identity and pride in their work (Fcb22, 2012-174): their good quality, reasonably priced food was their means of livelihood in competitive Korean society (Symin67, 2011-120). Consequently, the place-images reflected the inherited values and ethos of Little Chinatown, and thus attracting more authenticity-seekers with professional insights into food cultures and produced critical reviews. Before a wave of aesthetic and profit-seeking businesses, the affectional place-images of old-established and beloved spaces were mainly prioritised by professional food bloggers.

Since overseas Chinese people settled in South Korea a long time ago, there are many Chinese restaurants [in Yeonnam-dong] adhering to their traditional recipe despite other Chinese restaurants adapting to Korean tastes.

(Fcb22, Photography and restaurant review blogger, 2012-174)

Yeonnam-dong is the neighbourhood where the largest number of Chinese restaurants gathered. ... The Chinese restaurants are not big but have excellent skills.

(Symin67, Blogger influencer of restaurant review, 2011-120)

Similarly, taxi drivers' cafes (*Gisasikdang* (기사식당) in Korean) are representative of Korean working-class food cultures. They serve cheap, generous, quick and good-quality food, especially for busy taxi and lorry drivers. The restaurants are usually located in working-class neighbourhoods and are widely recognised as warm and comfortable spaces for low-income workers and students. Casual or manual workers seeking to save money and time have preferred these restaurants. Many 24/7 drivers' cafes in Yeonnam-dong have thrived for several decades next to Chinese restaurants. Because of Yeonnam-dong's proximity to Seoul's city centre, these restaurants attract many taxi drivers. There are also convenient and ample parking spaces due to the light traffic in this neighbourhood cut off by railways. In particular, it is socially recognised that Seoul taxi drivers are connoisseurs with remarkable ability to judge the quality of restaurants, based on information collected from their extensive network of drivers. In Korean society, the popularity of a restaurant among taxi drivers is a reliable indicator of good quality (KBS Documentary, 2020).

The drivers' cafes in Yeonnam-dong contributed to place-images of reliably, generous and cost-effective spaces, and their cheap, abundant, quick and quality food. Although these restaurants mainly aimed to serve working class customers, many "foodie" tourists and bloggers began to seek out these low-risk and cost-effective places, and devoted their leisure time to the single-minded pursuit of successful eating experiences. In terms of the tight budgets of young foodies, place-images of the reliability, abundance and cost-effectiveness of drivers' cafes were too enticing to ignore. The scenes in which drivers' cafes were full of taxi drivers were seen as representing as reliable spaces that not only served cheap, good quality food, but also conveyed feelings of comfort, generosity and considerateness towards customers (Ilhai, 2011-213; Foodbar, 2012-447). This kind of place-image was bound up with the latest social aspirations of Korean millennials for "small but certain happiness" in the low-growth economy and competitive society of Korea (Kim et al., 2018).

You won't take a risk of terrible restaurants in Yeonnam-dong's street of drivers' cafes near Hongik University station. Most restaurants in this street have been recognised as good restaurants for several decades. ... It was full of taxis in front of a restaurant.

(Ilhai, Restaurant review blogger, 2011-213)

Having a meal here made me comfortable among crowded streets. All meals were fairly served to everyone including taxi drivers, students and ordinary people. I loved a feeling of this warm, friendly and comfortable restaurant.

(Foodbar, Influencer of Coffee and tea blog, 2012-447)

Hidden Spaces

The second wave of young incomers from Hongdae not only intensified Yeonnam-dong's old-established place-images of cheap, reliable, generous and authentic spaces, but also implanted new, unexpected, dynamic and experimental place-images into Dongjin Market Street. Some bloggers felt that the new incomers were cultural intruders ruining the local authenticity of Yeonnam-dong. But in fact, the young incomers cherished the previous streetscapes and ethos of Yeonnam-dong. They tried to reflect the local street cultures in their own businesses. In Dongjin Market Street, they made an experimental attempt to achieve their ideal goals within the context of Yeonnam-dong. Their presence revitalised the neglected street with their youthful spirit, strengthening Yeonnam-dong's place-images.

In contrast to the tradition of Chinese migrants concentrating on keeping their authentic Chinese foods, the young incomers were very keen to create inspiring cultures flexibly in their own new and unexpected styles. Inosisi, a Japanese-style pub in Dongjin Market Street, arranged new place-images of dynamic, skilful and experimental cuisine in their unique style. Two chefs, who were born in 1983 and thus are Korean millennials, created daily changing menus according to the freshest and finest seafood ingredients from markets (Hanatour, 2010-12). Their customers could gain different experiences of surprising Japanese dishes every time. The daily menu created by these dynamic young chefs was sensational for tourists and bloggers as well as local residents Yeonnam-dong.

Two perceptive owners [of Inosisi] loudly answered quiet voices of customers, and the customers were amused by the energetic replies. There is young passion, kindness and changing daily menus from their daily shopping.

(Hanatour, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2010-12)

The key spaces which bloggers wrote about created an overall place-image at a neighbourhood or street scale, rapidly rearranging imaginary characteristics of Yeonnam-dong's spaces through online blogs.

The young incomers in Dongjin Market Street contributed to a wider diversity of exotic cultures through their businesses. Bloggers' intensive attention to the key spaces like Inosisi (Japanese pub) and Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai (Thai restaurant) intensified place-images of these cultures, triggering more spatialisation of unusual restaurants, cafes and bakeries in Yeonnam-dong. It is hard to clarify the physical relationship between the key spaces and new spatialisations of the exotic place-images, but bloggers' attention to the key place-images had an important effect on the street's transformation from a "cultural blank" to the "diversity of exotic cultures" as an imaginary characteristic of Dongjin Market Street. In other words, Dongjin Market Street developed distinctive characteristic that influenced future spatialisations in the imaginary context.

At the beginning of the incomers' arrival in Yeonnam-dong, several restaurants hired foreign chefs and bakers, such as Thai chefs in Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai and a Japanese senior baker in Café Dudart, to create authentic food experiences. These foreign chefs and bakers increased bloggers' curiosity and interest in exotic and unfamiliar cultures of Yeonnam-dong. Bloggers compared Yeonnam-dong to other exotic spaces in Seoul in order to accentuate the superiority of the incomers' spaces over others (Jinnia, 2011-248). Bloggers' production of the key place-images motivated tourists to consume identical experiences of the neighbourhood. In the transmission between online space and physical space via imaginary space, tourists' reproduction of the place-images in their leisure activities intensified the distinctive but situated characteristics of streets, bringing about re-spatialisations of the place-images. In the turmoil of multi-layered place-images, the attention-driven interactions between bloggers and tourists in pursuit of extraordinary and sensational place-images exaggerated an imaginary differentiation between the "new hidden spaces" and the "old forgotten spaces".

A newly opened bakery was very neat and clean. Daily bread is baked in the kitchen every day. This Japanese baker's bread is so popular that all loaves of bread are sold out every evening. ... All cake and bread are made by the Japanese baker in a Japanese style.

(Jinnia, Travel blogger, 2011-248)

5.4.2 Imaginary Activities: Cultural Strollers and Imaginary Polarisation

As the incomers' spaces were scattered around the narrow streets of Yeonnam-dong, tourists and bloggers started to find unknown and hidden spaces. These hidden spaces

were cultivated as an integrated place-image, the “mysterious neighbourhood” at a neighbourhood scale. As major bloggers paid intensive attention to hidden spaces, more tourists and bloggers were motivated to discover the mysterious neighbourhood. Many tourists enjoyed strolling along narrow unknown streets to find hidden spaces and strolling became a trendy activity among tourists and bloggers. They enjoyed encountering the “expected uncertainties” of the hidden spaces on their walks in a form of experiential “hide-and-see”. Place-images of the hidden spaces in the unfamiliar neighbourhood acted as a spatial filter to channel strollers onto undiscovered streets and spaces further away and contributed to the expansion of the new incomer’s spaces across most of Yeonnam-dong.

The proximity of Yeonnam-dong to Hongdae intensified the “expected uncertainties” of the hidden spaces. Many tourists and bloggers expected that Yeonnam-dong would have a cultural distinctiveness and uniqueness like Hongdae had previously. Many young people suddenly crowded Yeonnam-dong’s streets in which enticing and unique spaces had been discovered, reminding tourists of past Hongdae before its gentrification. This influx of tourists was similar to a gold rush: the spatial relation to Hongdae justified the strollers’ belief that they could discover valuable spaces and cultures in this neighbourhood.

Bloggers highlighted the real possibility of discovering the hidden spaces by recounting their direct experiences (Zoripong, 2010-199; Stylefish, 2012-410). In contrast to the superficial appearances of Hongdae, Yeonnam-dong was recognised as a potential gold mine that concealed valuable spaces and cultures on unexplored streets. Before bloggers built up enough information on this gold mine, the strollers’ gold rush to the mysterious neighbourhood required to seek, experience and translate hidden spaces directly onto maze-like streets in an adventurous way.

When I was cycling along a road with beautiful flowers, I could look at a strange place. Oh, it was a café! After discovering this cafe, I looked around it for a while because it was amazing. I didn’t expect this café here. It gave me an unique mood mixing a dowdy image with a stylish image.

(Zoripong, Professional travel blogger, 2010-199)

Walking in an interesting neighbourhood is great. This neighbourhood, which has attracted many people for several years, gives me a different image, depending on where I start a stroll. ... Adorable and nice cafes, bakeries and restaurants spread around the Yeonnam-dong community centre.

(Stylefish, Fashion consultant and fashion blogger, 2012-410)

In the context of the homogeneous social norms of Korean society and a standardised lifestyle in pursuit of financial success, in the 1990s and 2000s, Hongdae had been the alternative neighbourhood where the younger generation could be liberated from social pressures by experiencing creative, unique and indie cultures (See Chapter 4). It produced non-mainstream spaces, drawing on a rich diversity of minor cultures. Many indie artists, musicians, artisans and art college students of Hongik University had played a leading role as cultural producers here. In the late 2000s, the wave of commercialised chains swept aside the cultural tolerance for alternative, authentic moods and diverse communities. Capital inflow ruthlessly supplanted the alternative cultures in Hongdae.

When people and cultures began to be displaced from Hongdae, tourists and bloggers tried to find environments in neighbouring areas to replace gentrified Hongdae. With intensified place-images of the hidden-spaces in Yeonnam-dong, favourite targets of the cultural strollers, were converted from captivating spaces similar to trendy Hongdae to inspiring and authentic spaces of distinctive Yeonnam-dong (Purin927, 2012-164; Sister-K, 2012-606). It was related to the Hongdaeification as the temporary spatialisations of the Hongdae-style spaces in Yeonnam-dong. This changing pattern of strollers' tastes and activities influenced how the hidden spaces dictated fundamental place-images of Yeonnam-dong. Whilst the expectation of post-Hongdae's place-images, ethos and identity in Yeonnam-dong attracted more tourists and bloggers, the cultural strollers focused on finding unexplored spaces distinguishable from gentrified Hongdae (Purin927, 2012-164; Sister-K, 2012-606). Bloggers compared Yeonnam-dong with Hongdae in terms of cultural attractiveness (Purin927, 2012-164; Sister-K, 2012-606). But Yeonnam-dong itself became the alternative neighbourhood for satisfying the cultural strollers who sought enticing materials and spaces with its uniqueness and authenticity. It replaced their original aspiration for post-Hongdae. In brief, the strollers' activities changed to the pursuit of Yeonnam-dong's uniqueness and authenticity distinguishable from Hongdae. New physical spatialisations of the hidden spaces were bound up with changes in attention and practices. In other words, the restructuring of Yeonnam-dong's spaces and people had significant effects on the cultural practices of tourists and bloggers, drawing on and perpetuating changing place-images. Transforming spaces meant that tourists and bloggers had more new spaces to satisfy their cultural curiosity and desire for hidden spaces. For this reason, gentrifying Yeonnam-dong was well worth the strollers' physical discoveries of the imaginary spaces.

Yeonnam-dong is known as a hip neighbourhood currently. Yeonnam-dong has an adorable mood similar to Hongdae, but it is less crowded and has more unique places than Hongdae. Thus, I am looking forward to the Yeonnam-dong tour. ... I enjoy finding

hidden restaurants and cafes around Yeonnam-dong in comparison with Hongdae's main street. Yeonnam-dong is such an interesting neighbourhood.

(Purin927, Personal blogger, 2012-164)

Yeonnam-dong is progressing every day. Even if Hongdae dictated Yeonnam-dong, I wouldn't want Hongdae because Yeonnam-dong is an appealing neighbourhood.

(Sister-K, Personal blogger, 2012-606)

The cultural strollers' tours, as a tastemaker in reality and an attention seeker in online space, not only developed the imaginary unification of the incomers' hidden spaces at a neighbourhood scale, but also excluded the forgotten spaces of old houses and shops from the imaginary restructuring of Yeonnam-dong. With intensified place-images of unknown, hidden Yeonnam-dong, tourists and bloggers started to take their leisurely strolls along maze-like streets in order to discover the hidden and enticing spaces (Zoripong, 2012-462; Purin927, 2012-164). This cultural activity dismissed place-images of the existing spaces – old restaurants, small supermarkets and shabby pubs – which had been circulating prior to the young incomers' creation of their spaces. In the physical and imaginary restructuring of Yeonnam-dong's spaces, old spaces became place-images of "forgotten spaces". The strollers sharply distinguished between situated but unpredictable spaces (the hidden spaces) and stable and clichéd spaces (the forgettable spaces) in streets, increasing the gap between real and imagined Yeonnam-dong. The bloggers' gaze accentuated the hidden spaces of this mysterious neighbourhood and excluded the forgotten spaces. As the cultural strollers widened the imaginary gap by discovering new spaces, a process of changing place-images became inextricably bound up with gentrifying Yeonnam-dong.

Adorable shops on streets of a residential area make the Yeonnam-dong stroll more pleasurable.

(Zoripong, Professional travel blogger, 2012-462)

I am looking forward to the Yeonnam-dong tour. ... I enjoy finding hidden restaurants and cafes around Yeonnam-dong.

(Purin927, Personal blogger, 2012-164)

The discoveries of the cultural strollers not only created an "imaginary polarisation" in online space that separated the hidden spaces from the forgotten spaces, but also contributed to the "spatial stratification" that divided Yeonnam-dong into the most and least profitable spaces in real space. Yeonnam-dong was classified according to its potential property value informed by place-images: 1) promising streets of upcoming Yeontral Park (GLFP); 2)

inspiring streets of the young incomers; 3) nostalgic streets of the working-class residents; 4) reliable streets of driver's cafes and Chinese migrants' restaurants; and 5) restricted streets of the Human Town project. In terms of profits, the number of tourists and customers (footfall) in real space was the main criterion for valorising properties. According to Smith (1996), the rent-gap theory explains that the unequal differentiation of space creates conditions for gentrification. In the restructuring of Yeonnam-dong, it was evident that the imaginary polarisation (the image gap) between positive and negative place-images was a powerful impetus for the image-driven differentiation of financial values of spaces in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong.

5.4.3 Imaginary Ethics: Affective Spatialisations

As discussed in Chapter 4, the social context of Korean millennials experiencing stress, alienation and social deprivation in competitive Korean society contributed to spatialisations driven by their need for nostalgia and relaxation (Berardi, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; The Economist, 2020). A shortage of relaxing experiences in the millennials' everyday lives drove a burgeoning demand for affective spaces in Yeonnam-dong. As many young incomer artisans and artists were millennials, they also had a strong desire for creating emancipated spaces and cultures in order to escape from social norms, standardised lives and societal pressures. Their emotional and social difficulties drew them to affective spatialisations of Dongjin Market Street. They arranged the emancipated spaces for the purpose of emotional well-being. The young incomers and tourists tried to ensure overall mental health and happiness in their everyday lives through the peaceful and nostalgic street which reminded them of their happy times in the past (Olive1018, 2012-244). Dongjin Market Street represented alternative spaces for relaxation and emancipation.

Walking along liveable streets and adorable cafes gave me a feeling of going back the old streets of my childhood. ... I hope that Dongjin Market Street wouldn't change. I don't want this street to be popular.

(Olive1018, Personal blogger, 2012-244)

Places like Cafe Yisim and Coffee Libre spoke to the millennials' cultural aspirations for emancipated leisure activities. In the context of the lack of private space and time due to housing shortages, long working hours and Korean collectivism (See Chapter 4), the cafes in Dongjin Market Street created place-images of "cultural shelter", providing opportunities for

emotional well-being. The millennials enjoyed these spaces with their nostalgic, relaxed atmosphere and good coffee. Small and quiet coffee houses on the edge of Yeonnam-dong liberated young customers from the competitive and suffocating routine of everyday life. Leisure time geared toward emotional well-being in the nostalgic and unembellished interiors of beloved cafes embodied Yeonnam-dong's ethics for cultural shelter (Zodiac911, 2011-359).

There are small and attractive cafes in Yeonnam-dong. This cosy cafe has two tea tables, elegant curtains and the scent of roasting coffee beans.

(Zodiac911, Designer, traveller and restaurant review blogger 2011-359)

In particular, these affective spaces satisfied the search for "small but certain happiness" that the millennials sought: low-cost, cost-effective, risk-free and satisfying consumption in the face of sluggish wage growth and a tough economic situation (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019). As the millennials' social insecurity (unobtainable homeownership, job insecurity and mounting debts) dampened aspirations, they were captivated by Yeonnam-dong's peaceful, emancipated and cheap spaces. A cultural conversion among millennials from collectivist goals to individual happiness contributed to the imaginary spatialisations of cultural shelter. This place-image revalued the unembellished spaces in contrast with with aesthetic and trendy settings, and boosted the spatialisation of affective cafes in Yeonnam-dong's streets.

Place-images of the exotic tastes of international food cultures developed into affective spaces. As Korean millennials had experienced more international travel, higher educational attainment, and easier access to mass media and the Internet than the older generation, the incomers' spaces tried to reflect the millennials' diverse aspirations for global tastes. The millennials had a higher benchmark for their cultural lifestyles, but reality was harsh in the stagnant economy. Thus, they fulfilled their aspirations for international experiences through the alternative spaces of Dongjin Market Street. The growing gap between ideals and realities led to incomers' alternative spaces being visited in order to satisfy the millennials' tastes for diversity and authenticity. Dongjin Market Street created a place-image of "alternative attractions" to alleviate millennials' emotional frustrations as an alternative to unrealistic expectations of expensive international travel.

The social context of the millennials' wider aspirations for overseas tastes developed alternative attractions for international authenticity, liberating the millennials from financial restrictions in reality. The incomers emulated overseas authentic tastes by employing foreign chefs and creating exotic settings (Sam4forever, 2011-73; Azuma, 2012-60). Thai chefs,

Japanese bakers, Thai and Japanese sign boards, open kitchens, decorations and photos realised customers' conceptions of the authenticity of international foods. Whilst the notion of "cultural shelter" functioned to ease the social pressure on the millennials, the alternative attractions helped them to overcome the gap between ideals and realities in a cost-effective way. In other words, Dongjin Market Street was rearranged at a boundary between imagination and reality.

Even though I wanted to experience a variety of cultures like food in many countries, I've never had an international travel. Yet, many restaurants open to give authentic tastes. Probably, an increase of experiences in overseas travels boosts demands for authentic food, and actually its supplies are provided.

(Sam4forever, Restaurant review blogger, 2011-73)

When we finished our meals, I could look at Thai chefs at an open kitchen [in Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai]. ... I was glad to see them because they reminded me of my previous Thailand life.

(Azuma, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2012-60)

5.5 Online Space: Blogging Yeonnam-dong

Henri Lefebvre (1991) could not have predicted the rise of the Internet in his famous book, *The Production of Space*, originally published in 1974, or the way online space is unimaginably expanding its influence on real space in contemporary cities. In pursuit of higher cost-efficiency and productivity, capitalist society increasingly relies on and colonises the information of online space. In particular, the younger generation are dependent on Internet data for their cost-effective and risk-free leisure activities. This consumption trend for successful experiences based on online information divides and segments urban space. Online information leads to the stratification of spaces in real and imaginary geography. In contrast to traditional spatialisations without digital technologies, online space has had the most obvious effects on contemporary spatialisations in terms of boundaries between physical and conceptual spaces. Furthermore, millennials - the major consumers of urban spaces in Korea - rely heavily on online representations of spaces for their physical cultural practices.

This section aims to articulate the influence of bloggers and their blogging on spatial changes in Yeonnam-dong, mediated by cultural practices and place-images. It examines key features of online space from three approaches: 1) types of bloggers; 2) features of blogging; and 3) blog ecology. Firstly, examining different types of blogger aims to show who the bloggers are, how they collect information on Yeonnam-dong, and what made them blog - to share their views, emotions and experiences. Secondly, features of blogging explore what purposes blog posts had, what spaces blog posts concentrated on, and what the impacts of blog posts were on spaces. Thirdly, blog ecology is an aid to understanding bloggers' motivations and the mechanism of blogging. In particular, this section sheds new light on the distinctive structures and operations of blogs in relation to the production of Yeonnam-dong's spaces.

5.5.1 Types of Bloggers

In the production of Yeonnam-dong's spaces, spatial practices, place-images and tourists' activities were significantly mediated by bloggers' subjective perspectives. Understanding bloggers as cultural producers evidences how and why bloggers deciphered Yeonnam-dong's spaces and to what effects. They are categorised according to features of data collection data and geographical practices: 1) pioneers as insiders; 2) strollers as insiders; 3) tastemakers as outsiders; and 4) conformists as outsiders. These elements are closely related to their professions, specialities, accessibility and networks.

Type 1: Pioneers as Insiders

Blog pioneers who had lived around Yeonnam-dong between 2010 and 2012 had easier access than tourists to information on spatial changes. This group consisted of residents, shopkeepers and office workers whose everyday lives involved spatial practices in Yeonnam-dong. The blogger pioneers such as Neozest (2010-319) and Azulejos82 (2011-375) enjoyed discovering the hidden spaces in their daily routines. Discovering attractive spaces like unusual and appealing restaurants and cafes became a cultural activity, providing enormous pleasure to insiders bored with the previous stable quietness of the area. They started to share information about their fascinating experiences with other bloggers and subscribers.

Yeonnam-dong and Yeonhui-dong are a five-minute walk from my house, so I have fallen for the attractiveness of these neighbourhoods. Currently, finding the best hidden restaurants is my pleasure.

(Neozest, Personal blogger, 2010-319)

After moving in Yeonnam-dong, the most pleasing fact is that I had found small, warm and friendly cafes around my neighbourhood.

(Azulejos82, Travel writer and blogger, 2011-375)

By discovering hidden spaces, the insiders' blogging revalued and re-presented changing Yeonnam-dong. It was a situated reaction to the rapid changes in their neighbourhood and everyday lives they were experiencing. As the numbers of new shops with unique and authentic characteristics increased in streets, the pioneers ambitiously sought out and valorised them in real space and produced the information (texts and images) - re-presenting Yeonnam-dong online.

Type 2: Strollers as Insiders

Blog strollers were mainly of residents in Yeonnam-dong, experiencing the hidden spaces that had been discovered and shared by the blog pioneers. The curiosity of these insider strollers was sparked by the online blogs, and they were seeking to consume the hidden but well-known spaces in person because they were easily accessible to them. This blogger type played the role of local transmitter, reaffirming the captivating conceptions of those spaces in their experiences and making the conceptually-refined place-images available to tourists through their blogs. They regularly monitored what shops drew bloggers' attention within their walking distance and evaluated those spaces and whether to post or not (Suinmelong, 2012-611; Redpanda7, 2012-191). The strollers reinforced place-images of hidden spaces by reproducing information about them from their subjective perspectives.

I usually ride my bicycle around Yeonnam-dong at midnight. Currently, more and more photos and text about the Yeonnam-dong cafes and restaurants are uploaded through social media. I will drop in there in daytime.

(Suinmelong, Personal blogger, 2012-611)

When I was strolling around Yeonnam-dong in the evening, I suddenly recalled a very close blogger's posting on a nice izakaya behind the street of drivers' cafes. Thus, I

looked around the street to find the izakaya, but found a vegan bakery, ‘Veggie Holic’ by chance.

(Redpanda7, Travel blogger, 2012-191)

Type 3: Tastemakers as Outsiders

Blog tastemakers, also known as blog influencers, widely disseminated situated and selective place-images of Yeonnam-dong through their powerful blog posts. Their online posts had a large number of viewers and considerable influence on the consumption patterns of younger tourists. Even though their daily routines were not in Yeonnam-dong, they had an outstanding ability and network able to collect abundant information about attractive spaces characterised by unique and authentic cultures such as the artisan cafes in Donjin Market Street (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers). The network of influencers shared the latest information (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers) and rapidly captured the wave of new shops scattered over Yeonnam-dong’s narrow streets, building up highly specific place-images of the selected spaces in online space.

Blogger tastemakers consisted mostly of travel, photo, wine, coffee, food and restaurant review bloggers who had professional insights on the leisure activities in relation to spaces of consumption. Wide-spread knowledge of their blog posts encouraged the view that their recommendations were worth visiting. It gave the bloggers considerable fame, notability and influence due to the increasing number of followers who relied heavily on the tastemakers’ information.

This group felt a responsibility to not only discover unusual spaces in unknown Yeonnam-dong, but also to protect those spaces from overcrowding (BI03, blog influencer). Bimirya (2011-152; 2011-153) - who had 118,630 followers in February 2020 - recognised that the tastemakers’ influences could ruin the relaxed ambience of a unique space by guiding their followers to there, so he was very careful about deciding to post blogs about his cherished cafés. For2003 (2012-302) highlighted that the main role of bloggers should be to introduce and disseminate unknown but valuable spaces. The discovery was recognised as a valuable activity among bloggers. The tastemakers not only tried to provide detailed information about the hidden spaces in their posts, but also powerfully transmitted their subjective conceptions of the spaces to their followers. The subjectively situated, selective and fragmented information distorted Yeonnam-dong’s place-images and identity as well as physical formation of the spaces.

I was thinking whether to post Café Yisim to my blog or not. As a regular customer, I hope that this peaceful and calm mood would remain constant. Yet, I think this café won't change in this neglected street no matter what I post. ... I can't give up posting this lovely café.

(Bimirya, Blogger influencer and professional restaurant reviewer, 2011-152)

If every coffee had a fantastic taste like Café Yisim, I would love all the coffees. ... Unfortunately, this [excellent] coffee doesn't exist anywhere else, and this fact seems to make me avoid a cup of coffee. ... If you have any opportunity to come to nearby Inosisi, Chinese restaurants and Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai, I'd like to recommend you having coffee [in Café Yisim]. ... I expect that my rediscovery of Yeonnam-dong would be a key issue in 2012.

(Bimirya, Blogger influencer and professional restaurant reviewer, 2011-153)

I think restaurant review bloggers could be divided up into two groups. The first group tends to discover unknown places and lets people know them through their blogs. The second group tends to search the web for popular places. They experience and share them through their blogs. Definitely, I belong to the second group. ... However, I will play the first group's role today. Here is a precious place like treasure. You could find just two or three results in search of here online.

(For2003, Restaurant review blogger, 2012-302)

Type 4: Conformists as Outsiders

Blog conformists were particular tourists who not only consumed the hidden spaces produced by the blog pioneers and tastemakers, but also recorded their direct experiences themselves in their own blogs. The majority of this group were followers of blog influencers' posts, reinforcing and cascading the influencers' information through their pilgrimages to the hidden but reliable spaces. These conformists contributed hugely to refractive spatialisation by realising and confirming the bloggers' revelations that the recommended spaces were indeed worth a visit. The blogs of the conformists reinforced the online-reality gap between physical settings (reality) and desirable place-images (online), encouraging refracted spaces towards online reference images of highly selective spaces. Whilst the blog pioneers (Type 1) and tastemakers (Type 3) set up spatial targets worth consuming, the blog conformists delivered actual performances of experiencing the spaces through blogs.

Some bloggers in this group sought promotion to the influencer group (Carriesarah, 2011-466) thro by re-posting the recommended spaces which had been produced mainly by Type

1 and 3 bloggers. In order to achieve their goals, they needed to create staged and exaggerated posts to attract more attention and more followers. This reproduced information further widened the online-reality gap between physical and online space in a cognitive way, bringing about more vivid refractive spatialisation for decreasing the gap, especially after Yeontral Park open to the public in 2015. This group affirmed that hidden spaces were certainly worth a visit based on their exaggerated subjective and selective impressions (Chiffonade, 2011-484).

I visited Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai in Yeonnam-dong. After reading a post of my close blogger, Bimirya [the famous tastemaker], I check in here quickly.

(Carriesarah, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2011-466)

I hardly believe that authentic tastes of Thai restaurants exist in Seoul. Yet, after checking a post of the famous blogger whom I've followed, I tried Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai in Yeonnam-dong. Consequently, it was fantastic!!!

(Chiffonade, Cooking and restaurant review blogger, 2011-484)

5.5.2 Features of Blogging: Analytical Review Posts

Blog posts of the 2010-2012 period focused on analytical reviews rather than affective narratives. Whilst Yeonnam-dong was characterised as the cost-effective neighbourhood with cheap, good quality goods and services, bloggers' reviews measured the functional values of spaces to show how worthwhile the spaces were. Yeonnam-dong's place-images were rearranged through blogs, the value of cost-effective goods and services was closely associated with the value of spaces. Thus, bloggers tried to justify tourists spending their money and time in Yeonnam-dong through analytical reviews.

The analytical reviews accentuated the unique, inspiring and high-quality experiences, especially the exoticism of Thai, Japanese, Chinese and European food and coffee cultures. The food review posts examined exotic ingredients and recipes in detail and highlighted the value of Yeonnam-dong as an unique neighbourhood creating authentic tastes of international food in Seoul (Aeris80, 2011-378; Carriesarah, 2011-466; Melburne; 2011-140). The reviews gave reasons why tourists should visit Yeonnam-dong by highlighting the fundamental values of consumption in this space. Justifying the uniqueness of exotic food and coffee cultures through blogs was inextricably bound up with the rearrangement of

Yeonnam-dong's place-images and with the spatial changes taking place as a result of gentrification.

5.5.3 Blog Ecology: Fame-driven Blogging

Although most personal bloggers started blogging to share their individual interests, experiences and knowledges in leisure activities with other people, influencers seek to increase their fame, influence and followers to make profits from their shared information. However, it is difficult for Korean bloggers to make profits in the Korean online environment (BI03, blog influencer). Online blog platform services in South Korea have been dominated by the Naver Corporation (www.naver.com), a major Internet technology company, which had a 74.4 per cent share of the South Korean search engine market in 2019 (Kim, K-J. 2019; National Information Society Agency, 2020). Naver sets up much lower profitability from blog advertisements compared to YouTube. For this reason, Korean influencers tend to be motivated by fame and interest rather than financial returns (BI03, blog influencer). Many influencers are proud of their fame-driven blogging, from which they seek distinction in presenting honest motivations for blogging removed from the temptation of easy profits (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers).

However, some influencers tried to monetise their blogs by advertising restaurants, cafes and bars. The advertising posts were disguised as ordinary reviews in order not to spoil their reputations and credibility (BI01; BI03, blog influencers). But in fact, this devious practice of posting for profit has damaged the credibility of the whole blogging ecology. The influencers interviewed wanted to be distinguished from the devious profit seekers (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers). The bloggers interviewed emphasised that their own blogs have never been affected by advertisements and that they always produced critical and reliable information (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers). They were proud of their good reputations for writing honest posts. In contrast, the posts influenced by advertisements, known as "contaminated posts", overstated the value of spaces in terms of uniqueness and excellence. According to Neomawang (2011-95), followers played a role as "consumer watchdogs" in examining whether to produce accurate posts or contaminated posts. If followers picked up on the fact that the posts were not being honest or were being influenced by money for covert advertising, they would point this out, stop following, discredit the blogger and s/he would lose the income.

A positive function of blogs is to introduce decent businesses. Even though blog influencers have a strong influence, they can't change a terrible restaurant into an excellent restaurant in terms of quality of food. At the beginning, bloggers attracted many people to the intended [advertised] restaurants on purpose. Yet, people have an ability to judge accurate quality of food.

(Neomawang, Travel and restaurant review blog, 2011-95)

Blog-driven tours are motivated by the dependence of Korean millennials on online information because they are afraid of wasting their limited money and time on characterless consumer experiences. As Korean millennials seek cost-effective leisure activities in the context of sluggish wage growth and the tough economic situation, the "small but certain happiness" trend (*Sohwakhaeng* (소확행) in Korean), has spread among young Koreans (Kim et al., 2018). The millennials prefer to know that specific places can reliably provide distinctive, extraordinary and cost-effective experiences. For this reason, it is imperative for them that the value of such spaces was authenticated by bloggers prior to their own direct experiences.

In the online environment offering an unlimited range of information, the millennials needed to find reliable sources of accurate information about their interests. This cultural aspiration increased the number of followers of reliable bloggers (Mtgold, 2011-443): reliable bloggers provided appropriately filtered information to satisfy the followers' aspirations for dependable and safe spaces. These bloggers reacted to the millennials' demands by posting about the spaces that would ensure "the small but certain happiness". Due to this interaction between reliable bloggers and the millennials, Yeonnam-dong began to become stratified geographically by the blog-driven tours oriented toward selective spaces authenticated by bloggers.

