Pop City

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Notes

Introduction

1. Throughout this book, Korea refers to South Korea.


4. In 2003, the Roh Moo-hyun administration passed a special bill on decentralization that granted more rights and responsibilities to local governments, thus further increasing the degree of decentralization.


6. U.S. aid and grants from Japan (given in exchange for signing the Normalization Treaty in 1965) accounted for the majority of state investments. Around half of the foreign aid received between 1959 and 1969 was spent on building infrastructure facilities. Thus, South Korea might be said to be a site that absorbed surplus capital.
from advanced countries in the form of foreign aid, what David Harvey (1981) calls “spatial fix.”


8. See chapter 4 for the details of Land Adjustment Development.

9. In 1987, a nationwide civil uprising (the June Democratic Uprising [yuwol minju hangjaeng]) occurred that called for the end of the military dictatorship and promotion of democracy. Nationwide pro-democracy struggles led to the pronouncement of the June 29 declaration that brought about the resignation of Chun Doo-hwan. By the end of 1987, South Korea had experienced its first direct presidential election, which gave birth to the Roh Tae-woo administration and launched a substantive form of democracy in the country.

10. South Korea witnessed an annual economic growth rate of 10 percent during the 1980s. This economic boom resulted in a flood of money into the real estate market, which pushed up property values. In fact, property values quadrupled during the 1980s. In the aftermath of the 1988 Olympics in particular, the rate of increase went up sharply, from 18 percent in 1988 to 38 percent in 1990. The housing price hikes contributed to an increase in workers’ expenditures on housing, thus fueling wage increases (Oh 2016).

11. In 1987, before the inauguration of the Roh administration, South Korea had built a total of 645,000 housing units, satisfying only 56 percent of the housing demand in Seoul and 69 percent of nationwide demand. During the five-year period from 1988 to 1992, a grand total of 2,720,000 housing units were generated in the five newly developed towns. This form of rapid and massive construction of houses and cities was unprecedented in South Korea (Oh 2016).

12. In the presidential election of 2002, twenty years after the FNT project, candidate Roh Moo-hyun highlighted the uneven conditions of the country’s rapid growth as an election issue. Pointing out the excessive concentration of people, resources, and power in the SMA, the liberal presidential candidate attacked the greater Seoul area’s privileged power. He called for “Balanced National Development” (gukga gyunhyeong baljeon), which became the Roh administration’s policy priority during his presidential tenure (2003–2007). To actually achieve balanced development, President Roh argued, an active governmental role in spatial planning would be paramount. From its inception, the Roh administration promoted several development policies to attenuate uneven development. The major intervention was the construction of a new administrative city (now called Sejong City) outside of the Seoul metropolitan region, in the hope that population movement would follow the transfer of central administrative functions to the new city. Following the completion of the city’s construction, as of 2014, nine ministries, two agencies, two services, two presidential offices, twenty subordinate institutions, and sixteen government-funded research institutions had moved to Sejong City. In addition, the Roh administration also developed “Innovation Cities” (hyeoksin dosi) and “Business Cities” (gieop dosi) across the country, to which state corporations and private firms would be relocated, which aimed at drawing people away from the greater Seoul area to the rest of the
country. A total of 161 state corporations have been relocated to Innovation Cities located across the country. Detailed information can be accessed at http://innocity.molit.go.kr/.

13. South Korea is made up of seventeen first-tier administrative divisions: six metropolitan cities (gwangyeoksi), one special city (teukbyeolsi), one special self-governing city (teukbyeol jachisi), and nine provinces (do), including one special self-governing province (teukbyeol jachido). These are further subdivided into a variety of smaller entities, including cities (si), counties (gun), districts (gu), towns (eup), townships (myeon), neighborhoods (dong), and villages (ri).


15. For the research on tourism and the construction of urban spectacles, please see Cartier 2005 and Gotham 2007.

16. Hallyu is not the first case of the globalization of Asian popular culture; there was a boom in Hong Kong cinema in the 1980s (Lo 2005) and the Japan Wave in the 1990s (Iwabuchi 2002; Allison 2006). What differentiates the Korean Wave from these earlier phenomena is that: first, it has garnered a much broader audience via both formal (dissemination through a greater number of broadcasting channels through active exporting) and informal (such as the Internet and DVD piracy) distribution routes; and second, it has instigated massive pop culture-driven international tourism involving visits to the K-places. Using the concept “Inter-Asian Referencing,” Iwabuchi (2013) discusses how the Korean Wave has opened a field through which Asians encounter and discover neighbors and selves.

17. Scholars have discussed how the Korean Wave has sparked the previously restrained gendered desires to be exploded among East and Southeast Asian females and pointed out the contemporariness in such desires (Kim 2001; Lee 2008).

18. To advertise the new brand, the state corporation employed top Hallyu stars such as Big Bang, Krystal from f(x), and Lee Min-ho, and produced multilanguage television ads featuring these stars. The promotional movies can be found at http://www.imagineyourkorea.com/.


20. See Pile (2010) for the distinction between affective geography and emotional geography.

21. See chapter 2 for the audience groups having varied degrees of interest and commitment.


23. Drawing on Schumpeter, however, Jessop claims that the economic risks involved reflect the nature of capital not entrepreneurship.

24. Garnham defines culture as “the production and circulation of symbolic meanings,” and conceives a culture industry as involving “a material process of production
and exchange, determined by the wider economic process of society with which it shares many common features” (1990, 155).

25. At the same time, digitization also means the loss of audience markets due to the development of pirated products and informal distribution routes.

