

Expert Group Meeting
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Transnational Migration , Gentrification, and Displacement: The Case of South Korea

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Quantifying International Migration

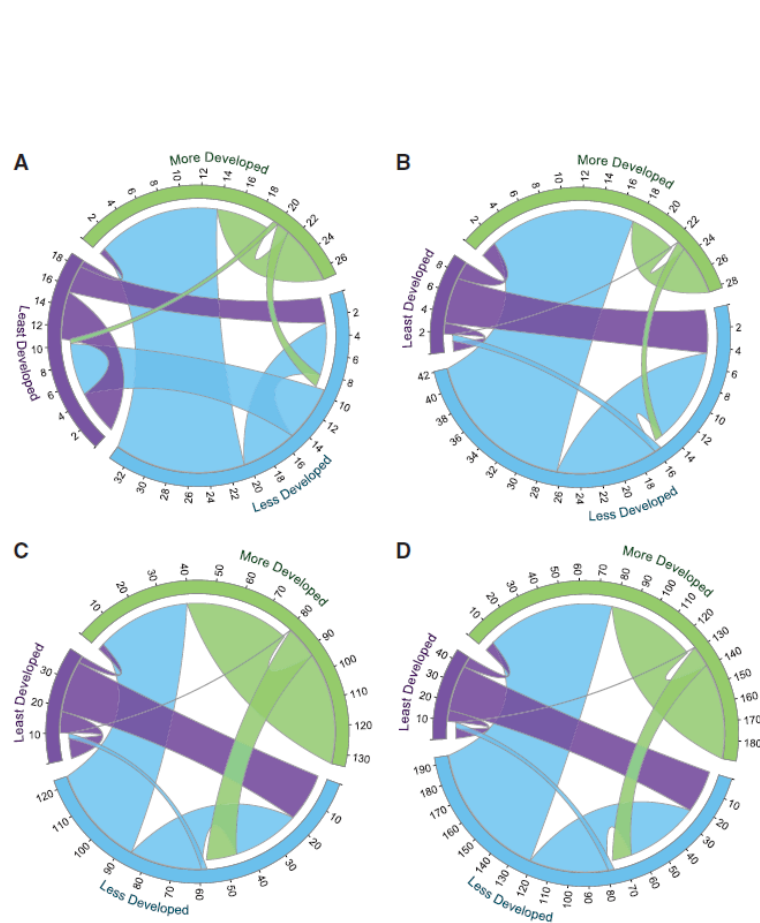


Fig. 2. Comparing estimated migrant flows to stocks in early 1990s and late 2000s. Migration flows between more developed (green), less developed (blue), and least developed (purple) countries. (A) Flows during 1990 to 1995. (B) Flows during 2005 to 2010. (C) Stock data from 1990. (D) Stock data from 2010. Tick marks on the circle segments show the number of migrants (inflows and outflows) in millions.

Source: Abel, Guy J. and Nikola Sander (28 March 2014). "Quantifying Global International Migration Flows" Science 343. 1520.