The fact that a quite reliable blogger introduced Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai is the certain evidence that this restaurant will be successful in business. As I tried here yesterday, I want to say that this restaurant is excellent. To be honest, I wish this restaurant would be known by as few people as possible.

(Mtgold, Travel blogger, 2011-443)

5.6 Summary of Refractive Spatialisation I

This chapter analysing the changes in Yeonnam-dong during 2010-2012 focuses on the beginning of refractive spatialisation in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. By using a hybrid ethnography, it examines the first stage (2010-2012) of the dynamic process on a timescale of nine-years of gentrification. It shows that the imaginary polarisation –between hidden space and forgotten space – driven by bloggers led to a spatial stratification according to changing monetary values mediated by blog-driven tourist footfall and potentially achievable rental profits on certain streets. With the spatial triggers of the five state-led projects, Hongdaeification and the young incomers' movements, refractive spatialisation converted a logic and system of Yeonnam-dong's spaces from the "peaceful working-class neighbourhood for everyday life" to the "mysterious neighbourhood in which extraordinary spaces were hidden in narrow streets". Thus, the geographical mobility of the cultural strollers, ushered in by blog information about selective place-images, valorised hidden spaces and devalued unattractive and mundane spaces. It restructured Yeonnam-dong's spaces in a new logic and system of unevenly filtered online data, causing stratified and fragmented patterns of spatial practices resulting from tourist preferences for attractive spaces introduced by online blogs during gentrification.

Chapter 6. Refractive Spatialisation II : New Logic of Locality and Spatialisation in 2013-2015

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the second period of refractive spatialisation in which the rapid transformation of spatial practices and place-images occurred. The 2013-2015 period was a turning point in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. A large numbers of individual blog posts accentuated the only essence of spaces, intensifying the spatial stratification according to financial value and popularity with tourists. With a large influx of young tourists, Yeonnam-dong's spaces were popularised nationally in TV programmes and blogs oriented toward the exaggerated and staged authenticity of selected businesses in the attention-driven economy. These TV programmes created media-led commercialisation of the Yeonnam-dong streets. Highly selective and situated spaces were featured which favoured the tastes of bloggers and tourists and developed refractive spatialisation emulating online-based references to popular place-images of aesthetic settings. In particular, Yeontral Park, which was opened in 2015, triggered the emergence of fantasies of Western spaces as hyper-realistic spatial practices. This transformation reconfigured a logic of localities and spatialisations, operating in favour of accessibility to online data rather than to physical locations.

This chapter aims to examine how and why bloggers characterised Yeonnam-dong's spaces in reaction to the new financial logic and tourist culture – the attention-driven economy and preselected tours. Here, refractive spatialisation is a dynamic transformation among diverse social actors: 1) small business owners; 2) artists; 3) landlords; 4) renters; 5) investors; 6) tourists; and 7) bloggers. This research focuses on the dynamics of social actors and their practices under changing urban conditions tied to financial logics and tourist cultures. Drawing on Lefebvre and Shields, these processes are articulated with reference to four spatial levels: 1) conceived space: contrasting strategies between economic opportunity and threat; 2) perceived space: selective spatial practices and ethics; 3) imagined space: polished place-images in the attention-driven market; and 4) online space: a turning point in online practice. This enables the analytical organisation of disparate evidence on spatial changes, based on blog data from 2013-2015. The findings of this chapter develop and understand how bloggers' spatial characterisation transformed Yeonnam-dong's spaces into aesthetic settings. The selective tastes and value judgements of tourists and bloggers were

refracted toward online practices in which the attention-driven economy and preselected tours functioned as a strong driver for the dynamic transformation to hyper-realistic spaces.

6.2 Conceived Space: Contrasting Strategies between Economic Opportunity and Threat

This section aims to clarify how the lingering economic threat from gentrified Hongdae brought about the contrasting strategies between private investments and alternative projects. Growing concerns about gentrification stimulated displaced artists and artisans from Hongdae to devise experimental strategies to resist the expected economic threat in Yeonnam-dong. In contrast, private investors concentrated on investment strategies for maximising rental profits by transforming old residential houses into commercial properties. A significant improvements of the built environment had been expected from the two state-led projects, the AREX and GLFP, attracting private investors who sought properties with potentials for increased profit margins. In the meantime, many artisans, artists and cultural organisations moved into the cheap properties on narrow streets which had become available since the cancelled Chinatown Development and New Town projects had reduced property prices sharply. Consequently, Yeonnam-dong was being simultaneously commercialised and popularised by private investments and alternative arts projects. Alternative arts projects sought to cultivate distinctive Yeonnam-dong cultures against soaring property prices, but as a result of producing aesthetic and captivating place-images of community-based arts projects, they also unintentionally contributed to the influx of tourists as well as to the rising property prices.

This section discusses why and how the contrasting strategies at the boundary between economic opportunity and economic threat resulted in dramatic changes to Yeonnam-dong. Analysis in terms of conceived space in the 2013-2015 period give a comprehensive understanding of how the spatial strategies of different social actors functioned in the changing economic context between Yeonnam-dong and Hongdae. In particular, it shows that the dynamics of conceived space created the context for refractive spatialisation in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong.

6.2.1 Shift from State-led Projects to Private Investments

In the early 2010s, lesser-known neighbourhoods in close proximity to gentrified neighbourhoods of the most famous shopping and entertainment districts in Seoul – Hongdae, Itaewon, Jongro and Gangnam – drew considerable attention from tourists and investors alike. This spatial pattern of the commercialisation of well-known neighbourhoods spilling over into lesser-known neighbouring areas was recognised as transmission of unique and affective spaces among tourists. Movements of displaced business owners and artists to cheaper neighbourhoods had been occurring across Seoul as profitable chain businesses had replaced the independent shops – restaurants, cafes and ateliers. The displaced businesses moved into the ground floor of three to five-storey residential buildings in peaceful neighbourhoods, and their unique cultures were becoming popular among tourists who were tired of crowded and commercialised streets like those of gentrified Hongdae. The tourists' growing attention to alternative neighbourhoods was bound up with an inflow of private investment in neighbouring areas.

However, the new neighbourhoods eyed by investors – Yeonnam-dong, Gyeongridan-gil, Ikseon-dong and Garosu-gil – were not suitable for chain business which required plenty of space to maximise profitable goods and services. Due to geographically restricted spaces in dwelling sizes and street widths, investors concentrated on buying the small properties of local residents. The individual investors, known as the “wealthy people from Gangnam”, bought small residential houses in order to convert them into commercial use (PELA04; PELA05, Yeonnam-dong property agency owners). The speculative investments created skyrocketing property prices. With this financial logic, the transformation into commercial properties started to alter many streets of working-class red-brick houses (Realty partners, 2014-939). Eventually, glamorous shops, cafes, bars and restaurants, and sharply rising rents, rapidly replaced houses for local residents as well as long-standing local shops. In brief, bloggers' and tourists' attention shifted from gentrified neighbourhoods to neighbouring areas such as Yeonnam-dong, because of newly discovered uniqueness of the small but attractive buildings in narrow streets unsuitable for chain business. But it was this feature of the built environment that also stimulated individual investors to purchase the small residential properties.

A few years ago, buying and selling properties was a simple way of investment, but seeking profitable houses becomes more important in its strategy. There are growing properties of profitable houses, especially in Hongdae, Yeonnam-dong, Itaewon, and Garosu-gil. These cases commonly arose from residential areas rather than commercial areas such as Gangnam station and Jongno. ... Young people started to gather in the areas. The number of houses decreased gradually. ... Commercial properties dominated

all streets, so residential houses could not survive any longer. In Hongdae, for example, all streets are full of restaurants, pubs, and cafes instead of houses. In fact, these commercial buildings were transformed from previous red-brick houses.

(Realty partners, Estate agency blog, 2014-939)

Improved tourist accessibility by the Airport Railroad Express (AREX) and the construction of Gyeongui Line Forest Park (GLFP) encouraged investors. Under mounting pressure from private investments, many residential properties were converted into commercial properties as guest houses, restaurants, cafes and bars, aimed at tourists. In addition, the bloggers' place-images of mysterious Yeonnam-dong between 2010 and 2012 encouraged tourists to discover the hidden spaces and share their information through their blogs. As well as stimulating soaring property prices, the sudden influx of Korean and international tourists led to a burgeoning demand for leisure facilities (Ddukban, 2014-473).

The Gyeongui Line Forest Park project is under construction. ... The field above the underground railway line will be transformed into the park, which is expected to improve quality of nearby resident lives. ... The property prices from Hongik University station to Yeonnam-dong increase from ₩35 million to ₩40 million per 3.3 m². ... AREX via Hongik University station also gives a positive influence on the increasing property prices. Recently, the guest house business aiming for international tourists becomes a blue ocean strategy in Yeonnam-dong. ... As the GLFP project is proceeding quickly, transformations from houses to commercial buildings is taking place.

(Ddukban, Estate agent blogger, 2014-473)

This change to profitable commercial properties not only transferred property ownership to private investors, but also caused the displacement of local renters. The new landlords tended to make profitable investments by focusing on higher rent margins from the tourism industry – guest houses, cafes, restaurants and bars. This pattern of the property transformation diminished the historical and cultural context and origins of Yeonnam-dong by displacing local landlords, renters and shopkeepers and converting their buildings. In brief, the transformation from houses to commercial buildings, the transfer of property ownership from local residents to private investors, and a conversion from old-established residences (live-in landlords) to profitable tourism businesses (live-out landlords) were set in train in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong between 2013 and 2015. In particular, the improved physical accessibility of Yeonnam-dong for Korean and international tourists through AREX and GLFP encouraged private investors to extend their spatial strategy in pursuit of successful profit margins from their properties of the tourism business.

The increasing displacements and sharp rises in property prices triggered a spatial experiment fighting back against gentrification. In a case of the resistance, Uhjjuhdah Store (어찌다가게) guaranteed eight small business owners a five-year lease agreement at a relatively lower price than other shops in Yeonnam-dong and Yeonhui-dong. This financial experiment intended to enhance cultural diversity of social groups in opposition to speculative ownership and profit maximisation, by providing an economically stable business condition in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. Uhjjuhdah Store was started by remodelling an old two-storey red-brick house in Donggyo-dong on the boundary with Yeonnam-dong. Lim Tae-byeong, the architect for this project, decided to open Uhjjuhdah Store after he had observed ruthless displacements of unique shops and cultures during his 12 years of running caféB-hind in Hongdae (Hwang, 2014).

The fact that most spaces for creative businesses did not last more than two years in Hongdae encouraged him to carry out his architectural experiment of providing the eight rooms at reasonable prices ranging from ₩600,000 (£389) to ₩1,100,000 (£713) per month (Lee, E-J, 2014). His strategy was to promote and retain unique and inspiring cultures by protecting them from sharply rising rents. As *Uhjjuhdah* (어찌다) means “unexpected incidents” in Korean, the Uhjjuhdah Store project aimed to share alternative spaces in opposition to “unexpected displacements” (AREX blog, 2014-945). This private project tried to guarantee that the eight renters could carry on their artisan or artistic activities under the stable five-year contracts (Lee, E-J, 2014; AREX blog, 2014-945). In 2014, the old red-brick house accommodated eight indie shops including a bookshop, whisky bar and hair salon (Lee, E-J, 2014).

A two-storey house with a garden was remodelled for Uhjjuhdah Store. ... If you want to escape from crowded Hongdae, you should visit this special place with eight small shops or ateliers. ... Uhjjuhdah Store provides communal spaces like a garden and lounge. ... This is an alternative space for realising the desire that shopkeepers keep doing their commercial activities without financial hardship. ... People in Uhjjuhdah Store have similar stories [of displacement] and do not want to make big profits immediately.

(AREX_blog, Official AREX blog, 2014-945)

Architect Lim Tae-byeong aimed to cultivate social relationships between the eight tenants by designing diverse communal spaces linked to all the shops. The Store was divided into eight sections, but tenants were able to interact with each other in shared spaces. It gave the small business owners the opportunity to create unique and inspiring cultures through collaborative projects or events in the old two-storey house. The tenants freely shared their

skills, ideas and information during their collaborative projects, and this created extraordinary experiences for tourists. The alternative space of economic and cultural experiment demonstrated a new strategy to protect and promote artisans and artists from speculative landlords and investors who had destroyed place-based supports and networks of diverse social actors. Although this experimental project created a positive case that landlords and tenants could make the win-win relationship in business, the majority of private investors mostly concentrated on rental incomes rather than the cultural value of space.

6.2.2 Collaborative Arts Projects and Economic Threat

The mass exodus from gentrified Hongdae included not-for-profit arts and culture organisations that had promoted diverse works of artists, artisans, residents, students and tourists through art exhibitions, flea markets, artwork support programmes and collaborative arts projects (Urbanplay, 2017). Ever since Hongik University, widely known as the prestigious arts school in South Korea, had been located in Hongdae in the 1990s, this neighbourhood had been transformed from a residential area into a thriving cultural district. As over 70 per cent of the younger generation had received a university education in South Korea, their similar lifestyles and orientations created burgeoning demands for distinctive artistic and cultural experiences (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; Korean Education Statistics Service, 2015). With the presence of arts college graduates from Hongik University, Hongdae had played a significant role in producing a younger generation of creative indie cultures – music, paintings, fashion, photography and performing arts. Arts organisations not only promoted diverse artistic activities, but also protected unique cultures and rights of artists and artisans against aggressive investment capital. However, by the late 2000s, property prices had skyrocketed in gentrifying Hongdae and many artists, artisans and organisations had moved to neighbouring areas in order to maintain the support and networks created in Hongdae.

The displaced arts and culture organisations from Hongdae recognised that residents and artists were highly vulnerable to displacement, so they expanded their collective strategy from liberated art works to collaboration with local residents in order to build cultural and economic resilience against commercialism (Shin & Lee, 2016a). They believed that collaborative arts projects with locals would not only foster community solidarity and pressure local landlords to curb excessive rents, but could also be supported economically by state subsidies for arts and culture. In contrast to the previous activities for independent

fine arts in Hongdae, this revised strategy involved artists and artisans' cooperation with locals in place-based arts activities, which could resist the expected economic threat of commercialised gentrification. With the aim of resisting gentrification, collaborative projects by arts and culture organisations were oriented to an artistic strategy for survival, in contrast to Uhjjuhdah Store that centred on a specific architectural strategy for the survival of eight artisans and artists. The expected economic threats changed the aim of original Hongdae organisations from the practice and realisation of art to the defence of cultural territory in local communities (Shin & Lee, 2016a). Due to the fear of re-displacement, the purpose of the arts activities changed from pure expressions of art to self-defence in resisting capitalistic principles.

Many arts and culture organisations chose to move to a peaceful neighbourhood, Yeonnam-dong, and started to consolidate their cultural territory with Yeonnam-dong's community through the collaborative arts activities. The cultural territory means a geographical boundary of their place-based artworks, which could influence Korean arts and cultural lives, thus the survival of Yeonnam-dong's community was linked to the groundwork for continuing these arts activities. However, ironically, the collaborative arts strategy with the locals accelerated a boost in tourist visits as well as in private investment, by promoting the aestheticisation of Yeonnam-dong's place-images. Even though with SMG financial support, the arts projects increased community solidarity, local landlords could not refuse the huge profits available from selling their properties to private investors. The revised strategy was successful in creating artistic place-images of Yeonnam-dong but failed to build strong, resilient community solidarity against financial and inflationary pressures.

The Living and Arts Creative Centre (LACC), one of the major arts and culture organisations in Yeonnam-dong, moved from gentrified Hongdae in 2008, planning to make an "arts and culture community with Yeonnam-dong's residents". Over the early 2000s in Hongdae, LACC with their motto, 'A living is in art, art is in a living', had promoted the handmade goods of Hongdae-based artists at the Hongdae flea market, aiming to support the creative activities of independent artists and artisans (BOA10, director of arts and culture organisation; Choi, 2016; Junlovehyun, 2013-650). After displacement from Hongdae, LACC's projects were extended to the revitalisation of Yeonnam-dong by creating handicrafts and mural paintings with the locals (See Figure 6-1). They published Yeonnam-dong maps indicating cultural spots like artist's ateliers and artisan's shops and held flea markets in order to link artists with local consumers as well as tourists. LACC's projects for making an "arts and culture community" in their cultural territory were concentrated on fostering the relationship between the newcomers and the locals rather than promoting their

artworks and goods independently (BOA10, director of arts and culture organisation; Lim, 2014; Choi, 2016; Junlovehyun, 2013-650). With art works in collaboration with the local community, the social extension of community-based projects cultivated Yeonnam-dong's place-images of decorative and interesting streetscapes (BOA10, director of arts and culture organisation; Junlovehyun, 2013-650).

LACC is a not-for-profit organisation that intends to make a cultural community. ... This is also a social enterprise to support unemployed young artists in alternative works and to improve cultural lives of the alienated class. ... LACC has promoted a variety of events and flea markets in Hongdae and neighbouring areas since 2002. It has led an alternative culture trend in an interaction between creators and consumers.

(Junlovehyun, Personal blogger, 2013-650)



Figure 6-1. Yeonnam-dong Mural Painting on Old Railway Structure

Based on SMG subsidies and LACC's place-based network, LACC officially participated in the preparatory project for Seoul's urban regeneration, the Himangji project (희망지 사업) (BOA10, director of arts and culture organisation; SMGO03, Project manager of SMG's urban regeneration projects). In order to achieve the aim of LACC's projects in Yeonnam-dong, LACC was converted into a social enterprise (See Figure 6-2). The sociocultural movement in Yeonnam-dong was developed from the conversion of LACC into a community-based social enterprise, aiming to survive and thrive in opposition to the gentrification of Yeonnam-dong. In reality, their arts projects in collaboration with the local

community contributed to the sharp increase in attention from tourists and bloggers, accelerating the economic threat of gentrification that ruined the local community and community-based arts organisations.



Figure 6-2. LACC's Social Housing Project

6.3 Perceived Space: Selective Spatial Practices and Ethics

This section of perceived space examines how changes in spatial practices and ethics were bound up with the restructuring of the built environment in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. Tourists and bloggers tended to accentuate the uniqueness of spaces in their individual experiences and their selective blog posts transformed spatial practices and ethics into seductive spaces, accelerating the spatial stratification in reaction to the changing aspirations of tourists. In this section, the selective and situated practices and ethics are discussed into three spaces: 1) Dongjin Market Street developed into alternative spaces for anti-commercialism; 2) the Yeonnam-dong Flea Market providing temporary spaces for community solidarity; and 3) Yeontral Park spawning seductive spaces for fantasies of the West. These spatial practices and ethics in three spaces led to distinct perceptions of economically stratified Yeonnam-dong in the attention-driven economy.

6.3.1 Honest Spaces for Anti-commercialism: Dongjin Market Street

The young incomers who had created the unique, authentic and not-for-profit cultures in neglected Dongjin Market Street, resisted conformity with the predominant ethics of commercialism. The spatial and cultural practices of Dongjin Market Street expressed the

incomers' ethos of creative tolerant and the skilful production of goods and services in non-mainstream cultures. This street also valorised these experiences through Thai food, brewed coffee, indie books, small arts exhibitions and handmade toys, avoiding the standardised goods and services sold in chain store. In contrast to the commercial ethics and financial logics of mainstream spaces in pursuit of profit maximisation, the incomers' spaces focused on creating out-of-the ordinary spaces *in opposition to commercialism*, engaging in cultural activities rather than commercial businesses. Dongjin Market Street was recognised as an alternative cultural community, not a commercial street.



Figure 6-3. The Kiki Leather Workshop in Yeonnam-dong

Bloggers claimed that the less-commercial activities attracted more tourists, revitalising Dongjin Market Street by producing authentic and high-quality foods such in places like Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai and Cafe Wangchangsanghoe (Bimirya, 2013-330; BOA06, art exhibition organiser). Tourists admired the incomers' enthusiasm for such food experiences. They discerned how the incomers developed distinctive spatial practices of not-for-profit, tolerant and inclusive cultures against pervasive commercialism in mainstream cultures (BOA06, art exhibition organiser; Mixdress, 2014-780). They appreciated the spatial practices and ethics of Dongjin Market Street as a counter to inescapable chain restaurants and shops in Seoul. The interaction between incomers and tourists transcended the standardised ethics of commercialised spaces (Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009).

The young owner of Tuk Tuk Noodle Thai always tries to introduce their authentic Thai taste and culture rather than selling them for money. His attitude is amazing. I think his attitude brings about the success of this restaurant.

(Bimiryra, Blogger influencer and professional restaurant reviewer, 2013-330)

There are many small but good restaurants in Dongjin Market Street, Yeonnam-dong. I love peaceful Yeonnam-dong and Yeonhui-dong in an artisan and non-commercial mood. ... Away from quite trendy and big chains for profits, I love this authentic food and culture given by this small and shabby place.

(Mixdress, Personal blogger, 2014-780)

Spaces of the young incomers in Dongjin Market Street particularly cultivated the social relationship between producers, locals and customers. The incomers wanted to create alternative spaces to care about social alienation of societal members. For instance, the owner of Pinocchio book shop, an independent bookseller, tried to establish a social business model in which diverse customers could build a caring relationship to improve community solidarity (Zoomanet, 2013-309). This book shop paid attention to building social relationships to create a close-knit community by providing a space for communication with local customers. The owner displayed unique indie books to the locals in order to organise social gatherings for the public benefit of healthy relationships, rather than for making profits.

The owner of Coffee Libre, Seo Pil-hun, prioritised the fair trade between coffee bean suppliers and customers (Toki_s, 2013-140). Pil-hun had regularly visited local coffee farms to check the quality of the beans and to draw up fair contracts. Coffee Libre was opened for the purpose of promoting a high-quality coffee culture with fairly-traded coffee beans by professional coffee roasting at a low price in Dongjin Market Street (BOA04, café owner). This fair-trade relationship fostered the belief that consuming Coffee Libre coffee was beneficial for local coffee farms as well as Yeonnam-dong's community, because profits and benefits were fairly distributed to them. One of the famous Korean TV food documentary programmes, *Meokgeori X-File* (먹거리X파일), named Coffee Libre as a socially reliable business that had created sustainable and fair contracts with organic coffee farms in India and roasted only excellent beans to provide the best coffee to customers at a cheap price (BOA04, café owner; Channel A Home, 2013). In particular, Coffee Libre upheld Korean millennials' values in social justice.

In these ways, Dongjin Market Street was recognised as an alternative space to the contemporary capitalist spaces that had negatively affected fundamental values and ethics

of humane society in pursuit of profit maximisation. The alternative spatial practices prioritised collaboration, communication, encounters and relationships between all societal members including cultural minorities who refused to accept commercialised spaces mediated by mainstream cultures. Thus, the revitalisation of Dongjin Market Street was bound up with the notion of tolerant and equal relations between diverse people in the spaces of the young incomers.

Q: Why did you decide to open this book shop in this neighbourhood despite a trend that many book shops are disappearing?

A: ... During managing here [Pinocchio book shop], I'd like to build a sustainable model to make a small [positive] change. I wish that visitors would be inspired by these books. ... I'd like to talk about local issues sincerely and do something for the local community. I want to gain the local's trust in this neighbourhood. I hope to change people's minds in a positive way.

(Zoomanet, Yeonnam-dong arts and culture organisation blogger, 2013-309)

Seo Pil-hun, the owner of Coffee Libre, said that good coffee has a story. A cup of coffee is not just an easy drink for him. Particularly, Coffee Libre considers the relationship between suppliers and sellers in terms of climates, altitude, beans, and processing.

(Toki_s, Personal blogger, 2013-140)

6.3.2 Temporary Spaces for Community Solidarity: Yeonnam-dong Flea Market

Since 2014, the Living & Arts Creative Centre (LACC), the displaced arts and culture organisation from Hongdae, had organised the Yeonnam-dong flea market five times a year along the main street of the northern residential area in which SMG's Human Town Project had been carried out since 2011. LACC arranged the temporary spaces to promote tolerant participations for diverse social actors in Yeonnam-dong. It aimed to promote a variety of free arts and cultural activities flea markets. These vibrant events aimed to make links between diverse groups – artists, artisans, business owners and tourists – and Yeonnam-dong's local community. In this northern area of Yeonnam-dong, the residents, who had resisted the large-scale redevelopment, finally compromised with SMG on the revised community restoration project, the Human Town Project (See Figure 6-4). They tended to have radical ideas and a disposition towards sociocultural solidarity with tolerant and liberated participants. Hence, the residents allowed LACC's flea markets along the main

street in front of their houses. As LACC had previous experiences of the Hongdae flea markets aimed at linking Hongdae-based artists with locals, it was possible for them to carry out Yeonnam-dong's markets successfully with residents, artists, artisans and tourists. According to the flea market's Facebook page, Sunnyyeonnam (2017), each event set up about 350 pop-up shops and attracted about 5,000 participants. The Yeonnam-dong flea markets continued until 2016, but were halted in 2017 by the conflict between LACC and the representatives of the residents (BOA10, director of arts and culture organisation) and the Mapo-gu office abruptly changed their supportive stance and ordered an indefinite suspension of the events. prohibiting them on the basis of residents' reports of an unknown complaint (BOA10, director of arts and culture organisation).



Figure 6-4. The Northern Residential Area of Yeonnam-dong

The Yeonnam-dong flea markets built spatial practices for tolerant participation and collaborative cultural events in the residential area in a same context of the anti-commercialism and fair-trade relationships in Dongjin Market Street. Everyone was eligible to apply for pop-up stores throughout an online registration form. All kinds of handicraft goods and artworks were allowed to be sold in the markets. Diverse people and 300 pop-up stores gathered in the street and harmonised with the peaceful residential area (Masuking7, 2014-525). Sharing artworks and performances was a significant social activity to build community solidarity between participants and locals. The participants freely exchanged their own interests, skills, performances and artworks in the temporary spaces along the residential street. Many visitors who came from distant cities enjoyed the tolerant and

liberated spatial practices in the temporary spaces. In other words, the temporary spaces including concerts of music, pop-up stalls and street paintings not only fostered the unification of Yeonnam-dong, but also disseminated the cultural events widely through diverse visitors. During the cultural events, social demarcation between residents, artists, artisans and tourists was naturally diminished, and showed that the tolerant, vibrant and liberated participants ranging from insiders to outsiders were the core actors for achieving the ethics of the temporary spaces. In short, the Yeonnam-dong flea markets valorised tolerant participation for the purpose of building community solidarity and temporarily deconstructing the social demarcation between insiders and outsiders— five times in a year.

300 teams participated in this market and displayed a variety of their artworks. It attracted large crowds. The street was full of diverse people who came from distant areas. This is a very calm neighbourhood, but this market made here bustling like a city festival.

(Masuking7, 2014-525)

The spatial practices and ethics of the anti-commercialism, tolerant cultures and equitable relations in the incomers' spaces were transmitted to the Yeonnam-dong flea market street. The residents in the flea market area had already revealed progressive characteristics in connection with their protest against the SMG's New Town project which planned to bulldoze the area for redevelopment but which was eventually revised to become the community restoration plan, the Human Town project. This community context contributed to the adoption of the new spatial practices and ethics derived from Dongjin Market Street (Livingart, 2014-526). The progressive residential area of the Human Town project was the most appropriate for LACC's community-based project aiming to build a robust community solidarity against the financial threats of commercial gentrification. The area was socially-progressive and openminded, thus the values of Dongjin Market Street were easily accepted in the area through LACC's flea market project (Misomeeee, 2014-528). In particular, the residents themselves ruled out the commercial possibility that profitable entertainment businesses such as night clubs, bars and pubs could open in the Human Town project area (PELA05, property agency owner; YR01, Yeonnam-dong resident). This legal restriction on entertainment businesses was a remarkable achievement in protecting community solidarity from commercialisation and meant that the residents and LACC could dispel any fears of economic threat. Their flea markets successfully developed the spatial practices and ethics of tolerant and liberated participation to eliminate the social demarcation between insiders and outsiders. This liberated participation *not only offered an opportunity for the different*

cultures and place-images of diverse social actors to be made visible, but also led to the dramatic popularisation of Yeonnam-dong's practices disseminated by tourists and bloggers.

Some of the participants were residents living in the street. It was an opportunity to meet locals and share my artworks with them in front of their houses. ... There are many guest houses and foreign tourists. Thus, many foreign participants were seen in the market.

(Livingnart, LACC's market blog, 2014-526)

The regular markets tended to open up plenty of opportunities to interact with Yeonnam-dong's residents. It showed that everyone enjoyed participating the market rather than selling something. Family participants with their kids took pleasure in their pop-up stores and they looked like picnickers.

(Misomeee, Travel blogger, 2014-528)

6.3.3 Evocative Spaces for Fantasy of the West: Yeontral Park

GLFP, also known as "Yeontral Park (연트럴파크)", was opened in 2015, and this aesthetically-designed green space generated tourist expectations of extraordinary and fascinating experiences, boosting aesthetic shops, restaurants and cafes around the park in response to a sudden demand for fantasies of Western-style spectacle (Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009). The new urban park reminded tourists of New York Central Park, one of the most famous urban parks of foreign countries among Koreans, prompting tourists' fantasies about a stylish and glamorous New York lifestyle formed by contemporary Hollywood films like 'Sex and the City (1998-2004)' and 'The Devil Wears Prada (2006)' (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009). In contrast to Dongjin Market Street and the flea market streets, the fashionable and aesthetic spatial practices of Yeontral Park started to dominate Yeonnam-dong. Tourists perceived that this newlydesigned real space was juxtaposed with their fantasies of Western exotic spaces (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009). Whilst the cultural strollers discovered the hidden spaces in narrow streets, the exotic, stylish, glamorous and aesthetic settings in Yeontral Park and nearby streets became more fascinating as places of consumption than the incomers' spaces. Tourists' and bloggers' attention started to shift from the "hidden spaces" in maze-like streets to the "fantasy-driven spaces" in well-designed Yeontral Park. In other words, fashionable

tourists produced a re-valuation of Yeontral Park and a devaluation of Dongjin Market Street which had been recognised as the centre of the hidden spaces.

The fantasies of Western spaces, drawing on an vague exotic imaginary of New York, were firmly believed to be worth experiencing (Sustainablog, 2015-92). Changing leisure activities in Yeonnam-dong became oriented towards Western-style outdoor activities – yoga, frisbee, running, sunbathing, reading, busking, kite-flying, picnics, football, playing with pets – in green spaces: community gardens, farms and parks. The stylish modern design of Yeontral Park engendered a feeling of being in a foreign country and induced tourists to transform their cultural activities to accord with Western-style outdoor cultures (Pinitol, 2015-551). Except for limited authorised picnic sites and university campuses, these kinds of outdoor activities in the park were very unusual in high density urban spaces in Seoul. In particular, the transformation of Yeonnam-dong’s scenery into a modern and stylish green corridor affected aesthetic spatialisations of cafes, bars and restaurants in nearby streets. The juxtaposition of real and imaginary spaces not only brought about new Western-style activities formed from selective and vague images of New York’s Central Park and Hollywood films, but also developed aesthetic spatialisations in response to tourists’ fantasies – an imprecise and speculative authenticity of Western practices. Yeontral Park led to a combined spatialisation incorporating both real space and imaginary space, mediated by selective and situated information provided by bloggers.

As the previous railway in Yeonnam-dong was transformed into the park beautifully, Yeonnam-dong looks like New York. ... There are many places to sit and rest and many strollers with their dogs in the park. You can find many stylish cafes, bars and restaurants on both sides of the [linear] park.

(Sustainablog, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2015-92)

I could find many people reading a book or chatting with their friends in the park as if they were in a foreign country. The scenery I’ve never seen before was strange but interesting.

(Pinitol, Climbing blogger, 2015-551)

As the fantasy-driven spatial practices of Yeontral Park came to dominate the attention of tourists and bloggers, Yeonnam-dong was perceived as a “tourist hotspot” for extraordinarily aesthetic experiences (Flowerdeer7, 2015-20; KM08, 30s film maker). For this reason, mundane practices in the forgotten spaces and working-class streets, Little Chinatown and drivers’ cafes were quickly dismissed in favour of the new tourist hotspot - Yeontral Park.

Through bloggers' posts, the diverse and unique spaces of Dongjin Market Street were merged into this tourist hotspot. Dongjin Market Street became perceived to be a part of Yeontral Park, and practices in the incomers' alternative spaces were absorbed in the Yeontral Park locality. Yeontral Park as a main gateway for tours of Yeonnam-dong gave tourists and bloggers the overwhelming initial impression of exotic, trendy and glamorous localities in the aesthetically designed park and neighbouring shops. Tourists enjoyed experiencing new spatial practices in order to satisfy their West-related fantasies, and bloggers intensified these expectations in order to satisfy followers' anticipations regarding Yeontral Park. These reactions to the new green space restructured perceived spaces of Yeonnam-dong. In brief, consuming extraordinary and aesthetic experiences based on fantasies and imagery of Western spaces started to dictate the majority of perceived spaces in Yeonnam-dong including Dongjin Market Street and drew more and more attention to the beautifully designed spatial practices. Yeontral Park was a key driver to bring about refractive spatialisation in bloggers' and tourists' spatial orientations towards the staged authenticity of Western-style spectacle (Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009).

