Spy Camera Epidemic in Korea: A Situational Analysis

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Author’s contribution
The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

ABSTRACT
This paper is aimed at assessing the problem of the spy camera epidemic in Korea. The paper used data and periodic reports from the Korean National Police Agency, the Korean Women Lawyers Association, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and other concerned organizations. As findings showed, between 2013 to 2017 there have been over 6,000 spycam cases each year, and more than 90 percent of the victims were women; on the contrary, the majority of the perpetrators were men. The perpetrators used public spaces like subway stations, buses, taxis, banks, swimming pools, supermarkets, and even bookstores; spy cams were also installed in private places like hotels, motels, guesthouses, and private houses. Consequently, on May 19, 2018, around 20,000 women went out to the street to protest against spy camera, and more than 200,000 women signed a petition on the ban of a spy cam. As a result, the government employed 50 workers and planned to employ around 8,000 additional workers to check for cameras over 20,000 public toilets. However, in fact, decreased, a spy camera crime is still a pressing issue in Korea.

Keywords: Spy camera; gender inequality; pornography; blackmailing; procedural and corrective justice.

1. INTRODUCTION
Have you ever expected to find a hidden camera inside a hotel room that you booked? Have you ever expected that secret recordings of you are streaming online while you are inside your hotel? According to Jeong and Griffiths’s recent investigation [1], about 1,600 people have been secretly filmed in hotel rooms in Korea by spy cameras. What do we mean by spy camera? PC Magazine Encyclopedia [2] defined spy camera - also called spycams - as a “still or video camera that is hidden in a radio, clock, or similar device, or one that is built into a very visible object such as a cigarette lighter, package of chewing gum or pen, etc.” Spy cameras can be seen from being wired or wireless. A wired spy camera is connected to a storage device, whereas wireless cameras transmit the recording to a receiver within a small radius. The recording ability of a
spy camera depends on the type of camera, storage capacity, and the battery's longevity. Some record for hours, some for days, some for weeks, and some others for months (ibid).

In addition to independent cameras, many people use their phones to take pictures and record videos in Korea. According to Gabbatiss [3], 90 percent of the recorded crimes have involved filming using regular phones. The advancement of the IT industries, particularly the increasing sophistication of camera technology and internet interconnectedness in Korea, eased the dissemination of this “spy camera footage”. This paper assessed the situation of spy cameras in Korea. It identified the victims of a spy camera, commonly used places, and analyzed the cause of spy camera epidemic in Korea. It further tried to explore the backlash against spy camera epidemic- both from the public and the government side in Korea.

The researchers followed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The quantitative method was used to analyze quantitative data obtained from the National Police Agency Annual Reports, Supreme Prosecutors' Office Annual Report, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Korea Women Lawyers Association, and statistical data of other relevant government organizations; whereas, qualitative method was applied to analyze the information gathered from literature (books, research, internet, etc.).

Although spy cameras are used for commercial and security purposes, in this paper, the term “spy camera” refers to taking pictures, videos, and sound recordings of others without their consent. Using spy cameras for security purposes is not the scope of this paper.

2. SPY CAMERA IN KOREA: SITUATION ANALYSIS

Nowadays, the rate of camera-related crimes in Korea is alarming. According to the Supreme Prosecutors' Office Annual Report [4], there have been over 6,000 spycam cases each year between 2014 to 2017. The study by the Korean Women Lawyers Association (2017) also indicated that spy camera victims continuously increased since 2007. As illustrated below on the graph, in 2007 there were 564 spycam cases. It alarmingly increased and reached its highest in 2015 which was 7730. From 2016 onward, spy camera cases showed a slightly decreasing trend.

Graph 1 Spy Camera Cases (2007-2017)

In 2006, crimes involving cameras constituted for about 3.6 percent of the total number of sex-related crimes. However, in 2015 it dramatically increased to 24.9 percent, which indicated that with less than 10 years the crime related to camera increased by more than 7 times its previous percentage [5].

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The spy camera phenomenon has reached such epidemic proportions in tech-savvy Korea. The footage of spy camera was easily accessible on the internet, and chronically affected the daily lives of the general public. The sophistication of technology and wired life in Korea greatly exacerbated the accessibility, as well as the distribution and multiplication of porno and related materials, such as those recorded by spy cameras.