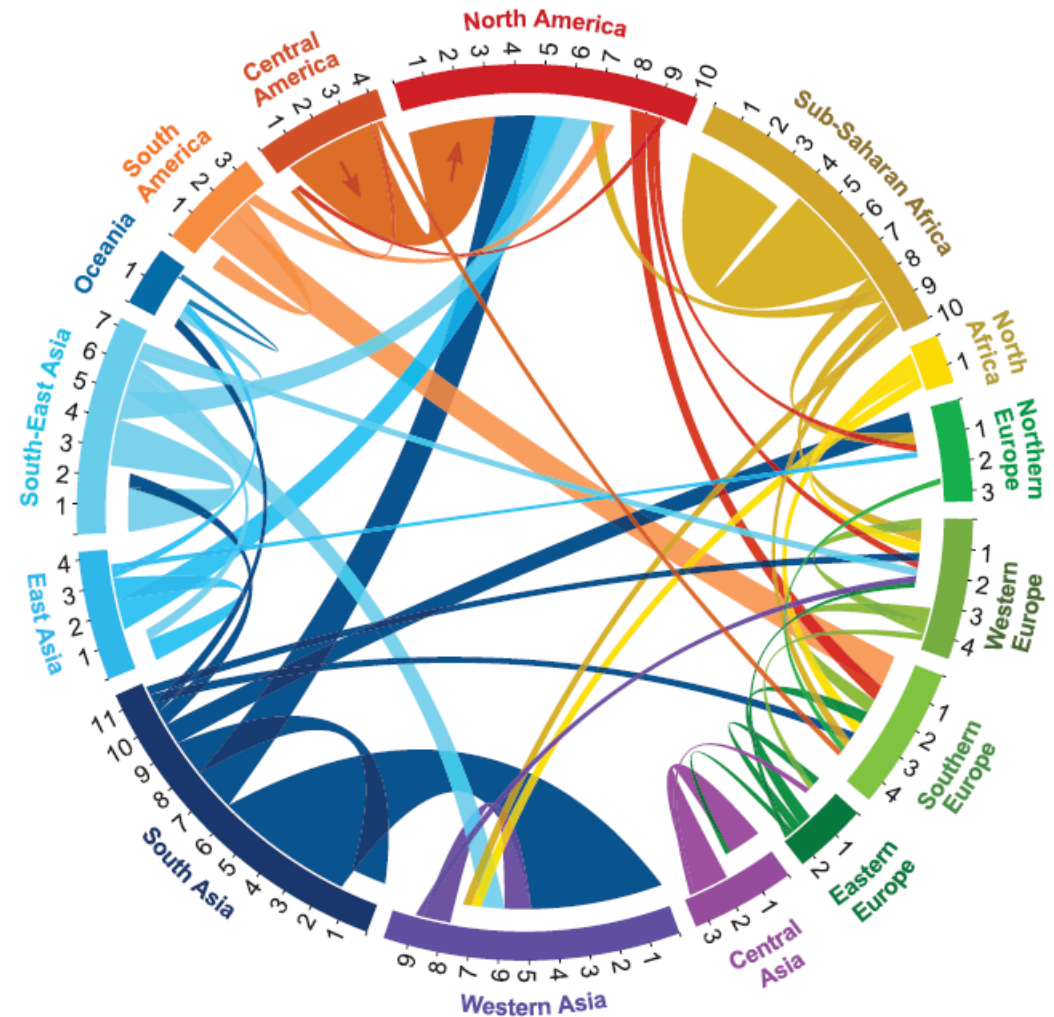


Fig. 4. Circular plot of migration flows between and within world regions during 2005 to 2010. Tick marks show the number of migrants (inflows and outflows) in millions. Only flows containing at least 170,000 migrants are shown.



<https://www.nocutnews.co.kr/news/5807822>



<https://www.hankyung.com/article/202307055849i>

(Left) Migrant Korean ancestors working in Yanbian, China;
(Right) Foreign workers entering Korea with an Employment Permit System visa

Displacement of Koreans in History

- Over 6.8 million Koreans settled across 170 countries since 1860. This history is divided into four distinct periods, with the first three highlighting displacement through migration (Yoon, 2012).
- First Period: Early Migration (1860s - 1906)
 - Choson farmers and laborers migrated to China, Russia, and Hawaii due to political and economic hardship.

Displacement of Koreans in History

Over 6.8 million Koreans settled across 170 countries since 1860. This history is divided into four distinct periods, with the first three highlighting displacement through migration (Yoon, 2012).

- Second Period: Japanese Colonial Era (1910 - 1945)
 - Displacement of landless farmers to Manchuria and Japan.
 - Political refugees and activists seeking asylum.
 - Manchurian Incident (1931) doubled Korean population in Manchuria.
 - Forced migration and drafting of Korean men for wartime labor and military service (Han 2002: 107).

