

Hallyu: Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2016



문화체육관광부

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

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Committee Procedures and Expectations

Committee will begin in January 2016, with the simulated location of Seoul, South Korea. Korean entertainment encompasses many different forms, and each of you will work toward enhancing your sliver of the pie. Much of the information and research about these topics comes from fan sources or is written in Korean. It is important to filter your research to facts and ensure topical accuracy in discussion. Make sure to understand the landscape of Korean entertainment, and how the government interacts with different companies. From that understanding, you will have to strategize on how to ensure your company or role is successful in shaping the course of Korean entertainment. 2016 is a particular crossroads for Korean entertainment and it is important to note that the future of this committee may not follow the historical trajectory.

In terms of Crisis Notes and Backroom, drawn out and developed arcs will be appreciated. We know that many of you have great ambitions in your backroom progress, so make sure your bases are covered and your portfolio powers are being used wisely. However, be warned: arcs exploiting COVID-19, genocide, sexual violence, racism, and human rights violations will not be entertained.

A serious note to consider is that K-pop in particular has gone through many controversies in the past. If you are unfamiliar with these you will be unaffected by them, but if you are familiar with some of these controversies please note that they will not be occurring in this committee. Serious subjects such as these go against UCBMUN's expectations for crisis arcs and will be avoided for the mental wellbeing of delegates and staffers. We expect delegates to refrain from attempting to cause these events to occur in committee and bringing these events up during debate.

Korean entertainment is a nebulous world, and many of the deals are conducted in closed rooms with paramount secrecy. Please work to ensure that the public facing image of Korean entertainment carefully cultivated over the past few decades does not disintegrate due to this committee's actions.

There was simply too much information on Korean entertainment to fit into a reasonable background guide, so we suggest additional research on the landscape around 2016. Our suggestions include looking at metrics of success like music charts, award shows, and articles that reflect on K-pop as a source of soft power for South Korea's standing in international politics. As always, strive to bring complex ideas and solutions to the table and explore new collaborations to bring Korean entertainment to the world. We look forward to welcoming you all to UCBMUN XXVI!

Best Regards,

Gamin Kim, Chair

Kai Smith, Crisis Director

Introduction to K-pop today

Intro to K-pop:

K-pop is a loose term that encompasses the popular music produced in South Korea and aimed at mainstream appeal to both people from Korea and international audiences. The spread of K-pop across Asia and to the west has been termed *Hallyu*, or Korean wave. *Hallyu* is not restricted towards K-pop; rather, as later sections will explain, it describes the political increase in the global popularity of South Korean dramas, films, and popular culture generally since the late 1980s. K-pop consists of both individuals and groups signed to companies that record and distribute their music. These companies may also organize advertisements and other entertainment ventures. Individuals and band members are referred to as Idols, a term derived from Japanese pop music that refers to the massive popularity that these idols hold. While other music genres use the term idol selectively, in K-pop an Idol is any individual who has debuted. “Debuting” is the first act of releasing music for profit while contracted under a company. Artists are contracted to their company, much like athletes, and these contracts are individualized, meaning members of the same band may have different contracts. Upon contract expiration or termination, Idols can choose to sign with another entertainment company or (in some very rare circumstances) go independent. Government investment into K-pop has helped propel it into the mainstream, and much of the government’s interaction with Korean entertainment is through the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. The structure of K-pop is highly regimented, and these next few sections serve as a brief introduction to the structure of modern K-pop.



Figure 1: Logos of various Korean entertainment companies¹

K-pop Companies:

Since the vast majority of Idols are signed to a company, there is a loosely defined hierarchy of companies. These can be broken down into the Big Three and other major players.

¹ “Major K-pop agencies to reform unfair contract clauses,” SBS, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.sbs.com.au/popasia/blog/2017/03/08/major-k-pop-agencies-reform-unfair-contract-clauses>.

The Big Three companies include SM, JYP, and YG Entertainment. Although they are not exactly on equal standing, the Big Three have a much larger cultural and musical presence than the remainder of the popular entertainment companies. In terms of revenue, in 2015, SM had 36 billion KRW net profit, YG had 24 billion KRW net profit, and JYP had 3.5 billion KRW net profit.² The current exchange rate from KRW to USD is approximately 1150 KRW to 1 USD.

These three companies are the best at ensuring success for their artists. While by no means guaranteed, these companies have generated some of the most successful acts in K-Pop, with EXO of SM, Big Bang of YG, and JYP's recently debuted group Twice all garnering international appeal.

SM Entertainment

Of the three, SM entertainment is the best known and most wide reaching. Having produced many of the acts that kick-started the international expansion of K-pop, SM's prestige is unmatched in the K-Pop world. Perhaps the largest limitation SM faces is that their acts are so successful that it is difficult to negotiate contracts since the artists are so famous. They are able to continually reload with talent, particularly international talent. SM has large appeal in China and Southeast Asia through their carefully crafted Idol lineups.

One issue that has plagued SM in their international expansion is their members' fame, particularly international members. In 2014, dominant boy band EXO lost members Kris Wu and Lu Han, and Xiumin later in 2015. All three sued SM, with their lawsuits stating preferential treatment for Korean members as a driving reason for leaving. The departed members were then able to carve out a career in China, and have been able to make much more money by removing the entertainment company from the equation.³ As companies continue to expand, EXO's Chinese ex-members serve as a warning against allowing idols to become discontent.

