



Differences in Perceptions towards Japanese Colonial Era Heritage: A Case Study of Gunsan City's Old Downtown

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Abstract

Modern cultural heritage has clear significance and value as part of the historical record of a given country. However, perspectives on the value and role of cultural heritage can vary. This study compares the perceptions of various subjects on urban colonial cultural heritage. The similarities and differences between the direction of local culture pursued by local experts and the perceptions of different subjects are analyzed, and the reinforced image of a multifaceted city image is examined. The results reveal that, first, differences exist within the reference group. The reference group determined the city of Gunsan's resources, which led to regional revitalization projects to improve the city's image. Second, commonalities were observed between the perceived images of local residents, visitors, and non-visitors. All three groups understood Gunsan as a city of modern history and a city where past and present coexist. Third, examining non-visitors' perceptions of Gunsan as a reinforced image revealed that their perceptions were similar to those of visitors. The public's view of colonial history is the same: it is a painful history but one that must be remembered. However, the interpretation and use of that heritage differ widely. The administration of Gunsan should manage the city's image to prevent historical distortion or the misunderstanding of history by the perceiving subjects.

Keywords: Korean modernism, negative heritage, dark tourism, city image, place-ness, visitors, residents

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Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lists negative heritage sites as World Heritage Sites since they are also places of importance that should not be forgotten despite the trauma associated with them. A place of conflict can be perceived negatively not only because of the past conflict associated with it, but also because people of the present hold negative images of it. The subjects of conflict include both colonizers and colonized in history. Although the colonialism has ended, complex conflicts can persist today, including disagreements that arise when negative heritage is utilized as a tourism resource.

Negative heritage is used as a tourism resource to promote historical memory and to teach lessons. However, expressed landscapes often glamorize negative heritage and simultaneously replicate colonial forms of discourse through broader geopolitical power structures by emphasizing the distinction between the colonizing and subjugated countries (Echtner and Prasad 2003). Additionally, developing tourism without an awareness of the historicalities inherent in colonial heritage creates sociocultural vulnerabilities related to ethnic class and deteriorates authority (Cheer 2015). The practice of regenerating colonial heritage in countries where poverty, alienation, and social inequality persist can generate reminders of a traumatic past. Cheer (2015) defined this as an ethnic landscape.

Such tourist-oriented landscapes deviate from promoting historical memories and lessons—the original purpose of tourism development—and create new perceptions among people. Depending on the nationality of the tourist, guides present different historical interpretations from formerly dominant and dominated countries, and sometimes make no mention of the colonial past. Tourists can express either a negotiated or opposing view toward accepting or acknowledging the hegemony of domination, which suggests that the different historical understanding of each group can lead to conflict (Wong 2013). Amongst studies on Korea, Youn and Uzzell (2016) examined the perceptions of Korean colonization by generations of Koreans who had no direct experience of the colonial period. They found that modern Koreans disagree with the notion that colonial heritage threatens

their national identity and regard the negative connotations associated with heritage as something related to the past. Chan-young Jung (2018) found that tourists experienced memories provided intentionally by public administrations through tourism activities in reproduced spaces and simultaneously formed an identity of local places. Accordingly, such *touristization* can lead to the glorification of negative heritage.

The aforementioned studies commonly argue that colonial heritage creates a space for conflict among subjects who possess differing perceptions of the past and heritage. Korea's modernization was initiated by foreign powers during the late Joseon dynasty (late 1800s). In particular, many major port cities were urbanized with the opening of ports during the period of Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). Some primary open port cities include Incheon, Gunsan, and Mokpo. Under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act, Korea today has a system for registering such sites of cultural heritage created during colonization as Registered Cultural Heritage. In contrast to other designated cultural assets, owners, local governments, and the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) register facility-type cultural heritage constructed in the modern era that require preservation and utilization measures. Modern cultural heritage items created in the Japanese colonial era can be generally distinguished by two types: those created by Japan as part of its colonial rule and those that possess traces of the Korea's anti-Japanese independence movement.

The above cities are representative of Korea's modern history and culture and their administrations have recently been making appeals to domestic urban tourism by undertaking various projects meant to encourage visitors. Amongst these cities, Gunsan has produced the most successful results. Gunsan possesses an urban system created by Japanese imperialists and during the colonial period the city experienced modernization with considerable growth in its urban economy. However, Gunsan declined significantly after Korea's liberation in 1945 and its severance from the Japanese economy and its fortunes receded rapidly and it continues to face economic hardship today (Park 2006). Paradoxically, the value of Gunsan's old city center is increasing as it preserves many traces of the colonial era in the face of the city's continued expansion.

Various perspectives regarding colonial era remnants are emerging as Korea's modern historical cities become more popular tourist destinations. Heritage formed during the initial stages of modernization are faced with contending views regarding whether they should be perceived as remnants of Japanese colonization or a legacy of the development process. According to the CHA's (2019) public awareness survey, 60.7 percent of respondents had positive views about registering Japanese colonial era heritage items as cultural assets. Respondents noted that such heritage "should be preserved" due to its historical record as well as educational, academic, and artistic value. Conversely, those who "opposed preservation" expressed antipathy in that such heritage sites were remnants of foreign invasion and were not legacies of the Korean people. The utilization of cultural tourism in Gunsan also generated conflicting views regarding whether such heritage sites should be perceived as educational resources or as distortions of a traumatic history. Those who considered the use of Gunsan as a tourism resource identified "the general public's lack of interest and awareness of it as a tourism product," "a lack of systematic promotion and management," and "a lack of tourism commercialization" as the main issues facing modern cultural heritage tourism resources. Regarding awareness, modern cultural heritage is perceived as a symbol of Japanese imperialism or exploitation so the value of cultural assets themselves should be recognized, and these heritage sites should be preserved and utilized as venues for teaching and learning (KTO 2005).