Displacement of Koreans in History

- Third Period: Post-War Migration Policy (1945 - 1962)
 - Establishment of South Korea's first migration policy.
 - Students, war orphans, and interracial families move to North America.
 - 6,000 Korean women married to US soldiers relocate to the US.
 - Around 5,000 children, including war orphans and adoptees, move to the US.
 - 6,000 Korean students in the US, many settling permanently.
 - Groundwork for future immigration post-1965 US policy changes (Yu 1983: 234).

Modern Displacement of South Koreans - Gentrification

- Capital reinvestment and commodification of space lead to displacement (Clark, 2005; Lees et al., 2008).
- State-Led Urbanization in Seoul
 - Korean developmental state's role since the 1960s in shaping the urban landscape.
 - Urban redevelopment collaboration between real estate and property owners.
 - High-density construction driven by speculative market (Shin, 2009; Shin, 2011).

Modern Displacement of South Koreans - Gentrification

- Socio-Economic Hardships and Socio-Political Dynamics of Displacement
 - **Redevelopment** improves physical conditions but imposes hardship through displacement.
 - **Affordable housing demolition** to make way for middle-class infrastructure (Porteous and Smith, 2001).
 - **Struggle** against forced eviction and housing rights (Kim et al., 1998; Shin, 2008).
- However, in the current Seoul's unique gentrification path, displacement issue not a major political concern (Shin and Kim, 2015; Davidson and Lees, 2010).

Modern Displacement of non-Koreans in South Korea through Gentrification

- Korea's Demographic Shift
 - From a homogeneous society to a multicultural one.
 - The rise in foreign residents and multinational marriages.
 - Transformation into a Labor-Importing Nation

Modern Displacement of non-Koreans in South Korea - Gentrification

- Emergence of Residential Enclaves
 - Development of distinct ethnic communities within urban settings.
 - Introduction of cultural diversity in a historically uniform society.
- Case of Africa business enclave in Itaewon, Seoul, South Korea shows **displacement through gentrification**

Modern Displacement of non-Koreans in South Korea - Gentrification

African migrants showed movement across borders and within borders.