GLFP opens to the public. ... I have visited here several times because of many good restaurants. This new scenery of the park gives me a refreshing feeling. As many people gather, it seems to be a hotspot. ... Many cafes and restaurants lie in both sides of GLFP.

(Flowerdeer7, Personal blogger, 2015-20)

6.4 Imagined Space: Polished Place-images in an Attention-driven Market

This section on imagined space aims to examine how curated place-images were stereotyped by the selective tastes of bloggers and how this reduced the gap between tourists' aspiration and real spaces through refractive spatialisation. The section shows how an exaggerated imagery of aesthetic spaces produced by the post-incomers led to profit inequality between selected spaces and neglected spaces in an attention-driven market. Those later arrivals to Yeonnam-dong created exaggeratedly staged settings of selective authenticity (MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009), also known as 'Instagrammable spaces', to attract more tourists and bloggers: aestheticisation of selective place-images in Yeonnam-dong was perceived as a safe way of

maximising business incomes i (Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009). The findings of this section show how commercialisation and commodification of imaginary Yeonnam-dong accelerated refractive spatialisation driven by online place-images informing preselected tours and an attention-driven market. It presents an understanding of the specific relationship between place-images and gentrification.

6.4.1 Imaginary Spaces: Selective Place-images and New Financial Logic

Overall place-images of Dongjin Market Street were curated as bloggers filtered out old and boring place-images. The refined place-images of diverse, authentic, unique, tolerant and skilful spaces, which were formed from the most attractive spaces of the incomers, were disseminated widely and quickly. They suggested what kinds of place-images *should* be spatialised in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. During the edited process, bloggers discarded place-images at odds with this imagining, especially the forgotten spaces. The celebrated spaces were clearly marked as the distinctive characteristic of imaginary Yeonnam-dong.

The young incomers showed how much they cherished the traditional characteristic of Yeonnam-dong by keeping old physical settings of Dongjin Market Street. However, the incomers' spaces selectively chose reliable, authentic and generous place-images from the Chinese community and drivers' cafes, instead of calling attention to all the perceived spaces. They developed these selectively refined place-images through imaginary practices of their dynamic, experimental and skilful cooking, baking and brewing with their unique styles. Yeonnam-dong was re-characterised by the selectively situated spaces of Dongjin Market Street. In other words, bloggers' filters tended to capture *a single* imaginary essence of Yeonnam-dong, centred on Dongjin Market Street, accentuating the most captivating and inspiring spaces through their blog posts. These edited and refined space-images were disseminated online as representative of Yeonnam-dong.

Bloggers intensified the focus on bizarre and extraordinary place-images of exotic spaces in Dongjin Market Street rather than the creative, artistic place-images developed by artisans and artists in handicraft shops and artwork ateliers. The bloggers' exotic spaces mostly consisted of Thai, Japanese and Mexican restaurants and specialty coffee shops. These images were quickly consumed with intense curiosity by tourists and bloggers, neglecting artists' and artisans'. Bloggers' preferences for place-images in Dongjin Market Street focussed heavily on the exotic spaces (Barndining, 2014-26; Tuktuk_yn, 2014-375; Woosoosa_lim, 2015-115), and much of this information was produced by travel and

restaurant review bloggers in favour of foreign food cultures. Creative and artistic goods did not draw much attention from bloggers centred on eateries and cafés for the purpose of gaining more followers, notability and influence (BI02; BI03, Restaurant review bloggers). Place-images of foreign food cultures and exotic moods were characterised as Yeonnam-dong's key attractiveness among tourists and bloggers. In particular, the visual contrast between the quiet neighbourhood and the exotic spaces invoked feelings of having new and refreshing experiences (Woosoosa_lim, 2015-115). Bloggers played a role in amplifying the exotic spaces among tourists, because the place-images accorded with tourists' tastes. Young Korean tourists wanted to experience new and refreshing sensations in their leisure activities (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009). They believed that they deserved to have unique experiences away from their competitive routines (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). In terms of small businesses, bloggers' activities contributed to the growing belief that exotic, bizarre and extraordinary place-images ensured successful profits in Yeonnam-dong.

Recently, small, unique and global-taste stores are increasing [in Yeonnam-dong]. There are cultural spaces such as ateliers, galleries and vintage [clothing and accessories] shops as well as many restaurants for Thai, Japanese, and Mexican tastes.

(Barndining, Food and travel blogger, 2014-26)

Many exotic restaurants add to Yeonnam-dong's attractiveness. The owner gives me a rich sense of reggae with exciting music. I am sure that reggae lovers will enjoy here.

(Tuktuk_yn, Hospital blog, 2014-375)

Shops look like in a foreign country, but streets give me a feeling of the countryside.

That [contrasting scenery] is an attractiveness of Yeonnam-dong.

(Woosoosa_lim, Fashion blogger, 2015-115)

The bloggers' selective posts encouraged wealthy business owners to start their businesses in Yeonnam-dong and to create exaggeratedly staged place-images in order to attract more tourists and bloggers in the new financial logic of an attention-driven market. Place-images of the exotic and bizarre had gradually been replaced with aesthetic European symbols. Before Yeontral Park opened in 2015, new place-images were formed around new European-style restaurants in maze-like streets in close proximity to the incomers' spaces of Dongjin Market Street. In contrast, post-2015 European-style restaurants created new aesthetic exteriors and interiors to attract more tourists and bloggers. It could be said that owners of the aesthetic restaurants recognised that the new financial logic driven by place-images brought financial success from consumer patterns reacting favourably to refreshing,

exotic and fascinating spaces in Yeonnam-dong. This owner group was the “wealthy entrepreneur gentrifiers” in contrast to the “marginal gentrifiers” in Dongjin Market Street who had run small businesses on tight budgets. The marginal gentrifiers did not have enough money to create well-designed physical settings for their own unique and authentic styles. However, the wealthy entrepreneur gentrifiers could create strong spatial metaphors for the aesthetic European-style authenticity demonstrated by employing Italian chefs, installing antique European decorations and furniture, and constructing glamorous exteriors of buildings (Aluvion, 2014-540; Dnntiziplus, 2014-76; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al, 2009). As the inflow of wealthy late incomers increased, bloggers quickly produced aesthetic place-images of the European-style staged spaces favouring the aesthetic and glamorous styles in depicting Yeonnam-dong. The new financial logic, based on the attention of consumers in pursuit of alluring place-images, developed staged authenticity of aestheticised spaces in a refractive way oriented towards the situated reference place-images online. The attention-driven market as a new financial logic in which the stereotyped attractiveness of Yeonnam-dong reinforced by bloggers’ selective posts was bound up with profit maximisation – accelerated the inflow of wealthy incomers to gentrifying Yeonnam-dong.

All fancy decorations in Casa Di Noa [Italian restaurant] came from Italy. Some of them are 100-year-old antiques.

(Aluvion, Wine blogger, 2014-540)

Am I in Europe now? It’s such a fantastic architecture in bright sunshine. I don’t know what I should do here, but the first look at this building makes me excited.

(Dnntiziplus, Travel blogger, 2014-76)

6.4.2 Imaginary Activities: Pre-planned Tours and Stereotyped Place-images

Bloggers can generally be divided into “tastemakers” and “trend seekers”. Tastemakers tend to experience spatial and cultural practices themselves to produce their critical reviews. By mapping the spaces that have not yet been discovered, conceptions of these spaces are developed by tastemakers, which are later consumed by trend seekers. Blog posts direct trend seekers’ attention to the selectively experienced spaces and their pattern of experiences is heavily influenced by this information. In this process, online posts encourage a sudden influx of tourists into the spaces selectively represented by the tastemakers. Their

taste inevitably establishes a pattern of consuming selective spaces in the attention-driven economy and in particular, this relation induces landlords and business owners to monetise the online place-images in a way of aestheticising their physical properties.

Until Yeontral Park opened in 2015, Dongjin Market Street had played a role as a leading cultural incubator in Yeonnam-dong. It provided a variety of experiences for tastemakers as well as trend seekers. Key place-images of Dongjin Market Street were subjectively edited by tastemakers. Whilst tastemakers' real experiences were reflected in their blogs, they still tended to stereotype Dongjin Market Street as an experiential gold mine in which captivating and unique spaces were hidden (Cassie007, 2013-542; Yellownoda, 2015-723). Thus, bloggers generated an intense demand and desire for these spaces, now stereotyped as fascinating, leading to a standardised pattern of consuming spaces in the leisurely strolls of tourists. Tourist demand for such spaces articulated in online space contributed significantly to the proliferation of blogs about the hidden spaces in the built environment Yeonnam-dong. In reaction to tastemakers' preferences, stereotyped spaces dictated the spatial characteristics and ethics of Yeonnam-dong's businesses.

There are many interesting shops next to Coffee Libre. I expected nothing from this abandoned Dongjin Market, but amazing fun is hidden here unexpectedly.

(Cassie007, Camping blogger, 2013-542)

This is the first time to visit Dongjin Market in which many good restaurants gather. Small shops lie dense. Each shop has a chic name and distinctive interior, so I want to visit them.

(Yellownoda, Restaurant review blogs, 2015-723)

As increasing numbers of trend seekers gathered in Yeonnam-dong's streets, digital maps on smart phones like Google maps guided them to preselected destinations which tastemakers had already discovered and reviewed. Geographic coordinates of the preselected destinations were provided by tastemakers' posts, and tourists' digital maps navigated optimised routes through the maze-like streets. Based on this information, the routes followed by trend seekers took pre-defined directions, dictated how to approach different places and what to do in advance. In particular, the preselected routes were centred on where trend seekers had been located when taking the images, thus perpetuating popular and trendy spots. Trend seekers' check-ins denoted how hip they were at the boundary between real and online space.

The preselected tours of trend seekers involved quick movement across pre-planned destinations in order to emulate trendy practices – ordering famous dishes and capturing shareworthy photos (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Their key aim was to collect more evidence of their (stereotyped) experiences of spaces in pursuit of fashionable check-in lists and “must-see” places (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Selective information and digital maps standardised tourist routes, destinations and experiences in real space whilst bloggers posted a limited range of stereotyped place-images as must-see places in an imaginary Yeonnam-dong (Fioraness, 2013-494; Chsart1112, 2013-606; Urry & Larsen, 2011). For this reason, preselected spaces and activities led to the rapid accumulation of profits concentrated in highly selective spaces – the so-called ‘tourist hotspots’ - produced online (Castells, 1991; 2010; Harvey, 1990; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). As the tour routes relied heavily on online information about the selectively stereotyped place-images, the division between the financial fortunes of “selected spaces” and “neglected spaces” increased dramatically, worsening the spatial stratification of Yeonnam-dong’s streets. This financial inequality affected gentrification in the new logic of the attention-driven economy.

As I heard that adorable cafes, restaurants and shops were increasing, J and I embarked on our Yeonnam-dong tour in the morning. Before our tour, we decided where we would go in advance. Thus, we checked a list of selected places from the Naver map on the way to Dongjin Market.

(Fioraness, Personal blogger, 2013-494)

I found here when I searched Instagram for Yeonnam-dong’s good restaurants. It looked like an attractive artisan restaurant. I turned on my map app to find the way to the restaurant.

(Chsart1112, Travel blogger, 2013-606)

Bloggers’ attention to attractive, authentic and unique place-images encouraged tourists to embark on physical walks in Yeonnam-dong’s streets, and in this way the tourists activated a new spatial mechanism in the new financial logic, dependant on stereotyped place-images and physical settings. Yeonnam-dong’s place-images were segmented by the subjective online reviews of tastemakers who built up a situated imaginary collection of hidden spaces, which gave a sense of refreshingly new, inspiring and sensational experiences. Yeonnam-dong was being categorised according to their attention and tastes. Consumption of stereotyped place-images and hidden spaces was incorporated into the ethics of trend

seekers and fitted into a cultural mould of attention-driven practices. The imaginary assemblage of the hidden spaces was depicted as so-called

“hot places (핫플레이스)” among Korean millennials. It was believed that these spaces could satisfy tourists’ aspirations and fantasies in their real tours. As the forgotten spaces had been replaced by the stereotyped spaces of the attention-driven market, Yeonnam-dong had been mediated by an imaginary standardisation. Ironically, the stereotyped place-images were perceived as “standardised differentiations” in the so-called ‘coolest neighbourhoods of Seoul’. In short, the selectively stereotyped place-images of the attention-driven market denoted the dominant style of representational Yeonnam-dong and these became reference styles in the built environment.

Due to the increasing numbers of spaces represented in in the standardised differentiations of stereotyped place-images, hidden spaces had to compete with them and opened hidden-style spaces to attract more tourists. This competition and rising rents stimulated small business owners to exaggerate their place-images for the purpose of boosting profits. Hence, hyper-realistic place-images were developed from spatial metaphors for Western-style fantasies – Italian chefs, Korean chefs who graduated from prestigious French or Italian culinary schools, open kitchen performances, antique decorations and furniture, classic interiors and glamorous exteriors for European-style restaurants. In this spatial transformation into the stereotyped place-images, bloggers preferred to capture more fascinating and out-of-the ordinary spaces able to draw more attention from information consumers, in order to forge their good reputations and influence (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers). As young tourists were very dependent on blog information to reduce the risk of “wasting” their money and time on the preselected tours (KM01, 30s office worker; KM03, 30s architect; KM09; 20s hospital staff), small business owners likewise attempted to create new place-images of hyper-realistic spaces and experiences to compete in the attention-driven market (BOA01, restaurant owner; BOA02, marketing manager of café; BOA06, art exhibition organiser). The preselected tours resulted in the hyper-realistic, exaggerated imaginary of physical spatialisations based on fantasies of Western styles.

6.4.3 Imaginary Ethics: Hyper-realistic Spaces in Preselected Tour (Walking Routes)

Due to the growing tourist attention to captivating place-images, a rapid spatial transformation of aesthetic settings occurred in Yeonnam-dong's streets (MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). In particular, the newly-opened restaurants and cafes in narrow streets were needed to compete with the hidden spaces of Dongjin Market Street in order to survive financially, because most tourist attention was concentrated on Dongjin. As Yeonnam-dong was perceived as *the* tourist hotspot for unique experiences, many tourists started to turn their gaze onto other captivating spaces away from Dongjin Market Street. Most young tourists tended to preselect their destinations based on reliable online information prior to their physical tours, so the newer business owners set up highly seductive spatial settings to satisfy bloggers' tastes. In other words, the aesthetic exteriors and interiors at the boundary between real and online spaces linked tourists' perceptions of Yeonnam-dong to actual leisure activities for cultural emulation (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990).

Young tourists reacted favourably to the embodiment of their fantasies of European classical beauty – the romantic Eiffel Tower in Paris, the scenic canals in Venice and Amsterdam, and elegant Buckingham Palace in London (Low, 2017; Shields, 2013a; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Rhdmswls14, 2014-87). Notions of European beauty and aesthetics has been ambiguously exaggerated and distorted for a long time in South Korea. Restaurants and cafes referencing European aesthetics created hyper-realistic place-images which were more glamorous and stylish than genuine European spaces, stimulating tourists to pay for the staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Rhdmswls14, 2014-87). These staged settings had considerable influence on how tourists created their subjective and selective impression of Yeonnam-dong. In this refractive spatialisation of hyper-realistic European aesthetics and beauty, the distorted European styles had been stereotyped as an aesthetic place-image which could both ensure successful profits in Yeonnam-dong and also out-compete Dongjin Market Street.

The exterior of Assisi [Italian restaurant] was so beautiful and captivating. Probably, it is a [authentic] sense of Italy. I could look at inside through windows, and the interior was also so beautiful. This good restaurant, Assisi, gives me a feeling of the Mediterranean in Yeonnam-dong.

(Rhdmswls14, Travel blogger, 2014-87)

The hyper-realistic place-images emulating European style and beauty had been constructed out of diverse spatial metaphors for satisfying the tourists' ambiguous fantasies (Low, 2017; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998;

2010). The newer restaurants staged symbolic materials of European beauty visualised through European food menus, antique furniture, dining tables, classical chandeliers and candlesticks, maps of European countries, and images of picturesque scenes (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 1994; 2017a; Goffman, 1990; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Rosearam, 2015-437; Cuy0218, 2015-562; Hanabro00, 2015-368). These metaphors gave a strong feeling of Europe that accentuated the elegant essence of European beauty (Low, 2017; Rosearam, 2015-437; Cuy0218, 2015-562; Hanabro00, 2015-368). The spatial metaphors of the hyper-realistic spaces were fully intended to decrease the online-reality gap between individual fantasies and online-based expectations. In other words, the symbolic materials were to meet tourists' expectations of real experiences in places for which they had collected reference images from the Internet. In the preselected tours, young tourists tended to align their chosen experiences of real spaces with online reference images such as aesthetic photos of popular and fashionable spaces. The tours ultimately aimed to realise the online place-images in real space in Yeonnam-dong, instead of inviting viewing of authentic place-images of real Europe. Conceptions of real European spaces were entirely replaced by bloggers' images of hyper-realistic Europe in Yeonnam-dong. The hyper-realistic physical setting was a case of refractive spatialisation to decrease the online-reality gap between individual fantasies and the online place-images of stereotyped spaces.

There were such beautiful chairs and a fireplace on the wall. It made me feel like the Renaissance. ... I heard that those were the real Renaissance things. It's such an authentic antique! ... I felt as if I was in a museum. ... For me, a chandelier was the most beautiful.

(Rosearam, Antique blogger, 2015-437)

The Mediterranean style fish dish was a major menu item in Yeonnam-dong Bada Steak, so it gave me a feeling of Europe completely. The interior was so exotic and amazing.

(Cuy0218, Personal blogger, 2015-562)

A chanson [a French song] came on a speaker. Flowers were placed everywhere. It looked like a restaurant in France. There were an old dining table and chairs with a matching tablecloth. I fully enjoyed the sense of France.

(Hanabro00, Travel blogger, 2015-368)

Tourists consumed the aesthetic style and mood (Waterjin, 2013-429) capturing their extraordinary moments on digital cameras (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 1994; 2017a; Goffman, 1990; Low, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011). With the emergence of the European-style settings, tourists and bloggers conceptually linked the aesthetic place-images to the trendy

Yeonnam-dong tours. Emulating and sharing the practices was recognised as Yeonnam-dong authenticity. It was an imaginary restructuring of Yeonnam-dong, bringing about refractive spatialisation in the realisation of the online hyper-realistic fantasies and metaphors that bloggers continuously edited and exaggerated. In the attention-driven economy, the newer restaurants, cafes and bars in this period constituted photogenic spaces to stimulate tourists to take more attractive and extraordinary photos of the staged settings (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 1994; 2017a; Goffman, 1990; Low, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Waterjin, 2013-429; Fromj402, 2015-335; Artplatz, 2015-375). As the majority of Korean millennials use multifunctional smartphones equipped with high-speed web browsers and high-performance digital cameras, young tourists can snap unlimited shots anywhere (Berardi, 2015; Ko, 2020a; 2020b). A smartphone digital camera enables tourists to capture and selectively and quickly edit their everyday lives according to their interests and tastes (Berardi, 2015; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Low, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Therefore, providing interesting spatial settings for digital photography became an imperative for Yeonnam-dong businesses during gentrification.

In digitalised everyday routines, imaginary Yeonnam-dong was individualised and fragmented by the tourist gaze. The digital photography gave young tourists an opportunity to consume the most captivating aspects of place-images. The more recently arrived business owners (i.e. wealthy post-gentrifiers) produced aesthetically-staged spaces in which tourists could make their own glamorous presences known. The aesthetic photography not only valorised selected places and place-images, but also led to the refractive spatialisation of photogenic spaces in Yeonnam-dong. In other words, photogenic spaces and aesthetic settings (“Instagrammable spaces”) constituted refractive spatialisation. The unique street cultures and historical context of Yeonnam-dong was commercialised in a process of refractive spatialisation. Photogenic spaces created an aesthetic impression of young tourists through digital photography. It could be said that the aesthetic commercialisation of street cultures, context and place-images, originally typical of old residential areas, was a major pattern of gentrification in Seoul in areas like Gyeongnidan-gil (경리단길), Ikseon-dong (익선동), Seongsu-dong (성수동) and Garosu-gil (가로수길). All these have narrow streets and old residential or industrial buildings in close proximity to large commercial or business districts like Hongdae and Gangnam.

Here is remote from main streets. This adorable Hongdae-style interior was worth taking photos. This photogenic burger refreshed me! A visual delight in photo is much greater than from a mood in this restaurant.

(Waterjin, Personal blogger, 2013-429)

This beautiful atmosphere of [Café] Nakrang Parlour attracted me more than the coffee. I can take amazing selfies here.

(Fromj402, Personal blogger, 2015-335)

[The owner of] Tingkl U wanted to make an interesting place to attract people's attention from the street, so I [designer] designed a simple photo zone by painting murals on the wall. ... It becomes a tourist hotspot for photos in Yeonnam-dong's streets.

(Art_platz, Handcraft blogger, 2015-375)

6.5 Online Space: Turning Point in Online Practice

This section considers online space and focuses on a turning point in the relationship between blogs, TV programmes and Yeonnam-dong. It examines how blogs and TV programmes sparked the national popularity and media-led commercialisation of Yeonnam-dong's streets. Whilst bloggers attracted tourists by displaying spatial practices and place-images, TV programmes accentuated the essence of the selective place-images in Yeonnam-dong's spaces. The popularisation of Yeonnam-dong in TV and blogs spread the belief that Yeonnam-dong was worth a visit. Three key aspects are discussed here: 1) the role of media-led commercialisation in the strong relationship between online space, the mass media and Yeonnam-dong; 2) bloggers' progress in providing back-region narratives – behind-the-scenes stories of the work involved in each business – to present entire representations of spaces, which triggered the involvement of TV programmes; and 3) new online-based perceptions of spaces encouraging young tourists to embark on their adventurous Yeonnam-dong expeditions to unknown streets, based on web searches and a digital maps. The findings of this section clarify how Yeonnam-dong's businesses were mediated by TV programmes and blog posts in the attention-driven market and how the media-led commercialisation accelerated refractive spatialisation of hyper-realistic fantasies and photogenic spaces.

6.5.1 Media-led Commercialisation via TV Programmes and Blogs

The South Korean “*mukbang* (먹방)” culture develops as a popular entertainment show genre broadcasting individual theatrical eating or introducing good eateries through eating

shows. Viewers can gain vicarious satisfaction from exaggerated or extravagant eating shows with a crunch and slurp, creating conceptions or misconceptions of food and spaces. This Korean form of TV entertainment has spread worldwide through global online video services like YouTube. Evans (2015) describes *mukbang* as the futuristic food phenomenon of the most digitally connected country, South Korea. *Mukbang* denotes remote companionship that gives viewers a feeling of eating together facilitated by comments and chats over the Internet. The *mukbang* culture reflects a deepening loneliness and alienation in contemporary Korean society, developing an alternative orientation among the younger generation that substitutes for traditional face-to-face conversations (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019).

Mukbang is a novel trend that replaces direct experiences and consumption in the sluggish Korean economy. In South Korea, travel by car to enjoy diverse food cultures in remote villages, towns and cities has been a nationwide trend since a dramatic increase in car ownership during the rapid economic growth of the 1980s (Shim, 2000). In comparison to the vehicles that have improved physical accessibility to extensive Korean cities, the Internet has intensified data accessibility to vicarious experiences by sharing text, photos and videos produced by others in diverse online platforms. Data acquisitions of vicarious experiences through online contents like *mukbang* are much cheaper, easier, safer and quicker than real practices, even though it is not reality. In contrast to the 1980s economic and travel boom, with the Korean economy now struggling and rising youth unemployment, the younger generation does not have sufficient income to travel, (Berardi, 2015; Harvey, 2005; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Shim, 2000). Hence, they tend to pursue vicarious pleasures provided by online services instead of real leisure activities, or seek online reviews on cost-effective and risk-free spaces for planning safe and thrifty leisure activities (Berardi, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; Ko, 2020a; 2020b). With the growing *mukbang* online content in South Korea, blogs also play a role of major online tools for providing vicarious experiences in consuming a variety of foods at many different outlets. As many Korean TV programmes simultaneously imitated the internet *mukbang* content in order to attract young audiences favouring online content, Yeonnam-dong's restaurants, cafes and bars were suddenly highlighted in nationwide TV programmes.

Whilst TV programmes on Yeonnam-dong's food cultures had fostered the belief that consuming Yeonnam-dong gave tourists trendy and worthwhile experiences, bloggers reinforced this belief by producing positive posts about selected spaces. Blogs dictated that tourists should spend time and money on actually experiencing the spaces, whereas TV boosted the nationwide popularity of Yeonnam-dong. TV programmes and blogs on

Yeonnam-dong developed in three stages. Firstly, tastemakers had discovered captivating but unknown spaces to disseminate through their blogs. As newly-discovered spaces were subjectively categorised as key spaces that tourists should experience, trend conformists reinforced this in their emulations. They also disseminated the information more widely through their own blogs. Secondly, TV broadcasting paid attention to the key spaces which triggered a sudden influx of tourists. In order to attract larger young audiences for these shows, the key spaces were featured in *mukbang* TV programmes in which Korean celebrities shared their experiences of Yeonnam-dong food cultures (Sooyons203, 2014-707). As a result, the TV programmes reinforced the credibility for Yeonnam-dong's spaces on a national scale, attracting more audiences in wider age groups as well as more tourists from geographically wider regions across Korea. Because of the national popularity among young tourists, Yeonnam-dong has come to be perceived as a significant tourist hotspot in South Korea. Thirdly, tourists and bloggers who were not initially interested in Yeonnam-dong were stimulated by the TV programmes (Delicate44, 2013-252). A huge influx of trend conformists from diverse cities across the country led to massive increases in the production and sharing of blog posts about Yeonnam-dong's key spaces. They were not professional reviewers or influencers, but contributed enormously to the national popularisation of Yeonnam-dong. These three steps resulted in a dramatically increased influx of tourists as well as a dramatic surge in blog posts. In particular, digital maps on smartphones diminished first-time tourists' anxiety about finding their ways through the maze-like streets of Yeonnam-dong and induced them to be more adventurous on their first visits (Diskek7, 2014-585). In this way, the *mukbang* TV programmes and online bloggers had reinforced tourists' belief that they should follow the nationally popular trend and visit Yeonnam-dong.

I like this attractive exterior. Since Tasty Road [a popular TV programme] broadcast here, Bada Pasta has become popular. I was curious about here because Kim Na-young, a TV celebrity, had posted here several times on her Instagram.

(Sooyons203, Personal blogger, 2014-707)

I had paid no attention to Yeonnam-dong in fact, but I visited here eventually. Fried crabs shown on Gourmet Road [a popular TV programme] made me crave to eat those.

(Delicate44, Personal blogger, 2013-252)

When I watched Gourmet Road [a popular TV programme], a good restaurant in Yeonnam-dong was seen on TV last week. Yeonnam-dong is famous for a tourist hotspot. ... A digital map app of my smartphone navigated my way.

(Diskek7, Personal blogger, 2014-585)

In the media-led belief that Yeonnam-dong was well worth a visit, the sudden influx of tourists soon overtook the supply of goods and services. In contrast to the blogs that had contributed to spatial stratification and imaginary polarisation in the 2010-2012 period, TV programmes were certainly detrimental to the economically vulnerable business owners in narrow streets. With the nationwide popularisation of the Yeonnam-dong tour, small business owners like the young incomers in Dongjin Market Street were on the threshold of serious displacement (BOA06, Art exhibition organiser; Toki_s, 2013-140). Although the influence of blogs and TV programmes are hard to disentangle, it was evident that prominence on TV escalated quickly into a more ruthless form of gentrification. Exaggerated TV programmes not only regulated Yeonnam-dong's businesses in the attention-driven market, but also accelerated the refractive spatialisation of hyper-realistic fantasies and photogenic spaces which the wealthy post-gentrifiers contributed to. In addition, the nationally-widespread popularity of the Yeonnam-dong tours encouraged landlords to rent their properties to higher income businesses (PELA04, property agency owner). In brief, the three steps in the growing influence of TV programmes and blogs caused media-led commercialisation of Yeonnam-dong's streets and the conversion of small businesses into hyper-realistic settings of aesthetic spaces suitable to gain the attention of increasing numbers of tourists.

I heard that Coffee Libre at the edge of the street was broadcast on TV and hit the jackpot. Yet, there was a too long queue for Coffee Libre when I visited to have a cup of coffee.

(Toki_s, Interior design blogger, 2013-140)

6.5.2 Blogging for Back-region Narratives

Goffman (1990) theorises on 'impression management' whereby people's theatrical performances manipulate the impressions they want to have on others in order to create positive influences in face-to-face interactions. Geographical stages for these individual performances are divided between the 'front-region' and 'back-region' (Goffman, 1990). In the front-region, a socially open space like a hall or cafes and restaurants, individuals try to convey a positive impression to their audiences who engage in conversation (Goffman, 1990). The front-region is a social theatre to show dramaturgic behaviours to audiences or listeners, but a backstage of the theatre like a kitchen, staffroom and bedroom is the back-region in which performers could be relaxed and return to their own personality without a

staged role, mask, make-up and costume (Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990). For instance, fine dining restaurant waiters and waitresses are very courteous and friendly to customers (audiences) and speak to them in a formal tone at tables (front-region). Yet, when staff move to the spatial context of the kitchen, their dramaturgic performances of service are temporarily halted in the back-region. Staff keep the door between the hall (front-region) and the kitchen (back-region) closed, because showing the backstage where busy chefs and staff make a messy scenes and loud comments would interrupt customers' appreciation of the elegant services and high-quality meals in the staged space.

Before the turning point at which the media-led commercialisation and aestheticisation of spaces started to dictate the images of Yeonnam-dong, bloggers paid attention to back-region narratives of Yeonnam-dong's spaces – hidden histories, interests, backgrounds, relationships, ethos and origins in business – shaping their front-regions. The back-region stories were a stimulating tool for arousing tourists' curiosity and encouraging them to experience front-region of spaces. It covered invisible fields of spaces like kitchens, chefs and baristas, which were directly connected to the quality of goods and services in the front-region. These journalist-like bloggers cultivated hidden narratives of their cherished spaces in the front and back stages. For example, their blog posts on back-regions constructed compelling narratives of glittering careers of Yeonnam-dong's chefs or baristas and enhanced the credibility of Yeonnam-dong. These narratives were attractive for TV programmes and tourists enjoyed authenticating back-region narratives through visible evidence of consuming the front-region.

Bloggers' historical narrative posts increased the credibility of artisan's spaces, especially in bakeries, cafes and Chinese restaurants. Authentic Chinese chefs and skilled artisans were the bloggers' main focus. The historical narratives focused on the personal lives of how artisan chefs, baristas and bakers had practiced their skills to create high-quality goods and services. As many chains restaurants, cafés and bakeries had dominated the majority of Seoul's commercial streets, the artisan spaces were perceived as a unique kind of space. Some bloggers who were aware of the values of the historical context had interviewed the artisans about their families, educational backgrounds and careers (Kebhana, 2015-261). During the production of the back-region histories, bloggers had played a significant role as journalists collecting local stories (spatial context and origins) from old shopkeepers, Chinese migrants and young artisans (Plspflsp, 2013-480; Grenni, 2014-339). These historically rich narratives that the journalist-like bloggers cultivated aroused tourists' curiosity about artisans' skills and spaces, triggering tourists' search for direct experiences in real space.

The owner in Siroguma had practiced Japanese cuisine in Japan for eight years. Hence, the tastes of all menu were truly excellent.

(Kebhana, Hana bank official blog, 2015-261)

This is Maehwa [Chinese restaurant] in Yeonnam-dong. ... It had been run for over 30 years next to the Embassy of China in Myeong-dong before moving to Yeonnam-dong.

(Plspflsp, Personal blogger, 2013-480)

Yeonnam-dong's Haha was opened a long time ago. The owner couple are Chinese migrants from Shandong province and has made home-made style food.

(Grenni, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2014-339)

In contrast to the polished (front-region) historical narratives of successful careers and the skills of artisans, blog posts on the competent newcomers, perceived as Yeonnam-dong's rising stars, accentuated their personal backgrounds, performances and life stories. First, in accordance with Korean norms that foster ideas that better educational backgrounds (like attendance at prestigious universities) signify higher personal credibility, bloggers paid attention to the educational institutions at which the competent newcomers had been trained (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Lett, 1998). Famous European culinary schools such as Le Cordon Bleu Paris and Italian Culinary Institute for Foreigners (ICIF) were highlighted by bloggers to show certain qualifications for the newcomers' culinary performance (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Lett, 1998; Saltdanji, 2013-84; Lbj3557, 2014-559). Certificates from prestigious culinary schools on the walls were the strong spatial metaphor for satisfying tourists' expectations and fantasies of European-style tastes. Secondly, the personal narratives highlighted international awards for the specialties of the competent newcomers. For example, Yeon-ju Ryu, the owner of Coffee D-Plex, was the first female barista in Korean national teams and won the World Barista Championship in 2012 and 2015 (Honeyjuny, 2015-152). Her international fame attracted much attention to her new café in Yeonnam-dong. Her remarkable achievements reinforced the impression that young professional chefs and baristas in Yeonnam-dong had the world-class skills while providing the high-end food and coffee at reasonable prices. Lastly, the personal stories of foreign chefs were accentuated by bloggers. Italian, Japanese, Mexican and Russian chefs and their family stories conveyed out-of-the-ordinary, authentic impressions to tourists in search of exoticism and these stories enhanced the credibility of the exotic tastes and ambience of Yeonnam-dong's spaces. In brief, the distinctive backgrounds, professional performances and exotic life stories of the newcomers related in back-region narratives not only increased the credibility of Yeonnam-dong's spaces, but also attracted the national attention of TV programmes.