26. Exporting requires marketing costs, yet it is negligible compared with the benefits that the export markets bring. Moreover, thanks to the already existing Korean Wave, Korean exporters did not need to expend much effort on marketing during the 2000s.

27. See the conclusion for discussion of the aftermath of THAAD.

28. Unevenness operates at different scales: “in the organization of the global economy (e.g. the categories of first and third worlds), at regional scales within most countries (e.g. heavily industrialized or finance-centered regions versus ‘laggard’ or persistently poor rural areas), within metropolitan areas (e.g. ‘inner cities’ versus suburbs), and within many cities at neighborhood and block-by-block scales” (Gregory et al. 2009, 780). Thus, there are multiple centers and peripheries at each scale.


30. Actually, the construction of the Five New Towns in the SMA exacerbated this spatial unevenness because construction of more than two million new houses attracted people not only from Seoul but from the rest of the country as well, reinforcing the concentration of national resources and population in the SMA. The urban projects, therefore, caused long-term externalities in deepening the country’s uneven development. The main social cost of the development projects was charged to the rest of the country, as rural areas faced increasing poverty and isolation (Oh 2016).

31. An alternative term for cultural industries is “creative industries,” defined by UNESCO as “sectors of organized activity whose principal purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution and/or commercialization of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature.” http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/creative-industries/. In this book, I will use the cultural industry, the creative industry, and the entertainment industry exchangeable.

Part I

1. Please see chapter 1 on live production for why they were always pressed for time.

2. All amounts have been converted into U.S. dollars for the sake of accessibility and the conversion from Korean won to U.S. dollars is made at a rate equivalent to $1 = 1,000 won throughout this book.

3. There are four terrestrial broadcasting stations that use public waves in South Korea: KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation), SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System), and EBS (Educational Broadcasting System). Since EBS focuses on educational content, the other three compete against one another for ratings in dramas, entertainment shows, and news.
1. Speculative Producers

1. SBS’s first commercial success was achieved through the drama *Sandglass* (*Moraeg Sigye*, 1995), a twenty-four-episode series depicting the Gwangju Uprising (Gwangju Democratic Movement) of 1980 and the political oppression later in that decade. This epic modern history series recorded stunning 64.5 percent ratings at its peak and is still in fifth place in the all-time rankings of Korean television dramas, with average ratings of 46.7 percent (Russell 2008). *Sandglass* thrust SBS forward, making it a competitive player in the industry. Since then, the ratings battles have seriously intensified among networks, especially over prime-time dramas.

2. The ratio was originally set for a minimum of 3 percent of total broadcasting hours and was gradually raised at a rate of up to 5 percent annually, so that, as of 2015, the ratio stands at 35 percent on MBC, 35 percent on SBS, 24 percent on KBS 1, and 40 percent on KBS 2 (Korea Creative Content Agency 2015).

3. *What Is Love All About* was first aired on Channel 1 of China Central Television (CCTV) from June to December 1997 and took second place in viewer ratings (average 4.2%) among all foreign programs. Following audience requests for a rerun, the series was rebroadcast in 1998 on Channel 2.

4. The term *hallyu*, meaning the Korean Wave, was first coined in Taiwan around 1997. The Taiwanese replaced the Chinese character *han* in the term *hanliu* (meaning “cold wave”) with another Chinese character *han* (meaning “Korean”), which has the same pronunciation. Thus, the term was not initially invented to show appreciation of Korean popular culture. Rather, in creating the term, the local media were warning the Taiwanese entertainment industry that it had to fend off the formidable competitiveness of Korean television dramas (Lee 2011).

5. As daytime two-hour dramas were reduced or phased out during the 2000s, Japanese broadcasters became desperate to fill the time slots. They found Korean dramas much less expensive to air than reruns of previous Japanese dramas and it was easier to handle the copyright issues, too. These market conditions opened the floodgates, allowing Korean television dramas to flow into Japan, which later witnessed an enormous and unexpected rise in their popularity.

6. As of 2008, total exports had reached around $11 million (KOFICE 2008).

7. As the next section explains, most independent producers are small and frequently go bankrupt due to their financial instability. Some bankrupt firms later reappear but with different names.

8. The biggest telecommunication company, SK Telecom, is a heavy shareholder in Sidus HQ and the second biggest communication mogul, KT, controls one of the major production firms, Olive 9.

9. Listed companies include Sidus HQ, Pan Entertainment, Olive 9, Chorokbaem Media, DSP E&T, JS Pictures, Yellow Entertainment, and Eight Pics. Kim Jong Hak Production carried out a backdoor listing by merging with an existing listed technology firm, Pure Nanotech.

10. Broadcasters do not calculate the total production cost and pay exactly 70 percent of it; rather, conventionally, until 2011, when I did my field research, the price was more
or less fixed at around $100,000 per episode. In more recent practices, the amount differs in terms of casting, profit-distribution schemes, and dealing with copyrights.

11. Until the late 1990s, when actors were still employed by and thus belonged to broadcasting firms, their appearance fees were paid by the in-house rating system: broadcasters established eighteen categories based on career and work experience, and restricted the fees to $300 to $1,500 per episode. A few top-tier actors played as free contract agents, but even their fees per episode did not exceed the maximum of $3,000. Very recent practices, however, show clear departure from the 2000s. No tacit regulations are applied and sheer market principles determine the compensation for top celebrities, who usually earn $100,000 to $150,000 per episode.