Modern cultural heritage possesses clear significance and value as part of a given country's historical record. However, there are socio-cultural implications when such heritage is used as public property. There are various and complex perspectives on the issue based on colonial history and which cannot be generalized. Therefore, the perceptions of various subjects should be viewed in a consilient manner. This study compares the perceptions of colonial city cultural heritage according to subject. The similarities and differences between the direction of local culture pursued by local experts and the perceptions of different subjects are analyzed, and a reinforced image of a multifaceted city image is examined. Based on this, the direction of regional studies and administration in Gunsan is critically discussed.

Literature Review and Research Framework

Research Framework

This study asks the following research questions based on the assumption that a city's image differs significantly depending on the subject perceiving it (Table 1). In particular, it premises that the opinions of such subjects vary widely due to conflicting views on how to treat colonial heritage. These subjects were diversely classified to investigate how experts who lead regional image by authoring ('reference group' in this study), and subjects responding to colonial heritage perceive, Gunsan's colonial cultural heritage. Additionally, the questions aim to reveal the similarities and differences in perceptions by subject and how the complex representation of Gunsan is accordingly derived. Consequently, this study aims to identify the characteristics of the reinforced city image and raise critical questions about current policies regarding the utilization of colonial heritage.

Table 1. Research Questions

Research Objective	Questions
Regional image perceived by different subjects	1. What; Gunsan old downtown's landscape resources
	2. Who; Local residents, tourists, and non-visitors
	3. How; Gunsan's perceived image
Characteristics of a colonial city representation	1. By analyzing the similarities and differences in the perceptions of a complex city image by subject, what reinforced city image is identified?
	2. What are the policies regarding the utilization of Korean colonial heritage?

Historical Resources and City Representation

International discussions on the preservation and utilization of landscape resources (discourse on cultural heritage) are evident in the discourses on

the significance of landscape resources as cultural heritage. The Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 1979) emphasizes the value of all forms of places with cultural significance and opens the potential of various interpretations of such places.¹ Similarly, UNESCO (1992) defined the concept of cultural landscape as a site of “combined works of nature and humankind...[that] express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment.”² The notion of historic urban landscape (HUL) first appeared in the 2005 Vienna Memorandum on cultural landscapes (UNESCO 2005). Subsequently, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011), which defined historical landscapes as a new form of heritage and aimed to reposition urban history as a resource in terms of utilization. Urban representations cannot be exhibited solely through external attributes; thus, such places must be examined internally.

A place’s inner appearance is more evident in older sites that retain memories of the place than relatively new areas. Individual local residents form images of a place, whether external or internal. Similarly, these images have a considerable influence on individual mental and moral qualities. The process of recognizing and constructing images of a place aligns with the process of discovering their authenticity beyond superficial visual images. This process also corresponds to the process of finding one’s inner self, where Jung (1964) noted, “The individual is the only reality. The further we move away from the individual toward abstract ideas about *Homo sapiens*, the more likely we are to fall into error” (C. G. Jung 1964, 62). Thus,

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1. Cultural significance here denotes an aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value for past, present, or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups (Australia ICOMOS 1979).
 2. UNESCO (1992) further categorizes cultural landscapes as 1) landscapes designed and created intentionally by humans with nature, such as parks and gardens; 2) organically evolved landscapes such as historical sites; and 3) associative cultural landscapes that integrate religious, artistic, or cultural associations with nature. UNESCO’s concept considers the heritage of nature, history and cultural activities as landscape resources, expanding the scope of landscapes to a cultural level.

deviating from the individual in a place leads to a loss of locative context and directs the focus towards superficial and abstract concepts. The process of becoming aware of a place through experience shows similar attributes. Experience is a term that encompasses various modes through which people perceive and construct reality; these modes range “from the more direct and passive senses of smell, taste, and touch, to active visual perception and the indirect mode of symbolization” (Tuan 1977, 23). Tuan asserted that experience is comprised of emotion and thought. Human feelings are not a succession of individual senses; rather, memory and expectations can exert sensory impacts into a changing flow of experiences. Therefore, we can speak of the life of feeling as we speak of the life of thought. In fact, feelings and thoughts are located near both ends of an experiential continuum and both are ways of knowing (Tuan 1977, 26).

Today, we can experience places in a new way: through virtual experiences. Technologies like social media and user-generated content have revolutionized tourism and place-making and provide access to a wealth of information about different places to people around the world. The traces left online by past tourists can spread, generating images of a place and shaping expectations for non-visitors (Marine-Roig and Clavé 2016; Sun et al. 2015). Non-visitors learn about and imagine new regions through online information, and when such information accumulates, it is reinforced and imprinted on them. Readers with historical or ethnic ties to a region can also experience triggers based on how they perceive the social media author’s perceptions of a place. For this reason, it is important to investigate how readers understand and interpret travel blogs in order to more thoroughly assess the potential for change in the medium (Keller 2018).

Issues Surrounding Colonial Heritage in Korea

A city with colonial history differs from other historical cities. While the heritage’s value of time is essential in a historical city, the intrinsic value and the construction of significance with people are considered crucial for heritage formed during the Japanese colonial period in Korea. Building significance is vital because the emotions and social implications towards

heritage are important and diverse.

The US Military Government in Korea governed the remnants of Japanese colonial rule following national liberation, most of which was transferred to and continued to be used by Koreans. However, these remnants were viewed by Koreans as disgraceful reminders of Japanese imperialism that had to be cleared away (Je and Song 2017). Discussions on the demolition of the Japanese Government-General Headquarters in Seoul (constructed in 1926)—a primary target of liquidation—began in 1949 during the Syngman Rhee administration. However, these were only nationalistic political discussions initiated by President Rhee to regain the public support he had lost during the Korean War (1950–1953), and no specific plans were devised (H. Jeong 2018). Subsequently, the Korean government used the building as central office space until the Chun Doo-hwan administration renovated it to become the National Museum of Korea in 1986. In 1995, the building was promptly demolished under the Kim Young-sam government’s “rectification of history” slogan. Additionally, movements were conducted to remove the metal spikes driven into key peaks across the country by Japanese imperialists in an attempt to eradicate Korea’s national identity. Japanese-style place names were changed, and Bujan Bridge in Gunsan Port was demolished. This was a dominant period of nationalism. However, historicism gradually regained momentum. Historicists began to argue that colonial heritage should be transferred to posterity to convey the historical lessons and heritage of Japanese colonization.