Chef Choi Byeong-goo and Gang Mi-seon are the graduates of Le Cordon Bleu, a famous French culinary school. This is a small restaurant run by them.

(Saltdanji, Salt blogger, 2013-84)

You can look at photos of the Italian elderly ladies on the wall. The owner of Bada pasta house, who is a graduate of ICIF, had travelled over Italy regions and wrote a book about Italian home-made recipe from the ladies on the photos.

(Lbj3557, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2014-559)

She is a world barista champion and a national representative of South Korea.

Furthermore, she was the first female member of the Korean national team. Yeon-ju Ryu who won the world barista championship in 2012 and 2015 opens her new space.

(Honeyjuny, Bread blogger, 2015-152)

6.5.3 Online Perception of Spaces: Web Search and Digital Maps

As trend conformists gathered in Yeonnam-dong, web searches became imperative to find risk-free and cost-effective spaces among the overwhelming flow of information prior to the preselected walks in Yeonnam-dong becoming available. Many trend conformists who had few or no experiences of Yeonnam-dong were afraid of facing this unknown neighbourhood without information. In particular, young tourists aimed at an economically acceptable tour providing safe, trendy and valuable experiences on their tight budgets. Their tours hoped to emulate popular tourist experiences reinforced by bloggers.

Acquiring fashionable experiences provides a sense of social relief for trend conformists belonging to mainstream South Korean cultures (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Lett, 1998). According to Lett (1998), a pattern of behaviour and attitudes established in the mainstream economy, culture and politics signifies above-average quality of life as the new urban middle class in relation to good education, high-income jobs and property ownership. This social phenomenon is derived from the historical hardship that Koreans endured when they had to restart their lives from nothing after the brutal destruction of the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War (Berardi, 2015; Gelézeau, 2007; Lett, 1998). For instance, individual ideologies between liberalism and communism were directly linked to the issue of survival in the turmoil of the war. In addition, the highly competitive work environment in contemporary Korean society has developed the strong belief that following

mainstream trends – promising studies at universities, stable jobs and popular housing – is the safest way of climbing the social ladder to future belonging (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Lett, 1998). Todorova (2016) claims that following a strong social trend (*Yuhaeng* (유행)) is recognised as a social benchmark for quality of life, so Koreans tend to choose popular but similar clothes, food, books and leisure activities signifying mainstream social status. Socio-cultural homogeneity based on popular trends gives Koreans a sense of relief from uncertainty and a sense of belonging (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Lett, 1998; Todorova, 2016).

In the context of socio-cultural homogeneity, Yeonnam-dong became a spatial benchmark of trendy cultures for young tourists. In pursuit of mainstream status, web searches were imperative in order to avoid unpopular and risky tourist spots. It was fully believed that the most searched keywords were linked to the most reliable and fashionable spaces (KM03, 30s architect). This myth strongly influenced the trend conformists' selections of spaces leading to the most searched spaces becoming the trendiest tourist destinations in Yeonnam-dong (Ohnobaby, 2015-277; Joozoo32, 2015-791). As well as adhering to imagined notions of the safest and trendiest spaces, young tourists also conformed to details of recommended practices like popular menus, photo spots, interior decorations and stylish vibes and choice of food (Lallajamie, 2015-269). The web search for risk-free spaces led to spatial changes in Yeonnam-dong due to refractive spatialisation emulating online reference practices.

In an autumn day, I craved nabe [Japanese-style stew]. I searched for a keyword, 'Yeonnam-dong nabe'. 'Nabe Sikdang' was the most searched restaurant in blogs, so I visited here.

(Ohnobaby, Personal blogger, 2015-277)

I made a plan to meet friends of mine on Thursday in Yeonnam-dong, so I searched the Internet for Yeonnam-dong's restaurants. Bada pasta house was overwhelmingly the most researched keyword on blog posts.

(Joozoo32, Personal blogger, 2015-791)

We ordered the two dishes which were the most posted menus in blogs.

(Lallajamie, Food blogger, 2015-269)

In the dependence on the web search for the trendiest spaces, a visual quality of spaces such as aesthetic photos influences tourists' decisions (Baudrillard, 1994; Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Seeing, doing, eating,

staying and resting were the key practices in the decision-making process for traditional tours (MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). But contemporary interactive online media suggesting routes has strengthened visual impressions rather than verbal storytelling for spatial practices (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). A wide variety of user-generated information on digital platforms including blogs, social media and YouTube has overtaken the mass media which had been managed by highly-trained personnel on TV, radio, and in magazines and newspapers. The younger generation has preferred an individual web search to a face-to-face oral tradition (Castells, 2010; Berardi, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Low, 2017). Internet data is deemed to be diverse, rich and accurate, and easily and conveniently available on portable smartphones (Castells, 2010; Berardi, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Low, 2017). In particular, incalculably increasing online information has diminished individual decision-making. Young tourists have relied heavily on visual symbolic impressions from photos and videos rather than on functional choices (Baudrillard, 2017a; Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010).

Alluring images of real space were prioritised by tourists as a spatial benchmark for real experiences. In brief, the key factors in physical tours were converted into visual spectacles, particularly noticeable in blogs and Instagram (Cider99, 2013-425). The online images dictated spatial practices in real Yeonnam-dong.

Instagram is quite exciting for me. When I looked at someone's photos, I suddenly craved to visit there. I had screen captures of those photos, and I sometimes dropped by those places. Café Yeonnam-dong 228-9 is one of them.

(Yjh0226, Knitting blogger, 2015-403)

What I chose among Yeonnam-dong's cafes was Vanilla Kitchen. A photo of its hot chocolate on Instagram attracted me here.

(I_free_art, Food blogger, 2015-834)

I always check real-time updates and read new posts from Twitter and Facebook everyday on my smartphone. One day I looked at a photo of yakisoba bread on Twitter. I was certain that this photo was taken in Japan, but it was actually at Café Dudart in Yeonnam-dong. ... I was really pleased when I discovered the cafe in the residential area.

(Cider99, Writing blogger, 2013-425)

In contrast to the maze-like streets that were the key feature in arousing tourists' interest and curiosity about the hidden spaces in the 2010-2012 period, this same geographical intricacy meant tourists struggled to find a way to their destinations in the pre-planned tours. As tourists preferred to arrive at their preselected destinations as quickly as possible, a digital map like Google Maps, NAVER Map and KakaoMap on their smartphones navigated the fastest way through the maze-like streets. Thus, digital maps encouraged even first-time tourists to embark on their Yeonnam-dong visits even if their destinations were concealed in narrow streets (Soulbird, 2014-312). In the traditional economic logic of commercial properties, locating shops on high streets is the most expensive because they are exposed to the highest public footfall in the most accessible space. However, a digital map of a preselected route reduced the importance of the geographical location of commercial property.

Yeonnam-dong is in the [geographically] opposite side of Hongdae. I've never been here on foot. I headed to Yeonnam-dong with my map app. ... I visited two places, Eoseulleong Jeonggeojang (어슬렁 정거장), which I found on Twitter, and Melloa (멜로아).

(Soulbird, Personal blogger, 2014-312)

Young business owners who could not afford rents in main streets devised an alternative strategy, making sure that their spaces on narrow streets were exposed online to attract young tourists. For example, Dongjin Market Street had poor accessibility, but this street was widely known across the Internet (Castells, 2010; Low, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Piston222, 2013-614). Open geographical information and free navigation tools contributed to the widely-spread knowledge of its location despite the physically derelict environment at the edge of Yeonnam-dong. As a result of the benefit of alternative digital technologies, young business owners could decide to open their spaces in what had previously been poor locations whilst tourists preferred to find unique and inspiring spaces in unknown streets (Castells, 2010; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). As a result, technology-driven perceptions of Dongjin Market Street caused displacement because of the dramatic increases in property prices due to increased tourist footfall. Nevertheless, the uniqueness and authenticity of these spaces, rather than accessibility, were recognised as the key factor in the decision-making process of young tourists. The new online perception of spaces, based on web searches and digital maps, triggered dramatic changes in the economic logic and tourist cultures as a result of overcoming geographical limitation.

I lost my way at first and struggled to find Café Yisim, but my map app helped us to find it. When I arrived at there, the street was filled with the scent of coffee from several cafes.

(Piston222, Photography blogger, 2013-614)

6.6 Summary of Refractive Spatialisation II

This chapter has examined the second stage (2013-2015) of refractive spatialisation and the changing logic of locality and spatialisation which followed the first refractive spatialisation (2010-2012). In the conceived space, the spatial transformation with soaring rents triggered by the stage-led projects – AREX and GLFP – attracted private investments. It shifted the main characteristic of the neighbourhood from residential to commercial. In order to improve solidarity in the Yeonnam-dong community in response to financial threats similar to Hongdae's gentrification, the young incomers – artists, artisans and not-for-profit cultural organisations – who had been displaced from gentrified Hongdae conducted community-based arts projects. However, ironically, these created attractive and aesthetic place-images stimulating bloggers and tourists to seek the hidden spots of the artisans' and artists' unique cultures, especially in Dongjin Market Street. This accelerated the imaginary polarisation and the spatial stratification in the transmission of aesthetic place-images from conceived space to perceived space via imagined and online spaces. Furthermore, Yeontral Park (GLFP) redeveloped from the railway, Gyeonghui Yongsan Line and Sinchon Line, stimulated tourists to weave fantasies of the West in the transmission from the aesthetically designed green space to individually-imagined space. In the second state of refractive spatialisation, therefore, the hybrid transmissions of place-images, selectively filtered, stratified and segmented through uneven online data networks, caused a rapid conversion of financial practices to those of the pre-determined routes that accorded with the attention-driven economy in pursuit of aesthetically stereotyped place-images adhering to online logic. As a result, Yeonnam-dong's gentrification in the transition of the 2013-2015 period was mediated by the online-driven logics, flows and systems of spatialisation – refractive spatialisation.

Chapter 7. Refractive Spatialisation III: the Online-Reality Gap and the Digital Picturesque in 2016-2018

7.1 Introduction

In order to answer the research questions relating to the nine years of gentrification of Yeonnam-dong covered by this thesis, this chapter on the third stage of refractive spatialisation analyses the hybrid dynamics of the final 2016-2018 period and their links to the refractive spatialisation of the 2010-2016 period. It articulates the major findings about the relational dynamics developed in the boundaries of the different spaces in gentrified Yeonnam-dong: 1) aesthetic design strategy (conception and reality); 2) digital picturesque and spatial settings (imagery and reality); 3) online code (imagery and virtuality); 4) aesthetic tourism (reality and virtuality); and 5) refractive spatialisation (all the spaces).

Before theorising the findings in the framework of the dialectical circuit of contemporary spatialisation based on Lefevre and Shields in Chapter 8, the findings of this chapter indicate how refractive spatialisation was completed in the peak period of Yeonnam-dong's gentrification to eliminate the online-reality gap. In the transition of Yeonnam-dong's industry from a housing rental market to an attention-driven commercial economy, the spatial strategies of business were oriented toward the forms of aesthetic tourism captured by bloggers' risk-free online representations. With displacement of artisans and artists who refused to accept the new logic and system of spatial practices, the attention-driven logic satisfied remaining social actors – small business owners' profit maximisation, investors' higher rental incomes, tourists' successful and unusual leisure experiences, and bloggers' increasing influence. With the interconnections among the different roles, interests, tastes and goals of social actors in online networks, Yeonnam-dong had been transformed into digital picturesque and Instagrammable spaces. Consequently, refractive spatialisation as a spatial tool for all social actors' desires, had accelerated the hybrid dynamics of the nine years of gentrification, which had operated in the dialectical circuit of spatial interconnections between reality, conception, imagery and virtuality in pursuit of shrinking the online-reality gap.

7.2 Conceived Space: Aesthetic Business Strategies in Gentrification

7.2.1 Property Transformation in Gentrification

As a result of rental price increases, displacement of the young incomers' from the spaces in Dongjin Market Street occurred rapidly between 2016 and 2018. Tenants of small shop spaces relocated their businesses to cheaper neighbourhoods and Yeonnam-dong seemed to repeat the ruthless displacement that had occurred in Hongdae. According to Foodi2 (2016-647), a food columnist and blogger, Dongjin Market Street rents doubled. Eventually, even Café Yisim, a symbol of the revitalisation of the street, left Yeonnam-dong. Until displacement from Dongjin, Jinsik Choi, the owner of Café Yisim, had attempted to make the Café a social shelter from suffocating daily routine and anti-commercialism by providing cheap but good quality brewed coffee and organising cultural events – such as small concerts of indie bands from Hongdae. As Dongjin Market Street became a pre-planned destination for trendy pilgrimages, tourists replaced regular customers who had enjoyed consuming the peaceful and nostalgic sense of small shops and distinctive cultures in the street. With the sharp increase in property prices and numbers of tourists, the street had to be commercialised to keep businesses, but the low productivity of the incomers' spaces, oriented towards uniqueness and authenticity, could not handle the sudden influx of tourists. Speculative property agencies located outside Yeonnam-dong stimulated local landlords to sell their properties to investors, while at the same time, some local property agencies tried to stabilise the property market to protect the local community (PELA05, property agency owner).

In the early 2010s, the young incomers had pursued their individual satisfaction from uniqueness and authenticity, establishing warm, friendly and diverse relationships with local residents and regular customers rather than pursuing purely financial imperatives. The reason why they moved into cheap Dongjin Market Street was to avoid the risk of displacement and to maintain their particular activities on their own terms. They never expected that Dongjin Market Street would become a source of Yeonnam-dong's gentrification.

Despite the rapid change in the local property market, Jinsik Choi had not changed his belief that Café Yisim should be a relaxing space giving every customer the best quality coffee at a cheap price. He did not compromise and allow takeaway coffee which could spoil its taste, even though there was regularly a long queue at the café. Likewise, many small business

owners in Dongjin Market Street were not interested in increasing their commercial their profits in response to the sudden boost in the rents and tourists. The owner of Pinokio's bookshop, a local indie bookstore, expressed his sentiments on the unfolding spatial changes in his blog (Pinokiobooks, 2016-917). Cultivating good relations with residents and regular customers was the most important value for him. Thus, he had no reason to keep his business in Yeonnam-dong any longer and moved to Gyeongju which is 335 km (208 mi) away from Seoul (Pinokiobooks, 2016-917).

Many bloggers admitted that the small, independent businesses of the young incomers contributed to Yeonnam-dong's authenticity and its unique cultures, but felt that displacement was an inevitable consequence in capitalist space (Bitterpan, 2016-78; Enjoyholic, 2016-258; Beautifulcup, 2016-289; Foodi2, 2016-647; Jamesbae, 2016-910; Eun_genius, 2016-966; Mitsru79, 2017-809; CafeFrance, 2018-249). The sudden influx of trendy tourists who enjoyed distinctive and fashionable spaces precipitated commercialisation of the street, but this was antithetical to the values of the young incomers and their emphasis on quality, authentic experiences and intimate relationships among the local community and regular customers.

Increasing numbers of tourist (demand) led to new spatialisations (supply) from reconstructions and renovations of old buildings, which occurred in a rent gap between potential property values and actual property incomes (Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wylie, 2008; Smith, 1996; 2008). The built environment dictated that most buildings in Yeonnam-dong were small, low-rise and perceived as obsolete which kept rental prices low compared to Hongdae and Seoul city centre. Yeonnam-dong's residential area had consisted of owner-occupied houses in which local landlords had not expected higher rental income from the working-class renters. The sudden influx of trendy tourists, however, destabilised the property market and attracted the attention of speculative investors to the quiet neighbourhood (BOA06, art exhibition organiser; PELA03, property consultant; PELA04; PELA05, local property agency owners). Speculative estate agencies and investors, known as the Gangnam wealthy people, aggressively bought many old properties (PELA04; PELA05, local property agency owners). This financial turbulence not only unsettled the local community, but also displaced the young incomers (BOA06, art exhibition organiser). As the successful profits of several TV celebrities were widely known through the mass media, Yeonnam-dong was conceived of as the centre of promising property investment in Seoul (PELA04, local property agency owner).

Landlords, including speculative investors, aggressively renovated or reconstructed their buildings to decrease the rent gap between potentially achievable rental profits and actual incomes. Some estate bloggers advertised Yeonnam-dong as a profitable neighbourhood (Icleshine, 2016-582; Mr_kim05, 2016-619; Yjhjje, 2016-870). They guaranteed that renovations and reconstructions would bring higher rental prices and lower vacancy rates (Harvey, 2001; Herod, 2019). The Yeonnam-dong's small, narrow buildings and streets, were not suitable for big retail chains requiring ample commercial space for big kitchen, many tables and car parks. Thus, the renovations and reconstructions appropriate for small businesses, instead of a large-scale redevelopment like a shopping mall, were the only way to increase investors' rental profits and any old residential properties were transformed into small commercial properties by investors (See Figure 7-1). These new spaces for small businesses were strategically aimed at reinforcing the area as a mecca for trendy tourists hidden in maze-like streets. As speculative investors refurbished small shops to maximise spatial attractiveness despite physical limitations, the new spatialisation was concentrated on an aesthetic setting appealing directly to attracting more tourists strolling along narrow streets.



Figure 7-1. Transformation of Commercial Property in a Yeonnam-dong Residential Street

Another way to increase actual rental profits without expanding a physical size of properties was to convert them to commercial properties. When overall property values increase, the

gap between the prices of residential and commercial spaces widens considerably. The increase in rents and the the conversion to commercial purposes had caused severe displacement of local residents (Amlee74, 2017-600; Dazzling_jun, 2017-864) as a result of attracting new affluent incomers who could afford soaring rentals (i.e. the “post-gentrifiers” discussed in Chapter 6). Furthermore, the worsening residential environment– bright lights, noisy street conversations and overpowering cooking smells from commercial properties at night – abruptly decreased the rental value of residential properties, accelerating the property transformation (PELA04; PELA05, local property agency owners).

Cafés accounted for a large proportion of new commercial properties (C_viewpoint, 2018-203; Suheeryu, 2018-517; Soong_vely, 2018-534; Cutetnwls, 2018-861). In contrast to fancy restaurants that required trained chefs and experienced staff, a café was seen to be an easier business to invest in because a high-performance coffee machine could replace a barista’s skill and produce a standardised quality of coffee with minimum staff (BOA02, marketing manager of café). Small cafés with machines could afford to move into Yeonnam-dong by hiring untrained, low-wage and part-time staff. As escalating competition among small cafés displaced the incomers, such as Café Yisim, from Dongjin Market Street, relatively affluent café owners tried to provide aesthetic interior settings to attract more tourists in competition for trade. For example, beautiful dessert and drink settings for aesthetic tastes – cake art, latte art and Instagrammable menus – far outweighed quality in the new business strategy of Yeonnam-dong’s cafés (BOA02, marketing manager of café). In the 2016-2018 period, refractive spatialisation took place through property transformations and the aesthetic settings of gentrification for the purpose of decreasing the rent gap between potential property values and actual incomes (Baudrillard, 1994; Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Smith, 1996; 2008; Zukin,1998; 2010. Zukin et al, 2009). As discussed in Chapter 6, the online production of highly selective and seductive place-images affected the spatial rearrangement of the neighbourhood.

7.2.2 Aesthetic Design Strategy in a Highly Competitive Market

Investors and landlords believed that aesthetic properties would boost rental profits from small business owners (tenants) by attracting more tourists and the strategic creation of aesthetic impressions spread quickly through Yeonnam-dong. Reconstructions and renovations to create aesthetic settings, with stylish and fancy exteriors and interiors filled

narrow streets (Qubix, 2016-105; C_viewpoint, 2018-456). Business owners created upmarket images of properties to gain higher rental incomes, which were linked to how many tourists could be attracted by physical impressions of these properties (Zukin, 1998; 2010. Zukin et al, 2009). Speculative property agents also encouraged investors and landlords to invest in appealing settings (PELA03, property consultant; Icleshine, 2016-582; Hongdaeooffice, 2016-949). During the spatial transformation, some speculative property agents aggressively persuaded local landlords to sell their old properties to investors for large sums. As the new strategy for higher rental incomes became widespread, property investment rapidly began to focus on aesthetic properties in Yeonnam-dong (Harvey, 2001; Lash & Urry, 1994; Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Smith, 1996; 2008).

When I visit here, I can feel a rapid [spatial] change. There are many alluring buildings with its exotic mood. Café Bonjour is one of them.

(Qubix, Travel blogger, 2016-105)

There were many fascinating stores on narrow streets. Renovated old buildings and a variety of fancy shops in these crowded narrow streets were good to walk without cars. It gave me much fun.

(C_viewpoint, Personal blogger, 2018-456)

This property in Yeontral Park is expected that a renovation would make a profit margin. This is on a [main] road, so it is advisable to open a fancy café.

(Icleshine, Estate agency blog, 2016-582)

Today, I am going to introduce a Yeonnam-dong office. ... This white floor looks glamorous. If you decorate a column of the office with photos and posters, it will be more captivating.

(Hongdaeooffice, Estate agency blog, 2016-949)

As Yeonnam-dong's streets filled with commercial spaces, some small business owners had to locate more than fifteen minutes' walk away from Hongik University station, which required inducement strategies to draw tourists further afield in pursuit of appealing settings and images. These businesses tried to overcome their limitation of relative geographical inaccessibility by developing aesthetic architectural designs. By providing unusual scenes and experiences, the alluring designs aimed to justify tourists' endeavours of having a 15-20 minutes' walk from the station. The post-gentrifiers' businesses at the edge of Yeonnam-dong were concentrated on having 'shareworthy' and sensational designs to offset the

longer distance as well as the expensive rents (PELA03, property consultant). Internet searches for prominent names and addresses online prior to actual visits drew tourists' attention to the staged images of aesthetic designs in these post-gentrified spaces. In the highly competitive market, the potential disadvantage of the tourists' long walk from the station was offset by the staged impression and allure of out-of-the-ordinary experiences promised by the aesthetic design of the post-gentrifiers' spatial and aesthetic rearrangements (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Castells, 2010; Harvey, 1990; Low, 2017; Sin_trust, 2017-226; Sooooong2, 2017-741).

This beautiful Café Deweet is a 10-minute distance from Hongik University station. It is at the edge of Yeontral Park.

(Sin_trust, Personal blogger, 2017-226)

Café Yeonnam-dong 239-20 looked like a painting. This cafe is so amazing. ... When I took photos of myself, I felt as if I was in a beautiful painting. ... In fact, this café is at the edge of Yeonnam-dong and a long distance from the station, so I hesitated to visit here. Yet, it was a good decision to come here because this café is a distinctive and amazing place compared to other cafes. I wanted to stay here longer.

(Sooooong2, Personal blogger, 2017-741)

7.3 Perceived Space: Digital Picturesque in Yeonnam-dong

7.3.1 Yeontral Park: New Crowd Cultures in Urban Green Space

The large-scale development of Yeontral Park was undertaken by the Seoul Metropolitan Government in 2015. This project was neither novel nor innovative, adhering to the emergent global planning trend for transforming obsolete railway infrastructure into urban green space (See Figure 7-2). For instance, High Line in New York, Promenade Plantée in Paris, Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago and Train Track Park in Jerusalem were developed according to the same global urban renewal trend before Seoul. Yeontral Park, in common with these projects, was designed to revitalise declining neighbourhoods and the local economy by creating a new green network linked to narrow streets and small buildings in the neighbourhoods to create new scenery and cultural activities (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016). This newly implanted green space not only rearranged the perception of the working-class neighbourhood, drivers' cafes and Little Chinatown, but also gave residents and tourists an opportunity to be involved in new open space leisure

activities. In particular, it became a spatial norm that trendy tourists could enjoy a variety of different outdoor experiences in this green space – for example, yoga, frisbee, running, sunbathing, reading, busking, picnicking, football and playing with pets (KM02, 30s Landscape architect; KM05, 30s office worker; KM11, 30s education content creator).



Figure 7-2. Yeontral Park (GLFP)

With the growth of interest in post-gentrification spaces and experiences, Yeontral Park became the centre of tourists' attention. Increasingly, trend conformists were more focussed on the new, popular, stylish and glamorous spaces of the post-gentrifiers than cheap but high-quality products, services and unique cultures of artisans and artists. The stylishly designed green spaces among grey old buildings were unfamiliar to tourists, but this sense of the unfamiliarity was perceived as a distinctive coolness as in hip among the dense urban environment of Seoul.

Crowds of tourists who gathered in Yeontral Park performing their desirable activities in public space were realising their vague fantasies of New York's Central Park or the parks and green spaces of European cities. At the beginning of this emergent crowd culture, tourists' desires were closer to unrestricted and emancipated activities than to exclusive and extravagant "showing-off". They enjoyed walking dogs along the green path, chatting with friends, reading books and busking in the park, which were rare activities in the dense urban spaces of South Korea. The green space encouraged tourists to contemplate what activities would bring a new sense of "coolness" and "trendiness" in individual comfort and happiness. (This outdoor culture was socially and culturally differentiated from ordinary commercial activities: shopping, eating and drinking. People in the relaxed green environment were able to have a lazy day free from restricted social relations, behavioural norms and the harsh work ethic usually dictating their lifestyles (Berardi, 2015; Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). In fact, these relaxation activities were something of a guilty pleasure

alongside a dominant Korean work ethic that valorised highly-productive, highly-diligent workers pursuing urban middle class status (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). Yeontral Park provided a new benchmark for emancipated and contented lives in contrast to modern Korean norms formed in rapid industrialisation, but this seemingly organic social change toward individual happiness and the re-use of public space was almost immediately colonised and transformed by the interventions of bloggers.

This is a forest path giving a feeling of liveliness mixing nature and a city.

(Ssyj963, Food blogger, 2018-4)

I could find that some couples and office workers enjoyed their lunch scattering around the sunny Yeonnam-dong park in small groups. They looked very relaxed. If somebody sunbathed on this park, it would put me in a rich European mood.

(Sr3d, Personal blogger, 2018-523)

Since the displacement resulting from the gentrification of Yeonnam-dong, the tourist gaze had been galvanised by the new spatial norms and financial logic that stimulated tourists to follow highly selective tastes in trendy and popular spaces. Yeontral Park played the role of symbolic landmark encouraging unfamiliar, exotic, trendy and enticing activities. In the transition of Yeontral Park to refractive spatialisation, emergent spatial norms in pursuit of emancipated and contented lives were distorted and disrupted by the highly selective activities and place-images commanding the tourist gaze in the viral view of bloggers. Notwithstanding an opportunity for diverse and disparate activities in Yeontral Park, tourists centred on a particular leisure culture, realising their fantasies of stylish and glamorous Western-style green spaces. In particular, the selective tourist gaze dominated spatial practices and economic logic in Yeonnam-dong, prompting business owners to set up Western-style commercial attractions such as American BBQ steakhouses, European beer shops, Italian pasta houses, French patisseries and boutique coffee shops, uprooting Yeonnam-dong from its history (Baudrillard, 1994; Shields, 1989; 2013a). Business owners, especially the post-gentrifiers, recognised tourists' fantasies in Yeontral Park as a financial opportunity to maximise their profits.

Bloggers confined tourists' leisure culture (the tourist gaze) to hybrid activities mixing Western fantasies and post-gentrifiers' commercial spaces. In contrast to Dongjin Market Street where unique and authentic goods and services of artisans and artists had been a strong driver in the re-spatialisation of Yeonnam-dong in the 2010-2015 period, the new Yeontral Park and its unfamiliar green urban scenery led the tourist gaze to their fantasies of

Western exoticism. Bloggers' posts incited tourists to perform highly selective activities resembling Western leisure cultures. This selective, but conformist crowd culture, combined with the new commercial logic, developed new hybrid activities – for example, a picnic on the park with famous American-style steak takeaways, European beers and Korean fried chicken (Low, 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Jjijil, 2016-385; Red2270, 2018-283). As bloggers linked tourists' leisure culture with commercial Western-style eateries and beer shops, the crowd culture was combined with post-gentrifiers' spaces around Yeontral Park in the new economic logic of attention-driven aestheticisation. These spaces and places reinforced tourists' feelings of the desirability of New York and European collective practices in the public green space. In short, individual experiences in Yeontral Park were restricted to the highly selected and situated activities guided by online information which stipulated what experiences trend conformists endorsed in the new urban green space.

As everyone ate the same things, I bought this steak takeaway too. It was a combination of a steak, chips, fried rice and blue soft drink. The majority of food menus was available for a takeaway to enjoy them in the Park. Is this a unique Yeonnam-dong culture? There are fewer interesting attractions and cultures than I expected [in Yeonnam-dong], but I am sure it will become one of the hotspots in Seoul.

(Jjijil, Photography blogger, 2016-385)

When I searched for Yeontral Park on the Internet, there were many photos of the people who bought beer at nearby shops and enjoyed their picnics with the beer.

(Red2270, Personal blogger, 2018-283)

New spatial practices and economic logics reinforced the relationship between the crowd culture of trendy tourists and aesthetic spaces of the post-gentrifiers. As Yeontral Park evoked fantasies of Western-style restaurants and food, the post-gentrifiers' spatialisation of the aesthetic style (e.g. boutiques or stylish-themed restaurants) took place around the Park. The post-gentrifiers concentrated on attracting more attention from tourists by creating aesthetically staged settings in their spaces. Attractive impressions were a crucial factor in retaining distinction and therefore for generating secure incomes to meet skyrocketing rents. In order to attract more followers online, bloggers competitively introduced the inspiring, viral and exaggerated settings to tourists (Rladudrhkd31, 2016-918; Wkwmd81, 2017-892; Unique1028, 2018-1). Bloggers' circulation centred on captivating the tourist gaze (discussed below as the "digital picturesque"). These attractive online images were associated with the crowd culture of Yeontral Park. The post-gentrifiers encouraged bloggers to post their aesthetic settings, which were major sources of information about the highly

selected spaces perceived to be worth a visit. The hybrid mixing of crowd activities with the aesthetic businesses around Yeontral Park created inflated expectations of the built environment where aesthetic spatial settings and online images could generate large incomes from tourists.

When I walked along the [Yeontral Park] forest path, there was a small and adorable café at the end of Yeonnam-dong. Somehow, I wanted to look for this sort of [aesthetic] café.

(Rladudrhkd31, Personal blogger, 2016-918)

Nowadays, I prefer going to Yeonnam-dong rather than Hongdae. This reason is very clear. It is full of fancy cafes as well as good restaurants around Yeontral Park.

(Wkwmd81, Travel blogger, 2017-892)

Several years ago, I found many Yeonnam-dong-style shops on the main streets, but now that kind of shop [the young incomer's spaces] remain in the only narrow streets.

(Unique1028, Travel blogger, 2018-1)

7.3.2 Digital Picturesque and Spatial Settings

In the late 18th and early 19th century England, the picturesque had influenced an aesthetic style of architecture and landscape. The term 'picturesque' denoted beautiful scenery evoking landscape painting like the 17th-century French artists Claude Lorrain or Gaspard Poussin (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013). Gilpin (1768), an English artist, originally defined the idea of the picturesque as "that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture", and informed leisure travellers of the picturesque beauty over natural scenery in his book, *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (Gilpin, 1800). The picturesque was concentrated on an aesthetic quality existing between the beautiful and the sublime (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2013). For example, medieval ruins in the natural landscape, such as Tintern Abbey or Whitby Abbey, were recognised as the of picturesque scenery. The experiences of strolling in and appreciating picturesque spaces were intended to arouse pleasure from an illusion, as if walking into a beautiful painting. With this trend in taste and appreciation of the picturesque in English culture, the aesthetic style of the picturesque landscape was reflected in the design of English gardens and parks. In other words, the picturesque style of art was

transposed over time into desirable landscape design in late 18th and early 19th century English spatialisation.