12. The weak financial capability of most drama production firms has been revealed by several scandals over unpaid appearance fees. In 2010, the labor union of the nation’s broadcasting industry representing staff, actors, and singers claimed that there were overdue appearance fees and other unpaid wages totaling $3.7 million. As a result, the union decided to boycott the filming of outsourced dramas at all three major broadcasting companies. The unionists stopped appearing in dramas for days and abandoned their collective action only after the broadcaster promised to devise measures to prevent payment delays. What is notable is that the union strikes targeted the broadcasters rather than independent producers, with representatives saying: “Although the subcontractors are in the first instance responsible for the unpaid salaries, the broadcasting companies should also take responsibility. The major broadcasters have abandoned their social and ethical duties.” A similar incident occurred in 2011, when the Korea Entertainment Management Association disclosed a list of companies, responsible for thirty-two dramas and films, which had failed to pay actors, and announced that actors belonging to the association would not appear in dramas and movies made by the named production companies. A director from the association stated: “Heads of the production companies failed to pay performance fees, but kept making dramas by setting up other production firms or changing their names. Therefore, the overdue payment problem is getting bigger. Broadcasting companies know this, but they keep outsourcing, saying the payment delay is an issue between producers and actors, and not their business.” This time again, the union criticized broadcasters as much as the producers who failed to make payments. These two incidents indicate the unreliable financial conditions of small-sized independent producers and the critical role of broadcasters, who can control delinquent independent firms. More information can be found at “Entertainers’ Union and KBS Reached Agreement,” Korea Times, September 1, 2010, http://koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/09/113_72392.html.

13. Revenues from selling in overseas markets generally make up 40 percent of income in ordinary independent production firms (Korea Creative Content Agency 2009).

14. Television dramas broadcast via cable channels have only recently begun to be exported. These include Shut Up Flower Boy Band (Dakchigo Kkocminam Baendeu, tvN, 2012), I Need Romance (Romaenseuga Piryohae, tvN, 2011, 2012), Queen In-Hyun’s Man (Inhyeonhwanghuui Namja, tvN, 2012), Yellow Boots (Noran Boksucho, tvN, 2012), Vampire Prosecutor, Season 1, 2 (Baempaieo Geomsa, OCN [Orion Cinema Network], 2011, 2012), Special Affairs Team TEN (Teuksusageonjeondamban Ten, OCN, 2012), God’s Quiz, Season 1, 2, 3 (Sinui Kwijeu, OCN, 2010, 2011, 2012), Girl K (Sonyeo Kei, Channel

15. Because of the uncertainty of a show making it onto a television channel and the precarious financial backing, stars have become a critical factor in attracting investment rather than a mere element in the drama. Independent producers have established a system whereby they monopolize high-profile writers and cast celebrity actors first, then win a slot on a channel, and later scrape up the investment money, using the actors’ star power. Capitalizing on the name value of stars as the critical route to funding the production signifies that they rely on future success with no tangible source of security for financial backing. On the other hand, there is no system for verifying whether the money invested is being used wisely. Broadcasting networks, which buy the final product (television dramas), never concern themselves with the sources and uses of the investment money. These capital flows subject the major players in the drama industry to great uncertainty, as they are always gambling on the success of their shows.

16. Author interview with a project manager at a small-sized drama production firm, March 2011.

17. Author interviews with industry insiders, March 2011.

18. Parts of this section were published in Oh 2015.


23. Actually, three dramas that started their first episodes on the same date recorded viewer ratings proportionate to the running times of their second episodes: *Witch’s Romance* (*Manyeoui Yeonae*, SBS, 80 minutes), *Thank You* (*Gomawoyo*, MBC, 72 minutes), and *The Devil* (*Mawang*, KBS, 71 minutes) recorded 16.3 percent, 14.6 percent, and 8.7 percent, respectively. Cited from “Ratings Proportional to Running Time,” [In Korean.] *Nocut News*, March 23, 2007, http://www.nocutnews.co.kr/show.asp?id=468765.


25. Author interview, March 2011.

26. Author interview with a scriptwriter, April 2011.

27. For the interactive nature of television series, please see Hand and Varan 2007.


31. In _simple placement_, brands are featured in three primary ways: first, the product itself can be seen either in the background or, more desirably, while actually being used; second, a corporate logo, insignia, trademark, or other identifying feature may be shown; third, an advertisement, such as a billboard or television commercial, may be placed in a scene as ambiance in the background (Smith 1985).

32. Lukač’s (2010a) examines how lifestyle-driven trendy dramas effectively targeted the young female audience in Japan in the 1990s.

33. Exceptions include _Sign_ (Ssain 2011), _Golden Time_ (Goldeun Taim 2012), _The Chaser_ (Chujeokja 2012), _Punch_ (Peonchi 2014), and _The Village: Achiara’s Secret_ (Maeul Achiaraui Bimil 2015). While the prime-time series on terrestrial channels were dominated by commercial Cinderella stories, cable channels successfully experimented with genre series such as _God’s Quiz_, _Gap-dong_ (Gapdongi, tvN, 2014), and _Signal_ (Ssigeuneol, tvN, 2014). Critics reckon that production conditions on the cable channels, which are less affected by sponsorship because commercials are allowed in the middle of a show, have created more room for creativity and freshness.


35. Ibid.

36. Author interview, March 2011.

37. Author interview, February 2011.


39. Such comments are prevalent on drama web pages and online drama discussion forums, and in general discourse on social media.