The 2000 Korea-Japan World Cup eased both South Korea’s anti-Japanese sentiment and Koreans’ inferiority complex towards Japan; subsequently, negative perceptions of colonial architectural heritage weakened. In 2001, the CHA introduced the Registered Cultural Heritage system and defined modern heritage as “cultural heritage constructed, produced, and formed during the period before and after the Korean War starting from the Enlightenment Period” (CHA 2007). The new system focused on registration and utilization, unlike the existing cultural property designation system that maintained the principle of original-form preservation centered on designation and regulation (S. Jeong 2020). Since

the introduction of the Registered Cultural Heritage system, the culture consumption discourse has very actively developed. Democratic developments followed the launch of Korea's local autonomy system in 1995; simultaneously, each province developed a new interest in revitalizing its respective region as it faced financial burdens. Gunsan promptly reported its colonial heritage as Registered Cultural Heritage and implemented policies to utilize it for tourism.

Following the culture consumption discourse, modern culture and urban regeneration projects reformed the declining modern city into a successful marketing city. Cities that possess colonial heritage, such as Mokpo, Incheon, Daegu, and Gunsan, have begun promoting themselves as *modern cultural cities* by abandoning the representation of their cities as places where the remnants of Japanese imperialism have yet to be cleared. Nevertheless, controversy persists. Using colonial heritage for tourism carries potential for conflict due to the persistent sensitivity and negative feelings towards Japan among Koreans. Additionally, replica tourism policies have expanded to other cities, raising continuous controversy over Japanese styles in modern cultural landscapes. Concerns that negative colonial heritage will gradually be glorified as positive are also increasing (Table 2).

Table 2. Changes in Discussions on Heritage

Political Changes	Creating and Utilizing Heritage	Issues of Historical Consciousness
Japanese colonial rule period	Formation	-
US Military Government in Korea, post-Korean War	Use, neglect	-
Military dictatorship		-
Civilian government	Demolition	Nationalism; Rectification of History movement
Local autonomy	Preservation	Historicism; acknowledgement of cultural heritage value
	Utilization	Culture consumption discourse, action Registered Cultural Heritage

Current Status and Policies of Colonial Heritage Resources in Gunsan

Gunsan's cultural policies aim to strengthen its identity by symbolizing the colonial heritage remaining in Gunsan that recounts historical events. People recognize Gunsan's identity through the legacy of its old city center (Moon 2011). Eighteen of these heritage sites were built by the Japanese as part of its colonizing efforts, including the old Gunsan Customs building (historical site), and most of these have been designated as Registered Cultural Heritage sites.³

Most cultural events and tourism resources in Gunsan are legacies of the Japanese colonial era. Since the Cultural Heritage Protection Act was enacted in 1962, the CHA has designated and preserved modern buildings with historical and architectural value as cultural heritage sites. However, many modern buildings with commemorative value have disappeared due to the absence of development pressure and awareness. In response, the cultural property designation system was introduced in 2001 to supplement the Registered Cultural Heritage system and a flexible protection measure based on differentiated reporting systems and guidance, advice, and recommendations. Since then, the scope of cultural heritage has expanded from traditional cultural heritage (centering on rarity and artistry) to modern cultural heritage (focusing on traces of life and daily memories) (CHA 2007). Registered Cultural Heritage includes non-designated cultural properties created more than 50 years ago that require preservation and utilization measures, or those created within the last 50 years that require urgent preservation measures (Article 34 of the Enforcement Rule of the Cultural Heritage Protection Act). Registered Cultural Heritage sites are concentrated in the old downtown area. Gunsan actively conducted tourism projects centered on heritage under the theme "Time Travel Village." The Gunsan Modern History Museum is central to this tour course, which hosts museum and historical commentary tours (Table 3, Fig. 1).

3. Of Gunsan's 52 historical heritage sites, 17 were created during the Japanese occupation and are now registered cultural properties, while only 5 are designated cultural properties.

Table 3. Cultural Heritage of Gunsan

Category	Meaning	Resources	Meaning
Historical resources	Colonial heritage	Historic cultural space around Coastal Port, coastal shore protection facilities, Coastal Port floating pier, Coastal Port Railroad, Haemang Tunnel, embankment of former First Reservoir	An industrial relic of urban modernization where the atmosphere of the old port and nature of the Geumgang Estuary can be experienced.
		Former Gunsan branch of the 18th Bank of Japan, former Gunsan Customs, former Gunsan branch office of the Bank of Joseon, Sinheungdong Japanese-style house, former Joseon Transport Co., Ltd. residence, former Namjoseon Electric Co., Ltd., former Jeonju District Court Gunsan branch office, Joseon Provisions Assns., former Japanese farm storage, Impi Station building	A place that retains memories of the site and reflects on the historicalities and values of individual buildings. A tangible space focused on the Japanese.
	Anti-Japanese resources	Jinpo Marine Theme Park, Gunsan 100th Anniversary of the March First Independence Movement	A place that promotes Japanese colonial history and ethnicity, where sunsets over Gunsan Port, Guam Garden, and the Geumgang River can be viewed.
		Modern History Museum, Gunsan Protest Hall, Gunsan Japanese Colonial Period History Museum	A Japanese colonial history education site and a modern history and culture hub in Gunsan. A space to provide modern tourism information.
	Dual resources	Daeungeon Hall of Dongguksa Temple, Lee Yeongchun House	A space of dual meaning that was created by Japanese imperialism and developed by Koreans.
Cultural resources	Tourism resources	Chowon Photo Studio, Teddy Bear Museum, Yeomirang Guest house	Experience tourism elements
		Gyouam-dong railroad village	A place where the meaning of space is focused on reproducing memories that may rapidly lose popularity.
	Museum resources	Lee Dang Art Gallery Chae Man-sik Literary House	A place focused on Gunsan's art and literature.
	Restaurant resources	Binhaewon Chinese restaurant, Bokseongnu Chinese restaurant, Jirinseong Chinese restaurant, Iseongdang Bakery, Hanirok Restaurant	A place where history and multiculturalism (China and Japan) operate dynamically.
	Industrial resources	Former Jeil Feed Co., Ltd. factory, Gyeonggi Chemicals storage tank	Industrial relics of Gunsan after liberation.
Natural resources		Geum River Estuary-West Sea Wolmyeong Park	A place forming the foundations of Gunsan's geopolitical history with a representative landscape and lookout over the old city center.