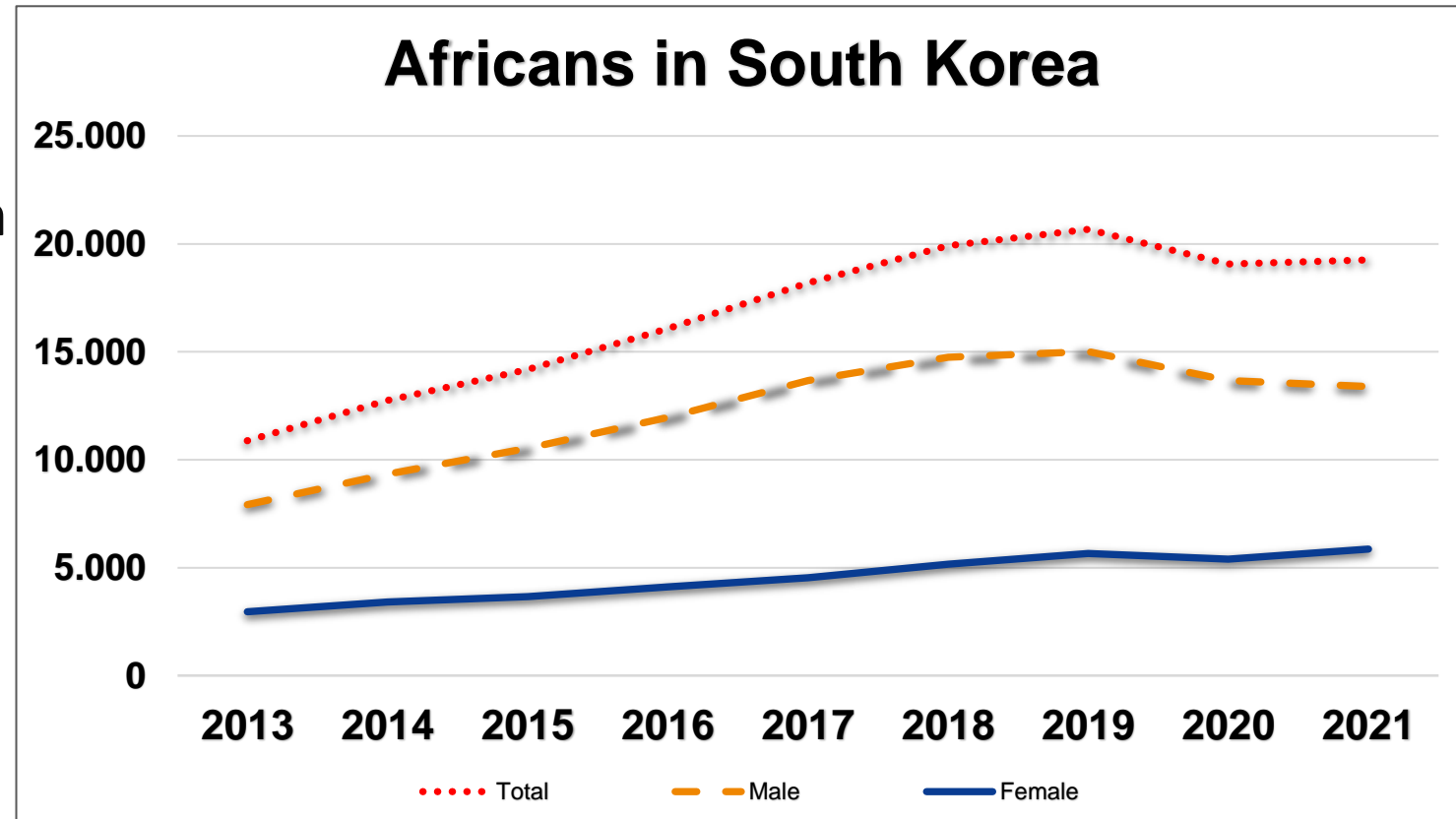


Transnational Migration - From Africa to South Korea

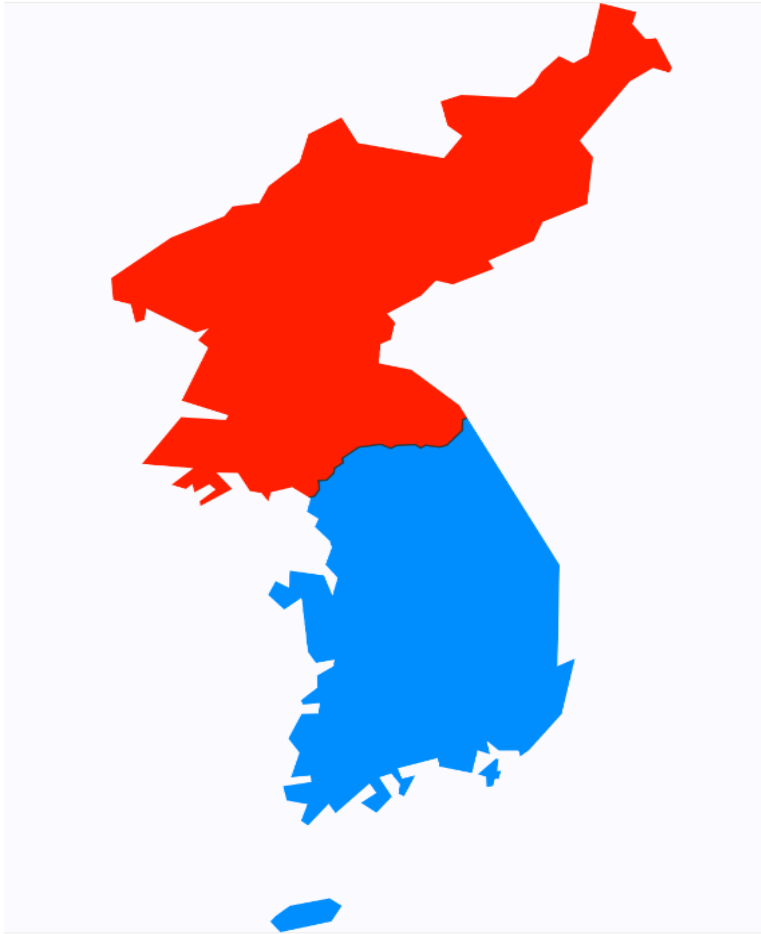
- Since the late 1980s, increase in migration especially from countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
 - Acceleration and diversification of emigration out of Africa, driven by economic opportunities and social transformation.
- The number of African migrants in South Korea is steadily growing.