41. Author interview, April 2011.

42. See chapter 2 for discussion of spatially organized story development.


44. Ibid.

45. Criticisms have also arisen regarding the industry’s lack of long-term creative development; when writers only process existing stories, the scope of their creativity is bound to be narrowed.

46. Historical grudges originated from the Japanese colonial rule of Korea. There were no cultural exchanges between the two countries until 1998, when South Korea lifted its ban on Japanese pop culture. Since then, South Korea has phased in Japanese cultural products; however, this has so far not included an opening of terrestrial channels to Japanese broadcasting programs. Yet Japanese television dramas enjoy a broad
Korean audience, which mainly experiences them via cable television, online, or on DVDs (Koreanfilm.org).

47. Among these, Saimdang, Memoir of Colors received a significant amount of investment from Emperor Group, a Hong Kong–based company, and Descendants of the Sun has already sold its transmission rights to iQiyi.

2. Spectacular Places

1. Parts of this chapter were originally published in Oh 2014.

2. Another spatial aspect of cultural production is the agglomeration of cultural producers in place, forming the synergetic relationship between the industry and place. Please see chapter 5 and Scott 2004, 2005.

3. I am referring here to dramas set in premodern dynastic eras such as Chosun (1392–1910), Goryeo (918–1392), United Silla (676–935), and the Three Kingdoms Period (57 BC–668 AD) in which Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla coexisted.

4. This is similar to docudrama in that actual historical events are dramatically depicted. Consequently, these dramas were rarely shot outside established indoor studios; outdoor scenes were mainly filmed at Gyeongbok Palace (the Chosun dynasty royal palace) or the Korean Folk Village.

5. Historical dramas usually consist of more than fifty episodes that are broadcast over a period of six months to a year.

6. For example, Queen Sundeok (Seondeog Yeowang 2009), featuring the Silla period, was mainly filmed at the Kyungju Millenium Park in Kyungju City, the capital of the Silla dynasty.

7. Sometimes broadcasters try to find sponsors. In the case of Yongin City, the city government smoothed administrative procedures to turn the land owned by MBC into a drama-filming site and funded parts of the construction cost. In the case of Kim Soo Ro (Kimsooro 2010), Kimhae City contracted with a broadcaster, MBC.

8. Author interview, February 2011.

9. Considering the fact that the average viewer rate for television dramas in Korea is around 15 percent, this number indicates the staggering popularity of the drama.


11. Wando County offered $4 million and the provincial government gave a grant of the same amount. In addition, the private sector in the area contributed $10 million. The sponsorship amount was about 8 percent of the total annual budget ($184 million).


14. The term *destination placement* is inspired by the term *product placement* (see Bala-
subramanian 1994). See chapter 1 for a discussion of the practice of product placement in
Korean television dramas.
15. While most Korean cases are the states’ projects and are entirely driven by local
government, community members (including Village Youth Groups) participated in the
drama sponsorship to a greater extent in these two Japanese cases by providing money
or free on-site labor. A crisis mentality reigned throughout both prefectures. They con-
sidered drama sponsorship to be their last chance to enhance material conditions in
their areas and raise outsiders’ awareness of their area.
17. Through the county’s drama sponsorships, the same places are also featured in
Seoyoung, My Daughter (Nae Ttal Seoyeongi 2012), 49 Days (Sasipguil 2011), and A Man
Called God (Sinira Bullineun Sanai 2010).
18. Sponsored by Shinsun Seolleongtang (Beef Broth Soup Firm), the aging CEO’s
company is set to run Seolleongtang business and one of the sponsor’s branches was
actually used as a major filming location.
19. As discussed in chapter 1, production sponsorship is often contracted while a
series is actually being aired. Particularly series that show sharp ratings increases in the
first few episodes attract late-coming sponsors. In Shining Inheritance, textual notices of
Donghae City’s sponsorship appear only from episode 7 (out of a total of 28 episodes),
implying that Donghae City joined late as a sponsor.
20. For the study on the melodramatic narrative, please see Keating 2006 and
21. “Goyang Spent $1 Million to Advertise the City via Dream High . . . Wasting
bulletin/2011/02/22/0200000000AKR20110222156700060.HTML.
22. Author interview, June 2011.
23. Author interview, May 2011.
25. Author interview, April 2011.
26. “Korean TV Show Sparks Chicken and Beer Craze in China,” Wall Street Journal,
chicken-and-beer-craze-in-china/.
27. Rephrased from http://www.dramabeans.com/2014/01/you-from-another-star-
episode-7/.
28. “Mixed Tourism Products Are Rising: Getting Beauty Services after Visiting
the Film Locations of My Love from the Star;” [In Korean.] DongA Ilbo, March 12, 2015,
29. Hirata Yukte (2004) explains the phenomenon of Korean drama tourism as
middle-aged Japanese women indulging themselves in Korea, a different form of gen-
dered travel from the earlier male-oriented sex tour. See also chapter 5.
30. During my fieldwork period in spring 2011, I never encountered Japanese fan-
meeting groups in Korea. The data presented here were collected through interviews
with tour guides, translators, travel agency staff, or on-site set managers, who all had
more than one experience with Japanese fan groups.
31. Author interview with a then-interpreter, March 2011.
32. Author interview with the civil official, May 2011.
37. Author interviews with officers in multiple municipalities, spring 2011.
38. Author interview, May 2011.
40. For studies on the gendered nature of television audience fandom, see Modleski 1982, Nochimson 1993. Nancy Baym’s research (2000) examines the formation of online community among mostly female television fans.
41. Tokyo, 175; Osaka, 25; Nagoya, 23; Sendai, 15; and Fukuoka, 11 (Korea Tourism Organization 2005, 2006).
44. The extensive remodeling that established sets for multiple historical periods has attracted the production of new drama series, including *The Great Seer* (*Daepungsu* 2012), *The Kings’ Daughter*, *Soo Baek-hyang* (*Jewangui Ttal, Subaekhyang* 2013), and *Six Flying Dragons* (*Yukryongi Nareusya* 2015).
45. The $50 million were split into $20 million for set construction and $30 million for the production. This is an extraordinarily large amount because the sponsorship was promoted at a provincial level.
46. The drama production firm, Chungam Entertainment, bought the land, valued at KRW 16,900 (around $17) per 3.3m², at the appraised price of KRW 11,000 (around $10).
48. Of course, local residents are not universally opposed to the state’s projects. Active local participation in Wando County is a good example. Having witnessed the explosive power of drama sponsorship through the so-called *Haeshin* set, local residents collected money to help the county sponsor the drama *Gourmet* (*Sikgaek* 2008), in which the local specialty, Wando abalone, was strategically featured. Resident participation was possible because the drama sponsorship was directly related to the livelihood of the locals.
49. Author interview with a tour guide who described the Japanese tourists’ experiences, March 2011.
50. Author interview, May 2011.