In 21st-century South Korea, a younger generation who have been exposed to ubiquitous Internet culture tends to prefer producing aesthetic digital images of themselves over actual practices (See 5.3 Spatialisation of Online Culture in South Korea). The digital images disseminated and circulating through blogs and social media stand for another personal identity in online space in South Korea (Berardi, 2015; Kim, J. et al., 2008; Kim, Y., 2008; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Lee et al., 2006; Son, 2011). In contrast with social status in real society – dependent on socially and individually defined values, roles, positions, power and achievements - the online persona is formed in relation to staged sign value (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Berardi, 2015; Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019). An individual impression is formed from material objects –houses, cars, suits and watches, digital devices, business cards, professional books and university degree certificates – that signify an exclusive taste, social networks, influence, intelligence, educational background, wealth and occupation (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). However, in pursuit of social status and sign values, ordinary millennials in their twenties and thirties require large amounts of money, effort and time, as well as an exclusive social position, in their real lives. In reaction to the barriers to ostentatious actual signs, they choose the alternative value system where staged and exaggerated online images and self-representations mask the more mundane and real identities of everyday life (Berardi, 2015). For the millennials, online space becomes a social theatre where staged individual impressions appear and appeal to others. This is related to Goffman’s idea (1990) that people tend to control their staged impressions when reacting to different social audiences depending on their social roles, positions and jobs – “impression management”, or the management of spoiled identity. The alternative value system denotes that the individual’s aesthetically staged images widen the gap between real existence and online persona, which is in contrast to refractive spatialisation aiming to shrink the online-reality gap in space. The French psychoanalysis and psychiatrist, Jacques Lacan (2004), said, ‘Man’s desire is the desire of the Other’. In contemporary capitalist society, people’s desire stems from the materials or social positions that other people usually desire to possess or become. People not only follow others’ desires, but also desire to obtain a visible presence gazed upon with desire by others (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Lacan, 2004; Urry and Larsen, 2011). In this way, Korean millennials are prone to the visible exaggeration of their identities by staging their online impressions to attract the gaze of others.

The 'digital picturesque' is defined as an aesthetically-staged scene or portrait evoking an impression of an agreeably shared image – the most “liked” picture – through online platforms such as blogs and social media platforms. These digital picturesque images usher Korean millennials into an alternative value system according to the metrics of views, likes, shares and comments. In the everyday lives of millennials, anonymous individuals tend to be judged by their online impressions, which adhere to the alternative value system symbolised by the Instagrammable photo opportunity (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). Thus, they tend to flaunt their individual online images to highlight relative wealth, social status and extraordinary lives, which satisfies their desires for belonging to mainstream social groups (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). This is affirmed as a result of obtaining high numbers of likes and followers online and reducing anxieties related to social alienation and the deprivations of competitive reality. The demarcation between real identity and online persona had faded from millennials' daily routines. The digital picturesque images that transcend physical limits and social boundaries of real lives help Korean millennials to deviate from the traditional value system, but by exaggerating their online impressions they simultaneously delude themselves into thinking that their real lives are mediated by their virtual galleries visualising the essence of exclusive, remarkable and aesthetic experiences captured within extraordinary spatial settings. The digital picturesque carries out an ambivalent function that not only dismisses unsatisfactory parts of individual impressions, but also instils a desire for pleasurable and shareworthy experiences as an ingredient in the manufacture of future images. As the interaction between real space and the Internet has been reinforced for the purpose of fulfilling individual desires, practical experiences become increasingly oriented toward the production of picturesque images online.

Digital Picturesque in Yeonnam-dong

In gentrifying Yeonnam-dong, commercial spaces run by the post-gentrifiers became a tourist hotspot for producing staged images and sharing them online. When individual desires for establishing exaggerated online personae became a millennial culture, these spaces provided aesthetic settings in pursuit of the digital picturesque images that the younger tourists craved. An aesthetic value of commercial spaces differentiated millennials' online identities from their actual lives, that is, the gap between online identities and reality. In other words, the aesthetic space, spatialised in a refractive way, served as the spatial interface between experiences of unusual cultures in real space and the production of digital

picturesque images in online space. The online styles attached to, and valorised by, individual desires for staged impressions become a strong driver for the spatialisation of aesthetic practices (that is, refractive spatialisation as defined in this thesis). In regard to this new spatialisation, it could be said that Instagrammable space – spaces that maximise visual sign values in the individual pursuit of wealth and social status – captured by digital cameras and shared through Instagram according to the alternative online value system such as likes, shares, comments and followers, was developed from digital picturesque styles. In the aesthetic spaces mediated by the digital picturesque, the younger tourists tried to create Instagrammable images that would attract the attention of others, showing off extraordinary, cool and trendy experiences, in order to exaggerate their individual impressions online. The 18th and 19th century designs of picturesque English gardens and parks drew upon the rules of composition in landscape painting in maximising aesthetic impressions. The aesthetic settings of 21st century Yeonnam-dong are arranged by the online value system of individual impressions through digital photography and Instagrammable spaces with trendy fashions and modelling poses, beautiful backgrounds, image filters (like types of painting styles), hashtags and geotags to gain more “Likes”.

Viewing digital images became a very important ritual for the younger tourists to capture that moment worthy of emulation in the aesthetic spaces before their actual experiences of eating and drinking. The photographic results of the ritual were a visible barometer of individual achievements read through leisure practices. It is in direct contrast to Korean social norms that have required steady productive members of society to contribute to economic growth, individual representations of being universally diligent and industrious, accentuating the Korean work ethic, are crucial for Korea’s relationship-based society in which people are expected to adhere to a variety of goals in response to different relationships with their families, schools, works, local communities or governments (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). But this acceptance of impression management in relation to the Korean work ethic is being extended to South Korea’s new urban leisure and sightseeing ethic. Inspiring and unique experiences of leisure were perceived as a benchmark for successful achievements that only industrious and productive people could realise. Yeonnam-dong gave the younger tourists, who realistically had limited career prospects or opportunities to ascend the social ladder, more scope for differentiation and distinction in their leisure activities and for creating favourable online impressions. Online photos of Instagrammable settings, including boutique furniture and extravagant food, visualising their distinctive images in a digital picturesque background, were used to remind themselves how industrious and enthusiastic they were (Unique1028, 2018-1; Sung2gamja, 2018-206). These images were intended to convey a particular lifestyle, sense of status and social

distinction through the visual evidence of “living”, as opposed to the display of ostentatious materials signifying social success. Ironically, the online images produced by Korean millennials indicated their fear of being gazed upon as socially useless and unproductive, or associated with laziness, incompetence and inadequacy.

I like taking photos whatever it is attractions or nice restaurants or popular places. ... I always take photos of beautiful places, decorations and decorated meals. When I looked at the photos, I felt delighted and realised that I lived hard. ... When I was tired, I was cheered by the photos. It encouraged me to decide that I would work harder to go to other nice places!

(Unique1028, Travel blogger, 2018-1)

The photos capturing my wonderful days remind me of the sense of the moment like magic, making me feel bright and cheerful. ... Today, after hanging out in Hongdae, I moved to Yeonnam-dong and visited a beautiful café and a fancy bar. ... These places have photogenic spots for the most beautiful selfies or the best food photos. People enjoy taking photos recently.

(Sung2gamja, Restaurant review and shopping blogger, 2018-206)

Aesthetic settings - ‘Instagrammable places’ - in Yeonnam-dong contributed to the production of staged images through digital photography influenced by the digital picturesque. Digital picturesque photos captured in aesthetic spaces and shared in online space enabled the younger tourists to convey dramatically staged impressions highlighting extraordinary, distinctive and worthwhile leisure activities. The younger tourists gained a satisfaction from the images, based on the belief that energetic and productive people could have exclusive or extraordinary leisure experiences, which were ultimately the visible evidence of a successful pathway to higher social status in South Korea’s urban middle class (Lett, 1998). They believed that the harder at work they were, the more satisfying images they could make. Thus, the digital picturesque photos in aesthetic spaces of Yeonnam-dong signified a remarkable achievement for a worthwhile member of society in regard to the diligent and productive daily routine (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Lett, 1998). Unique1028 (2018-1), travel blogger, described her photos as a necessary source for revitalising her everyday life and emphasised that the photos strongly motivated her to work harder in affording greater opportunities for delightful experiences in unusual places. The aesthetic space was a theatre to stage socially worthwhile impressions of tourists’ leisure time through digital photography, so tourists demanded digital picturesque photos from Yeonnam-dong’s aesthetic spaces. The staged photos helped to offset the increasing

anxiety of the younger generation that they might be alienated from a particular group, which would negatively affect their sense of self-worth. According to EBS Documentary (2015) and Ko (2020a; 2020b), the fear of alienation drives the social behaviour of the younger generation to make their appearances more attractive by spending on fashion and beauty. This accentuates and visualises themselves as a group, in the belief that distinctive images help them to regain their confidence and self-worth (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; EBS Documentary, 2015; Goffman, 1990; Ko, 2020a; 2020b; Lett, 1998). The younger tourists in Yeonnam-dong were attempting to justify their social status, roles and importance through providing visible signs of individual experiences from Yeonnam-dong's aesthetic spaces.

The value system of commercial spaces was converted from functional quality (objective cost-effectiveness) into aesthetic signs (subjective desire-satisfaction) in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017). The new trend in Yeonnam-dong's consumer culture indicated the burgeoning demands that meant the younger tourists were willing to pay more for aesthetically staged settings and images rather than high-quality goods and services (Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; Zukin, 1998; 2010. Zukin et al, 2009). The increasing importance of the aesthetic value in real space was related to the demands of impression management, oriented toward an imagined worthwhile life to be justified and legitimised by the gaze (and likes) of others. Ultimately, the aesthetic spaces of Yeonnam-dong were evaluated in terms of representations of desired and ideal egos photographed in staged backgrounds (See Figure 7-3), in a similar way to how high-end fashion brands – Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Prada and Burberry – are valorised by the sign value that improves social status of its possessors, rather than the material value of function and technology (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Lash & Urry, 1994). The new spatial ethic and ritual photography of Yeonnam-dong developed these photo-perfect spaces to satisfy the sign value in an attention-driven and symbolic economy. The aesthetic photography conveying distinctive images, which could be gazed upon by others, was bound up with the valorisation of symbols and signs (sign value) in aesthetic spaces, rather than the value of goods and services as formerly (use and exchange value).



Figure 7-3. Aesthetic Signs of Unique Experiences from Diverse Local Sesame Oils in Café

Three Types of Spatial Settings for the Digital Picturesque

The aesthetic settings, oriented to the digital picturesque, were the spatialisation of subjectively-deciphered Yeonnam-dong combined with the Korean work ethic and consumer culture, influenced by the relationship-based nature of Korean society and peer pressure. The focus on aesthetics dictated that commercial spaces in Yeonnam-dong should be transformed into photo-perfect Instagrammable spaces to attract more tourists obsessed with aesthetic and shareworthy images. This not only sustained a narrative that an individual work ethic deserved to gain extraordinary leisure experiences strengthened by online displays of distinction, but also offset the social media peer pressure that forced the younger generation to create exaggerated, sensational and viral images in order to be 'liked' among and belong to peer groups (Heo, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y., 2019; Lett, 1998). The aesthetic spatialisation of Instagrammable spaces involved a digital picturesque style that inspired millennials by the shareworthy design of spaces tailored and curated to online influencers' tastes (as if English gardens and parks had been designed to realise the sense of fashionable picturesque paintings like Whitby Abbey in the late 18th and early 19th). The *Instagrammable images were refracted when passed through millennials' tastes in online space*. The images were transformed into more sensational and shareworthy forms drawing more clicks, views, likes and comments on online platforms. This refractive spatialisation mediated by the digital picturesque brought about three types of spatial settings in

Yeonnam-dong's spaces: alluring (museum and exhibition); exclusive (theatre and performance); and deceptive (studio and photography).

The Alluring Setting

The "alluring setting", like a museum, was intended to attract the urban tourists' attention to the aesthetic objects within the spaces prior to tourists' pre-planned experiences. Tourists took a leisurely stroll along narrow streets to discover stylish and fashionable sites which would give them cultural inspiration. Shop windows played a role in showing objects of glamorous, artistic, fashionable and extraordinary styles to the trendy strollers. The shop windows in Yeonnam-dong were converted from transparent walls protecting against strong winds and dust into exhibitions of captivating indoor objects and activities - bigger, brighter, decorated and staged frames to be gazed upon by street spectators (Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Schivelbusch, 2014). The gaze of strollers through the windows satisfied indoor tourists who desired that their experiences to be gazed upon by others (Lacan, 2004). It transferred distinctive and selective experiences from real space to online space through images of the windows. The shop window functioned as a symbolic passage in exchange for sign values that tourists yearned to display and stare at. Hence, small business owners set up beautiful displays of indoor goods, decorations, lighting to provide customers with extraordinary experiences, which became Instagrammable spots inspiring strollers to capture aesthetic and shareworthy images. The staged display of aesthetic scenes exposed through the windows was tailored and curated to strollers' tastes, oriented explicitly toward Instagrammable photos (Yeanzz, 2018-416). The shop window as an alluring setting became a symbolic exhibition to convey the sense and sign value of the aesthetic spaces refracted by online tastes.

I wanted to take more beautiful photos of myself [in front of the bakery's window], but I couldn't because of crowds of tourists at its entrance. ... Uniquely, this bakery set up a showcase with its name tags on bread, which allowed [outside] tourists to see. The window looked as if a polaroid photo was written by a magic marker pen. ... The interior of the bakery was peacefully decorated with an Instagrammable taste.

(Yeanzz, Travel, fashion, and café blogger, 2018-416)

The Exclusive Setting

The "exclusive setting" created a contemporary form of staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973; 2011), giving inspired performances to realise tourists' fantasies of exclusive and

extravagant experiences in a privileged space. This setting provided a staged spectacle performed by a celebrated chef or pâtissier in their open kitchen. Certificates of culinary schools, photos of TV programmes, and celebrity signatures were hung on the walls to intentionally strengthen distinctive impressions of superior goods and fine services (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Bonbon_mikan, 2018-5). Foreign chefs, especially from Italy, or famous Korean chefs conducted exaggerated cooking performances at their open kitchens, easily watched by customers, to build absolute trust in cooking (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Slo_olo, 2017-786). In an exterior setting, the small size of shop sign boards, almost hidden at the edge of their facades, with legibility in foreign languages – such as English, French, Italian and Japanese – represented symbols of exclusive access to the spaces (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; MacCannell, 1973; 2011). This staged authenticity of the open cooking shows was enacted through the interaction between chefs (performers) and customers (audiences), visibly catering to tourists' extravagant but vague tastes for the highest quality food and services (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In other words, the customer gaze upon the staged authenticity (performances) and material symbols (objects) of superior goods and services developed a hyper-realistic simulation of the fantasy of exclusive experiences and privileged status, allowing the viewers to imagine they were sharing the experience of a wealthy or powerful celebrity. Hence, this simulation of an exclusive setting as an Instagrammable extravagance, became a target to be photographed by tourists in order to perpetuate their visualised desires.

Austin Kang, who is a famous and handsome participant in Master Chef Korea series 4, opens his restaurant, Eleve.

(Slo_olo, Personal blogger, 2017-484)

Chef Her Jin-woo appeared throughout this open kitchen. He trained as a chef in Sous Marin and Le Comptoir [which are the most famous French restaurants in Itaewon].

(Slo_olo, Personal blogger, 2017-786)

There were many decorations in the restaurant. In particular, a certificate of Le Cordon Bleu [which is the international chain of French culinary schools consisting of 35 institutes in 20 countries] attracted my attention. The owner studied at the school.

(Bonbon_mikan, Travel blogger, 2018-5)

The Deceptive Setting

The “deceptive setting” provided a staged photo studio to capture aesthetically exaggerated images for the purpose of producing digital picturesque photos. This setting, especially in cafés, enabled tourists to create shareworthy and glamorous impressions of individuals (Bblabla, 2016-865). This value of the staged images displaced the traditional ethic that good cafés should give good coffee, tasty desserts and comfortable furniture creating a good vibe. Yeonnam-dong’s cafés were transformed into photo-perfect spaces in which many young tourists derived their self-worth from the Instagrammable photos. Spatial metaphors of large mirrors, decorative lighting, neon signs, terraces and rooftops functioned as the studio for aestheticising and accentuating tourists’ attractive appearances and shining moments, as an outstanding achievement away from their mundane routines (Shield, 1989). In particular, the younger tourists’ selfies (self-portrait digital image captured on smartphones) emerged as the cultural behaviour that would maximise the staged beauty of their individual appearance in pursuit of sign value and self-worth (Baudrillard, 2017a; Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Lacan, 2004; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In other words, the interaction between the self-staged images and the Instagrammable backgrounds was developed by the tourists seeking approval and admiration from anonymous peer groups in online space. Hence, a large mirror in cafés and restaurants was an important tool in tourists’ staging of beautiful selfies in an arranged background (Parisunset, 2018-61). Accent or decorative lighting provided a more dramatic “photo shoot”, and a neon sign could create a stylish vibe to underline extraordinary experiences (Devildiet, 2016-360). Or a terrace and rooftop with romantic lighting and urban scenery could inspire tourists with an emancipated, refreshing and fantastic feeling away from their daily lives (Gk4216, 2017-866). These material objects in the deceptive settings contributed to the self-staged images where tourists’ intention (real space) and other’s attention (online space) converged, oriented to the digital picturesque (new cognition) and refractive spatialisation.

This place was worth my photos. It looked as if I hired a photo studio.

(Bblabla, Personal blogger, 2016-865)

This large mirror was easy to take good selfies ... This beautiful place inspired me to take more photos. I wish my house could be decorated like here.

(Parisunset, Personal blogger, 2018-61)

I was completely bewitched by this unique pink neon sign, so I went to this restaurant because of this.

(Devildiet, Diet blogger, 2016-360)

I found this hidden and beautiful café in Yeonnam-dong. This café is famous for its terrace. The interior is also so beautiful. ... This café encouraged me to take photos. ... This café and terrace are easy to get good photos.

(Gk4216, Personal blogger, 2017-866)

In the gentrification of Yeonnam-dong, particular spatial changes oriented toward the digital picturesque and refractive spatialisation, had been detected and deciphered by bloggers. The spatial practices and cultures in the aesthetic spaces, arranged later by the post-gentrifiers, were subsequently interpreted in an online language and refracted into bloggers' texts and images involving visible symbols and signs in the codification of a new spatial ethic and value that could inspire the younger tourists. The blog posts influenced the refractive interpretation and codification of the spatial changes, which were selectively collected and rearranged by the urban tourists' strolls and leisurely activities. The new blog grammar linked with the new spatial ethic and value, led bloggers to transform the spatial changes into online photos and descriptions and to curate them according to their tastes.

Conversely, the blog grammar was adapted to highly selective information relating to spatial changes, developing new design codes for Yeonnam-dong's spaces adhering to the dominant online ethic, values and preferences. In other words, the online ethics and values widely shared by global Internet users usurped the social and spatial ethics and values serving as local cultures and dominated refractive spatialisation in Yeonnam-dong. The online preferences reflected globalised trends and universalised tastes that inspired international millennials with Instagrammable experiences, and side-lined the local context and collective history of spaces. These design codes aimed to emulate the trendy interiors and exteriors popularised by the younger tourists through "likes" on online platforms. This specific process of refractive spatialisation was driven by the digital picturesque that functioned as Yeonnam-dong's design codes reinforcing the online preferences, ethics, values and tastes in actual space. The digital picturesque and refractive spatialisation in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong were distinctive features of 21st-century urban spaces mediated by the online references, in sharp contrast to the 20th-century post-modernist spaces of theme parks and malls emulated from place-images of international attractions and heritages – Eiffel Tower (Paris, France), Pyramid (Giza, Egypt), Acropolis (Athens, Greece), Grand Canal (Venice, Italy) and Serengeti Safari (Tanzania) in a modern sightseeing ethic (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977; Shields, 1989; Low, 2017).

This refractive spatialisation visualised “three types of spatial settings” (See Table 7-1).

Table 7-1. Three Types of Spatial Settings for Digital Picturesque

Types	Functions	Roles of tourists	Purposes of Spaces	Strategic Objects (Spatial Metaphors)
Alluring Setting	Museum	Outsiders Strollers Spectators	Exhibition and advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large shop windows • Aesthetic displays of goods
Exclusive Setting	Theatre	Guests Audiences	Performance and appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famous or foreign chefs • Open kitchens • Certificates from culinary schools • Photos and signatures of celebrities • Hidden shop sign boards written in foreign languages
Deceptive Setting	Studio	Models Photographers	Pose and photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large mirror • Lighting and neon sign • Romantic flowers and decorations • Terraces and rooftops

7.4 Imagined Space: Refractive Spatialisation and the Online-Reality Gap

7.4.1 Online Code: Hyper-realistic Representations and Blog Grammar

Bloggers, who were also the urban strollers in real space, refracted conceptions of spatial changes within their tastes, developing a blog grammar to interpret gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. This refractive interpretation accentuated highly selective place-images for aesthetic, unique, exclusive, popular, romantic and exotic materials, adhering to the online ethic to attract more likes and shares. As selective place-images came to dominate spatial practices in Yeonnam-dong, the urban stroller (flaneur) consuming the sights, sounds and smells of the city was transformed into an attention seeker (Castigliano, 2017; Shields, 1989; 2013a). They sought out spaces of expectation, discovered from web searches, in pursuit of more inspiring images of their experiences in real space, in order to share them on blogs and social media. Online images overtook real experiences in planning travel and visits. The refractive interpretations of urban strollers widened the gap between spatial practices in real space and the highly selective place-images shared online. Hence, small business owners in Yeonnam-dong started to spatialise the online ethic, value and tastes in order to monetise

the place-images in the three types of spatial settings discussed above: alluring, exclusive and deceptive. Shrinking the online-reality gap brought about more tourist footfall (attention-seekers) and therefore more profits for their businesses.

The sensational place-images of Yeonnam-dong's spaces collected through the urban strollers' gaze and taste were refined to remove perceived imperfections, like the working-class and Chinese migrant neighbourhoods, which demonstrated the "online-reality gap" and undercut the tourists' inspiration and fantasies. These highly selective and refined place-images played were the "simulacra" of Yeonnam-dong. According to Baudrillard (1994), the simulacrum is an exaggerated imitation of a selective reality that functions as a hyper-reality that is believed more than the whole reality with its origins and contexts. The hyper-realistic place-images - the simulacra - rapidly distorted tourists' mental imagery of Yeonnam-dong. Therefore, the younger tourists who were over-dependent on online information for "success" in finding leisure activities were considerably influenced by the simulacra.

The simulacra of Yeonnam-dong mediated by online tastes were implanted in the tourists' minds, so they were ideally situated for touring Yeonnam-dong. The highly selective place-images became the overwhelming representation of Yeonnam-dong. In this refractive reflection between reality and online, the simulacra, created a new sightseeing ethic that of collecting shareworthy photos (visible evidence of their worthwhile leisure pursuits) of popular and Instagrammable spaces (Benzi003, 2016-4; Dldmswl415, 2016-163; Recipeofsong, 2016-333). The aesthetic and inspirational photos were symbols of successful tours consolidating visible sign-values for tourists. The younger tourists tended to seek inspirational values in pursuit of emotional satisfaction rather than valuing cost-effectiveness as the earlier bloggers had done. Symbolic values in relation to social status became more important for impression management than actual experiences in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. The tours not only pursued hyper-realistic place-images, but were also transformed into hyper-realistic behaviour, consuming staged scenery and images, to be posted on blogs and social media (rather than real goods and services).

Our tour began at the hotspots of Yeonnam-dong. There were many good restaurants that I found on the Internet.

(Benzi003, Personal blogger, 2016-4)

Yeonnam-dong had many famous places shared on Instagram. We chose a restaurant and café from the famous places.

(Dldmswl415, Travel blogger, 2016-163)

Yeonnam-dong is a cool neighbourhood in Seoul. ... My favourite shops, for which I searched online, gathered in Yeonnam-dong. It made me pleased.

(Recipeofsong, Personal blogger, 2016-333)

With the relationship between attention-driven profits, tourists' tastes and selective place-images, the online-based code served to spatialise the hyper-realistic place-images. This code aimed to actualise linguistic imagery of blog posts adhering to online tastes – the Instagrammable and digital picturesque style. The three types of spatial setting of the digital picturesque are emblematic of this code (See Table 7-1). It was not conceptualised as a spatial strategy, but small business owners realised that the aesthetic settings shared in blogs were important to improving their incomes. Refractive spatialisation within this code, as an aesthetically exaggerated and staged space oriented toward hyper-realistic place-images, served as a visual reminder of the simulacra in Yeonnam-dong developed from online imagery (Bora_2010, 2018-878). Yet, this online code and refractive spatialisation in gentrifying and commercialising streets ruined the distinctive and unique place-images of the incomers in Dongjin Market Street (Sosoifree, 2016-524; see Chapter 5). It improved spatial legibility of online-based place-images reinforced by views, likes, shares and followers on online platforms as a new spatial formation of symbolic values (Lynch, 1960).

I visited Yeonnam-dong, known as the coolest neighbourhood in Seoul. I don't like narrow streets, but many well-known restaurants and beautiful cafés brought me to Yeonnam-dong.

(Bora_2010, Travel blogger, 2018-878)

Yeonnam-dong becomes one of the hippest neighbourhoods, but too many people's visits cause a rapid change. It eliminates the unique characteristic of this street [Dongjin Market].

(Sosoifree, Personal blogger, 2016-524)

Affective consumption by younger tourists compensated for their frustration and dissatisfaction with their social status and individual achievements, while at the same time, it spatialised the hyper-realistic place-images into Yeonnam-dong. Their emotional consumption in real space functioned as an alternative value system and valorised by extraordinary and shareworthy impressions and obscuring their identity and reality in relation to mundane jobs, tiny houses, hectic lives and tight budgets (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 2017a; Goffman, 1990). Their blog posts highlighted spatial symbols and signs signifying distinction, attractiveness, emancipation and influence in spending their leisure time in worthwhile activities. Millennials' escapism to avoid their unpleasant reality was a powerful

driver of the hyper-realistic place-images, arranging the online codes that reflected their desires and fantasies through blog imagery, and contributing to refractive spatialisation.

Korean millennials have suffered from intense stress and anxiety in competitive society (Berardi, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Markovits, 2019; Kim, Y-S., 2019). They are afraid of deviating from the socially standardised Korean way of life in pursuit of a high-income job, financial stability, a happy marriage, and the best schooling for their children (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). According to EBS Documentary (2015) and Ko (2020a; 2020b), the younger generation who suffer from low self-esteem tend to increase their spending on desirable objects such as fashion accessories as self-medication against sadness, loneliness and emptiness by creating attractive and distinctive appearances. Emotional consumption of the hyper-realistic place-images helped to decrease the gap between low self-esteem and ideal appearance. ‘Likes’ of aesthetically staged photos on online platforms restored a sense of self in the alternative value system among millennials.

In Table 7-2 below, the online code of hyper-realistic place-images is categorised according to blog keywords signifying tourists’ desires and fantasies in pursuit of their ideal appearances – distinction, attractiveness, emancipation and influence – in the emotional consumption of Yeonnam-dong’s spaces.

Table 7-2. Online Code of Hyper-realistic Place-images

Tourist’s Ideal Impressions (Category)	Hyper-realistic Place-images	Blog Keywords (Online Representations)
Distinctiveness	Aesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautiful café tour • Beautiful cafés, restaurants, shops, buildings and neighbourhood • Beautiful food, drinks and desserts • Adorable goods and decorations • Appealing objects to be looked at
	Unique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique and distinctive interiors • Extraordinary places • Unique sense of Yeonnam-dong
	Exclusive and Extravagant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxurious and graceful places • Antique furniture and decorations • Cherished places • Delicate interiors • Excellent looks • More special than Hongdae
Attractiveness	Alluring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spaces arousing curiosity • Many spectacles and interesting things • Cooking performances

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good places for seeing, doing, and enjoying • Good places for strolling • Feeling of galleries • Impressive exteriors • Pleasant to look at with a good atmosphere
	Selective and Situated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction to be targeted • Places making me happy • Satisfying places that I want to own • Suitable places for women in 20s
	Romantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best romantic date route • Romantic mood • Good places for couples with good moods
Emancipation	Exotic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scandinavian style furniture and design • Sense of French streets • Feeling of travels to Europe • Exotic mood • Sense of Japan
	Fictional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mood in a film or fairy tale • Unrealistic mood • Dreamlike mood
Influence	Instagrammable and Photogenic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular places worth Instagram • Places introduced by blogs • The sense of Instagram • Popular places on social media • Goods, food, and drinks for social media • Instagrammable theme • Beautiful places for photographs • Photo-perfect places • Best photos in my life • Best places for selfies • Mirror selfie • Photo studio-like places • Best photo spots • Photos in a good atmosphere
	Hip and Popular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stylish places • Hot neighbourhood and places • Hip places • Well-known places • Packed crowd • Modern and stylish interiors and exteriors

Distinctiveness

The distinctions in tourist's' ideal impressions set out in of Table 7-2 reflect a desire to be distanced from ordinary and mundane daily routines. Aesthetic and glamorous spaces –

beautiful cafés, unique interiors and antique furniture – were consumed to emulate others in superior positions. This code, oriented toward aesthetic, unique, exclusive and extravagant place-images, highlighted excellent impressions of leisure activities. The blog keywords in relation to beautiful, unique, extraordinary, luxurious and excellent spaces and settings signified distinctive and extraordinary experiences. In other words, these hyper-realistic place-images of individual distinction were accumulated and accentuated by tourists' desire to convey ideal and distinctive impressions. The younger tourists made a temporary but strong distinction to valorise their exceptional leisure experiences, transforming Yeonnam-dong into spaces for extraordinary practices. Tourist practices characterised Yeonnam-dong's distinctive extraordinariness instead of residents' daily routines. Night-time and weekends in the neighbourhood rather than daytime and weekdays were highlighted by tourists. Extraordinary and temporary distinction displaced ordinary and daily routines. Consequently, the distinctions made in the online code were developed to emulate the hyper-realistic place-images that had usually been created by exclusive others as a result of transferring it to real spaces.

Attractiveness

According to Berardi (2015), Heo (2015), Kim et al. (2018); Kim, Y-S. (2019) and Lett (1998), South Korea's younger generation, who were afraid of deviating from the socially standardised lives and identifications, devoted themselves to more attractive appearances. "Attractiveness" (outlined in Table 7-2) was developed to increase their visible appeal by consuming alluring, selective, situated and romantic spaces and settings in their leisure activities. The blog keywords relating to attractiveness were reinforced by their emotional spending derived from the social fear and anxiety. They pursued more captivating spectacles through which to stage their attractive images to draw others' attention and approval (Goffman, 1990; Lacan, 2004). This attractiveness in spatial practices was to alleviate their fear and anxiety for social impressions to be liked and accepted by others (Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990; Lacan, 2004). Good places, vibes and cooking performances to be 'liked' and gazed upon were highlighted with blog keywords, producing alluring, selective, situated and romantic place-images (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). In contrast to the function of the distinctiveness code, the attractiveness code enticed tourists to consume attractive place-images to be gazed upon and accepted by others. Lacan (2014) claims that man's desire is satisfied by the desire of the other. When an individual's desire is recognised and desired by others, it valorises and activates the desire as a result of the

gaze. Therefore, the attractiveness online code became a spatial ethic for being desired by others, as well as a business strategy.

Emancipation

The younger tourists developed the emancipation code (see Table 7-2) from the escapism that leisure activities provided, helping them to avoid (or manage), albeit temporarily, their fear and anxiety. They sought an unfamiliar sense of emancipated unreality away from their mundane routines. The exotic and fictional place-images effectively emulated tourists' fantasies of novels, movies and games. Thus, the blog keywords accentuated a sense of foreign countries, films and fairy stories. The emancipated unreality – Scandinavian styles, French streets, dreamlike vibes, cinematic decorations and fairy-tale-like cafés – was exaggeratedly visualised as spatial settings, producing exotic and fictional place-images. This emancipation code was centred on totally imaginary representations, whereas the distinctiveness and attractiveness codes created ideal impressions of real places. Tourists pursued perfect settings to temporarily avoid and forget their real lives, and engaged in their own fantasies by experiencing fairy-tale-like book cafés or cinematic pub vibes. Online-based tastes, refracted through emancipated unreality and escapism, diverged from real spaces and intensified hyper-realistic and Instagrammable spaces. The gap between online and reality in Yeonnam-dong widened due to the growing demand for the emancipation online code, while at the same time, the hyper-realistic spaces were spatialised in a refractive way to reduce the online-reality gap in pursuit of profit maximisation.

Influence

Whilst the younger tourists' social fear was temporarily overcome by their emotional spending on hyper-realistic place-images, they wanted to extend their influence on others by valorising staged images (Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990, Lacan, 2004). The influence code (see Table 7-2) had the purpose of creating a visible impact on others' attention and tastes. They devoted themselves to the pursuit of Instagrammable, photogenic, hip and popular place-images inspiring other tourists to conform to the influence code (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). The blog keywords – popular places shared on social media, photo-perfect places, best places for selfies, hip places and tourist hotspots, etc. – signified shareworthy and inspiring spaces, Instagrammable spaces. The tourists intended to create influential impressions and clarify their cultural position as tastemakers or hipsters as well as flaneurs (Castigliano, 2017; Heo, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Lett, 1998;

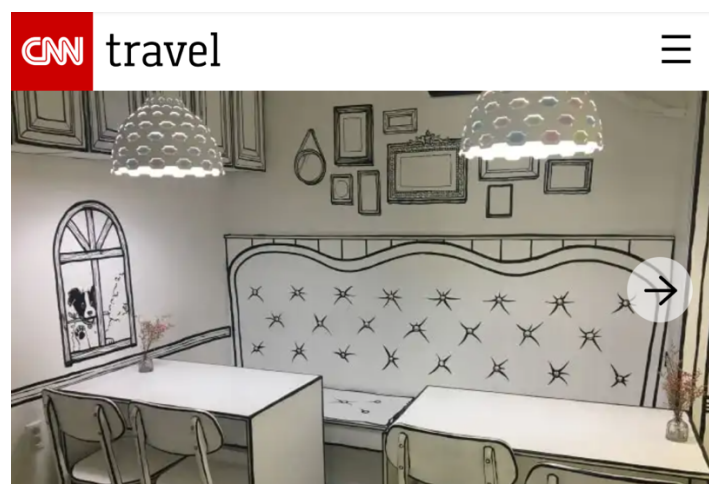
Shields, 1989; 2013a). Their online status was enhanced by creating influential impressions. In the online-reality gap, this code contributed to refractive spatialisation oriented to online value and taste for the purpose of visualising hyper-realistic spectacles.