In 2016, over 7,000 South Korean women found compromising videos of themselves on adult websites [6]. The most baffling problem was, the creation, duplication, and distribution of porno and porno related materials was accomplished using sophisticated cameras and distributed through the internet as fast as a tick of a second. Police said that it was difficult to catch the perpetrators: They said that the rise of social media and the wider availability of smartphones exacerbated the uptick in “spy cam porn” [6].

In Korea, spy cameras are not just taking footage of acts of sexual intercourse, they also took the pictures and videos in toilets, in bikinis, at home, walking on the street, etc. These footage posted online, which become a ‘social death penalty’ for those thousands of victims. Most of the victims hide from the sight of the public, and some, who have the ability to have plastic surgery, completely change their physical appearance.

3. THE TARGET OF SPY CAMERAS

In general, all people have the potential to become victims of spy camera related crimes. People can be exposed to spy cameras almost anywhere at any time. However, studies have found out that women are by far the target of spy cameras. Al Jazeera (22 Oct 2018), with a headline of- “Spycam Epidemic Seizes South Korea's Women”- wrote that South Korea women were in the grip of a ‘spy cam’ epidemic. The Straits Times [7] also presented an analysis that high-tech Korea has been battling a growing epidemic of spycam videos, which largely involved men secretly filming women in schools, offices, trains, toilets, changing rooms and on the street.

According to the Annual Reports of the Supreme Prosecutors’ Office (2018), between 2014 to 2017 there were 26,329 crimes related to cameras and filming. Among these crimes, only 434 were female suspects, while the rest were men, which clearly showed that men were involved in camera and filming related crimes far more than women. Studies also indicated that among the victims of spy camera, women constituted the absolute majority- more than 80% of victims of spy camera were female: 3.7% of the victims’ age was below 19, and young girls whose age was in the range of 21-30 years constituted 33.8% [8].

The graph below summarizes the sex distribution of spy camera victims between 2012 to 2017.

Graph 2 Victims of Spy Camera

As presented in the graph above, in 2012, there were 53 men and 2286 women who were victims of spy cameras. However, the number vigorously increased and in 2015 reached its peak, with 6342 female and 120 male victims. As the data shows, the victims of spy cameras were almost all women. Of the 28, 743 victims of illegal filming between 2012 and 2017, 98% were men, and the number of men victims were insignificant, perhaps 1 or even no male victims out of 10 possible victims.
The number of female victims is perhaps far more than the reported number because it has been difficult for female victims to speak out in a society where women are often told not to be sensitive and to accept the status quo.

4. WHY WOMEN ARE TARGETS OF SPY CAMERAS?

According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [9], there are three main gender inequality issues, which are: Violence against women, the gender wage gap, and the unequal sharing of unpaid work. In Korea, according to the Korean Institute of Criminology [10], although sexual crimes are the least reported, in 2015 alone, there was a total of 31,063 sexual related crimes and 86% of the criminals were male and more than 90% of the victims were women. A study on abuse against women, drawing a sample of 2,000 South Korean men respondents, found out that out of these 2,000 Korean men, 1,593 (79.7%) of them had physically or psychologically abused their girlfriends while they were dating [11].

If we look at data related to the wage gap, in 2018, the World Economic Forum's study on "wage equality for similar work (survey)" ranked Korea 121 out of 146 countries. The study further indicated that women in Korea earn only 63% of what men earn and that women in Korea hold only 10.5% of management positions (World Economic Forum Report, 2018). The World Bank [12] also indicated that the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament of Korea was only 17% (The World Bank Report, 2019).

In the case of household work and chores, women have a heavier burden. Korean women spend almost the same time for unpaid work for paid work [13]. Korean men do only about 16.5 percent of household chores and leave the rest (83.5%) to their wives [14]. Women in Korea are almost exclusively responsible for childcare and other home activities such as cleaning, washing, repair work, or caring for pets, etc., as compared with men.

Therefore, there is huge gender inequality in Korea. According to the World Economic Forum's most recent report on the global gender gap, South Korea ranked 115 out of 149 countries. Thus, it is possible to conclude that as a result of the huge gender discrepancy, women in Korea were targeted by perpetrators of spy camera related crimes. However, since gender inequality is broad and general, it is better to provide and identify some specific illustrative factors. If we do a simple problem tree analysis, we can come up with lower-level actors that aggravated spy camera crimes in Korea.

Although there are many interconnected factors that implicitly or explicitly make women the targets of spy camera related crimes, this paper focused only on three factors: The expanded porno industry, blackmailing or as an instrument of revenge, and the poor procedural and corrective justice available to victims of spy camera related crimes.