Figure 1. Map of Gunsan

Source: Kakao map, modified by author.

Methodology

Study Area and Research Scope

Although the target area focused on the city center formed at the time (old downtown), the city's image considered the entire area of Gunsan. The old downtown is a space that was occupied and formed by the Japanese during the colonial period and is currently a representative tourist destination and landscape of Gunsan. Gunsan's old downtown is a symbolic space of Japanese colonialism and simultaneously a central hub of Gunsan's modern city. The current Gunsan formed its image of a representative modern city through the successful development of various tourism projects. The modernization of Gunsan encompasses the pain of its origin as a colonial city. During the Japanese colonial period, Gunsan was exploited more than any other area for the production of rice and other goods. Although it had opened its port during the Korean Empire (1897–1910), the city center really developed under the urban planning framework of the colonial period

and its outskirts expanded into an industrial city during the Saemangeum Project.⁴ Conversely, the old downtown area has retained its appearance from the Japanese colonial period due to stagnation caused by the expansion of the new city. Additionally, the economic and physical decline is more pronounced in Gunsan's industrial complex area than in other cities due to its discontinued growth caused by the recent downturn of its secondary and tertiary industries.

The target subjects included the reference group, consisting of regional studies (Gunsan studies) experts and the local administration, and the perceiving subjects, consisting of local residents, tourists, and non-visitors.⁵ The representation of Gunsan as a modern city was assumed to be the pursued image based on research into the literature published by the reference group and the perceived image was examined by surveying the perceiving subjects. The representations perceived by each group were then compared and examined. Using the results, the perceiving subjects' personalities and their effects, information-sharing characteristics, differences by subject, and the multifaceted traits of tourism resources were analyzed. In particular, the group with the largest influence on non-visitors' perceptions of a learned reinforced image of the city were identified, and whether that pursued image reflected the original intention was examined accordingly. The achievements and issues of colonial city tourism policies are then discussed based on these findings.

Research Method

The analysis method was as follows. First, the literature of local researchers and administrators of the reference group was examined.⁶ Regional research

4. The Saemangeum Project refers to a largescale land reclamation project realized by building the world's longest seawall, connecting Gunsan and Buan.

5. Here "non-visitors" refers to those who have never been to Gunsan but know about Gunsan from other sources.

6. The local media, which is recognized as a leading group in the formation of a regional image, were included at the beginning of the study but later excluded from the reference group as they are generally a means of promoting administrative plans and have no objective or critical role as media.

on Gunsan studies (academic research), symbolic icons, policy plans, and related projects of Gunsan were analyzed. Next, each subject was surveyed. The survey included an emotional evaluation on feelings about images of Gunsan. A total of 192 respondents completed the online survey. The questionnaire consisted of questions on information-sharing methods based on their experiences related to sharing or receiving information about Gunsan. Additionally, the survey investigated the representative places of Gunsan contained in such information and that information's degree of attractiveness. Participants were asked to intuitively evaluate their feelings towards Gunsan and their image of the city. Text mining was performed on the open-ended question responses regarding their overall feelings towards the city and perceptions of individual places, and each subject's perceptions were then summarized based on the survey responses. The open-ended question responses were used as a basis for evaluating subjects' perceptions of the place and were displayed as a word cloud through text analysis (Appendix). The image of the city perceived by each group was analyzed by perceiving subjects, image formation methods, and formed images (Fig. 2).

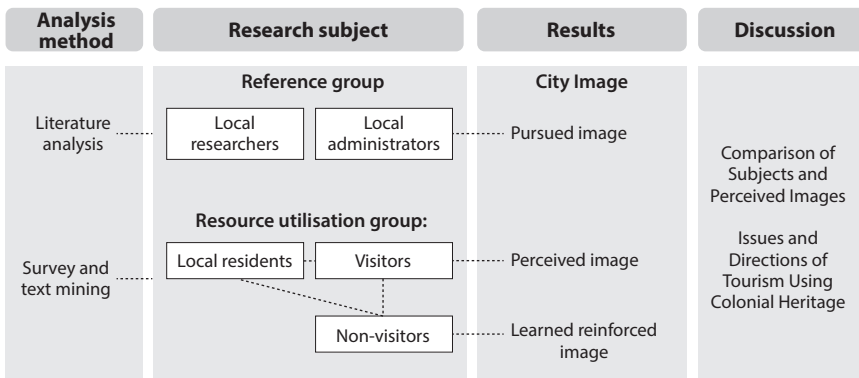


Figure 2. Research Process

Source: Author.