When the online-reality gap opened up, tourists were obsessed with the hyper-realistic spectacles developed from the online code and spatialised in real space. Spatial practices in Yeonnam-dong were dominated by online representations and tastes, which were perceived as a hybrid spatial ethic and business strategy in the interconnection between online and reality. The following section examines how the online-reality gap and refractive spatialisation worked through tourists' tactical gazes and walks influenced by the online code: the aesthetic tourism.

7.4.2 Aesthetic Tourism: Tactical Gazing and Walking in the Online-Reality Gap

In contrast to land uses, functions and boundaries formed by state laws, plans and policies (conceived space), the cultures and place-images of Yeonnam-dong have been re-arranged by tourists' physical movements and experiences. The early urban strollers in the 2010-2015 period, before Yeontral Park was opened in June 2016, had created the cultural boundary delineating where the young incomers produced unique goods and services. As they enjoyed discovering the hidden spaces in narrow streets, the realm of authenticity could be clearly perceived by tourists. According to Urry and Larsen (2011), the tourist gaze is a conceptual process to interpret, assess and compare objects and spaces by linking them with particular signs and visualising them. The early urban strollers' gaze based on physical movement through space in search of extraordinary experiences outlined the cultural boundary of Yeonnam-dong according to their subjective tastes and reinforced highly selective place-images developed from the appreciation of artists and artisan works in opposition to ruthless consumerism. By means of strolling and gazing, uniqueness and authenticity of Yeonnam-dong was collected and shared among tourists in blog texts and images of the cultural realm. However, the focus on artisans and crafts had displaced local residents and old shopkeepers from this imagery – an online-reality gap. The early urban strollers in the 2010-2015 period transformed the cultural realm of Yeonnam-dong (perceived space) into highly selective place-images (imagined space) by transferring them to blog posts (online space), which created the conditions for the later hyper-realistic place-images and refractive spatialisation of aesthetic tourism.

Aesthetic tourism aimed to create hyper-realistic impressions online visualised from Instagrammable spaces catering to the desires of younger tourists who wanted to emulate influencers' online achievements – Instagrammable practices. In contrast to the online code that widened the online-reality gap, aesthetic tourism was a dynamic driver of refractive spatialisation transforming online representations into real spaces, in order to decrease the gap between the online images and the reality of Yeonnam-dong. Tourists selected the aesthetic spaces popularised by online influencers, where value and taste were spatialised prior to their actual pre-planned tours, whereas the urban strollers in the 2010-2015 period had sought hidden and unique experiences of actual places (See Figure 7-4). In gentrified Yeonnam-dong between 2016 and 2018, tourists were influenced by the strong belief that Yeonnam-dong was located at the intersection between online representations and emulated physical practices. In aesthetic tourism, the aestheticised and hybrid spaces in which the online codes were implanted in pursuit of profit were programmed to satisfy spatial expectations of preselected tours, with visitors following a planned route as if at an art exhibition.



WITH ME AS YOUR GUIDE

The Seoul cafe that looks like a cartoon

Figure 7-4. Yeonnam-dong's Aesthetic Tourist Hotspot (Café YND239-20) introduced by the CNN News (Street, 2018)

Tourists' decisions on their sightseeing routes were influenced unconsciously rather than with rational thought (Freud & Brill, 1913; Lacan, 2004). In particular, their gaze and movements were not only mediated by stunning spectacles, but they also interpreted and evaluated these images unconsciously (Debord, 1977; Freud & Brill, 1913; Lacan, 2004;

MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011). As the numbers of trend conformists increased substantially in Yeonnam-dong, aesthetic tourism was converted from an adventurous stroll by urban strollers to a trendy pilgrimage along safe (risk-averse) routes, developed from blogs to inspire online followers with aesthetic spectacles. These pre-planned routes of the aesthetic tour, as a risk-free pilgrimage, were based on intuitive selections from trendy, popular and Instagrammable place-images drawing a large number of 'likes' online (KM01, 30s office worker; KM03, 30s architect; KM05, 30s office worker; KM11, 30s education content creator). The younger tourists were lured to the aesthetic sites by the prospect of shareworthy experiences and photos (Rimm1226, 2017-255; Son2306, 2017-651). In this massive flow of selective online information, it was impossible for them to carry out an objective evaluation of Yeonnam-dong's spaces. Instead, the intuitive selections in response to the aesthetic and the remarkable were an efficient means of collecting information for planning a safe tour (Freud & Brill, 1913; Lacan, 2004). Aesthetic tourism reinforced the relationship between intuitive selections and aesthetic representations during the consumption of hyper-realistic place-images, resulting in refractive spatialisation of small businesses oriented toward Instagrammable spectacles.

My goal is to find beautiful cafés. Even though I am a blogger, I always search blogs for something new.

(Rimm1226, Personal blogger, 2017-255)

My friend told me that I should go to one of the popular spots in Yeonnam-dong. He gave me a list of the popular cafes [from the Internet].

(Son2306, Personal blogger, 2017-651)

Hyper-realistic place-images and representations selectively chosen according to blog keywords were idolized by the younger tourists in advance of their physical tours. By contrast, this aesthetic tourism decoupled the early authenticity, derived from the peaceful working-class neighbourhood, Little Chinatown, drivers' cafes and Dongjin Market Street artisans' spaces, from the intuitive selections and the safe routes. The prospect of desirable experiences and successful photos created tourists' tactical practices of gazing and walking to the aesthetic sites, strengthening the "fictional authenticity of the imitated appearances (simulacra)" in opposition to representations of Yeonnam-dong based on historical contexts and origins.

The tactical aesthetic gaze and walk greatly influenced business strategies in commercialised streets, replacing spatial contexts with shareworthy online representations.

Conformist movements driven by Instagrammable value encroached on non-shareworthy areas which was located within the online-reality gap. These spaces were commercialised and monetised by aesthetic tourism in pursuit of symbolic value. The transformation of streets to the digital picturesque – Instagrammable, shareworthy and trendy spectacles – was a key process of refractive spatialisation in Yeonnam-dong’s gentrification. In particular, user-generated tagging – #yeonnamdong, #yeonnamdongcafe and #yeonnamdonghotspot – indicated Yeonnam-dong as a hotspot for aesthetic tourism. The tags symbolised the hyper-realistic neighbourhood where tourists could fulfil their desires and fantasies of experiencing aesthetic online images popularised by the “likes” of online platforms. Yeonnam-dong’s gentrification denoted that commercialised streets (transformed from working-class residential areas) were dominated by the millennials’ alternative value system in the belief that visibly shareworthy spaces (See Table 7-1 and 7-2) could be valorised and consumed in the hope of escaping unpleasant everyday realities (economic struggles, hard work and mundane lives) and unfeasible aspirations such as home ownership in Seoul (Berardi, 2015; Heo, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Kim, Y-S., 2019; Lett, 1998). Aesthetic tourism, as an active driver of refractive spatialisation, was ultimately an exploration of the spatial convergence (the perfect condition of refractive spatialisation) of real spaces and online representations in gentrified Yeonnam-dong.

This is discussed further in the following section.

7.4.3 Refractive Spatialisation: Key Drivers of Refraction in the Online-Reality Gap

Traditional spatialisation is examined and conceptualised by the Western theorists discussed in Chapters 2 – the Lefebvre’s dialectic of space, Bourdieu’s habitus, Foucault’s *dispositif*; and Shields’ social spatialisation (Bourdieu, 2010b; Foucault, 1998; Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Stanek, 2011); According to their approaches, the production of space is influenced by social compounds, embodied in individual habits and cultures through experiences, cognition and imagery of space in the logic of capitalism.

As discussed in Chapter 4, South Korea’s digital society is linked and integrated into online information and communication technologies at home, work and leisure through more than 95% coverage of high-speed broadband (Partington & Grierson, 2019). This advanced built

environment with digital technologies changes people's perception, conception and interpretation of space (Low, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In particular, refractive spatialisation displaces the traditional logic of spatial constructions mediated by social compounds – historical, cultural and social contexts and origins of local communities which function as the online-reality gap. This new spatialisation is locally rare, but pervasive in global cities – for instance, Seoul, London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Paris, Berlin and so on in developed countries (GaWC, 2020; Sassen, 1991). The sites of refractive spatialisation in the global cities are known as the “world's coolest neighbourhoods” among the younger urban tourists. Trendy but temporary spaces in these neighbourhoods are developed to spatialise borderless, contextless and globalised tastes for digital picturesque value – Instagrammable images fortified by global Internet networks and portable digital devices like smartphones, tablets and laptops. Aesthetic tourism with digital devices – the dynamic practice of refractive spatialisation in gentrification – removes historical authenticity, culture and the existing ethos of local communities (the online-reality gap) in order to implant the online code into “boring” and “worthless” spaces. In other words, traditional values and spaces are refracted toward the millennials' alternative value system centring on online representations accentuated by “likes”.

The Internet Media: Melting Pot of Spatial Context

The Internet becomes an online melting pot of diverse authenticity, images, cultures and experiences as a result of producing borderless, contextless and ubiquitous values and tastes to be consumed easily through the World Wide Web. Online space shares the globalised spatial ethic that particular sites should be consumed by international tourists regardless of the context, meaning and origin of spaces. For example, over-exposure to tourism in cities such as Venice, Amsterdam and Barcelona can mean neighbourhoods are spoiled when overrun by crowds of tourists. In contrast to famous and historic sites of mass tourism, the ‘world's coolest neighbourhoods’ provide interesting, extraordinary and trendy place-images and experiences of new spaces of consumption – exotic restaurants, hipster cafes (like Cereal Killer Café in London), stylish pubs, art galleries, independent bookshops and artisan shops. These neighbourhoods in close proximity to city centres had been previously neglected and occupied by ethnic or economic minorities. For example, Peckham, Hoxton and Shoreditch in London, Brooklyn in New York, Shin-Okubo (Koreatown) and Shimokitazawa in Tokyo, and Eulji-ro and Yeonnam-dong (Chinatown) in Seoul (Henrie Kwushue, 2020; Marcus, 2019; Mo, 2017; Shin & Lee, 2016a; 2016b; The street, 2019;

Urbanplay, 2019; Zukin, 2010). These areas were revitalised by young incomers – artists, publishers, designers, chefs, brewers and baristas – who were attracted by low rent and tolerant attitudes of local communities (Henrie Kwushue, 2020; Marcus, 2019; Mo, 2017; Shin & Lee, 2016a; 2016b; The street, 2019; Urbanplay, 2019; Zukin, 2010).

However, this uniqueness and authenticity created by young incomers were taken over by the second wave of fashionable, aesthetic and standardised tastes formed in the online melting pot of the Internet. These coolest neighbourhoods, functioning in the capitalist economy, are vulnerable to financial threat (like gentrification) from spatial conversion into the online code, whereas most historic attractions vulnerable to mass tourism are protected by strict heritage legislation despite some inconveniences to local communities. In the late 20th century, simulacra of historic places were reproduced in post-modernist shopping malls or theme parks visibly accentuating fictional and thematic fantasies – Venus Fort (Japan) reproduced Venice (Italy), Disneyland (US) reproduced Neuschwanstein Castle (Germany), and Luxor Las Vegas (US) reproduced the Pyramids (Egypt) (Baudrillard, 1994; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). In contrast, refractive spatialisation in the 21st-century's coolest neighbourhoods transforms residential or young incomers' spaces into digital picturesque (Instagrammable) sites for tourists to escape from their mundane reality and engage in temporary fantasies, and provide visible evidence through their staged photos as a result of being fortified by their online cognition of contextless and dissolved place-images (Playme, 2018-493).

I could see more foreigners than Koreans in 'Café Yeonnam-dong 239-20'. This café is not well-known among Koreans, but popular in other countries. ... This café deluded me into thinking that I was in a 2D cartoon. ... This is the coolest photogenic café in Yeonnam-dong. ... These photos gave me a fantastic sense of the cartoon world.

(Playme, Beauty and restaurant review blogger, 2018-493)

Digital Photography: Pressure on Selective Reality

Digital photography accelerates the production of affective and sensational photos portraying the younger tourists' extraordinary and selective moments. A digital camera enables them to take, delete and edit images easily and cheaply whilst its screen helps them to instantly evaluate quality of their moments (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Taking, editing and deleting photos repeatedly enables the selection of the best images – often better than the real objects. This

repetition aims to deliver distinctive and exaggerated impressions from chosen photos. The camera captures edited images of outstanding aspects rather than whole objects comprehensible to others. These highly selective images not only fragment, distort and aestheticise reality, but also remove ugly and mundane spaces (the online-reality gap). Digital photography is a vital tool for producing the staged place-images refracting spatial cognition and memories of leisure activities (Sung2gamja, 2018-206; Audtjisl841510, 2017-520; Hyosunv, 2018-473). It is also carried out to satisfy the millennials' new value that seeks visibly shareworthy spaces to mask their unpleasant reality and fulfil temporary fantasies reinforced by online representations. In brief, the millennials' digital photography not only seals the online-reality gap, but also spurs small business owners to create aesthetic, shareworthy and Instagrammable settings for the staged photos. In this way, digital photography contributes to refractive spatialisation in gentrification.

As many people enjoy taking photos recently, my list of favourite cafés and restaurants reflects photogenic and beautiful spots.

(Sung2gamja, Restaurant review and shopping blogger, 2018-206)

Many foreigners took their seats to order something from menus and take photos. They seemed to like the pink colour interior. ... The interior gave me a sense of being in a fairy tale or film.

(Audtjisl841510, Personal blogger, 2017-520)

I couldn't stop my camera shootings in these beautiful spaces. My friend helped me to capture more photos of these beautiful spaces.

(Hyosunv, Personal blogger, 2018-473)

Aesthetic Business: Pressure on Online Representations

Whilst staged photography has spread rapidly among the younger tourists, aesthetic businesses have been developed to provide photogenic and Instagrammable sites in response to tourists' burgeoning demand for aesthetic images. These businesses aim to draw millennials' attention to the digital picturesque spaces for the purpose of maximising their profits in sharply rising rents. Small business owners develop an attention-driven market in the coolest neighbourhoods where aesthetic settings can guarantee their profits by attracting more tourists (Seouldatepop, 2018-971). As discussed in Section 7.3.2, the three types of spatial settings in Yeonnam-dong are empirical evidence of the aestheticisation of

businesses in refractive spatialisation. Working on the opposite side of the process of digital photography editing and aestheticizing real spaces, the aesthetic business spatialises the highly selective place-images captured by tourists' cameras and blogs. The place-images are refracted into the aesthetic settings. The aesthetic settings function as photographic studios to perpetuate the younger tourists' unusual and selective experiences captured by digital cameras on their smartphones. These dramatically staged photos fragment and distort place-images of the coolest neighbourhoods, leading to a process of refractive spatialisation that decreases the online-reality gap and accelerates gentrification in real Yeonnam-dong.

In the beginning of my business, I struggled with less profits. As Yeonnam-dong had fully developed [and was highly competitive in business], I had been in deficit for a while. I thought this restaurant needed a new strategy to change this hard situation. So, I purchased new beautiful dishes from Japan, and tried to highlight distinct items in a visual aspect. ... Young couples tend to decide on a restaurant that has particular objects women like. Thus, I examined what themes young women preferred, and then made this neon sign that young women liked [talking selfies next to].

(Seouldatepop, Business blogger, 2018-971)

Digital Technology: New Logic and the Virtual Cognition of Space

Over the course of history, technological innovations – steel, the printing press, electric lighting, telegraph, the steam engine, motor vehicles and the Internet – have been bound up with particular spatialisations. The steam engine meant people became independent from natural sources of energy – the horse, water and wind power (Schivelbusch, 2014). Mechanical movement driven by steam locomotives created a new landscape shaped by the machines – smooth, hard, level and straight ground for railways, but which had negative effects on nature (Schivelbusch, 2014). According to McQuire (2008), electric lighting created new social lives and relations as well as extending working hours by illuminating modern cities at night, expanding consumption practices (Schivelbusch, 2014). Controlling night life led to productive spaces of capitalist industries on the threshold of modern cities – for example, gleaming skyscrapers in the early 20th century (McQuire, 2008).

Motor vehicles opened up symbolic spatialisation in contrast to the modernist and utilitarian spaces created by the steam engine and electric lighting, as conceptualised by Venturi,

Scott Brown and Izenour (1977) in relation to the symbolic transformation of architecture in Las Vegas. Exaggerated large, colourful and decorative sign boards and façades of buildings were highlight commercial symbols seen easily from fast moving cars (Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, 1977). These commercial symbols – garish and decorative spectacles – altered the visual context of urban landscapes in Las Vegas’s neighbourhoods to attract more vehicle drivers from roads due to maximising an impact on drivers’ cognitive processes.

This symbolic spatialisation through motor vehicle technology provides an understanding of how refractive spatialisation works with digital technologies. Refractive spatialisation creates hyper-realistic, shareworthy and Instagrammable place-images to be widely shared in online space due to the time-space compression (Sheppard, 2006; Harvey, 1990), in order to attract more and more attention from bloggers and online texts and imagery. The Internet network and bloggers could be substituted for motorways and car drivers in a digital society like Seoul. Instagrammable photos shared on online platforms replace exaggerated Casino signs and neon lights on Las Vegas’s roads during virtual cognition of space (the digital picturesque). Technologies change people’s spatial cognition according to new logics of spatialisation (Castells, 1991; 2010; Harvey, 1990; Lefebvre, 1991; McQuire, 2008; Schivelbusch, 2014; Shields, 2013a). With digital technologies in Seoul, the younger tourists prioritise virtual experiences gained from online place-images prior to their pre-planned tours of real space. As historical innovations have changed the logics of spatialisations in urban landscapes, refractive spatialisation is the digital-technology-driven transformation in contemporary cities.

The Mechanism of Refractive Spatialisation in Gentrification

Yeonnam-dong’s spaces at the edge of spatial practices, Dongjin Market Street, have been distorted and refracted to decrease the online-reality gap by removing and concealing the real contexts and origins of what are considered to be unattractive spaces. This contradictory spatial change following the online code is a highly effective way of reducing the online-reality gap, satisfying tourists’ desires, and maximising business profits. In aesthetic tourism, the online-reality gap is perceived as a marginal space of unattractive and mundane reality, shunned by consumers, especially the millennials. As aesthetically oriented business strategies and digital imagery pressure Yeonnam-dong’s spaces into spatialising a highly selective reality and online place-image, a distorting and refractive twist of physical

space on its online-reality axis (boundary) shrinks the gap between the two – e.g. the working-class redbrick houses, Little Chinatown and taxi drivers’ cafes are removed (See Figure 7-5). As contextual narratives of lived reality vanish from the gap and spatial convergence of online and reality occurs, hyper-realistic Instagrammable and digital picturesque spaces are formed from a fragmented and aestheticised essence of Yeonnam-dong, symbolising both online and real representations (translocality) at the same time (See spatial convergence in Figure 7-5).

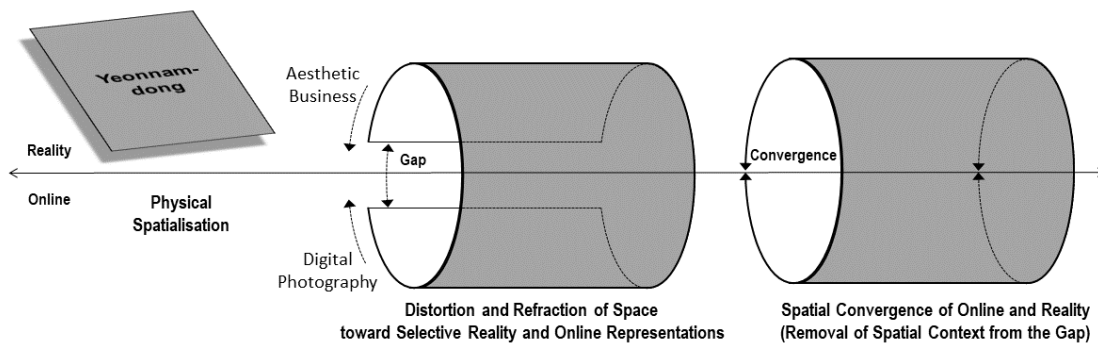


Figure 7-5. Restructuring Yeonnam-dong’s Space on the Online-Reality Axis

Refractive spatialisation newly formed in four levels of space – conceived, perceived, imagined and online spaces – is driven by the millennials’ aesthetic tourism that aims to experience highly selective spaces captured by virtual cognition of the hyper-realistic spaces from online information. The millennials who grew up with digital technologies – laptops, mobile phones, tablet computers, Internet and social media – are easily assimilated into the virtual cognition of space. They consider gaining information online – reviews, photos, comments and ‘likes’ – as an imperative ritual for embarking on their pre-planned tours of these highly selective spaces. The force of friction from the online-reality gap activated by the aesthetic tourism leads to Yeonnam-dong’s gentrification, increasing expected productivity and rents in the attention-driven economy (See Figure 7-6). Hence, the spatial strategies of small business owners centre on hyper-realistic representations – which are both produced by and co-produce the aesthetic tourism – in order to reduce the online-reality gap and increase business profits.

The online-reality gap prompts Seoul’s gentrification. Streets of residential houses have become rapidly commercialised by burgeoning numbers of tourists in Seoul’s coolest neighbourhoods – for instance, Yeonnam-dong, Eulji-ro, Gyeongridan-gil, Ikseon-dong and Garosu-gil (Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Mo, 2017; Shin &

Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017; 2019). The online-reality gap has been perceived as an economic opportunity for the hyper-realistic settings in order to reduce the rent gap between current and potential income from properties (Harvey, 2001; Lees, Shin & López-Morales, 2016; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008; Smith, 1996; 2008; Zukin, 1998; 2010; Zukin et al., 2009). In this refractive spatialisation, the online-reality gap during gentrification has pressured old, cheap and 'forgettable' spaces, as distinct from online representations, to be transformed into digital picturesque and Instagrammable spaces in pursuit of millennials' tastes and successful profits (See Figure 7-6).

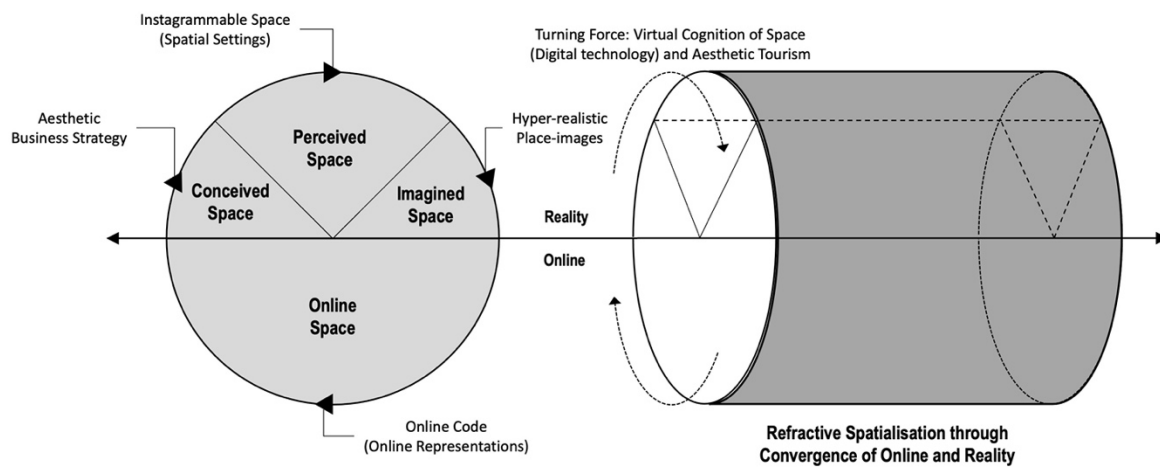


Figure 7-6. Activity of Refractive Spatialisation

The refractive spatialisation of contemporary urban spaces has been transferred from historical transformations of diverse spaces. The example of religious spatialisation provides an understanding of how refractive spatialisation has worked historically. Religious architecture – churches, mosques, stupas and temples – was developed in connection with imagined spaces of religion driven by worship, religious faith and sacred images (Mumford, 2016; Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 2005; 2013a; 2013b). This religious spatialisation was reinforced and exaggerated by sacred settings – for instance, stained glass windows, statues, towers and domes in churches, and buddharupa, pagoda and thangka in Buddhist temples – to reduce the gap between religious imagery (the Bible, Buddhist texts and holy paintings) and physical buildings (Mumford, 2016; Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 2005; 2013a; 2013b). These sacred spectacles aimed to produce dramatic inspiration and attract more believers were refracted through an absolute belief in God, implanted into real spaces of medieval cities in Europe and Asia. Imagined space for God had been spatialised in centres of political power in town halls or palaces – for example, the Patriarchal Cathedral Basilica in Venice's St Mark's Square and Munmyo (Confucian temple) in Seoul's Changdeokgung

palace area. Sublime and magnificent buildings as the spatial medium for reducing the faith-reality gap developed in a refractive way to deliver coded sacred meanings, messages and images to ordinary people.

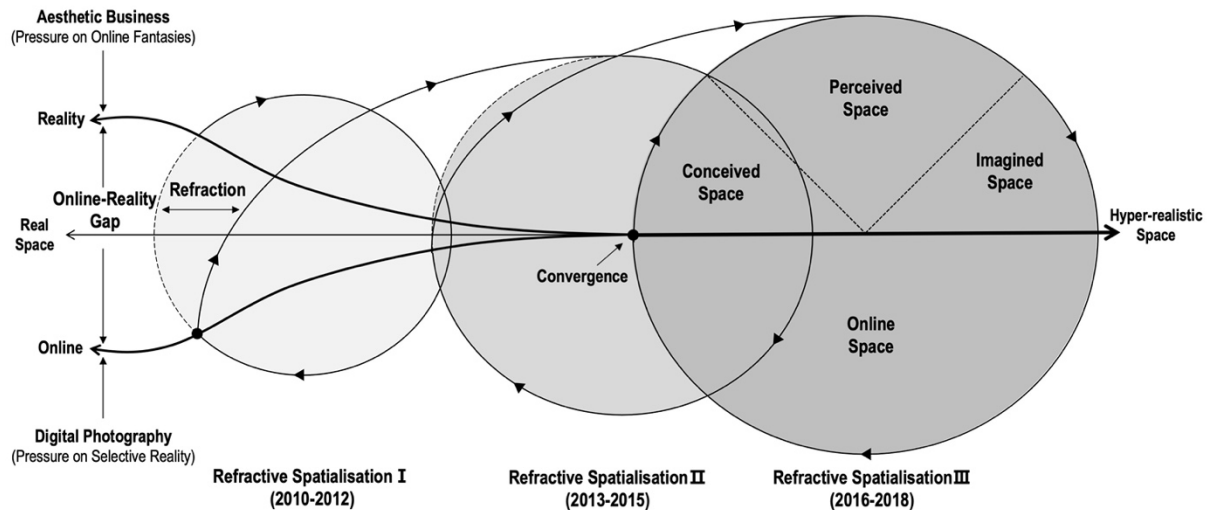


Figure 7-7. Yeonnam-dong's Refractive Spatialisation during Gentrification

The refractive spatialisation of contemporary urban spaces – tourist hotspots, coolest neighbourhoods and Instagrammable spaces – reveals a mechanism similar to religious spatialisation, whereby online images, ethics, values and tastes are transmitted through spatial settings of hyper-realistic representations. These representations are embodied in tourists' digital photos and blog posts and recirculated through online space. It creates a dynamic circulation of conceived, perceived, imagined and online spaces; a hybrid expansion of numbers of Instagrammable spaces; and a refractive consolidation of the intensity of hyper-realistic settings across the boundary between online and reality, exemplified in three periods of Yeonnam-dong's gentrification (See Figure 7-7). Yeonnam-dong's refractive spatialisation shows the relational dynamics involved in different key drivers of refraction – the Internet media, digital photography, aesthetic business and digital technologies. As the urban strollers had led to taste-making by seeking aesthetic spaces spatialised by online representations, the spatial refraction from the online-reality boundary began to decrease the gap – two circuits of the refractive spatialisations in the 2010-2012 and 2013-2015 periods (See the two refraction points in Figure 7-7). This refraction from the boundary had forced Yeonnam-dong's spaces out of their circuits of spatialisation twice: 1) the waves of gentrification in Dongjin Market Street (2010-2012); and 2) Yeontral Park in 2015. The refractive points in Figure 7-7 had developed larger and stronger spatialisations with rising rents (indicated by the size of the circular circuits in Figure 7-7) oriented toward

hyper-realistic representations – the digital picturesque and Instagrammable spaces. When the online-reality gap was almost closed in the 2016-2018 period, the refraction was deactivated by the convergence of online and reality. In other words, the perfect condition of refractive spatialisation has curbed property prices and gentrification in the attention-driven market in Yeonnam-dong.

7.5 Online Space: the Online network from Narrative to Visual Information

7.5.1 Production of Online Representations

Online space shows an opposite process in producing spatial representations – from online data to online representations of selective spaces. Traditionally, representations (place-images) had been generated from physical geographies and spatial practices as a result of people's cultural and commercial practices in a market. This traditional production of spatial representations is bound up with uneven development and the renovation of derelict buildings or brownfield land to enable capital accumulation through the logic of capitalist geography (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 1996; 2008). The uneven pattern of redevelopment brings about new representations of unequal spaces. In addition, the aestheticisation of spaces in post-industrial cities, shaped out of tactical spatial strategies in response to a reconfiguration of industries and markets, produces new logics and systems of spatial consumption – simulacra, translocality, the tourist gaze, and staged authenticity - creating aesthetic and attractive representations in imagined space (Baudrillard, 1994; Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Sassen, 1991; Urry and Larsen, 2011; Zukin, 1998; 2010). As online space is newly implanted into the circuit of traditional spatialisation, the process, logic and system are transformed from three levels into four levels of contemporary spatialisation – conceived, perceived, imagined, and online space (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2006; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Stanek, 2011). In this process, a large number of representations of space are redeveloped from online space through uneven online networks mediated by online influencers' selective tastes, values and styles.

In the transition from word-of-mouth communication to digital communication, online data has become a reliable and impartial source of information among South Korea's millennials

familiar with digital devices in their everyday lives. In particular, instead of relying on traditional word-of-mouth recommendations, they acquired knowledge of aesthetically agreeable spaces for unusual leisure experiences online (Happy_hworld, 2018-425). Before pre-planned tours in Yeonnam-dong, aesthetic representations of situated spaces are collected and accentuated in extensive online searches as well as personalised recommendations on smart online platforms – Google search engine, Google Maps, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram (Happy_hworld, 2018-425; Leedan2, 2018-9; Zrlol87, 2016-319). During gentrification of the neighbourhood, a limited list of worthwhile and successful spaces was narrowed down online by tourists. It strengthened aesthetic representations (place-images) and standardised the logic and design of commercial spaces based on bloggers' preferences (business types) and tastes (styles of space) of spaces linked with tourists' data consumption of the online code. In this sense, the online practices documented by bloggers are empirical evidence of refractive spatialisation in a opposite direction of reality (physical geography) via imagery (people's minds) and conception (business knowledge).

I used to ask my friends their experiences of good restaurants in other neighbourhoods, but everyone searches the Internet for it now. ... I visited Tokiya because many people suggest online that it is a good restaurant in Yeonnam-dong.

(Happy_hworld, Beauty and fashion blogger, 2018-425)

My friends and I tried to seek good restaurants in Yeonnam-dong known as the coolest neighbourhood in Seoul. We went through all social media like Instagram and Facebook to find a particular site where few people knew that its vibes and menu were special. Finally, we discovered the best place.

(Leedan2, Travel and restaurant review blogger, 2018-9)

Unique cafés fill Hongdae's streets, Hapjeong, Sangsu and Yeonnam. I searched Instagram for a new café to avoid ordinary ones we regularly visited. We decided to go to VER's Garden, a beautiful café in Yeonnam-dong.