5. THE LUCRATIVE PORNO BUSINESS

In 2004 the Korean Government passed a law that prohibited prostitution. Article 3 of the law detailed the consequences of violating the law. However, the law was ineffective in actuality and still, it is easy to get sexual services, especially in Seoul. The law was unable to clean up the face of the prevalence of "sex tourism" and prostitution in Korea (Lih Yi, 2018).

According to A Haovoscope Report [15], on “Black Market Crime: Prostitution Prices and Statistics of the Global Sex Trade”, there were around 147,000 prostitutes in Korea, and annually brought $13 billion, or roughly 1.5 percent of the GDP of the country. Due to the lucrativeness of the sex business and other related factors like internet connectedness, pornography, and other related materials and pornography-related activities were hugely expanded in Korea. As a result, Koreans are exposed to and have accessed pornography-related obscene materials at an early age.

According to the study of Dongsik Kim, et al. (2018), 98 percent of men and 90.1 percent of women in Korean accessed obscene materials (photos, videos, etc.). The study also found that Koreans in their 20s were the age group most likely to be exposed to those erotic photos, videos, and the like. More surprisingly, 34.9 percent of respondents were first exposed to pornography when they were elementary school students; and 33, 17.5, and 14.7 percent of respondents were exposed to pornography during middle school, as adults, and as high school students, respectively. In terms of accessing pornography websites and materials, 40% of males and 29.8% of females first accessed such materials when they were elementary school students.
Furthermore, according to sources cited in the International Business Times [16], paid sex is easily available all over Korea. In addition to red-light districts, which operate and offer commercial sex openly, even coffee shops, shopping malls, hotels, motels, juicy bars, internet chat rooms, and cell phones were used for prostitution and pimps [16]. The majority of women working in these establishments are Korean nationals. But there are also a high number of Russian sex workers in Seoul. This is largely due to Korean men’s fascination with blondes. There were also a large number of Chinese and Filipino women sex workers.

This thriving sex industry in Korea leads to the multiplication and distribution of pornography videos and related materials. Although it is illegal to distribute pornography in Korea, videos featuring sexual content are widely shared via servers based overseas or through secret file-sharing sites [17]. According to 한국일보 (Hankook Ilbo) newspaper report (2017), Ggulbam (꿀밤), one of the biggest porn sites, daily visited by 500,000 people, and the owner of the site earned 70 million won per month from 480 sites only in advertising fees. The police found that the owner, identified only by the surname Chung, earned at least 1.5 billion won ($1.3 million) in 2016 alone. The owner of the site aspired to "live a lavish life by earning around 10 billion won ($9 million)" through the website [18].

According to the findings of the Thomson Reuters Foundation [19], the footage, which
Studies have shown that most of the secret business is the major cause of the proliferation of areas for profit. Perhaps the lucrativeness makes the business a cash cow with multiple money to remove footage on the internet, which footage, live streaming, or advertisements, some In addition to getting money from selling the footage. gain access to features like replaying certain members, 97 people paid $44.95 per month to the footage of hotel guests was str sophistication. According to a recent CNN investigation (March 20, 2019), about 1,600 people have been secretly filmed in hotel rooms in Korea, and the NDTV [20] detailed that when the footage of hotel guests was streamed live, more than 4,000 members watched; out of these members, 97 people paid $44.95 per month to gain access to features like replaying certain footage.

In addition to getting money from selling the footage, live streaming, or advertisements, some third-party, private firms have charged the victims money to remove footage on the internet, which makes the business a cash cow with multiple areas for profit. Perhaps the lucrativeness of the business is the major cause of the proliferation of spy camera perpetrators.

6. BLACKMAILING OR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF REVENGE

Studies have shown that most of the secret filming is done by partners - with or without consent - at homes or in love hotels, and later used as either a form of revenge if the relationship turns sour or as a tool for future blackmail or coercion to force a continuous relationship. Looking at the classification of spycam perpetrators in relation to the victim, the Korean Women Lawyers Association Study (2017) showed that perpetrators had either directly or indirectly in a relationship with the victims.

As illustrated in the graph above, people in romantic or sexual relationships constituted the highest number of spycam perpetrators (43.68%). The remaining 19.54, 6.32, and 3.45 percent were done by colleagues, via the Internet, and friends, respectively. There were also cases where a teacher photographed a high school girl attending to their class; doctors photographed a patient in their hospital; photographers secretly photographed customers in a photo gallery, etc. [5].