Results and Discussion

Image of Gunsan as a Modern City

1) Perceptions of the Reference Group: The Pursued Image

The perceptions of local researchers and administrators were examined by reviewing and analyzing literature on studies, symbolic icons, policy plans, and related projects of Gunsan.⁷ Research on regional identity has been actively developed since 1990 in addition to local researchers' research on Gunsan. In 2019, Gunsan and Gunsan National University's Humanities and Urban Center published the *Topography of Gunsan Studies* by consolidating their accumulated research. These studies are focused on the Japanese colonial era and clearly demonstrate the historical characteristics of Gunsan, and the tourism effects evoked by these studies is one of the accumulated results of regional studies.

The identity and representation of Gunsan can also be found in Gunsan's administration. Local administrators consider the most realistic issues and improvement measures and have concrete and comprehensive plans for a future representative image of the city. The Gunsan administration views the city as future-oriented and hopeful. They perceive natural resources as abundant, convert historical resources into tourism resources, and plan various projects to regenerate the old downtown. They discuss specific plans for the symbolic icons of the city, city streets, cultural tourism, landscape planning and other related projects. Gunsan's vision for cultural tourism is time travel. The old downtown area is a tourist hub for time travel and projects are being promoted to expand tourism routes and revive art and cultural centers and commercial districts as economic revival measures.

Table 4 summarizes the city image of the local expert group containing

7. Articles related to the reference group were examined as they were expected to most strongly reflect regional issues, but were excluded from the analysis because they lacked critical content, instead being focused on promoting the city's projects.

the aforementioned local researchers and administrators. Gunsan studies experts and Gunsan administrators are both leading actors in identifying Gunsan's resources and developing them into local assets. However, specific differences exist in their nature and image formation. Gunsan studies experts are characterized by regional identity; they discover hidden value in visible elements, such as historical and natural resources, and assign meaning to a place by discovering data through literature and field research, or use historical evidence and value judgements as content for their studies. Gunsan studies experts publish research results and share the images they form through civic education. Their overall image of Gunsan is of a space where the pain of Japanese colonialism is concentrated and that of a declining and underdeveloped port city. Additionally, they regard the old downtown as a space associated with Japanese colonial politics.

On the other hand, one task of the Gunsan administration is to plan for the city's future. Gunsan administrators endeavor to connect the city's planned future image to policy tasks and to identify what resources the city has in abundance to use towards this goal. In addition, they lead municipal administration projects and promotional activities. They positively interpret Gunsan's resources and consider their utilization value. In effect, their image of the city sees natural resources as an abundant source of benefits, industrial resources as driving forces behind the local economy, and humanities resources as a developmental element of cultural tourism. The Gunsan administration's image of the city depicts it as a space of rich natural resources, a central city in the pan-Yellow Sea region, and a city that is advancing into the future. They perceive the old downtown area as a tourist city and Time Travel Village.

Table 4. Pursued Image

Category		Local Researchers (Gunsan Studies)	Local Administrators (Gunsan)
Nature		Explore local identity	Derive tasks for the future city
The perceiving subject	Subject	Regional studies researchers	Administrators, public officials, and working experts

	Experience method	Discover hidden values through visible elements	Identify improvements and leads change	
	Relationship with the place	Assign meaning to the city by discovering data; Consists primarily of historical evidence and value judgements	Use the city to connect its future image to policy tasks; View the city as a place of abundance and utilization	
Image formation methods	Activities and movements	Literature and field research	Promotion and municipal administration projects	
	Ideas	Aim to derive regional identity; Biased towards one era (Japanese colonial period); View Gunsan as a microcosm of Korea's unfortunate modern history	Positively interpret resources; Regard natural resources as symbols of abundance; Regard industrial resources as the driving force of the local economy; Regard humanities resources as a developmental element of cultural tourism; Aim for economic and cultural development; Focus on the positive aspects of the present and the future	
	Group sharing	Publication of research results and civic education	Reflect their ideas in their administrative plan; Lead the city's physical transformation project	
Formed image	Comprehensive image	Gunsan overall	A space where the pain of the Japanese colonial period is concentrated; A declining and underdeveloped port city	A space with rich natural resources; A central city in the pan-Yellow Sea region; A city advancing into the future
		Old downtown area	A space of Japanese colonial politics	Time Travel Village; Tourist destination
	Multifaceted image of old downtown area	A space that with extensive experiences of exploitation, violence, unhappiness and misfortune; a radical place; a space of resistance A divided modern city centered on Japanese colonial rule that ostracized Koreans The origin of the anti-Japanese spirit; A place where strikes and peasant protests developed into anti-Japanese movements;	A representative tourist destination; A space where modern cultural heritage is well-preserved; A historical site; An area subject to urban regeneration and central businesses; An area requiring economic restoration through strategic planning projects (old markets, youth, and the arts);	

	Origin of the Honam Independence Movement; A place with an exotic atmosphere and scenery; A declining and underdeveloped old town; A place of abandoned factories and back alleys; A Korean residential area in the 70s and 80s; A place of nostalgic memories and movie backdrops	Wolmyeong Park is a space that embraces the city's history
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2) Perceptions of Local Residents and Tourists: The Perceived Image

To examine the image of the city as perceived by local residents and tourists, a short-form questionnaire was conducted on the feelings and perceived representations of Gunsan. The survey included questions on “feelings towards Gunsan,” “image of the old downtown,” and “representative places and reasons.” Responses were categorized into social, cultural, and emotional feelings towards the city, the perception of the place, and its representation. Local residents perceived the city as strongly associated with “(modern) history,” “the sea,” and “coexistence of past and present.” This suggests that local residents feel the city’s historical ties. Regarding location, residents responded “the sea,” “Wolmyeong Park,” “Geumgang River,” “Modern History Museum,” and “Eunpa Amusement Park,” and expressed affection for its excellent landscape resources.