Part II

1. For the history of Korean music before the domination of idol music, see Lie 2015.
2. Elsewhere I have discussed the operational structure of DC Inside and how that prompts the discursive consumption of popular culture; see Oh 2015. For the in-depth anthropological research on DC Inside, please see Lee, Gil-ho 2012.

3. Image Producers

1. Aoyagi (2005) and Galbraith and Karlin (2012) provide in-depth research about the Japanese idol system.
2. Young talents who debut as actors and actresses, for instance, are not labeled *idols*. For more detailed research on the Korean idol system, please see Lee 2010, Kim and Yoon 2012, and Won and Kim 2012.
3. For more information about the *jimusho* system, please refer to Marx 2012.
5. These days, the contracted trainees belonging to major management agencies are already elite groups; many young children spend extra tuition on singing and dancing lessons at private institutions simply to pass an audition by one of the entertainment agencies. As the K-pop industry has prospered, the number of private institutions has also mushroomed to nurture idol wannabes. See Ho 2012.
6. Lee Soo-man, a founder of SME, introduced the concept of CT (cultural technology) to explain the in-house training system. According to him, “CT is the driving force behind the development of SM’s pop culture into global *Hallyu*. One of the elements of CT is our training system. Through auditions, we discover hidden talent and put them through three to seven years of music, dance, and acting training in order to create a star that’s close to perfection. It’s through this unique system that the Hallyu wave was created.” “Lee Soo Man Outlines SM Entertainment’s Three Stages of Globalization,” *Allkpop*, June 13, 2011, http://www.allkpop.com/article/2011/06/lee-soo-man-outlines-sm-entertainments-three-stages-of-globalization.
7. While performers who leave their initial management company find themselves blacklisted and unwelcome within the entertainment industry in Japan (Marx 2012), the recruitment of dropped-out trainees by smaller agencies is a common practice in Korea. Given their lack of an established training system, as a way of saving on development costs smaller companies prefer to scout those who have already experienced training at a major firm. Quite a few K-pop idol stars who currently belong to medium- or small-sized management agencies were previously trainees at one of the three majors: for example, Soyeon of Tiara is an ex-trainee at SME and Lee Gi-kwang of Beast was originally trained at JYPE.


9. In July 2009, Jaejoong, Yoochun, and Junsu attempted to split from SME, claiming that their thirteen-year contract was excessively long, schedules were extended without the permission of the band members, and profits were unfairly distributed. In October 2009, the Seoul Central District Court granted the trio a temporary contract injunction, and TVXQ’s group activities in Korea ceased. TVXQ returned as a duo in 2011. Keith Negus’ book (1999) discusses the uneasy relations between production firms and artists in the music industry.


11. The unique feature of K-Pop Star, an audition program aired by SBS, is that it provides some participants who pass through a certain number of rounds with the opportunity to get training at three major management companies: SME, JYPE, and YGE. The on-the-spot training scenes also display the interiors of major agency buildings, which are decorated with photos of leading K-pop idols.

12. Girls’ Generation started as a nine-member group in 2007, but Jessica departed from the group in 2014 and three other members (Sooyoung, Tiffany, and Seohyun) left the group in 2017.

13. K-pop fans play a game of pretending to be SM creator Lee Soo-man, saying, “We included everybody in the hope that you can find at least one or two boys or girls to suit your own taste from the large groups.”

14. One market approach that the major gihoeksu have adopted is to acquire public recognition for a new group during its predebut stage. SME has been operating the “SM Rookies” system through which the SM trainees get to face the public. Under the slogan, “Ids and fans grow together,” SME aims to establish a substantial fan base before the official launch of a new group. YGE and JYPE have also actively used television programs to obtain public recognition for their newly launched idol groups. In 2006, YG Entertainment released Real Documentary: Big Bang—a survival reality program in which trainees competed against each other to be selected as a member of Big Bang—on GOM TV (an Internet-based television channel). The program clocked up more than a million viewings within only two weeks and was reaired via tvN (a cable channel) as Big Bang: The Beginning. Enjoying the enormous publicity generated by the program, in 2013 on MNet YGE launched another one called Who Is Next: WIN. The show dealt with multiple rounds of a competition between “Team A” and “Team B,” both formed from trainees within YGE. “Team A” won all three rounds of public
voting, and made its debut as WINNER. The next year, YGE released another reality survival program, called *Mix & Match*, to select members of iKON, a seven-member boy band. The program featured the six members of Team B in *Who is Next: Win* and three new trainees. JYP Entertainment released a documentary, *Blood Men*, via MNet in 2007 that shows the predebut audition and training days of the group One Day, which later split into 2AM and 2PM. By revealing the brutal realities of the debut process, the reality programs plant the idea among audiences that the selected members went through rigorous training and finally achieved their dreams. The commercial exploitation of the debut process for idol groups has generated enormous publicity; not only are the newly formed groups and their members widely known to the public but fandom is established even before the debut. Such practices, however, are limited to major *gihoeksa* with powerful influence over broadcasting stations.