Either deliberately or for their own entertainment, some people in relationships take photos or videos while making love. Sometimes women were secretly filmed while having sex. Perhaps, these photos and videos were taken innocently, for capturing good memories, or the video was purposely taken and kept as collateral, including manipulating the recorded person into being a “sex slave.” Whatever the purpose of filming at the beginning, when the relationship goes wrong, either of the partners could have used it incorrectly, either for revenge or “blackmailing”.

![Spy cam Perpetrator Classification](image)

**Fig. 4. Spy camera perpetrators**

*Source: The data was Korean Women’s Lawyer Association (2018)*
Nana’s story was one among thousands: Nana, who is in her 20s, had a boyfriend. Later, she broke up with him. One day, however, she received a call from a friend who had recognized her on a pornographic website; then, her life changed forever. She said, “her mind went blank”. She quit her job; moved to another city; and cut herself off from her friends and family. Her life spiraled out of control. She said, “she thought of changing her name” … she wanted to change everything, so she could wipe out her existence. She said, “she tried to commit suicide many times”… ’ [6].

In Korea, there may be thousands of women with Nana’s story concealed behind the scenes and muted within the reality of gender inequality in modern Korean society.

7. POOR PROCEDURAL AND CORRECTIVE JUSTICE

The government has taken some measures to shut down the camera and filming related crimes, like jailing criminals - The female owner of Soranet, who started the website with her husband and two others in 1999 - was jailed for four years and fined the US $1.25 million; and Soranet – which had more than one million users - was shut down in 2016 [6] and also other legal actions were taken. However, many women still questioned whether the procedure was fully fair and if the punishment was corrective enough. They said that the problem of spy camera continues, instead, to be aggravated by the uncooperative attitude of the police and the light penalties given out by the courts.

In 2016, there were 4, 499 spy camera related cases, and only 1, 720 went to trial, which shows the weak punishment rate. Only 809 (10.5%) were imprisoned; whereas, 41.1 percent of the convicts were released on probation or suspended sentences [21]. Similarly, more than 5,400 people have arrested for spy camera related crimes in 2017, but fewer than 2% were jailed (“Korea spycam porn: 1,600 fall victim and four men arrested,” 20 March 2019) [22].

In Korea, there is ‘a deep-seated sexism’ [23]. In the first place, police do not treat men and women equally; the crimes committed against men and women do not get equal weight, even if the crime was the same. For example, after a woman was found to have secretly filmed a nude male model during a university drawing class and posted the video online, she was quickly arrested and paraded in front of the media (of course wearing a mask) which was a rare case before this incident. Then, women started questioning, why did the police react sharply when the perpetrator was a woman and the victim was a man? They said police used a double standard at work when the victims were men. As a result, the protest was called in June 2018 against spy cameras and the negligence of the police when dealing with women’s cases. They asked why the police did not act as quickly as when men committed the crime and when women were the victims [23].

However, the women's questions about the discrepancy in the police’s care in handling cases didn’t get the expected support; there were even women who were against this. One recent research showed that only about 50 percent of Korean women and 20 percent of Korean men supported women's rally against spy cameras. The reason why some women didn't fully support the rally seems like fearing the backlash. For example, the Korea Press Foundation surveyed some 1,000 Korean men and women aged 20-59 and 72.5 percent of those who did not support the rally thought that the protest may have made more Koreans think negatively of feminism [24].

Generally, as long as the perpetrators of spy camera crimes continue to not be “correctly” punished, and cases get given different weight - such as taking gender into factor - it will be difficult to clean up spy camera perpetrators in Korea.

8. TARGET PLACE OF SPY CAMERA

Spy camera perpetrators have used a wide range of public spaces including buses, taxis, banks, swimming pools, supermarkets, and even bookstores; however, in Korea, subway stations were found as having the largest number of spy cameras. In addition to public spaces, spy cameras were also installed in private places like hotels, motels, guesthouses, private houses, etc.

Quoting local authorities, Deanna Paul (Mary 20, 2019) wrote that hidden spy cameras were discovered inside TV boxes, wall outlets, and hairdryer stands in 42 hotel rooms.

May and Lee [25] also wrote that in hidden corners across South Korea, tiny cameras are surreptitiously recording thousands of women when they are at their most vulnerable. As a result, women have come to fear that cameras could be anywhere: perched inside the toilet bowl
Fig. 5. Cameras found by police hidden inside a hotel wall outlet (left) and hairdryer stand (right)
Source: CNN

of a public restroom, disguised as a smoke detector in a shop’s fitting room, or even rolled into a plastic bag at the lip of a trash can. According to the crime analysis statistics of the Supreme Prosecutors’ Office [4], the total number of sexual assault crimes increased by 95.1% over the past decade (2007 ~ 2016), and after 2016 it showed a slight decrease.