Number of Africans in South Korea

2013 **10,880**
2022 **19,258**



Seoul; Itaewon

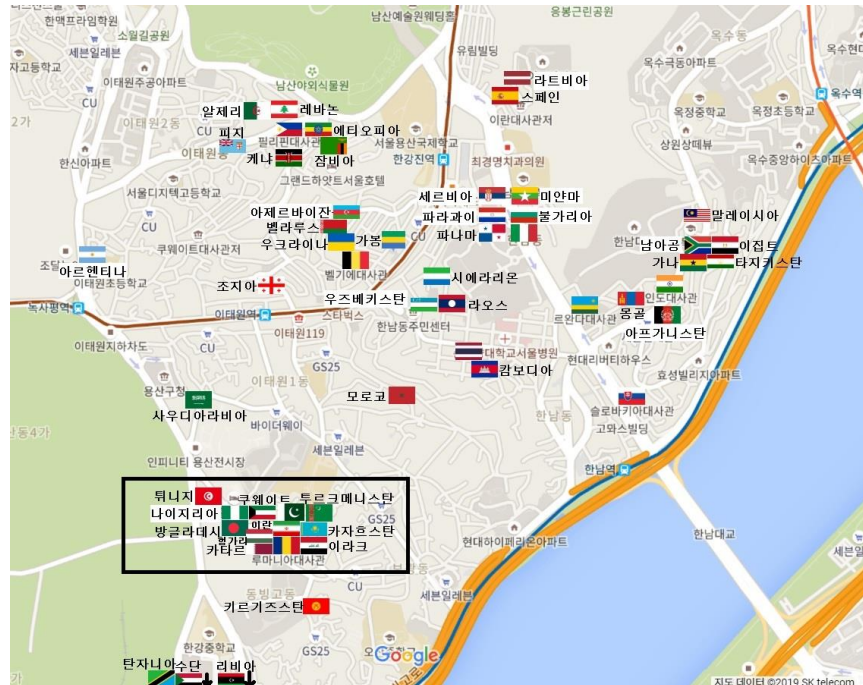


Itaewon



Africa business enclave in Itaewon

- Itaewon, Seoul's Multi-ethnic Enclave
 - With the **US military base**, **embassies**, and **Seoul Central Mosque**, Itaewon hosts residential and commercial functions for foreigners in Seoul.



Africa business enclave in Itaewon reported in Korean Daily Newspapers

朝鮮日報

사회 >

[오콘쿠오씨] 한국와서 장사하며 산전수전 8년...

배신-부도-홍수... "아프리카 상인정신으로 버텼죠"

金秀慧기자 sh
일력 2002.03.20. 20:37

가림

"그동안 고생한 거 말로 다 못해."