15. For the discussions of idols’ sexuality and the gendered nature of idol production, please see Kim 2011 and Jung 2013.

16. Some idols are trained to be able to compose music and allowed to produce their own albums. Representative examples of this include G-Dragon in Big Bang, B.I in iKON, Jung Yong-hwa in CNBLUE, and Yong Jun-hyung in BEAST. Only recently, agencies have begun to nurture the artistic production skills among trainees; BTS and Stray Kids were created upon such creative autonomy.


18. “1 vs. 100” aired on August 18, 2015, on KBS.


21. For the studies on fandom, please see Lewis 1992 and Jenkins 1992b. For the celebrity studies, please see Gamson 1994.

22. I have explored the discursive consumption of Korean television dramas elsewhere (Oh 2015). In the web 2.0 era, the reception process of television shows goes far beyond passive watching to embrace collective consumption and collaborative reproduction among the anonymous public.


24. Ibid.

25. Moreover, easy access to free digital copies of music files further eats away at the profitability of the pop music business.


27. A few idol groups that have megasize fandom, such as EXO and BTS, still sell their music albums well. EXO is a quadruple-million seller as its four albums (*XOXO, Exodus, Ex’Act*, and *The War*) have sold more than one million copies. Such very rare cases do not necessarily render music a primary currency in the K-pop industry.

29. Marx (2012) discusses how the Japanese jimusho system promotes “created” performers over talented ones. Against the backdrop of a dwindling music market and the decline of television viewership, the top channel for the creation of revenue streams is corporate/product sponsorship and promotion. In the jimusho system, this commercial logic leads to emphasis on attractive looks over artistic talent where idols are concerned and results in industry players devoting more time to securing advertising deals than producing entertainment content. Thus, the Japanese idols that the jimusho system prefers are those with general talent rather than those who are too specialized.


31. In the holographic performance hall, screens are transparent, tilting at forty-five degrees. When the holographic video is projected on the tilted screens, it creates 3D holographic projections floating in midair.

32. As regards hologram performances, my informants reported: “They are quite realistic, and therefore afford audiences a semblance of what a true concert experience could be, only without all the high-pitched screaming”; “These showings are ideal for tourists who are visiting Seoul and may never have the opportunity to see their biases [favorite idols] in the flesh.” Author interviews, June 2016.

33. Although the majority of them were fan girls, I spotted fan boys and fan adults as well. In my personal interviews, many fan girls interpreted K-pop places such as the Artium as public spaces in which their identity as fans would not necessarily be disclosed, as the following interview quotes suggest: “The Artium is a space I would feel safe to go to for my own interests. It is not like waiting in a long line at a fan-meeting venue. When you are shopping and looking around here you won’t be glared at much by other people. In here, I could be just a shopper, as far as the public is concerned, rather than a fan, and that is a great relief”; “It is totally possible to enjoy the Artium without spending a single penny; entry is free and a good majority of the interactive activities are free as well. Hanging around is not discouraged in spaces like the LIVErary either”; “While I’m still intimidated by public fan culture, there is something comforting about walking into a space knowing that you will not be judged for the things you enjoy.” Author interviews, June 2016.

34. Author interview, June 2016.


38. Foreign fans have tried to enhance their visibility by urging entertainment agencies to create English-language websites for overseas audiences and increase the number
of overseas concerts. It is common for global fans to organize flash mobs in prominent public areas via Facebook, performing and dancing to the latest K-pop songs.

39. For the discussion of K-pop fandom in Southeast Asia, please see Jung 2011.
41. Uploaders can also adjust the settings to disallow any comments on their videos.
42. Cited from https://thelittleshopofdonuts.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/a-case-for-k-pop/.
43. Author interview, April 2015.
44. Dance practice videos display idols’ in-house choreography practice wearing ordinary clothes. Filmed from the front and uninterrupted by the busy camerawork of music shows, the practice videos plainly reveal the overall choreography. They are thus used as dance tutorials by fans. Ardent fans eagerly wait for these unofficial videos because they find watching their idols going through ordinary rehearsals in their not-so-sparkly outfits surprisingly entertaining.
45. The number of views generates revenues to YouTubers. If the view count reaches ten million, the estimated revenue is between $13,600 and $34,000. See http://youtubeMoney.co/.
47. When celebrities appear at an airport for overseas schedules, fans have opportunities to take photos of them in an off-stage ordinary outfit.
49. Actually, the term “cannon goddess” originated from the SHINee fan club. SHINee members often remark, “Our fans take pictures of us using cameras that are used to take pictures of the moon.”