(Zrlol87, Personal blogger, 2016-319)

7.5.2 Digital Galleries: Aestheticisation of Individuals

The millennials have exhibited their extraordinary, distinctive and selective impressions in blogs and social media platforms. They valorise these carefully chosen parts of their everyday lives, captured by staged digital photography, in pursuit of self-promotion (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 2017a; Goffman, 1990; Lett, 1998). The aestheticisation of their online images and texts produce favourable impressions of them for the public or blog subscribers by refining their daily individual routines through digital image editing. They openly make visible their efforts to flaunt their socio-cultural situation of belonging to trendy groups recognised as having exclusive social status (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998; Eusia, 2018-390; Sun814105, 2017-88; Lightsout, 2016-469). They satisfied themselves that they had worthwhile and successful leisure activities, desired by others, in their lives. Ultimately, the visible evidence of selective individual practices reassured them that their everyday lives were better than those of others in South Korea's relationship-based society (Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). For example, direct experiences of famous chefs' cooking performances, artistic food, and excellent service in exclusive restaurants restricted to a small number of customers, improved their sign-value by highlighting their distinctive tastes, the images of which were aesthetically archived in their blogs and Instagram (Lightsout, 2016-469). These aestheticised images shared online played the role of individual galleries and archives in strengthening millennials' online personae distanced from mundane and trivial routines. This online logic in aestheticisation of individuals drove refractive spatialisation in relation to new business strategies in Yeonnam-dong.

The interior and vibes are very much satisfying. ... This visibly beautiful food allows me to flaunt it on my Instagram.

(Eusia, Personal blogger, 2018-390)

Café Highwaist has a good appearance. It encourages me to take photos and post them on my Instagram in order to show off this popular tourist hotspot where I am.

(Sun814105, Travel blogger, 2017-88)

When I came into Yeonnam Terrace, a wide-open kitchen drew my attention. It is run by Her Jin-woo, a famous chef previously working in Le Comptoir Apgujeong and Sous Marin Itaewon. He has opened this casual dining restaurant with reasonable food.

(Lightsout, Travel and photo blogger, 2016-469)

Selective and aesthetic impressions shared through online posts influence the real everyday lives of South Korea's millennials in pursuit of self-satisfaction by diminishing the boundary

between online and reality: all daily routines tend to be evaluated by selective impressions of individuals staged and edited in online space. The millennials set up the “edited ordinariness of everyday life” for censoring unattractive and unremarkable practices. They depicted selected moments of leisure activities as representing their whole lives – e.g. carefully curated images of friends (social space), chefs’ food, luxury hotels, and hired cars which were actually selected or temporarily owned (Rladudrhkd31, 2016-631; Eusia, Personal blogger, 2018-390). It shrinks the online-reality gap in their reality through selected, temporarily owned, and distinctive online records producing an alternative sign-value (Bourdieu, 2010a). In other words, everyday lives are swapped for online personae in an online communication process of digital photos, videos and texts captured and (re) produced instantly. This switch from real identities (reality) to online personae (virtuality) is accelerated by the edited appearance of the ‘ordinariness’ of this lifestyle exhibited through aesthetic online archives.

I enjoy looking at my Instagram photos on which I had captured my life. It is pleased that all [but actually, selectively chosen] my friends are on my Instagram.

(Rladudrhkd31, Personal blogger, 2016-631)

A half of photos on my smartphone were captured from the food I’d eaten. ... This is my treasure chest bringing me a cheerful mood.

(Eusia, Personal blogger, 2018-390)

7.6 Summary of Refractive Spatialisation III

In the last stage (2016-2018) of refractive spatialisation in the nine years of gentrification covered by this thesis, this chapter has conceptualised the hybrid practices of Yeonnam-dong’s spatial transformations at the peak of its gentrification – the highest property prices and ruthless displacement. As Yeonnam-dong came to be seen as the trendiest tourist hotspot in Seoul, in the transformation of conceived space to an aesthetic design strategy, the post-gentrifiers (the latecomers of small business owners who were wealthier than the marginal gentrifiers (artisans and artists) in Dongjin Market Street) began to create hyper-realistic spaces in their business settings in order to attract more attention from bloggers and tourists. The business strategy in relation to hyper-realistic spaces (conceived space) was

centred on the goals of satisfying tourist fantasies (imagined space) provoked by aesthetically-designed Yeontral Park (perceived space) and selectively filtered blog posts (online space) in the attention-driven economy.

During the changing logics and systems of spatialisation mediated by uneven online networks, a digital picturesque was created and a new cognitive process of contemporary space was facilitated by online reference spaces for the purpose of seeking shareworthy and photo-perfect spectacles (Instagrammable spaces). This stands in contrast to the 19th-century English picturesque pursuing picture-perfect spaces based on the ideal aesthetic scenery depicted in landscape paintings. The new cognitive process transformed spatial settings into digital picturesque spaces – alluring (museum), exclusive (theatre) and deceptive (studio) settings. With the online code for regulating hyper-realistic representations, Yeonnam-dong's tourist culture was converted into aesthetic tourism with tactical gazing and walking in pursuit of hyper-realistic and extraordinary authenticity in the attention-driven economy. The hybrid dynamics of refractive spatialisation at the peak of gentrification were triggered by the online-reality gap, refracting Yeonnam-dong's localities toward the digital picturesque and Instagrammable spaces for the purpose of maximising social actors' interests through uneven online networks: 1) tourists' attention-seeking and risk-free leisure activities; 2) small business owners' profitable settings of their businesses; 3) bloggers' influential data production aiming for more views, likes and followers; and 4) investor and landlords' higher profit margins on their rental properties.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to incorporate key findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 into the theory of refractive spatialisation. It discusses how these findings are interconnected and how they interact in a dynamic operation of the refractive circuit. In order to answer the research questions, following the flow of refractive spatialisation across the four levels of space is organised as follows: 1) imagined space; 2) online space; 3) perceived space; and 4) conceived space. The seven theoretical frameworks (the second-tier framework) are connected to the key findings within these four spaces (the first-tier framework). Thus, this chapter shows how the seven key findings impact on each other and operate within the refractive circuit.

Each finding is then articulated with definitions, objectives, productions (of aesthetic images and Instagrammable spaces), roles and influences during refractive spatialisation. Incorporating key findings into the theory of refractive spatialisation concludes how the complex relations and dynamics of the hybrid (online-reality) transformations over the nine-year period of the gentrification of Yeonnam-dong covered in this thesis took place and what refractive spatialisation is. A discussion of the changing logics, values and systems examined in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 sheds new light on a new form and process of contemporary gentrification, called refractive spatialisation, under online networks, and addresses the research aims and contributions. It shows that while digital platforms and data sharing have never determined the outcomes of spatialisation, the alternative socio-economic practices in online networks have influenced the direction and speed of the transformations of spaces. Lastly, implications and future research agenda are presented for responding to future urban dynamics.

8.2 Incorporating Key Findings into the Theory of Refractive Spatialisation

Instead of a fragmentary question by question approach, this section focuses on a comprehensive understanding of the theory of refractive spatialisation based on the key findings of this research. These findings are woven into the four levels of space operating within refractive spatialisation. The following section aims to map the key findings from the

empirical study of Yeonnam-dong onto the Lefebvrian dialectics in the dynamics of refractive spatialisation.

8.2.1 Imagined Space: Staged Photography and the Digital Picturesque

Imagined space establishes new systems of imagery in the production of images (staged photography) and cognition of spaces (digital picturesque) derived from online blogs. Selective and situated place-images in imagined space are produced by the younger tourists' staged photography and digitally transformed into online images through blog posts. With the conversion of representations of the built environment from staged photos (visible materials) to selective place-images, the interaction between the tourists' imagery and the bloggers' postings takes place dynamically through a cognitive process of the digital picturesque. The spatial cognition with online-driven place-images creates the tourists' demand for Instagrammable spaces in pursuit of emulations of the staged photography. Consequently, two systems of imagery contribute to the transformational interconnection between perceived space and online space: staged photography and the digital picturesque.

Alternative Value System of Individuals: Staged Photography

Staged photography refers to the shareworthy and extraordinary images of photo-perfect spaces, aesthetically edited to create distinctive impressions. Staged photography aims to visibly perpetuate the best moments of a person's leisure activities. The settings of Yeonnam-dong's spaces have acted as a theatre for the production of staged photos. The younger tourists intend to raise the socio-cultural visibility of individuals in the front-region (leisure activity) due to their belief that aestheticisation of their impressions will differentiate their lives from mundane daily routines (Bourdieu, 2010a; Goffman, 1990). Thus, the photography aims to signify their exceptional social status by producing increasingly staged but temporary images that function as sign-value in the alternative value system (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 2017a; Lett, 1998). When the millennial tourists valorise and justify their distinctive and selective consumption of space, the staged photos are collected as visible evidence of their acceptable and appropriate experiences while showing how well they manage their budgets. Staged photography plays the role of a benchmark for their cultural practices in Yeonnam-dong, depending on how much imagery is considered shareworthy, sensational and inspirational within online space (See Table 8-1). In this way, younger tourists' increasing demands for staged photography pushed Yeonnam-dong's post-gentrifiers into transforming their businesses into Instagrammable (photo-perfect) spaces to attract more tourists.

Demand for Hyper-realistic Space: The Digital Picturesque

The digital picturesque denotes a new cognitive process for understanding contemporary space in the new logic of spatialisation - *refractive spatialisation* – interconnected with staged photography and Instagrammable spaces. The younger tourists initiate searches for worthwhile spaces for their pre-planned tours by means of bloggers' posts about selected spaces in Yeonnam-dong. The staged photos stimulate these younger groups to find inspiring and aesthetic cultural practices in Yeonnam-dong in a visible way. The digital picturesque intensifies the tourists' cognitive development within selective place-images shared in online space, generating their demand for the hyper-real spaces to visualise imaginary spectacles that are decoupled from spatial context and origins in reality (Baudrillard, 1994; Debord, 1977; Lash & Urry, 1994; Zukin, 1998; 2010). Figure 8-1 shows how the online-driven cognitive process, the digital picturesque, takes place in the circuit of refractive spatialisation: 1) perception of the staged photos; 2) sharing of the selective images online; 3) cognitive development in the online shares; 4) business owners designing spaces to attract online references; and 5) refractive spatialisation influenced by Instagrammable (photo-perfect) tastes. As hyper-real placemaking driven by the digital picturesque is increasingly recognised by small business owners (the post-gentrifiers), Instagrammable settings are used as the major business strategy for maximising potential profits by narrowing the online-reality gap (See Table 8-1).

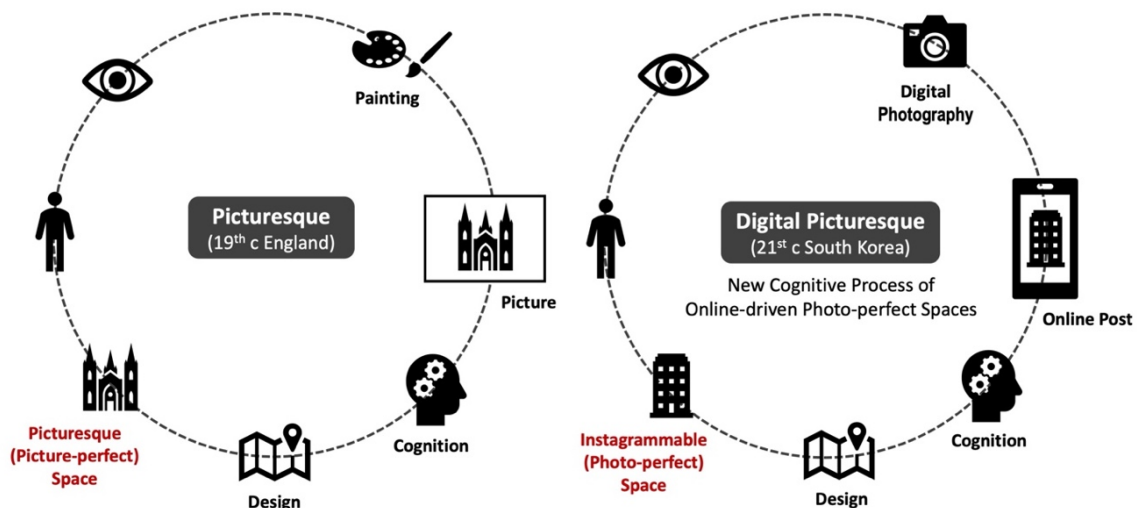


Figure 8-1. Processes of Traditional Picturesque and Digital Picturesque

8.2.2 Online Space: The Online Code in Uneven Networks

Staged photography and the digital picturesque performed in imagined space are developed into an online code for clarifying hyper-real spaces in online space. With online shares of intriguing images, text and videos, the online code is developed and accentuated from the staged photography in Yeonnam-dong's hidden but worthwhile spaces. The digital picturesque transforms individual fantasies into coded images of selective spaces. Thus, the online code stipulates young data consumers must emulate the hyper-real and Instagrammable spectacles in their physical tours. These "must-see" spaces are exemplified by the online code and plotted in the younger tourists' mind maps (imagined space), creating aesthetic tourism in real Yeonnam-dong. The online code not only results in the standardisation of Instagrammable online representations derived from the interaction between reality and imagery, but also affects refractive spatialisation by colonising the younger tourists' cultural practices of pre-planned tours based on virtual references (Zukin, 1998).

Valorisation of Hybrid Space: The Online Code for Hyper-realistic Space

The online code is linguistically formed to articulate the tourists' imagery of desired spaces. It plays the role of online reference images to decrease the online-reality gap in repetitive transitions between reality and virtuality. The selective and situated place-images are coded in online space to provide successful cultural experiences for Korean millennials in their pre-planned tours in Yeonnam-dong. The millennials tend to seek risk-free, cost-effective and shareworthy spaces from online information in their decision-making processes. However, data in online networks – mainly, blogs, Instagram, Twitter and Foursquare – are unevenly produced and transmitted to those data consumers – the millennials (Castells, 1991; 2010; Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017; Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda; 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). In other words, online information is selectively centred on attractive spaces in Yeonnam-dong and mostly disseminated by online influencers (BI01; BI02; BI03, blog influencers; Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017). The uneven networks incorporate highly selective spatial practices and imaginations into the online code. Because the online code assembles together individual place-images articulated in blogs, it is the aesthetic essence of desired fantasies of Yeonnam-dong developed from the dynamic boundary between reality and virtuality (See Table 8-1). In this way, the online code is the fundamental reference and principle for hyper-real and Instagrammable spaces. It is used by tourists to emulate the online images of spaces in creating distinctive impressions of themselves and by business owners to spatialise for the images in their successful business strategies.

8.2.3 Perceived Space: Aesthetic Tourism and Instagrammable Settings

Aesthetic tourism (new consumer culture) and Instagrammable settings (new spatial formation) serve as reciprocal practices in satisfying the interests of young tourists and small business owners: successful experiences and profits. These two interactive logics play a principal role in spatial transformations oriented toward digital picturesque spectacles. The new “tourist gaze” and the need for fascinating settings restructure localities of Yeonnam-dong simultaneously developed from the interconnection (the digital picturesque) between imagery (selective place-images from staged photography), conception (aesthetic spatial strategies), and virtuality (coded online representations). Aesthetic tourism and Instagrammable settings decouple Yeonnam-dong from spatial origins and contexts (the online-reality gap) in a process of hyper-realism (refractive spatialisation).

Aesthetic Tourism: Attention-driven Consumer Cultures

Aesthetic tourism denotes a new consumer culture that is mediated by online data in the attention-driven economy. It produces a new “tourist gaze” and tactical strolls oriented toward hyper-realistic authenticity and spaces of refractive spatialisation (Low, 2017; MacCannell, 1973; 2011; Shields, 1989; 1990; 2005; 2013a; 2013b; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In this new form of aesthetic tourism, the online-driven tour practices the younger tourists rely on blog information about aesthetic spaces (the online code) in the cognitive process of the digital picturesque, and subsequently, they seek to emulate the preselected spaces and cultural practices in reality. Thus, this selective tourism aims to capture selective spaces with the staged photography for producing distinctive impressions and sign-value (Bourdieu, 2010a; Baudrillard, 2017a; Lett, 1998). The tourism plays a significant role as the active driver in the link between virtuality and reality. Dynamic actors in aesthetic tourism not only produce blog posts for selected place-images by capturing them in their physical strolls, but they also reinforce the new tourist gaze and staged authenticity for hyper-real and Instagrammable spaces by consuming them to emulate the online codes (See Table 8-1).

Spatial Formation of Symbolic Values: Instagrammable Settings

In contrast to Lynch’s (1960) five major elements of urban form – paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks – perceived in a cognitive process, Instagrammable settings become the new spatial formation of symbolic values developed from the online-reality gap in a

process of refractive spatialisation (Boy & Uitermark, 2015; 2016; 2017, Marti, Serrano-Estrada & Nolasco-Cirugeda, 2017; Shelton, Poorthuis & Zook, 2015). The symbols are represented in the new cognitive process of the digital picturesque and which has been examined in the blog content analysis for this research. As Lynch (1960) shows, the way ordinary commercial buildings in cities are perceived by people can be used to them inside for commercial purposes. However, Instagrammable settings aim to draw the attention of data consumers in online space because the younger tourists preselect worthwhile spaces from virtual experiences prior to physical tours. Seeking data of photo-perfect, shareworthy and risk-free spaces in advance to ensure successful leisure consumption is prioritised over seeking actual cognition of localities in physical geography. It arranges new spatial elements of the gentrifying neighbourhood to standardise aesthetic settings for their distinctive and enticing visual impacts on tourists as Instagrammable settings (See Table 8-1). Instagrammable space is selectively developed in reconfiguring the dynamic relationship between reality (locality), conception (spatial strategies), imagery (place-images) and virtuality (the online code), which make up the refractive spatialisation examined in this research.

8.2.4 Conceived Space: the Online-Reality Gap and Refractive Spatialisation

The online-reality gap and refractive spatialisation are core concepts for examining the new logics and systems of gentrification in Seoul in South Korea's digital society. The five findings relating to imagined, online and perceived spaces can be seen to have been triggered by the online-reality gap during gentrification, resulting in refractive spatialisation oriented toward reducing or eliminating the gaps (the rent gap and online-reality gap both).

Financial Triggers: The Online-Reality Gap

The online-reality gap is the major trigger in the attention-driven economy in gentrifying Yeonnam-dong. At the beginning of gentrification, the gap had opened up between "unattractive" localities (the forgotten spaces of old working-class houses, drivers' cafes and Chinese restaurants) and burgeoning demands for unique and authentic spaces (the hidden space of artisan and artists' shops). However, the demand for translocal and hyper-real spaces was provoked by the selective online representations, and widening the gap was suddenly accelerated through aesthetic tourism. The widening online-reality gap is directly linked to increasing the rent gap identified by Smith (1996; 2008). The post-gentrifiers

associate the online-reality gap with potential profits in the attention-driven economy (See Figure 8-2). They set up Instagrammable spaces as a new strategy for profitable spatial settings to attract increased attention from tourists (See Table 8-1). When the number of likes and shares increase in online networks, tourists' staged photos, owners business profits and landlords' property prices are boosted in a dramatic way. However, the rent-gap also contributes to accelerating Yeonnam-dong's gentrification with the shrinkage of the online-reality gap – discovery of unique cultures (tourists), in-depth narratives and reviews (bloggers), and diversity, uniqueness and authenticity (business owners). Decreasing the gap leads to displacement of spatial origins (local history and cultures) and contexts as well as local communities. As a result, the online-reality gap develops a dynamic process of a new spatial fix by attention-driven symbolic values: aesthetically staged authenticity, distinctive impressions (sign-value) and risk-free consumption. This is a development of Harvey's (2001) spatial fix which involves physical improvements for high productivity and fresh capital accumulation in derelict brownfield and deindustrialised spaces.

The refractive spatialisation being suggested here is triggered by both the online-reality gap and the rent gap in translocal and transnational spaces, the so-called 'coolest neighbourhoods' dominated by online logics.

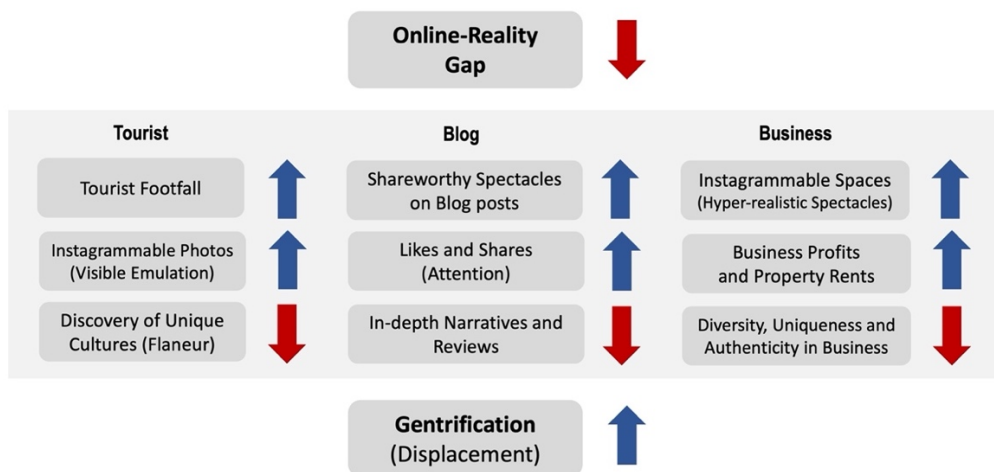


Figure 8-2. Relational Dynamics from the Online-Reality Gap to Gentrification

New System of Spatialisation: Refractive Spatialisation

Refractive spatialisation is the dynamic transformation of urban space into hyper-real practices through restructuring the symbolic meanings of contemporary spaces, in relation to reality (locality), conception (spatial strategy), imagery (place-image) and virtuality (the

online code) in the new cognitive process of the digital picturesque. With the logics and principles of online space, refractive spatialisation shapes desired symbols and signs into aesthetic and hyper-realistic spaces thus shrinking the online-reality gap. This new spatialisation is dynamically carried out in the six elements analysed in the findings: 1) staged photography; 2) the digital picturesque; 3) the online code; 4) the aesthetic tourism; 5) Instagrammable settings; and 6) the online-reality gap, framed in the four levels of space.

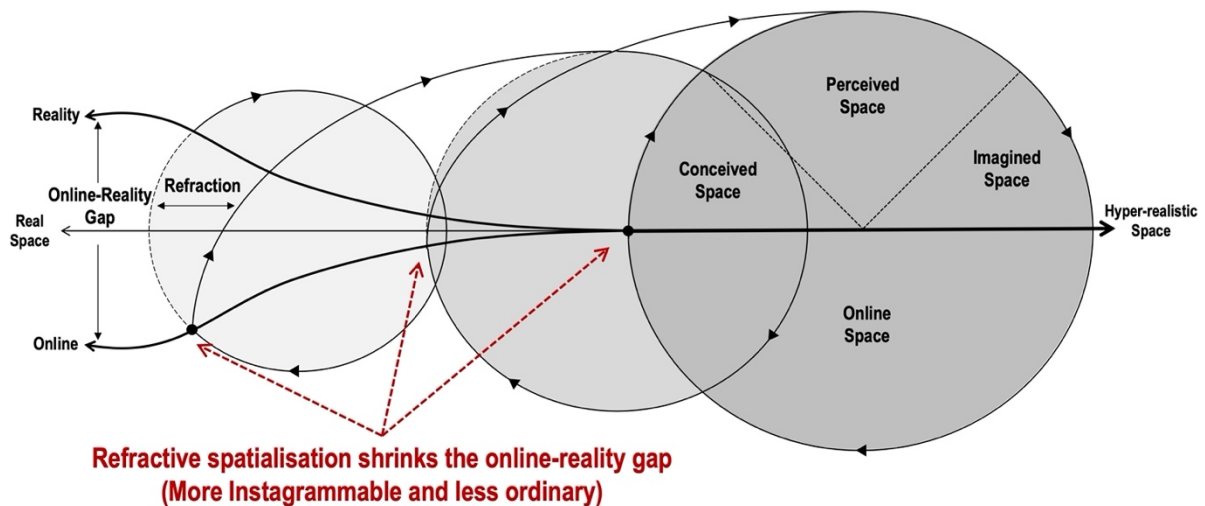


Figure 8-3. Process of Refractive Spatialisation in the Online-Reality Gap

From a global perspective, refractive spatialisation in contemporary cities takes place with the dynamic transformations of time-space compression of technological innovations, the reconfiguration of global industries (post-industrial cities), and the new flows of information and knowledge in the network society (Castells, 1991; 2010; Sassen, 1991; Harvey, 1990; Low, 2017; Urry & Larsen, 2011). The new global logics and flows frame and influence the new spatialisation at the neighbourhood scale in Seoul. Thus, translocalities are simultaneously developed in the interconnected links between reality, conception, imagery and virtuality to satisfy multi-dynamic localities incorporated into global networks and markets (Castells, 1991; 2010; Low, 2017). Yeonnam-dong had been transformed by the online selection of specific localities into hyper-realistic and translocal spaces as shown by the empirical evidence of refractive spatialisation in this thesis. In the shrinking of the online-reality gap, financial investment transforms visibly “unattractive” spaces (the forgettable spaces) into Instagrammable spaces (See Figure 8-3). This process proceeds until the gap disappears in the “perfect” condition of a gentrified and commercialised neighbourhood.

Refractive spatialisation provides opportunities for monetising ordinary neighbourhoods in order to satisfy the diverse desires and fantasies of individuals, reinforced by translocal spectacles (See Table 8-1). This new system of spatialisation triggered by the online-reality gap has caused the rapid acceleration of Yeonnam-dong's gentrification and commercialisation.

Table 8-1. Theory of Refractive Spatialisation

Level of Space	Theoretical Framework	Key Findings	Productions	Roles & Influences
Imagined Space	Alternative Value System of Individuals	Staged Photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic photos and videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aestheticisation of Individual impressions • Visualisation of sign value
	Demand for Hyper-realistic Space	Digital Picturesque	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive development within online imagery • Demand for Instagrammable spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realisation of potential profits from Instagrammable spaces
Online Space	Valorisation of Hybrid Space	Online Code for Hyper-realistic Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online reference spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardisation of Instagrammable representations • Impact on pre-planned tours (decision-making process)
Perceived Space	Attention-driven Consumer Cultures	Aesthetic Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective blog posts and place-images (the online code) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of the new staged authenticity and tourist gaze
	Spatial Formation of Symbolic Values	Instagrammable Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial elements of Instagrammable spaces for visual impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardisation of Instagrammable settings
Conceived Space	Financial Triggers	Online-Reality Gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instagrammable spaces • Gentrifying neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destruction of spatial origins and contexts • Commercialisation of Yeonnam-dong • Trigger to refractive spatialisation driven by symbolic values

	New System of Spatialisation	Refractive Spatialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monetisation of Instagrammable spaces • Translocality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration of gentrification through refractive spatialisation
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8.3 Addressing the Aims and Contributions

This section addresses the overall aim of this research which was to examine how a new flow of capital liquidity promoted by uneven online networks impacts on the production of space in the new forms of gentrification in Seoul, a post-industrial and advanced capitalist city. This has research conceptualised the changing logics and systems of financialised urban spaces. For example, commercial strategies in global cities (London, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Shanghai and New York) are oriented toward the standardisation of hipster tastes, popularised in online, to strengthen mobility of the money derived from digital technologies and globalisation with low-cost carriers, online platforms (for delivery, taxi and rental houses), social media, digital messengers, and online payment systems. These cases of new spatial transformations in relation to globalised tastes show how capital liquidity in globalised and digitalised urban space triggers distorted and refractive spatialisation under existing dynamics such as the spatial fix (Harvey 2001) and the quaternary circuit (Aalbers 2008). Nevertheless, while digital platforms (including social media) and data-sharing have never completely determined the outcome of spatialisation, they have affected the direction and speed of changing spatialisations through the introduction of alternative socio-economic practices – virtual gatherings, online transactions, remote working, online university courses and online entertainment - which have taken place in physical space and have been accelerated in new everyday ways with the global Covid-19 pandemic.

The key findings of staged photography, the digital picturesque, the online code, aesthetic tourism, Instagrammable settings, the online-reality gap and refractive spatialisation, are not only driven in the dialectical circuit of the different levels of space, but also activate the spatial circuit through social actors – tourists, bloggers, small business owners, landlords and investors – in the transition to the attention-driven economy. By advancing an empirical understanding of Yeonnam-dong’s gentrification, the theory of refractive spatialisation developed from the main findings in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 contributes to shifting knowledge of contemporary spatialisation from the Lefebvrian geography of modern cities toward the hybrid (online-reality) dynamics of contemporary urban spaces triggered by the online-reality gap as well as the rent gap (Smith 1996; 2008). The key findings of this research are

incorporated into refractive spatialisation to articulate new knowledge of contemporary gentrification under conditions of digitalised capital liquidity in the ubiquitous interaction between global networks and individual digital devices in space.

8.4 Implications for Future Urban Policy and Strategy

As this research provides empirical evidence on how online data and platforms affect the built environment in terms of the aesthetic strategies of businesses and the symbolic consumption culture, the key findings contribute to areas of online strategies in future urban planning. The regulation of online space is needed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of urban management. Online networks and systems have already started to influence the multi-relational and dynamic operations of urban systems in contemporary cities through traditional plans for urban infrastructures (transport, food supply, energy, water, sewerage, health, education, defence and security). For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, digital infrastructure for the NHS test and trace system, working from home, and online public supports such as remote medical services and tax services has played a core role in addressing urgent social and health demands and goals in urban scale. There could be considered in future urban planning – for example, strategic deurbanization and revitalisation of suburban areas for housing supply by conducting online space planning for remote work systems and e-public services.

Similarly, using digital technologies and online data is becoming more important in urban policy and strategy in responding to the diversity and complexity of modern society. By understanding mechanisms of spatial transformations through online networks, the state's approach to urban planning can focus on interconnections between real space and online practices. Moreover, qualitative data collected extensively and quickly from online space can be used to decipher complex meanings and relationships in globalised and digitalised urban dynamics. Such data analysis can provide solutions to future urban problems that might occur in the “metaverse” of 3D virtual spaces connected to real socio-economic systems – business, education, entertainment, volunteering, social gathering and so on instead of physical mobility.

Currently, urban strategies in city centres require an alternative approach in the context of ubiquitous international transactions and the increased mobility of wealth. Planners and policymakers need to understand the new structures and mobility of wealth in the hybrid

(online-reality) dynamics of contemporary cities. Global tech giant like Google, Amazon and Apple not only break tax regulations in each country, but also encroach on local high streets. These firms have snatched up local profits through online platforms, and locally-derived profits have been accumulated into a few digital technology hubs like San Francisco, significantly contributing to global inequality (Neate, 2020). When local consumers use online payment systems for global online entertainment services (e.g. Netflix or Amazon movies), their money is drained out of the local communities where they live and delivered through wireless networks to the global headquarters of financial or digital industries in New York, London, San Francisco, Boston and Shanghai.

This drainage of money from local economies leads to the economic decline and abandonment of city centres. Quite recently, big British retail brands – John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Next and Debenhams – had been recognised as ‘anchors for regeneration’ but can no longer guarantee revitalisation of UK high streets, because of global tech giants are changing consumer practices (Hanley, 2021). But at the same time, some consumer tastes are being shifted to the local and experienced-based uniqueness of city centres. Consumers pay attention to local businesses with authentic cultures, services and goods rather than to big-name franchises. This means that an alternative approach for future urban strategy should focus on how money can be circulated within local communities through online-based consumer cultures and practices.

8.5 Future Research Agenda

Future research should attempt to address the absence of Lefebvrian theory in analyses of online space (outlined in Chapter 2), because it is much current research expresses doubts about whether online space can be combined with and operationalised through the theory of the production of space. The research literature has focussed on how online networks and digital technologies have influenced economic systems, business strategies and cultural practices, but less attention has been paid to what forms of urban spaces might be able to respond to these emerging factors. There is no evidence that all physical spaces could be transformed through technologies of online space. Thus, the first task for future research should conceptualise the detailed online-reality interconnections between diverse spaces in cities from Lefebvrian perspectives deliver persuasive arguments. By successfully incorporating online factors into the Lefebvrian theory of spatialisation, a variety of

conceptual approaches could be established to clarify the complex production of contemporary urban spaces under the increasing innovations of digital technology.

The qualitative data and methods of this research have limitations in relation to clarifying the relationships between online information and spatial transformations which might be better examined with quantitative data, such as the population of a given area, the number of shops, tourist footfall, online posts, views, shares, likes, and commercial transactions. Although the findings of this thesis provide an understanding of refractive spatialisation, the detailed points of online-reality interconnections are uncertain without a combined data of qualitative and quantitative information. Furthermore, the limited numbers and groups of interviewees mean that many questions remain about social interactions, impacts on the built environment under refractive spatialisation, and the mobility of displaced artisans and artists. Future research could extend the range of interviews as well as the quantitative data to approach in-depth interconnections between online and real spaces.

In order to confirm the theory of refractive spatialisation, further case studies should be carried out in other cities and countries. Seoul is one of the global leading cities for digital connection through cutting-edge technologies and online infrastructures (see Chapter 4), but it also has its specific context of urbanisation and politics – the Two Million Housing Drive and New Town Projects (1980-90s) under the 32-year military dictatorship. Furthermore, South Korea has a distinctive ideology of social norms and status formed from traditional Confucianism and modern capitalism during industrialisation and economic growth (Lett, 1998). Contemporary cities in most developed countries have been globalised and standardised since the 1980s under neoliberal capitalism (Castells; 1991; 2010; Harvey, 1990; 2001; Sassen, 1991; Smith, 1996; 2008), but traditional cultures have had particular effects on the distinctive production of urban spaces, and online space has become another of the diverse factors influencing how urban space is produced and changed. Future research could focus on how online space interacts or collides with existing contexts, and how the different interconnections in cities transform the logics and systems of traditional spatialisation. In particular, it could examine whether Western theories of space - including Lefebvrian theory - applicable in Eastern cities in, for example, Korea, Japan and China.