Table 5. Perceptions of Local Residents

Category		City's Image
	Nature	A combination of images as an experiential place of local experts and personal experiences
The perceiving subject	Subject	Individual citizens
	Experience method	Experience through life

	Relationship with the place		A relationship defined by the region name: a Gunsan person; The region directly links to local people's identities
Image formation methods	Activities and movements		Residing Forms local pride or shame through overall experience
	Ideas		Aims to construct a positive image based on local patriotism; Perceives the city as a place of economic value and high quality of life; Characterized by inherent NIMBY and PIMFY phenomena
	Group sharing		Forms local public opinions; Civic groups or community activities (online and offline spaces); Introduces the region to outsiders (shares information both on and offline)
Formed image	Comprehensive image	Gunsan overall	A peaceful city
		Old downtown area	A historical city where the past and present coexist
	Multifaceted image		Tourist city A city where past and present coexist; A true representation of modern history; A city that is pleasant to live in ↔ A declining city; A city with a future ↔ A city characterized by economic downturn
	Properties		Considers natural and tourism resources as corresponding to the quality of life; Conflicting perceptions exist in terms of the local economy and environment; Considers the utilization of modern history as positive

Visitors strongly associated their feelings about the city with “(modern) history,” “past,” “sea,” “experience,” and “famous restaurants.” Similar to local residents, visitors felt that Gunsan’s representations relate to its history. Visitors displayed slightly different perceptions of the place to local residents, with responses such as “the sea,” “famous restaurants,” “Iseongdang,” and “Saemangeum.”

Most visitors viewed the city as outsiders and primarily experienced the city through travel. They formed an image of Gunsan from an observer’s perspective after partially experiencing the city through tourist attractions or representative places. They became actors in the city’s image formation by expressing their experiential representations of the city based on individual experiences of a large-scale online platform using various methods.

Table 6. Visitors' Perceptions

Category		City's Image
Nature		Forms a city image through personal experience
The perceiving subject	Subject	Individual visitors
	Experience method	Experience through travel
	Relationship with the place	Observer Experiences focusing on tourist attractions and representative places
Image formation methods	Activities and movements	Pursue famous and trendy places and simultaneously boasts rare and trend-setting experiences ; Focused on picture-taking
	Ideas	Comply with the information intended by the managing personnel of the place (the city or owner of the tourist destination); Constructs significantly subjective judgements when no information is provided; Sensitive to the visuality of the location (a photogenic spot)
	Group sharing	Share information online to proactively form the place's image; Form representative characteristics of the region using fragmentary experiences; Mainly share information as visual information (photos) and text (videos also include auditory information); Actively either recommend or do not recommend the place to others
Formed image	Comprehensive image	Gunsan overall Historical tourist attraction
		Old downtown area Time travel destination
	Multifaceted image	A place that retains history and utilizes it well ↔ A tourist destination that glorifies the past; An urban regeneration hub ↔ A changing city; Traumatic memories ↔ Unique and exotic
	Properties	Only recognize representative tourist attractions as landscape resources; Have conflicting tendencies due to extremely varied perceptions of modern cultural heritage; Interpret the same target in various ways

3) Perceptions of Non-visitors: Learned Reinforced Images

People who had never visited Gunsan possessed a reinforced image of the city. A survey was used to investigate their feelings regarding their image of the place. Non-visitors mainly perceived the place's image by accepting the image formed by visitors. They are the last perceiving subjects of the city's image and potential tourists to Gunsan. Therefore, the complexity of the formed image can be observed through comparison with the pursued image of the reference group.

Table 7. Non-visitors' Perceptions

Category		City's Image	
Nature		Form new images about a place by accepting other peoples' images of the place	
The perceiving subject	Subject	Individuals who have received information via online platforms	
	Experience method	Understand the place through media	
	Relationship with the place	Potential tourists; The last perceiving subjects of the city's image	
Image formation methods	Activities and movements	Accept others' information; Accept the city's image through various media outlets, primarily online information	
	Ideas	Form preconceptions about the place's image (both positive and negative); Preconceptions affect future behaviors (visits); Form a more unified image of the place than that of the information creators	
	Group sharing	Rare	
Formed image	Comprehensive image	Gunsan overall	Tourist city
		Old downtown area	Modern historical city
	Multifaceted image	Sad history ⇌ well-preserved heritage ↔ Japanese culture; (Past) possessed a flourishing history ↔ (Present) inactive port	
	Properties	Similar to visitor's image of the place but more unified; View Gunsan as a travel destination; interested in events (famous restaurants and festivals); Characterized by indifference and possessing simple negative images of the city	

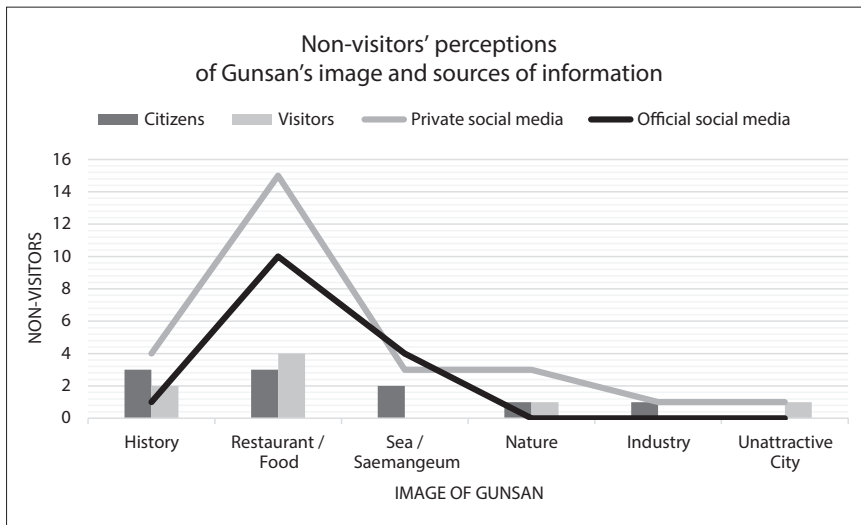


Figure 3. Non-visitors' perceptions of Gunsan's image and sources of information

Source: Author.