4. K-Star Road

1. This does not necessarily mean that all Gangnam residents are part of the upper class: many young parents with school-age children have opted to be tenants in the area to enjoy the better educational opportunities.
2. Park seized power in a military coup in 1961; the military dictatorship continued until 1979, when he was assassinated.
3. See also the MBC Documentary I Can Tell Now (Ijeneun Malhal Su Issda), episode 79, “The Roots of Speculation: The Republic of Gangnam (Tugiui Ppuri: Gangnam Gonghwaguk),” which aired on April 10, 2004. At that time, an apartment condo of around 2,000 square feet located in central Seoul cost around $11,000; thus, $2 million in illegal political funds was an unimaginable amount.
4. To pacify individual landowners’ complaints, the state exempted them from real estate transfer tax in the Gangnam development site.

5. School District 8 is known to have the best public schools in the country and is also a mecca of private education.

6. Valérie Gelézeau (2007) interprets the appearance of large-scale apartment areas in Korea as the result of deliberate government policy, especially the allotment system (bunyang jedo). Through the bunyang system, would-be home owners bought apartments at below-market prices before they were even built; then, when construction was complete, they found themselves suddenly wealthy because values had already soared. At the same time, apartments became a symbol of social recognition for a new stratum that had lost its traditional sense of identity based on birthplace (kohyang).

7. The currency depreciation affected the price of imported oil, causing price hikes for every single manufactured product. Skyrocketing interest rates also aggravated household debt.


9. Gangnam-gu is one of the twenty-five gu (districts) that make up the metropolitan area of Seoul; Gangnam-gu Office is the district government. As stated above, Gangnam, broadly speaking, refers to the three wealthy gu located south of the Han River: Seocho(-gu), Gangnam(-gu), and Songpa(-gu). Although Gangnam-gu is only one part of broader Gangnam (sometimes referred to as the greater Gangnam area), the district office is trying to make the symbolic status of Gangnam apply only to the area within its district boundaries.

10. The original data can be accessed at the following site: http://gangnam.go.kr/portal/bbs/selectBoardList.do?bbsId=B_000031&menuNo=200097.

11. Although such efforts to be global face criticism in terms of the normalization of the global city and the exacerbation of sociospatial polarization, particularly among “developing” cities, playing the global has been a desperate initiative for emerging cities and legitimized “the entrepreneurial turn” of urban governance. See also Robinson (2002) and Dupont (2011).

12. Medical tourism is nothing but a euphemism for plastic surgery tourism. The overseas marketing of Korean popular culture has constructed an image of Korean beauty that fuels fans’ aspirations to emulate the appearance of Korean stars (see chapter 5). Given the growing boom in “plastic surgery tours” to Korea, Gangnam-gu Office is trying to capitalize on this “medical” demand by exploiting the density of beauty clinics in the area. A discussion of plastic surgery tourism, however, goes beyond the scope of this study.

13. Multicultural (damunhwa) policies are designed to provide an alternative to Korea’s historic ethnic homogeneity by acknowledging and endorsing the diverse cultural origins of migrant brides, foreign investors, and migrant workers. The policy originally intended to embrace “Otherness.” Ironically, however, it has created a dichotomy between the multicultural and the nonmulticultural (i.e., the “Korean”).

14. In my attempt to interview district officials, I was asked to, first, reveal my perspective on their place-promotion policies: “If your research intends to criticize our
policies, we cannot do any interviews. If there is criticism only, city officials cannot do anything.” Personal phone call with a district officer, June 2016.

15. Seriously underestimating actual demand, SM Entertainment scheduled one single concert; all tickets were sold in less than fifteen minutes. Those who did not get a ticket took to the streets, urging SM Entertainment to add more dates. French fans picketed the main courtyard of the Louvre Museum, waving signs and banners saying, “Please hold the concert on another day” and “We want a second SM Town Live in Paris.” The demonstration lasted for about an hour. The protestors staged a flash mob performance, and sang and danced to a number of K-Pop songs. This incident was turned into a huge national media spectacle back home in Korea to show how K-pop was gaining worldwide recognition even in the West.


17. This quotation is from Gem Muzones’s blog (www.travelswithahobo.com), a founder and author of the budget travel blog Travels with a Hobo.

18. This was posted as a “Reply” to the following: http://www.allkpop.com/article/2014/07/what-its-like-going-to-a-k-pop-concert.


20. Author interview, March 2011.


22. The data is drawn from Kpop United, a group that organized to bring K-pop fans together and to also teach them about the culture behind K-pop. They created their first tour called “Dream Tour Korea!” in 2012. The blog posting can be found at http://kpoptamago.blogspot.com/2013/04/kpop-united-dream-tour-korea-day-1.html, accessed in October 2015.


25. In an effort to make inroads into overseas markets, some major agencies have held overseas concerts. For example, under the aegis of the “SMTOWN Live World Tour,” in which all SM artists collaborate and perform together, SM Entertainment has regularly held overseas concerts in many different countries. Big groups such as Big Bang, Shinhwa, and 2PM are often on an Asia tour or a world tour. Yet such opportunities do not come along often—only a few times a year in Japan and China, which are major markets for K-pop, and at best once a year in other smaller markets. Minor agencies do not have the capacity to launch overseas concerts on their own. Lack of opportunities to see their idols in their own countries, however, is not the only reason that hungry and tantalized foreign fans are driven to visit Korea. Korea has a unique concert culture that can be experienced only in the mecca of K-pop.

26. Called dreame (meaning “dream rice”), these rice stacks are a type of charitable activity engaged in by fans in the names of their idols. It is now common practice among
K-pop fans to send *dreame* mock-ups to show support for their stars rather than sending flowers. This activity has become a representative form of activism within K-pop fandom; once largely driven by consumerism, fan culture has become socially aware (Jung 2012).