9. WOMEN REACTION AGAINST SPY CAMERA

According to a recent statistical report, women constituted almost half of the Korean population [26]. However, the role of women in the political, socio-economic and other affairs of the country has lagged far behind, women in Korea were especially grossly exposed to sexist related problems. According to Center for Strategic and International Studies [27], in Korea women were sexually harassed and abused in politics, arts, entertainment, academic, and even in religious institutions, but women never spoke out about it until recently. Feminist theorists such as Cheris Kramarae, state that through man-made language, which “aids in defining, depreciating and excluding women”, women became muted, including regarding whatever happened to them [16].

In Korea there are many examples of high profile crimes against women: For example, a provincial governor and potential presidential candidate of Korea, An Hee-Jung, was accused of assaulting one of his secretaries [27]; Coach Cho Jae-beom has been convicted of sexually assaulting several players, including raping a high school short track athlete [28]; former Vice Justice Minister Kim Hak-ui was banned from leaving the country due to the ongoing allegations of a sex scandal, etc., [29]. A survey by the Ministry of Gender, Equality, and Family found out that in 2016, eight in ten respondents experienced sexual harassment at work [6].

Recently, spy camera perpetrators “breathing down the neck of women” are anywhere and at any time. They filmed and took pictures of women even inside the toilet. Especially, since 2007 spy camera crimes have vigorously increased. Parallelly, the number of women who are victims have increased, with a growing rate - particularly until 2016 - and since then, the rate has shown a slight decrease [6].

The accumulated grievances of women pushed them to flood the street which is the first mass women’s movement in Korean history. The first reaction against spy cameras was undertaken on May 19, 2018, when women rallied against Korea’s spy camera porno epidemic [18]. Lee Suh-yoon (2018), with a headline of ‘Our lives are not your porn’, wrote that South Korean women cry out against ‘spycam porn’, that around thousands of women poured into Gwanghwamun Square protesting widespread “spycam pornography,” and urged the inactive government to step up efforts to deal with the illicit filming crimes.

Lee Suh-yoon quoted that the women's message that "we will not tolerate being second-class citizens, and our lives are definitely not your porn". As clearly shown below in the picture, the angry demonstrators carried banners, which said:

"We don't have a toilet to go
We don't have a place to rest
We don't have a country to protect us
So here we are" (Suh-yoon, 2018).
In addition to the street demonstration, over 200,000 people have signed an online petition on the presidential website, arguing for a ban on spy camera sales and strict punishment of criminals. This movement was a breakthrough in which women independently initiate, organize, participate, and led the rally. It was one step ahead of the male-dominated Korean society. It paved the way to the proliferation of feminism and feminist leaders, organizations and reactionary measures. Women showed their strength and leadership ability. Most importantly, they draw the attention of the global community and consequently internally and externally influenced the government to take action.

10. ACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT

The government of Korea has taken measures against spy camera crimes since 2004. In 2004, the government began requiring smartphones to make a loud shutter sound when taking pictures and videos to prevent secretly filming and photo-taking. However, on the contrary, spy camera crimes dramatically increased [30].

Consequently, the government decided to fight against the crime strongly; the cabinet gathered and discussed the spy camera issue. At the meeting, President Moon Jae-in said, "We must make sure that the offenders suffer greater damage than the damage they inflict". He also passed an order to government officials to explore tougher punishments for hidden-camera crimes and also ensure that the perpetrators’ actions are immediately notified to employers [31]. However, the number of spy camera perpetrators has increased drastically.

As a result, in 2017 the government introduced a new law to punish spy cam perpetrators. The law states as follows:

"Article 14 (Taking Photos by Using Cameras, etc.) (1) A person who takes photos of another person's body, which may cause any sexual stimulus or shame against the latter's will, by using a camera or similar mechanism, or who distributes, sells, leases, provides, or openly exhibits or screens the photos so taken, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than five years or by a fine not exceeding ten million won. (2) Even though taking photos under paragraph (1) was not against the will of the person photographed at the time of taking such photos, a person who distributes, sells, leases, provides, or openly exhibits or screens any photos of the former's body so taken, against the former's will, thereafter, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than three years or by a fine not exceeding five million won. (3) A person who circulates any photos taken under paragraph (1), for the purpose of profit-making, by means of an information and communications network referred to in Article 2 (1) of the Act on Promotion of Information
After the introduction of the law, spy camera crimes showed a slight decrease but were not eradicated or decreased, as expected. Thus, the government made another decisive decision. It announced a new plan to check public toilets, especially in Seoul. The government immediately employed 50 workers to check over more than 20,000 public toilets [33]. The government also planned to employ around 8,000 additional workers to check for cameras in public toilets [18].