Unit: Number of people.

Non-visitors' perceptions of Gunsan are influenced the most by private social media. These non-visitors are less likely to learn about Gunsan's image from public media, such as publicity or articles created by the Gunsan city government or related organizations. This means that individual perceptions are diffuse. Therefore, the image of Gunsan is subjective and relies more on fragmented images than the perceptions of actual residents or reference groups. All subjects have different perceptions of the image of Gunsan, but unlike other groups, visitors have an inherent ambivalence towards the area's colonial legacy, which can be misleading to non-visitors (Fig. 3).

The Image of a Colonial City

1) The Image of a Colonial City Derived by Comparing Subjects' Perceptions

Based on Gunsan's colonial heritage, differences in the perceptions and

interpretations that arise from the utilization of negative heritage as a tourism resource were examined; the following being a summation of results. First, differences existed within the reference group. The reference group discovered Gunsan's resources, which led them to regional revitalization projects that they pursue as part of their efforts to improve the city's image. In this regard, the perspectives of local researchers and administrators differ. The two subgroups displayed different resource interpretations and periodic inclinations. Local researchers remember old Gunsan as a place of pain, and they express the value of Gunsan's resources as negative heritage. Conversely, local administrators acknowledge such perceptions while simultaneously striving to emphasize positive representations of Gunsan. Although they recognize the educational value of historical resources, they endeavor to use negative heritage to revitalize the local economy by implementing tourism and urban regeneration projects. This process generates non-criticized plans and transforms negative heritage into positive modern historical heritage.

Second, commonalities were observed between the perceived images of local residents, visitors, and non-visitors. All three groups understood Gunsan as a *city of modern history* and a *city where the past and present coexist*. They possess clear images of Gunsan and align with local researchers' and administrators' inclinations to develop the city with strong historical characteristics. Interestingly, the three groups did not view colonial heritage negatively. Local residents perceived the regional economic downturn and environmental degradation as negative but positively regarded the utilization of modern historical resources. Visitors viewed the city as a tourist city and had a dual interpretation of its historical heritage; they recognized Gunsan as a place that retains history and utilizes it well, yet simultaneously as a tourist destination that glorifies the past. This issue occurs throughout modern cities that rapidly developed under colonialism. Emotional expressions according to individual preferences, cultural abuse due to commercialization, and the neglect of historical testimonies in urban projects extend to public opinions on historical consciousness. Such phenomena have been observed in Gunsan during the following events: an apology delivered to the resident council's opposition to the establishment of

a yukata rental store in 2016; an outcry of public opinion against the inclusion of Chae Man-sik and Lee Man-soo in selecting five modern figures of Gunsan in 2012; the establishment of Moon Jong-gu’s Monument of Loyalty and Filial Piety in the Gubul-gil Course (a Gunsan walking-tour route); and the controversy over the historicity of the roof shape of a modern shelter built in 2018. Conversely, Gunsan is evaluated as playing a

Table 8. A Comparison of Perceiving Subjects

Category		Pursued Image		Perceived Image		Enhanced Image
		Local Researchers	Local Administrators	Local Residents	Visitors	Non-visitors
Formed image	Gunsan overall	A space expressing the pain of the Japanese colonial era; an underdeveloped port city	A space with rich natural resources; a future city	A peaceful city	A historical tourist attraction	A tourist city
	Old downtown area	A space of Japanese colonial politics	Time Travel Village; a tourist destination	A city where past and present coexist		
				A historical city	Time travel destination	A modern historical city
Multi-faceted image	A radical place; a divided space centered on Japanese imperialism The origin of the Honam Independence Movement A place with an exotic atmosphere and scenery An old declining town	A representative tourist destination A space where modern cultural heritage is well-preserved; a historical site An area subject to urban regeneration and central businesses ≙ an area requiring economic restoration	A port city	A place that retains its history and utilizes it well ↔ A tourist destination that glorifies the past An urban regeneration hub ↔ A changing city Traumatic memories ↔ Unique and exotic	A place with a sad history ≙ Well-preserved heritage ↔ Japanese culture (Past) A place that possessed a flourishing history ↔ (Present) An inactive port	
			A tourist city			
			A city where past and present coexist			
			A city that is pleasant to live in ↔ A declining city			
			A city with a future ↔ A city of economic downturn			

central role as a site for the exploration of modern history by continuously promoting the protest-centered historical commemorative project. Additionally, all three groups of subjects viewed Gunsan's colonial heritage as both a source of traumatic memories and a unique and exotic attraction. Local residents perceived the city as strongly associated with natural resources, where Wolmyeong Park, the sea, Geumgang River, and Eunpa Amusement Park were recognized as significant places. However, visitors more strongly associated the city with (spicy seafood noodle soup) restaurants, Iseongdang bakery, Saemangeum, ports, and railroad villages. Natural resources were essential factors for local residents as they correlate with their forms of life and history, whereas artifacts such as city structures and famous restaurants with strong experiential characteristics were more valued by outsiders (visitors).

Third, examining non-visitors' perceptions of the city as a reinforced image revealed that their perceptions were similar to those of visitors. Non-visitors viewed Gunsan as a tourist destination and modern historical city, while perceiving its colonial heritage as remnants of its tragic history and of Japanese culture. Their awareness of Gunsan was most strongly influenced by visitors' perceptions of the city's image.