27. Author interview, June 2014.


30. In addition to K-Star Road, the K-ROAD project is envisioned as encompassing “K-Fashion Road,” a remodeling of a neighborhood where fashion shops and studios are clustered; “K-Beauty Road,” an area where beauty shops and clinics are concentrated; “K-Gourmet Road,” which is lined with quality restaurants; and “K-Riverside Road,” which connects Gangnam with the nearby Han River Park.

31. The brand of a product embodies a set of physical and sociopsychological attributes as well as beliefs that are associated with the product. See Simoes and Dibb (2001).


35. Building affective connections between a city and its users can be done by a variety of means: by appealing to the aesthetic sensibilities and cultural tastes of the so-called new middle class (young, high-income professionals), who would like to live in gentrified neighborhoods (Zukin 1995; Smith 1996; Florida 2002); through consumer lifestyle magazines that encourage readers to aspire to particular lifestyles and brand names (Greenberg 2000, 2008); and through cultural stories that construct cities’ images (Jensen 2007). These affective strategies, which mainly target a particular (upper middle) class, have, however, also been the object of contestations over privatization, exclusion, and displacement (Ley 1996; Smith 1996).


5. Cosme Road

1. Parts of this chapter was originally published in Oh 2017.

2. “Imo” is the nineteenth year in the sexagenarian cycle, corresponding to the year 1882. The Imo Incident was a revolt by some units in the military against the government’s
discriminatory policies favoring the new Special Skill Force organized by the Japanese advisory.

3. The writing of the poem/song “As Time Goes By” (Sewori gamyeon) is a famous story. One night in 1956, a group of artists gathered together at the famous Gyeong Sang Do House (a drinking place) in Myeong-dong. As the group sat drinking, the poet Park In-hwan began scribbling down a poem. Composer Lee Jin-seob looked at it and created a musical score to go along with the poem on the spot. The actress Nah Ae-sim began to sing it, and when the group was joined by tenor Yim Man-seob, it became a full-fledged performance.

4. The Fourth Republic (1972–1979) was established under the new constitution called Yushin (meaning “Revitalization” or “Reform”) in 1972. The reform created an authoritarian institution called the National Conference Unification (NCU). NCU was essentially an electoral college whose main task was to choose the president through a nonpopular voting mechanism. Park Chung Hee was elected without opposition in 1972 and 1978. This system remained in effect until after Park’s assassination in 1979. Establishing the presidency as a self-perpetuating and highly autocratic position in the South Korean government, the Yushin Constitution was little more than a legal mechanism for institutionalizing Park’s dictatorial rule.

5. Deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) caused significant declines in inbound Chinese tourists in Korea. See the conclusion for discussion of the aftermath of THAAD.


9. For brand name spellings, I referred to their own logo images.

10. Author interviews, May 2014.

11. Author interviews, May 2014.

12. “THE FACE SHOP vs. innisfree.”

13. Author interviews, May 2014.


15. The road shops may be either directly operated by a cosmetics firm or by franchising agreement.

16. Author interviews, June 2014.

17. Despite the advantages of agglomeration, measures to reduce production costs have led companies to form outsourced satellites that rely upon inexpensive labor costs, for example, in Vancouver, British Columbia (Coe 2000; Scott 2007).

18. Gangnam is a primary destination for such “medical tourism,” but discussion of the Hallyu-driven plastic surgery tours much exceeds the scope of this book.
19. Author interview, June 2014.
20. These modeling examples are as of 2015 and the brands frequently change their models over time.
21. In comparison, there are few blogs that discuss the musical styles of K-pop.
22. Author interview, June 2014.
23. Author interview with a store assistant at Nature Republic, June 2014.
26. As of December 2014, the official appraised land value for the site was around $200,000 per square meter; it had held the number-one position for ten straight years. Land value data is from the Korea Land Information System, https://www.realtyprice.kr:447/notice/gsindividual/siteLink.htm, accessed on April 29, 2018.
27. Author interview, May 2014.

Conclusion

1. One example is the Roh Moo-hyun administration’s Comprehensive Real Estate Tax (jonghap budongsan segeum), which imposed an additional 1 to 3 percent of property tax on real estate whose value exceeded 600 million won (about $600,000). The policy was intended to redistribute wealth and prevent speculative bubbles.
2. The initial agreement between the United States and South Korea was made on July 7, 2016.
4. The screenwriter achieved great commercial success through her works, including Descendants of the Sun, The Heirs, and Secret Garden.
5. Its final episode recorded an 18.680 percent nationwide audience share, an indication of exceptional success for a drama series aired via a cable channel, making it the second highest rated drama in Korean cable television history.
7. See chapter 2 for details.
9. I draw on Joseph Nye’s (2004) conceptualization of soft power as a form of power that arises from the attractiveness of a country’s cultural values. This entails the ability to get what one wants by seduction rather than coercion. See also Lukač’s 2010b.
10. For the relationship between international film (festival) and cities, see Stenger 2001 and Stringer 2001.


12. Cities in other parts of Asia have been endeavoring to tap into the popularity of certain media content: for example, the Japanese National Tourist Organization’s effort to enhance international tourism to Tokyo by capitalizing on the popularity of Lost in Translation, and Taipei City’s efforts to develop the historic district of Bopiliao by appropriating the representations and meanings of the hit film Monga (Chen and Mele 2017). In contrast to such postproduction efforts, my focus in this book is on the precontracted placement of places in media content.