Finally, with digital technologies developing and improving every year, it may be necessary to trace changing patterns of online-reality interconnections over time. Covid is accelerating the development and use of digital platforms and practices such as remote working, online lectures, and smartphone applications for public services in developed countries, oriented toward contactless but remotely-connected lifestyles. As discussed in the literature review,

changing systems of social relationships and commercial activities, departing from existing norms and practices, could transform the flow of the production of the built environment. In the same way the Cyworld mini blog changed the cultures of younger Koreans in the 2000s, a new digital environment like, for instance, the “metaverse” could shift traditional spatialisation to a digital dynamic.

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Appendix 1: List of Blog Posts (Blog code, Name of blogger, Theme, URL)

- 2010-012, Hanatour, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/hanatour/140115697134>
- 2010-106, Hersuja, Wine and restaurant review blogger,
<http://emptyh.blog.me/110087789298>
- 2010-122, Hersuja, Wine and restaurant review blogger,
<http://emptyh.blog.me/110092320820>
- 2010-161, Minj74, Travel blogger, <http://minj74.blog.me/100109539496>
- 2010-164, Eshita, Cartoon blogger, <http://eshita.tistory.com/59>
- 2010-199, Zoripong, Professional travel blogger, <http://zoripong.com/30088426129>
- 2010-207, Younghwan, Korean heritage blogger, <http://younghwan12.tistory.com/2741>
- 2010-319, Neozest, Personal blogger, <http://neozest.blog.me/130088521672>
- 2010-328, Choie47, Former civil servant of Yeonnam-dong and personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/choie47/110081695788>
- 2010-366, Azulejos, Yeonnam-dong resident and travel blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/azulejos82/120120488762>
- 2010-373, Oh-happyday, Member of Mapo-gu Council and personal blogger, <http://oh-happyday.tistory.com/5>
- 2011-073, Sam4forever, Restaurant review blogger, <http://blog.daum.net/sam4forever/75>
- 2011-095, Neomawang, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/neomawang/110123908271>
- 2011-103, Wedgeshot, Wine and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/wedgeshot/70122755039>
- 2011-107, Baenamsan, Chinese food culture blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/wedgeshot/70125584117>
- 2011-120, Symin67, Blogger influencer of restaurant review,
<https://blog.naver.com/symin67/40132203410>
- 2011-140, Melbourne, Blogger influencer of restaurant review,
<http://melburne.blog.me/130101078803>
- 2011-152, Bimirya, Blogger influencer and professional restaurant reviewer,
<https://blog.naver.com/mardukas/100126070016>

2011-153, Bimirya, Blogger influencer and professional restaurant reviewer,
<https://blog.naver.com/mardukas/100140993861>

2011-189, Nokdu, Blogger influencer of restaurant review,
<http://hsong.egloos.com/3253090>

2011-199, Ancine, Yeonnam-dong's restaurant blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/ancinedining/10114500083>

2011-213, Ilhai, Restaurant review blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/ilhai/120126468616>

2011-248, Jinnia, Travel blogger, <http://jinnia.tistory.com/155>

2011-254, PlaceMAK, Yeonnam-dong's arts gallery blog,
<http://placemak.blog.me/20139141826>

2011-294, 79webe, Estate agents blog, <https://blog.naver.com/79webe/60131765031>

2011-347, Ninano30, Restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/ninano30/10114137390>

2011-359, Zodiac911, Designer, traveller and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/zodiac911/150103505313>

2011-375, Azulejos82, Travel writer and blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/azulejos82/120122328850>

2011-378, Aeris80, Wine, travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/aeris80/100141191701>

2011-443, Mtgold, Travel blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/mtgold/100141170268>

2011-466, Carriesarah, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/carriesarah/144269021>

2011-484, Chiffonade, Cooking and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/chiffonade/130122642082>

2011-536, Beirut, Coffee blogger, <http://beirut.tistory.com/200>

2012-060, Azuma, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<http://dsmtjr0901.blog.me/60174420782>

2012-100, Matsooni, Restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/imcyl/110151695039>

2012-164, Purin927, Personal blogger, <http://purin927.blog.me/40168016015>

2012-174, Fcb22, Photography and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/fcb22/90142494382>

2012-191, Redpanda7, Travel blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/redpanda7/100169203449>

2012-244, Olive1018, Personal blogger, <http://olive1018.blog.me/40167858854>

2012-302 , For2003, Restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/for2003/70144881766>

2012-369, Bruprin, Restaurant review blogger, <http://bass007.tistory.com/1973>

2012-410, Stylefish, Fashion consultant and fashion blogger,
<http://stylefish.co.kr/110146646027>

2012-447, Foodbar, Influencer of Coffee and tea blog,
<https://blog.naver.com/foodbar/150135046645>

2012-462, Zoripong, Professional travel blogger, <http://zoripong.com/30140163244>

2012-596, M25, Lifestyle blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/m25m25m25/110149138324>

2012-606, Sister-K, Personal blogger, <http://please66.blog.me/130149056357>

2012-611, Suinmelong, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/suinmelong/100163229783>

2012-678, Gomasil, Professional travel blogger, http://gomasil_com.blog.me/30150823920

2012-743, Moaol, Travel blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/cotb890/90139052842>

2013-084, Saltdanji, Salt blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/saltdanji/140193649718>

2013-140, Toki_s, Interior design blogger, http://toki_s.blog.me/120188911133

2013-252, Delicate44, Personal blogger, <http://delicate44.blog.me/80201059353>

2013-309, Zoomanet, Yeonnam-dong arts and culture organisation blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/zoomanet/120199005331>

2013-330, Bimirya, Blogger influencer and professional restaurant reviewer,
<https://blog.naver.com/mardukas/100183984037>

2013-425, Cider99, Writing blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/cider99/60193532829>

2013-429, Waterjin, Personal blogger, <http://waterjin.tistory.com/94>

2013-480, Plspflsp, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/plspflsp/130178420643>

2013-494, Fioraness, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/fioraness/10180508082>

2013-542, Cassie007, Camping blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/cassie007/196420012>

2013-606, Chsart1112, Travel blogger, <http://chsart1112.blog.me/150175327074>

2013-614, Piston222, Photography blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/piston222/120197999547>

2013-650, Junlovehyun, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/junlovehyun/150172859301>

2014-026, Barndining, Food and travel blogger,
https://blog.naver.com/barndining_/220165189590

2014-076, Dnntiziplus, Travel blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/dnntiziplus/220163129626>

2014-087, Rhdmswls14, Travel blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/rhdmswls14/220040529819>

2014-312, Soulbird, Personal blogger, <http://soulbird.blog.me/220109951420>

2014-339, Grenni, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/grenni/130188951662>

2014-375, Tuktuk_yn, Hospital blog, https://blog.naver.com/tuktuk_yn/220203387742

2014-473, Ddukbann, Estate agent blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/ddukbann/220106291364>

2014-525, Masuking7, <https://blog.naver.com/masuking7/220032920221>

2014-526, Livingnart, LACC's market blog,
<https://blog.naver.com/livingnart/220042114095>

2014-528, Misomeeee, Travel blogger, <http://misomeeee.blog.me/10189755067>

2014-540, Aluvion, Wine blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/aluvion/220107825697>

2014-559, Lbj3557, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/lbj3557/220149824762>

2014-585, Diskek7, Personal blogger, <http://diskek7.blog.me/220160957788>

2014-707, Sooyons203, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/sooyons203/220165995132>

2014-780, Mixdress, Personal blogger, <http://mixdress.blog.me/220061555572>

2014-939, Realty partners, Estate agency blog, <http://realtypartners.co.kr/220177956926>

2014-945, AREX_blog, Official AREX blog,
https://blog.naver.com/arex_blog/220007219826

2015-020, Flowerdeer7, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/flowerdeer7/220523436567>

2015-092, Sustainablog, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<http://sustainablog.blog.me/220471091227>

2015-115, Woosoosa_lim, Fashion blogger,
https://blog.naver.com/woosoosa_lim/220383731517

2015-152, Honeyjuny, Bread blogger, <http://honeyjuny.blog.me/220328715999>

2015-261, Kebhana, Hana bank official blog, <http://blog.kebhana.com/902>

2015-269, Lallajamie, Food blogger, <http://lallajamie.blog.me/220387709227>

2015-277, Ohnobaby, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/ohnobaby/220535914159>

2015-335, Fromj402, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/fromj402/220301679644>

2015-368, Hanabro00, Travel blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/hanabro00/220235304226>

2015-375, Art_platz, Handcraft blogger, <http://artplatz.kr/220358507562>
2015-403, Yjh0226, Knitting blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/yjh0226/220539929738>
2015-437, Rosearam, Antique blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/rosearam/220306831783>
2015-551, Pinitol, Climbing blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/pinitol/220478394739>
2015-562, Cuy0218, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/cuy0218/220547589310>
2015-723, Yellownoda, Restaurant review blogs,
<https://blog.naver.com/yellownoda/220376066633>
2015-791, Joozoo32, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/joozoo32/220377392288>
2015-834, I_free_art, Food blogger, https://blog.naver.com/i_free_art/220579928981
2016-004, Benzi003, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/benzi003/220759509176>
2016-035, Sooyong8721, Travel blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/sooyong8721/220776667459>
2016-105, Qubix, Travel blogger, <http://qubix.tistory.com/1546>
2016-163, Dldmswl415, Travel blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/dldmswl415/220837471632>
2016-319, Zrlol87, Personal blogger, <http://zrlol87.blog.me/220729101800>
2016-333, Recipeofsong, Personal blogger, <http://recipeofsong.blog.me/220701829953>
2016-360, Devildiet, Diet blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/devildiet/220845870294>
2016-385, Jjijjil, Photography blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/jjijjil/220820084934>
2016-469, Lightsout, Travel and photo blogger, <http://ultraorange.co.kr/220869164823>
2016-524, Sosoifree, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/sosoifree/220768305656>
2016-582, Icleshine, Estate agency blog, <https://blog.naver.com/icleshine/220822984688>
2016-631, Rladudrhkd31, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/rladudrhkd31/220596203026>
2016-865, Bblabbla, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/bblabbla/220846207372>
2016-918, Rladudrhkd31, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/rladudrhkd31/220703294992>
2016-949, Hongdaeoffice, Estate agency blog, <http://blog.daum.net/0165913329/197>
2017-088, Sun814105, Travel blogger, <http://bboholic.com/221112445555>
2017-226, Sin_trust, Personal blogger, https://blog.naver.com/sin_trust/221138483166
2017-255, Rimm1226, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/rimm1226/221106651598>
2017-484, Slo_olo, Personal blogger, https://blog.naver.com/slo_olo/221005746120
2017-520, Audtjisl841510, Personal blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/audtjisl841510/221102211419>

2017-651, Son2306, Personal blogger, <http://sonsweet.net/221113227140>
2017-741, Soooooong2, Personal blogger, <http://songsongyi.com/221148172656>
2017-786, Slo_olo, Personal blogger, https://blog.naver.com/slo_olo/221015643610
2017-866, Gk4216, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/gk4216/221082217271>
2017-892, Wkwmd81, Travel blogger, <http://kimsujung.co.kr/221118808571>
2018-001, Unique1028, Travel blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/unique1028/221421098778>
2018-004, Ssyj963, Food blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/ssyj963/221414950408>
2018-005, Bonbon_mikan, Travel blogger,
https://blog.naver.com/bonbon_mikan/221422441254
2018-009, Leedan2, Travel and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/leedan2/221392356210>
2018-061, Parisunset, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/parisunset/221390543785>
2018-206, Sung2gamja, Restaurant review and shopping blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/sung2gamja/221407757658>
2018-283, Red2270, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/red2270/221392951723>
2018-390, Eusia, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/eusia/221418126410>
2018-416, Yeanzz, Travel, fashion, and café blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/yeanzz/221422103873>
2018-425, Happy_hworld, Beauty and fashion blogger,
https://blog.naver.com/happy_hworld/221393082992
2018-456, C_viewpoint, Personal blogger,
https://blog.naver.com/c_viewpoint/221427548211
2018-473, Hyosunv, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/hyosunv/221427861479>
2018-493, P1ayme, Beauty and restaurant review blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/p1ayme/221374012335>
2018-523, Sr3d, Personal blogger, <https://blog.naver.com/sr3d/221385602335>
2018-878, Bora_2010, Travel blogger, https://blog.naver.com/bora_2010/221297703307
2018-971, Seouldatepop, Business blogger,
<https://blog.naver.com/seouldatepop/221319133087>

Appendix 2: List of Interviewees

20-30s Korean Millennials (interview code, Age, Sex, Job, Interview date)

- KM01: 30s, Male, Office worker, 26 August 2018.
KM02: 30s, Male, Landscape architect, 28 August 2018.
KM03: 30s, Female, Architect, 29 August 2018.
KM04: 30s, Male, Urban Planning Researcher, 30 August 2018.
KM05: 30s, Female, Office worker, 30 August 2018.
KM06, 30s, Male, Journalist, 31 August 2018.
KM07, 30s, Male, PhD student, 01 September 2018.
KM08, 30s, Male, Film-maker, 03 September 2018.
KM09, 20s, Female, Hospital staff, 10 September 2018.
KM10, 20s, Female, Japanese tourist (office worker), 16 September 2018.
KM11, 30s, Female, Education content creator, 18 September 2018.
KM12, 30s, Male, Office worker, 28 September 2018.
KM13, 30s, Male, Landscape architect, 05 October 2018.
KM14, 30s, Male, Office worker, 07 October 2018.
KM15, 20s, Female, Japanese tourist (researcher), 16 September 2018.

Business Owners and Artists in Yeonnam-dong (interview code, Sex, Job, Interview date)

- BOA01: Male, Restaurant owner, 05 October 2018.
BOA02: Male, Marketing manager of café, 16 October 2018.
BOA03: Male, Restaurant owner, 23 October 2018.
BOA04, Male, Coffee bean distributor / barista / café owner, 28 November 2018.
BOA05: Male, Local resident / painter / writer, 11 October 2018.
BOA06: Male, Bar owner (Hongdae) / Art exhibition organiser (Yeonnam-dong), 17
October 2018.
BOA07: Female, Artist, 18 October 2018 (Written interview).
BOA08: Male, Leather craftsman, 04 November 2018.
BOA09: Female, Gift shop owner, 22 October 2018 (Written interview).
BOA10: Female, Director of arts and culture organisation, 25 October 2018.

Property Experts and Local Agencies (interview code, Sex, Job, Interview date)

- PELA01: Male, Property researcher (Regional economics), 07 September 2018.
PELA02: Female, Property researcher (Regional economics), 06 October 2018.
PELA03: Male, Property consultant / activist / writer, 08 October 2018.
PELA04: Male, Yeonnam-dong property agency owner, 21 October 2018.
PELA05: Female, Yeonnam-dong property agency owner (40-year-old business), 22 October 2018.

Blog Influencers (interview code, Sex, Blog theme, Followers, Visitors, Interview date)

- BI01: Male, Restaurant review and tech blogger, Unknown followers, 20,917,059 visitors (January 2021), 05 October 2018.
BI02: Male, Restaurant review blogger, 16,874 followers, 2,919,057 visitors (January 2021), 11 October 2018.
BI03: Male, Restaurant review, wine and travel blogger, 128,096 followers, 61,130,757 visitors (January 2021), 24 October 2018.

Yeonnam-dong Residents (interview code, Age, Sex, Job, Property ownership, Interview date)

- YR01: 50s, Female, Local activist, Landlord, 09 October 2018.
YR02: 50s, Female, Artist, Landlord, 09 October 2018.
YR03: 50s, Female, Housewife, Tenant, 09 October 2018.
YR04: 60s, Female, Housewife, Landlord, 09 October 2018.
YR05: 20s, Male, Writer, Unknown, 29 October 2018.

Seoul Metropolitan Government Officials (Sex, Expertise, Role, Interview date)

- SMGO01: Male, Large-scale urban developments, Project researcher, 08 November 2018.
SMGO02: Male, Urban planning, Planner, 29 November 2018.
SMGO03: Female, Urban regeneration projects of neighbourhoods, Project manager, 04 December 2018.

SMGO04: Female, Urban regeneration projects of neighbourhoods, Project manager, 06
December 2018.

Appendix 3: Documentary Case Study of Yeonnam-dong: 1970-2010s

The Spatialisation of Urban Infrastructure: Working-class Neighbourhood and Little Chinatown in the 1970-1980s

The 1970s urbanisation of Yeonnam-dong created socially-mixed communities consisting of the socially high-ranking class, the middle-class, the working-class and Chinese migrant families. After the Korean War, Yeonnam-dong's built environment consisted of inadequate houses mixed with squatter areas, and lacking infrastructure. Lowland farms located on the riverbank had been notoriously prone to the Hangang River floods every rainy season in summer (Kim, S-S, 2013; Kwon, 1984; Park, E-S, 2014). The post-Korean War Seoul plan focused on improving urban infrastructures in the 1970s-1980s, Yeonnam-dong benefited from the construction of the Hangang embankment and the Gangbyeon Expressway (1969-1972) as protection from the summer floods; and the construction of the Seongsan Bridge (1980) and Yanghwa Bridge (1984) connected Mapo-gu to Yeongdeungpo, which was a main CBD before the Gangnam New Town development (Kwon, 1984; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017). These infrastructures not only led to the emergence of new urban areas located between Hongdae and Shinchon, but also led to improved living standards in Yeonnam-dong and its neighbouring areas – Yeonhui-dong, Seogyo-dong, Mangwon-dong, Seongsan-dong and Donggyo-dong. This attracted the attention of Seoul's middle-class residents to Yeonnam-dong, especially because it was located next to Yeonhui-dong, Seogyo-dong and Donggyo-dong, known as 'wealthy neighbourhoods' at the time, until the high-income families moved from Gangbuk (North) to the Gangnam New Town (South) (Kwon, 1984; Urbanplay, 2017). As a result of these urban improvements in flood defences, infrastructure and access to urban areas, many middle-class residents moved into Yeonnam-dong (Kim, S-S, 2013; Kwon, 1984; Park, E-S, 2014). Good public transport linked Yeonnam-dong to Seoul's city centre where the National Assembly Hall, Supreme Court and Supreme Prosecutors' office were located before they were moved to the Gangnam New Town in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For this geographical reason, politicians in the parliament and public officials in the legal service, perceived as a socially high-ranking class, had lived among working-class houses around Yeonnam-dong until they moved to Gangnam.

Yeonnam-dong had cultivated a particular place-image of the working-class and Chinese migrant community in contrast to the wealthy place-image of neighbouring areas, Yeonhui-dong, Seogyo-dong and Donggyo-dong. Four former presidents and prominent politicians had lived in these areas which consisted mainly of expensive, detached houses. Despite the overall working-class image, Yeonnam-dong was actually made up of two areas: the wealthy southwest and poor northeast. Southwest Yeonnam-dong had well-organised, big plots of lands for the detached houses developed during the 1970s land readjustment project including the wealthy neighbouring areas. This was in contrast to the northeast where small working-class houses, narrow streets, the shabby Dongjin Market and Chinese restaurants were geographically blocked in by the two railways and socially neglected (Urbanplay, 2017). As geographical access to main urban areas was poor, the northeast was relatively isolated and disconnected from neighbouring areas and as a result, declined significantly. In addition, the small, irregular plots of lands in maze-like streets, excluded from the land readjustment project, made for cheap rents, attracting working-class families and Chinese migrants who had been displaced by redevelopment of the city centre in the 1970s (Lee, K-W, 2015; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016). The first incomers to the northeast created a streetscape of the low-income community. Whilst the residential area of the high-income or socially high-ranking class in the southwest was perceived as the wealthy neighbourhood like Yeonhui-dong, Seogyo-dong and Donggyo-dong, the first incomers to the northeast produced a stereotypical working-class community in Seoul. This socio-economic dichotomy between the two areas reflected the different infrastructure and living conditions in Yeonnam-dong, even though the dominant place-image of the working-class and Chinese migrant community remained strong.

Chinese migrants gathered in Yeonnam-dong after the movement of the Seoul Overseas Chinese High School to Yeonhui-dong in 1969, creating place-images of Little Chinatown. The China-Korea Treaty of 1882, an unequal treaty, forced Korea to allow Chinese businesses in Seoul and the Seoul Overseas Chinese Primary School was established in Myeong-dong in 1909, which by the 1970s, was the third largest Chinese international school in the world (Kim, J-W, 1996; Urbanplay, 2017). Although Chinatowns had been formed in Seoul's city centre for a century – Myeong-dong, Sogong-dong and Gwansu-dong (Han, 2011; Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017), the 1970s discriminatory laws and policies of the government restricted the economic expansion of Chinese migrants in order to diminish Chinese economic influence and reduce the size of their communities (Han, 2011; Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017). This stringent restriction on Chinese migrants' possession of land in South Korea ruined Chinese businesses and their enclaves. Furthermore, the city centre redevelopment projects led by the state displaced the

Seoul Overseas Chinese High School and Chinese migrants. They were dispersed over outskirts of Seoul and their businesses were confined to cheap Chinese restaurants and the cloth trade between the two countries (Park, E-S, 2014, Urbanplay, 2017). The Chinese migrants displaced from the city centre moved into cheap Yeonnam-dong and started mainly Chinese restaurant businesses (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017). Their authentic Chinese food cultures with cheap Shandong home-made meals in small restaurants of the north-eastern area popularised Yeonnam-dong as “Little Chinatown” in Seoul.

The northeast of Yeonnam-dong, hemmed in by the two railways in close proximity to the city centre and university towns – Hongdae and Shinchon, had less traffic and cheap rents, and in the 1970s taxi drivers’ cafes grew up along a main street accessible by crossing the railways through narrow tunnels (Urbanplay, 2017). These small eateries not only provided fast, cheap square meals for taxi drivers, but also washrooms and cash exchange services for smaller notes or coins. Busy taxi drivers could park their cars easily and leave the cafes immediately after their meals and quick washes. Along with the working-class houses and Chinese restaurants, the drivers’ cafes reinforced Yeonnam-dong’s working-class cultures and place-images in Seoul.

The Spatialisation of Social Capital: Educated Incomers and the Progressive Childcare Community in the 1990s

As a result of rapid economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s, by the 1990s university graduation rate exceeded 50 per cent (Korean Education Statistics Service, 2015; Seol, 2011). But many university graduates were becoming increasingly irritated by standardised lifestyles and social competition in pursuit of successful status in South Korea’s urban middle class, promoted both by modern capitalist strategies and by traditional Confucian norms: 1) good education at top universities; 2) stable occupation in major firms or state departments; 3) successful marriage within the same (or higher) economic class; 4) high-income households and property ownership for economic prosperity; and 5) high-quality education for children and socialisation into accepted goals and social reproduction (Bourdieu, 2010a; Heo, 2015; Lett, 1998). With the strong belief, the well-educated workers and stable workforces had contributed to rapid economic development, but by the 1990s younger individuals began to question the social and mental price of achieving the same goals under repressive social norms. After the democratisation movements and the end of the 32-year

military dictatorship – Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo – of the 1960-80s, the attention of university students and educated young people turned to alternative and progressive cultures. New arts, bohemian lifestyles and forms of childcare diverged from the economic and Confucian values that young individuals felt were oppressing them (Heo, 2015; Kim, Y-T., 2018; Lett, 1998).

Hongdae's alternative cultures in art, music, design and publishing reflected the desire of the younger generation to gain unique, diverse and emancipated experiences (Buin, 2016; Choi, J-H, 2011; Park, E-S, 2014; Yoon, 2017;). The younger generation of the 1990s resisted the disciplined lives and normative expectations of the previous generation, seeking depoliticised cultures for individual pleasure (Choi & Chae, 2012; Kang, 2009). This trend led to the development of pop cultures and consumerism as well as alternative cultural movements (Choi & Chae, 2012). Progressive and experimental cultures for alternative arts, education and communities, mainly in Gangbuk (North), coexisted alongside the construction of speculative and extractive urban development in Gangnam New Town (South), where new businesses and wealth were largely concentrated in the 1990s.

There were eight universities located in Mapo and Seodaemun Districts and near major global firms based in the city centre, and the cheap residential area in Yeonnam-dong in Mapo District (Gangbuk) became attractive for young, well-educated and highly progressive residents, especially married couples in their 30s – office workers, publishers, postgraduate students and small business owners. They were interested in an alternative community for their children and in education for them beyond the institutionalised, mass production system of Korean human capital which depended heavily on competitive test results (Jeong, 1994; Park, E-S, 2014). These groups were the second incomers in Yeonnam-dong after the 1970s movement of the first incomers – the working-class and the Chinese migrant residents. This young group was highly motivated towards sharing social values – openness, diversity, fairness, dignity, humanity, education, cooperation and solidarity – in contrast to the first incomers who were seeking a better living environment for themselves (Kim, B-M, 2014; Kim, K-S, 2018; Sungmisan Maeul, 2020).

The Shinchon Co-operative Childcare Association (SCCA) and its nursery school were founded in Yeonnam-dong in 1994 (Jeong, 1994; Sungmisan Maeul, 2020). It was the first co-operative childcare community organised by local parents in South Korea (Choi, M-W, 2020; Woo, 2020). Full-time working parents had shared their concerns about alternative parenting with Byeongho Jeong, a professor of anthropology at Hanyang University (Jeong, 1994). They organised an experimental childcare community led by Professor Byeongho,

located in a two-storey detached house in Yeonnam-dong (Jeong, 1994). The SCCA was funded jointly by 35 families and at the beginning, the co-parenting nursery school took care of 40 children between four months and six years (Jeong, 1994). Before the starting the SCCA, these parents and Professor Byeongho, head of SCCA's nursery school, had examined many cases of established co-operative childcare set up in developed countries (Jeong, 1994; Kim, B-M, 2014). Alternative education programmes in these countries covered practical activities like raising animals and growing vegetables: these were seen as desirable alternatives to learning Korean and maths in the classroom. Such activities aimed to encourage children to have diverse experiences, thoughts, and values in an inclusive and tolerant environment mixing with socially vulnerable local people – immigrants and people with disabilities (Jeong, 1994; Kim, B-M, 2014). The alternative and progressive nursery school in Yeonnam-dong aimed to valorise a co-operative and co-parenting space for cultivating diverse communications and relationships in Yeonnam-dong. These aims directly contrasted with conventional Korean education and the aggressive competition for high grades in exams connected to top university entries which signified expected social success in South Korea.

This progressive community was extended from a SCCA (co-operative schooling) to being a Sungmisan Maeul (social enterprise) and emerged as a leader of a successful social movement for better local communities in Seoul, carrying out radical activities in six domains – childcare, education, living, housing, culture and leisure (Kim, B-M, 2014; Sungmisan Maeul, 2020).

The Spatialisation of Transitional Cultural Diversity: Creative Incomers and Unique Spaces in the 2000-2010s

The commercialisation of Hongdae in the 2000s triggered soaring property prices in neighbouring areas – Hapjeong-dong and Sangsu-dong - but Yeonnam-dong was not strongly influenced by it. The two railways, the Gyeonghui Yongsan Line and the Sinchon Line, surrounding the northeast of Yeonnam-dong cushioned Yeonnam-dong's property market against the economic impact of gentrified Hongdae (Yoon, 2016). However, the GLFP project, approved by the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs in 2006, transformed the railways into a wide-open green space, bringing about rapid spatial and social changes due to increasing footfall and interest from investors (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2020; Yoon, 2016). In contrast to the wealthy residential area in the southwest,

many working-class houses around Dongjin Market Street in the Northeast were converted into commercial properties run by gentrifiers – trendy fashion shops, cafes, bakeries and restaurants – displacing the original residents (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Yoon, 2016). In the transition to Hongdae becoming a tourist destination, artists and artisans displaced from Hongdae occupied derelict sites in Dongjin Market Street and set up their unique spaces with their alternative cultures – independent book shops, small galleries, coffeehouses and art workshops (Lee, K-W, 2015; Park, E-S, 2014; Urbanplay, 2017; Yoon, 2016). These spaces only temporarily fostered uniqueness and authenticity before being displaced by the trendy and aesthetic businesses of gentrification.

This third wave of incomers from Hongdae - the so-called 'cultural refugees' - were the young and creative class involved in artistic and cultural works (Shin & Lee, 2016a). They had worked in Hongdae, but by the 2010s, commercialisation had displaced them. As they required Hongdae-based supports, networks and activities in their businesses, Yeonnam-dong's quiet streets and cheap rents in close proximity to Hongdae attracted them to neglected old buildings (Kim, S-S, 2013; Park, E-S, 2014; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Yoon, 2017). By making this move to Yeonnam-dong, the creative groups did not anticipate any future spatial and economic change in Yeonnam-dong (BOA05, local and painter; BOA06, art exhibition organiser). They felt assured that the old and peaceful landscape constrained by the railways was likely to remain unchanged (Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017). Their unique and authentic spaces in the derelict streets recreated the previous environment of Hongdae filled with alternative, liberated and inspirational atmosphere. The cultural similarity between Yeonnam-dong and Hongdae appealed to urban tourists who had known old Hongdae. However, ironically, the uniqueness and authenticity created in Yeonnam-dong by the cultural refugees from Hongdae attracted commercialised businesses visibly imitating Hongdae-style shops but without its cultures. Yeonnam-dong came to be perceived as a part of Hongdae in commercial and cultural terms, transitioning from unique and authentic spaces of artists and artisans to the commercialised "alternative Hongdae" (Lee, K-W, 2015; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Urbanplay, 2017).

The small buildings and narrow streets in Yeonnam-dong made impossible for franchised businesses to start large-scale fashion or hospitality industries. This limited geographical condition, especially in Dongjin Market Street, enabled the creative incomers to run their non-mainstream businesses without threat of commercial chains (Lee, K-W, 2015; Yoon, 2016, 2017). For example, exotic bistros, good-quality coffee, independent publishers, small exhibition spaces and artists' studios were formed in pursuit of unique tastes and values

rather than large profits (Lee, K-W, 2015; Yoon, 2016, 2017). These spaces and activities fitted in well with Yeonnam-dong's peaceful landscape and atmosphere (Shin & Lee, 2016a; Yoon, 2016, 2017). Dongjin Market Street, with its maze-like geography and derelict buildings became, not only a cultural incubator for the young creative incomers to gentrifying Mapo and Seodaemun Districts, but also became a hotspot of gentrification in Yeonnam-dong during a transitional period of gentrification.

According to Park, E-S (2014), Yeonnam-dong's businesses run by creative incomers were cafes (27.08%), workshops (14.83%), publishers (12.25%), design offices (6.80%), restaurants (6.30%) and pubs (5.31%). This data shows that Yeonnam-dong provided diverse types of spaces for place-based networks to accommodate the different social groups and cultures of the incomers., These groups living in Yeonnam-dong were able to convert old residential houses into their offices, studios and shops because of the cheap rents in proximity to major firms in entertainment, film, media and publishing industries in the city centre and the CBDs (Kim, S-S, 2013; Park, E-S, 2014). As a result, the small businesses set up by young incomers started to replace residential houses in Yeonnam-dong (Park, E-S, 2014).

The creative incomers, who had experienced ruthless displacement Hongdae, were highly motivated to protect Yeonnam-dong's community united against possible threat from speculative investments. Before Yeonnam-dong was gentrified in the 2010s, many cultural organisations and movements, like the Living and Arts Creative Centre, Mojaran Co-op, Cultural Action, Eco-Horizon Institute, General Doctor, Woman's Job and Future, etc. – had been formed by the creative incomers to protect residents, shopkeepers, artists and artisans in the local community from the likely financial threat of commercial gentrification (Cultural Action, 2020; Lee, K-W, 2015; Living & Arts Creative Centre, 2020; Shin & Lee, 2016a; Woman's Job & Future, 2020). These "cultural refugees" wanted to build community solidarity for vulnerable residents and groups in the area to resist ongoing commercialisation and displacement (Lee, K-W, 2015; Shin & Lee, 2016a). They organised community-based cultural events and activities, such as the Yeonnam-dong flea market set up by the Living and Arts Creative Centre in pursuit of Yeonnam-dong's collective values and goals. In cooperation with the local community, their activities promoted cultural and social diversity in Yeonnam-dong. However, these cultural events and movements unintentionally created and reinforced a place-image of an authentic "must-see" neighbourhood in Seoul which, paradoxically, accelerated a huge wave of commercialisation.

Appendix 4: Interview Consent Form [English Version]

‘Place-images, Internet media and the changing commercial activity of gentrifying areas in Seoul, South Korea’ Consent Form

<i>Please tick the appropriate boxes</i>	Yes	No
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 00/08/2018 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.		
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed and being recorded audio.		
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study before November 2018; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.		
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.		
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.		
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		
I give permission for the interview transcription and voice recording that I provide to be deposited in the researcher’s Google Drive and NVivo 11 so it can be used for future research and learning		
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.		

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher [Minki Jeong]

Signature

Date

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