서울 이태원에서 아프리카식당을 운영하는 나이지리아 출신 엠마누엘 오콘쿠오(Emmanuel Okonkwo·32)씨는 한국말을 썩 잘했다. 전국의 '시장바닥'을 돌며 몸으로 익힌 말이었다.



나이지리아 출신으로 서울 이태원에서 아프리카 식당을 운영하는 엠마누엘(오른쪽에서 두번째)씨와 부인 오카마카(오른쪽에서 첫번째)씨가 직원들과 함께 직접 만든 음식을 자랑하고 있다.사진 왼쪽에서 세번째가 건물주인인 정영안씨.<a

엠마누엘씨는 아프리카의 '개성(開城) 상인'으로 불리는 이보족(族) 출신이다. 미국, 유럽, 홍콩 등지에 수만명이 넘는 한인

2002

Nigerian Hub
나이지리아 명소

WOMAN DONGA

이태원의 작은 아프리카 해피홈 레스토랑



이태원 해밀턴호텔 앞 나이지리아 타운으로 들어가는 입구에 위치한 해피홈 레스토랑. 나이지리아인 부부가 운영하고 있어 아프리카의 풍취를 제대로 느낄 수 있다. 이곳의 대표 음식인 라이스&플랜타인은 바나나처럼 생긴 아프리카 과일인 플랜타인을 튀겨 요리한 음식으로 아프

리카 음식을 처음 접하는 사람이 먹기에도 부담 없다.
영업시간 오전 12시~오후 12시 문의 02-797-3185

2005

Nigeria Town
나이지리아타운

朝鮮日報

2006

Nigeria Street
나이지리아거리

사회 > 경기·인천

숨어있는 '서울 속의 외국'들

송인동 길가에 네팔 음식점 늘어서
이태원 밤이면 나이지리아인 가득
혜화동 일요일마다 필리핀인 장터

朝鮮日報

사회 >

서울은 '작은 지구촌'... "우리가 남이가"

이태원엔 무슬림마을·흑인마을, 동대문엔 네팔거리·몽골타운...

동부이촌동 日人마을 등 시내 곳곳에 '그들만의 타운' 출추며 예배·차도르 쓴 채 쇼핑... "서울이야, 외국이야?"
"왜 남의 아내에게 함부로 말을 거냐"... 풍습 갈등도

2008

Black Neighborhood
흑인 마을

Africa business enclave in Itaewon



African Population in Seoul's Itaewon Rises

Print A+ A- Social media icons: Facebook, X, Talk, WhatsApp, YouTube, Email, Link

Itaewon, South Korea's No. 1 district for expats and foreign tourists, has seen the number of African residents rise about 80 percent over the past five years, data showed Tuesday.

A total of 706 Africans were registered as residents in Itaewon in 2009, a sharp increase from 385 in 2004, according to the Yongsan Ward office.

The rise is attributed to the area's many shops and restaurants that cater to African tastes and provides venues for friends to exchange information on life in Korea.

Africans took up around 16.4 percent of the some 2,377 foreigners living in the Itaewon area.



Source: (News article 1) https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/11/113_64096.html
(Image 1) https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/09/117_72832.html

Africa business enclave in Itaewon



1. Emerged in the 2000s
2. Low rent in the old Ihwa Market street and Hookerhill
3. Dissolution of Africa Street started in 2012 due to gentrification.

[Map] of African Street in Itaewon
- 1st African Street: Old Ihwa Market Street
- 2nd African Street: Hookerhill