2) Issues and Directions of Tourism using Colonial Heritage Discovered through Reinforced Images of the City

Policies to utilize cultural heritage (the culture consumption discourse) began in the late 1990s to positively recognize colonial heritage and institutionalize its preservation. Simultaneously, the local autonomy planned the use of Gunsan's colonial heritage as a local tourism asset. Though criticism continues in the fields of history and cultural heritage, local administrations and tourism sectors in Korea actively utilize the valuable lessons of negative heritage as tourism and image-making resources. The city of Gunsan began approaching tourism development plans in 1990s, some years before other cities (Yang and Park 2017). Starting with the survey of modern buildings in 2003, Gunsan designated the Modern Historical and Cultural Landscape District (part of its Basic Plan for Modern History and

Culture Landscape Development) in 2005, conducted the Modern Culture City Creation Project in 2010 and administered the Leading Urban Regeneration Project in 2014. The city's Modern History Museum, which opened in 2011, has seen an increase in annual visitors, from 220,000 in 2013 to 950,000 in 2019, with other local governments benchmarking Gunsan. These cultural heritage utilization policies serve as impetus for small and medium-sized cities to grow independently within the local self-government system.

Gunsan is characterized as a prototype of a modern city that has its origins in the Japanese colonial era. The reinforced city images perceived by non-visitors show Gunsan as a tourist city full of modern history. In terms of revitalizing the region and attracting tourists, these reinforced images are a successful achievement of the local administration. However, another phenomenon that emerged from tourism development is the creation of Japanese-style landscapes, the experiencing of Japanese-style houses, and the reproduction of Japanese-style shopping malls, which impacted local commercial districts. These are accompanied by Japanese cultural artefacts for consumption, such as kimono rentals, rickshaw rides, and famous restaurants. Famous restaurants and Iseongdang bakery, which were strongly recognized sites among individual places, were resources introduced as foreign culture at the time and remain as historical and luxurious city experiences in Gunsan. Consequently, the colonial period is recognized as one of the most prosperous and favorable times for the small city of Gunsan, rather than as traumatic history. Some criticize Gunsan as a place of *Japanese style*, while others are attracted to its *foreign* and *unique* atmosphere.

Although these interpretations can be viewed as cultural trends (the culture consumption discourse), the Gunsan administration should focus their energies on providing appropriate history education. Gunsan has continued to develop its historical commentary program and to focus on promoting historical awareness by construction of the Gunsan Uprising Hall, Gunsan Japanese Colonial Period Museum, and the Centennial Memorial Hall of the March First Independence Movement. However, amid the various persistent aforementioned controversies, standards for the use and management of colonial heritage should be established to help the

general public avoid misunderstandings of history and misuse by merchants.

Conclusion

This study examined the disputes surrounding colonial heritage—a negative heritage—and issues on utilizing it in tourism, in addition to how various subjects perceive it. Modern cultural tourism has recently gained popularity in various Korean cities by utilizing heritage from the Japanese colonial period. Concerns are increasing that the expansion of replica tourism policies will obscure critical historical perceptions of modern heritage. Additionally, discussions persist on the value of defining such relatively recent heritage as modern culture and using it to construct a city's image. The Korean people commonly view their colonial past as a period of trauma, but a period to remember. Nevertheless, interpretations of heritage utilization are considerably diverse and distinct. Gunsan has been successfully proceeding with and taking the initiative in exploiting colonial heritage for tourism. Therefore, this study examined the city images pursued and advocated by local researchers and administrators, the perceptions of local residents and visitors, and the reinforced images perceived by non-visitors as information receivers. The images of Gunsan among these three aforementioned groups were derived through these perceptions and the Gunsan cultural tourism policies devised by the reference group were critically analyzed. Accordingly, this study explored the nature of the historical identity pursued by the city of Gunsan.

This study examined controversies relating to negative heritage and tourism and conducted a survey to compare and evaluate the perceptions of different subjects. Open-ended responses to questions on Gunsan's representations were analyzed using text mining. While issues on negative heritage surrounding Registered Cultural Heritage in Korea have previously been discussed, this study further investigated the perceptions of other resources, such as the Gunsan Modern History Museum and famous restaurants. Consequently, this study identified differences in the way various subjects perceived Gunsan. However, more light could be shed on

the problem of glorification and distortion of the Japanese colonial period through a survey of experts whose perceptions were confirmed by the literature. This could add to this study by allowing for a multidimensional comparison of perceptions between subjects to analyze the perceptions of individual landscape resources and modern heritage sites. Therefore, it would be meaningful for future research to identify the causes of historical distortion and glorification for use by tourism. By applying these findings to colonial history tourism, it is hoped that more thoughtful and sustainable methods for utilizing colonial heritage can be explored.

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Appendix: Survey Summary

(1) Respondents

Respondents		Remark	
Number of respondents	192	Gunsan Population: 265,304 (2021)	Gunsan Museum of Modern History, visitors per year: 291,780 (2021)
Gunsan citizens	47 (24.5%)		
Visitors to Gunsan	94 (49%)	-	-
Non-visitors to Gunsan	51 (26.6%)		
Male	79 (41%)	134,290 (51%)	
Female	113 (58%)	131,014 (49%)	-
0–19 years old	5 (2%)	45,633 (17%)	
20–39 years old	68 (35%)	58,095 (22%)	
40–59 years old	60 (31%)	86,708 (32%)	-
60–years old	59 (30%)	73,177 (27%)	

Unit: Number of People.

(2) Questions

	Citizens and Visitors	Non-visitors
Group-specific questions	Have you communicated about the military? How do you usually communicate? How much of Gunsan's charm was reflected in the information you chose? What is a typical place in Gunsan that you would recommend? Why did you choose that place? What kind of city is Gunsan in your experience?	How did you get to know Gunsan? How did the route you chose above attract you to Gunsan? What is the most representative place in Gunsan that you would like to visit? Why did you choose that place? What is the impression of Gunsan as a city that you have learnt about indirectly?
Common question	What is your image of Gunsan as a city?	

(3) Text Mining of Open-ended Responses

	The impression of Gunsan	The city's image
Citizens		
Visitors		
Non-visitors		

Source: Made by Wordcloud.kr.