In addition, in July and August (2018), the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) [34] inspected spy cameras in bathrooms and shower facilities in the University of Seoul, Lotte Department Store Cheongnyangni Outlet, Cheongnyangni Station and the Seoul Grand Children’s Park; Bupyeong Underground Shopping Center in Incheon, and at three popular beach resorts (Daecheon, Chungnam; Haenundae, Busan; and Gyeongpodae, Gangneung). From September 3 to October 5, the inspection also took place at private buildings in cooperation with local police stations and building owners. In this operation, 124 suspicious holes were found - 104 in bathrooms, 5 in nursing rooms, and 15 in fitting rooms, and covered with “safety stickers” [34].

Moreover, the Ministry intensively examined shopping complex Square 1, movie theater CGV, and Cheonghak Culture Center in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon; Ramada Encore Dongdaemun Hotel and Seongdong-gu Sports Complex Center in Seoul; and the Yeoju Bus Terminal and a NH Nonghyup Bank branch in Yeoju, in search of hidden cameras in bathrooms, fitting rooms, and nursing rooms [34].

The Digital Sex Crimes Victim Support Center was also instituted to provide consultation and spy camera film removal service. In the first 50 days of operation, it helped 500 victims remove more than 2,200 videos online. It also provides victims with legal support to file criminal charges and takedown notices. The government also promised to provide $4.5 million for funding to local authorities to increase patrols of toilets and changing rooms to search for spy cameras [35]. The government further announced the adoption of new technology, the server name “Indication Filtering”, to block access to websites containing “harmful content.” A total of 895 websites are now impossible to access from anywhere in South Korea: unlike other content-blocking technologies, SNI filtering makes it possible for the government to discover which users have attempted to visit which websites [36].

However, women still raised a question on the commitment of the government and its executive institutions. Female activists and bloggers wrote that the male-dominated executive institutions were unable to execute women’s affairs to their fullest potential. Hence, the fight against spy camera crime in Korea is still a big headache.

11. CONCLUSION

It is obvious that advancement in technology affected the status quo, as it has changed the way of people’s way of life, both negatively and positively. In Korea, with the development of technology, especially the development of the IT industry, the way of life of the society continuously changed. Positively, technology eased daily life in Korea. With the power of technology, Korea made sophisticated the service industry, maintain the security and safety of the people, as well as keeping up with the pace of the economic and political development.

However, as findings showed, the technological advancement shadowed some of the beautiful social life of the people. Korea is known as a collective society. However, nowadays, social interactions are continuously cracked, and the crack is continuously widened. In Korea, thousands of people are addicted to technology. People do not have time to personally communicate with their families, friends, and neighbors; an isolated, capitalistic society is emerging. Today, it is hardly possible to notice a collective society in Korea.

Spy camera crimes are one of the repercussions of the destruction of social norms, values, and traditional ways of life. In Korea, from the most private places, such as the toilet, to the public place, such as the subway station, spy cameras were found. These spy cameras filmed especially women for the purpose of personal enjoyment or for sale. Mostly, spy camera perpetrators filmed women when having sex at hotels, guest houses, even private rooms/houses and posted on porno sites, or watching on live streaming.
As the findings of the research showed, spy camera related crimes increased dramatically from year to year and the number of women who found their videos on pornographic sites paralleled increased. Victims of spy camera crimes decided to change themselves, including, but not limited to, their name and their physical appearance, because like most of the cases showed, victims became excommunicated not only at the workplace but also at home. As a result, they left not only their work but also their home so as to hide at a place where no one recognized them, which can be called a “social suicide”.

Although women are timid, in a male-dominated Korea, eventually the accumulated grievances pushed them to go out to the street and start fighting against the spy camera epidemic. The government took action from passing legislation to hiring employees who checked spy cameras in public toilets. However, recently (2019) 1,600 guests were filmed and live-streamed at their hotel showed that the action of the government was not enough. Spy camera crimes are still a pressing problem in Korea. It needs an additional political and social reaction.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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