Africa business enclave in Itaewon

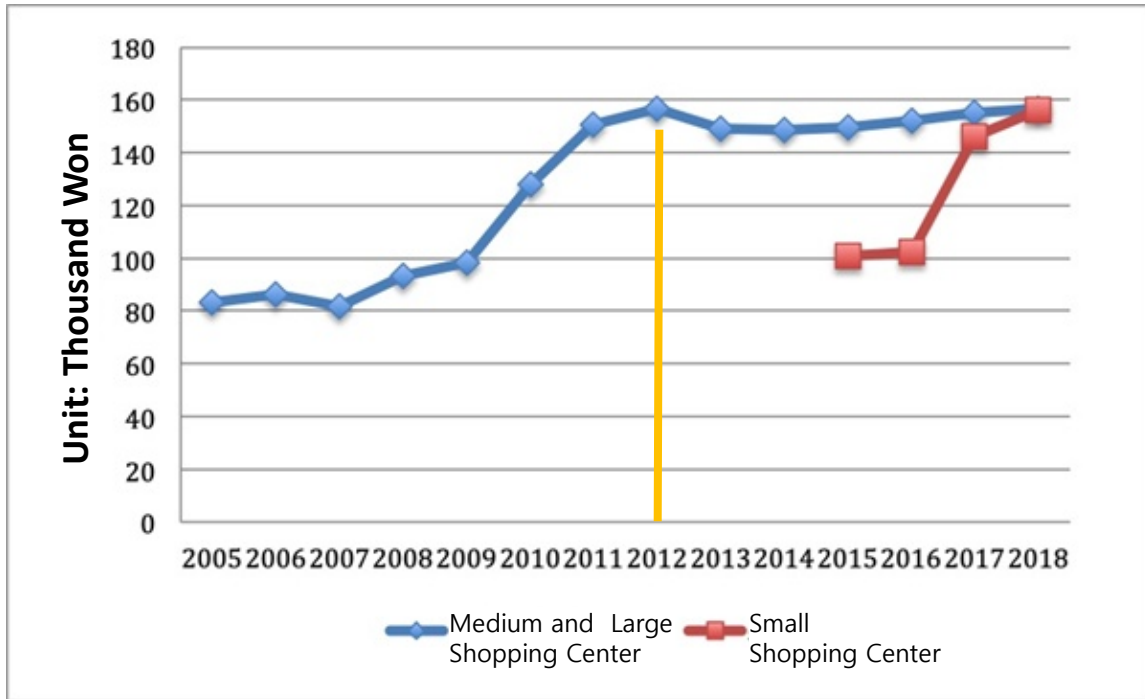


Fig. 1. Change in rent in Itaewon by year and size: 2005-2018

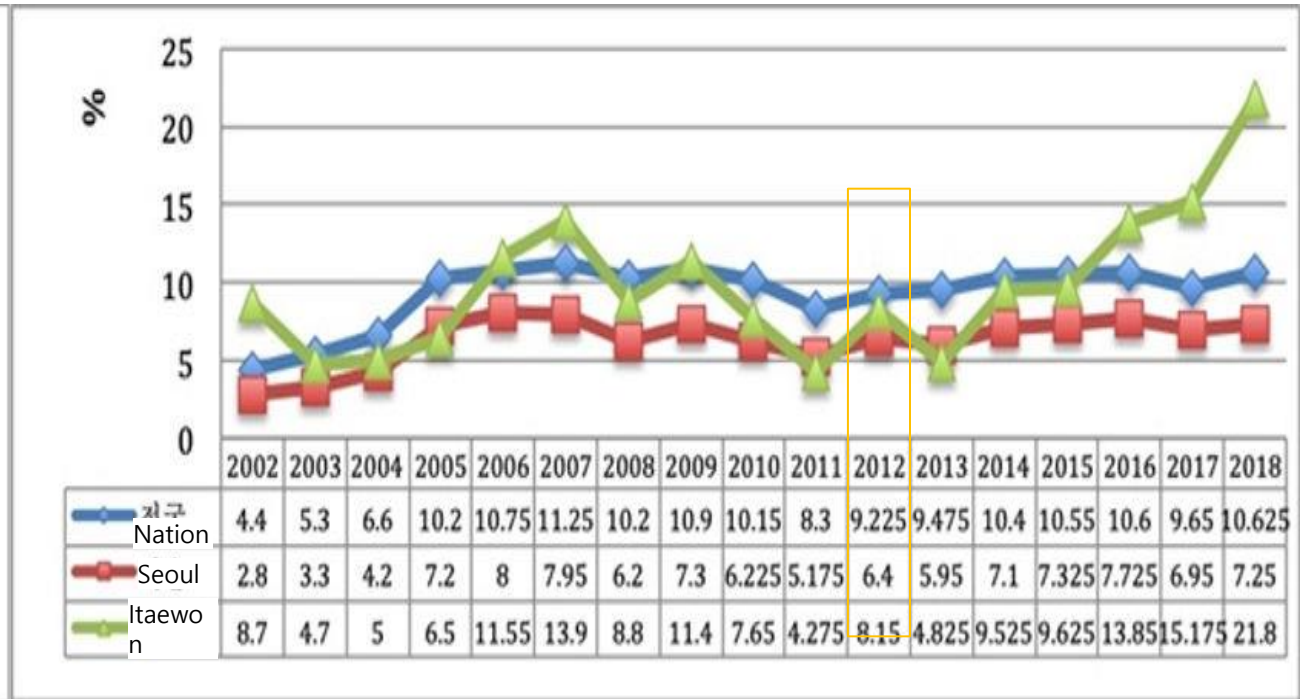


Fig. 2. Vacancy rate change by year for medium-to-large shopping malls in Itaewon: 2002-2018

***Green Triangle is for Itaewon.**



2009 Establishment of 8 African businesses: 3 restaurants, 4 hair salons, 1 ethnic market.

2023 One African restaurant and club is open for business on the once Africa Street.





Club Zion known for its mural with Bob Marley and an ethnic african native, located at the edge of the once African Street, open on a Tuesday night - May 2023

Africa business enclave in Itaewon

- The displacement of African migrants at Itaewaon was due to state-led gentrification via the development of Hannam-dong New Town in 2004, an urban development project led by the government (Choi, 2024).
- Indirect, direct, and symbolic displacement impacts on the ethnic enclave.

Understanding Displacement in Gentrification

Gentrification transforms urban spaces, often resulting in the displacement of existing users and owners by more affluent groups, categorized into direct, indirect, and symbolic forms (Shin et al. 2016; Janoschka et al. 2014).

- Direct Displacement

Direct displacement involves the immediate expulsion of residents due to physical actions or economic pressures, such as eviction or unaffordable rent increases (Shin et al. 2016).

- Indirect Displacement

Indirect displacement occurs gradually, through increased living costs and property values in surrounding areas, making neighborhoods inaccessible to original residents (Marcuse, 1985; Davidson and Lees 2010; Lees et al. 2008).

- Symbolic Displacement

Symbolic displacement refers to the erosion of the cultural identity and sense of community among long-term residents, leading to feelings of alienation (Atkinson, 2015).



Before Displacement of Africa Street



After Displacement of Africa Street

Before Displacement of Africa Street



After Displacement of Africa Street



Conclusion

■ Introduction to South Korea's Demographic Shift

- Historically homogeneous, South Korea is now experiencing significant transnational migration.

■ Inflow of African Migrants

- African migrants are becoming increasingly prominent in South Korea.
- Many choose to work and live in urban areas, notably due to the absence of work permit visa requirements.

Conclusion

■ Development of an African Enclave

- An African enclave has developed in the Itaewon area.
- A business enclave known as 'Africa Street' has emerged, serving as a cultural and commercial hub.

■ Impact of Gentrification

- Gentrification and state-led urban development have led to the fading of Africa Street.
- African migrants face displacement due to these gentrification efforts.

Conclusion

■ Dual Displacement Challenges

- African migrants in South Korea encounter dual challenges: displacement from their countries of origin and from their places of settlement due to gentrification.
- This reflects broader themes of socio-economic dynamics of transnational migration, displacement, and gentrification.

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