YG Entertainment

YG entertainment has spent the last decade producing enduring K-pop acts such as Big Bang and 2NE1. With their recent run, YG has narrowed the gap between them and SM. YG's greatest advantage lies in their Western appeal and the more authentic reputation of their artists. G-Dragon and Big Bang are particularly known for having a heavy role in their music production and leaning into more hip-hop elements. Artist-led production and songwriting is just one aspect of YG's appeal to authenticity. YG's sound is often more hip-hop influenced and their groups tend to deviate from typical K-pop tropes. The best example of this is former girl group 2NE1. In K-pop, many girl groups appeal to male viewers, but 2NE1 is one of the best examples of the "girl crush" concept, where female acts appeal toward female viewers through empowering or female focused songs.⁴ 2NE1's smash hit "I Am The Best" is a premier example of this concept

² Full earnings and ranking of top agencies like SM, YG, and JYP revealed for 2015, AllKpop.

³ Yaki Jones, "The crazy amount of money Chinese idols who left K-pop have made," *AllKpop*, November 14, 2020,

<https://www.allkpop.com/article/2020/11/the-crazy-amount-of-money-chinese-idols-who-left-k-pop-have-made>.

⁴ Caitlin Kelly, "How 'Girl Crush' Hooked Female Fans and Grappled With Feminism as K-pop Went Global in 2018," *Billboard*, December 27, 2018.

in action, as the group deviated from appealing to the male gaze and earned a widespread following.

These intentional divergences from the often bubbly demeanor of SM groups resulted in more success in the U.S. market for YG. The authentic appeal mirrors that of many Western artists like Taylor Swift and The Weeknd, and it's no coincidence that with the rise of social media, YG's authenticity has directly translated to heavy international viewership. As YG has risen to prominence, they have shown that there is more than just one path to success in the K-pop world.

JYP Entertainment

JYP was founded by Park Jin-Young, a former idol turned producer and CEO. The newest addition to the Big Three, JYP is notable for focusing heavily on international markets, rather than focusing on competing in Korea against SM and YG.⁵ Although YG and SM are also internationally focused, JYP is the only member of the big three to focus more on international markets over than domestic markets. As a result, many of its acts are much better known outside of Korea and many Koreans are often confused by the massive popularity from international fans. Featuring acts such as 2AM, Wonder Girls, and the heavily internationally focused GOT7 and Twice, JYP continues to broaden the K-pop market, and provides a template for companies seeking relevance outside Korea. Although the smallest of the big three, JYP is growing quickly. It has recently displaced FNC as the third member of the Big Three and is on track to compete for the top spot in K-pop in the next few years.

Other Notable Entertainment Companies

Outside of the Big Three, there are several notable companies that are slowly gaining traction. Although much smaller, these companies still serve key roles in the Hallyu world.

The most famous of these companies is Big Hit Entertainment (now called HYBE in 2021). Their most notable group is BTS, who have just completed their *Most Beautiful Moment in Life* trilogy, and were nominated for Best Boy Group at the 2015 Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA), the biggest stage in Asian entertainment, representing a breakthrough moment for Big Hit. Although small, their biggest strength lies in fan base building, and they have a devoted following of "ARMYs" who strongly support BTS. Their success is largely a result of forming their own path outside of traditional exposure paths. Supplementing the usual variety and music show spots with many vlogs and frequent social media interactions, BTS has managed to connect closely with their fans and form a strong parasocial relationship.

CUBE entertainment is the largest company outside of the Big Three, and many considered them to be the third best until recently. CUBE was formerly consistently able to create successful groups, but CUBE has not had a strong presence outside of boy group BTOB recently. Their slide has been a result of financial troubles and struggling in international competition.

⁵ Tamar Herman, "JYP Entertainment Tops Big 3 to Become World's Biggest K-Pop Label," *Billboard*, August 30, 2018, <https://assets.billboard.com/articles/columns/k-town/8473052/jyp-entertainment-tops-big-3-worlds-biggest-k-pop-label>.

FNC and Pledis are two smaller companies that both have begun to emerge in recent years. They resemble a larger version of BigHit before BTS, capable of debuting groups, but highly dependent on success without being able to guarantee it. In order to climb the ladder of companies, FNC and Pledis need to generate massively popular groups, but their groups will not have the guaranteed instant acclaim that those of the Big Three often have. FNC and Pledis are worth mentioning in any overview of K-Pop, having big boom or bust potential. Pledis in particular has just debuted Seventeen as of 2015, which is quickly gaining traction.

Trainee System:

The trainee system was originally developed in Japan by J-Pop companies, but was co-opted early on by SM to bolster their talent production.⁶ The system begins with auditions, and then select individuals are offered contracts as trainees. There is no guarantee that the trainees will “debut” or officially become part of a K-pop group. Trainees are expected to live in South Korea, at their company’s training facility, and transfers of contracts between companies are considered very common.⁷

In the trainee system, dating is not allowed, and sexual orientations other than straight are not allowed. Trainees are monitored constantly and there are no off days. This constant training is used to separate trainees into the promising ones who will continue with the company, and less valued trainees, some of whom pay to be part of the program. For the elite and talented at the top agencies, debut at some level can be expected, but for many of the lesser valued trainees, debuting is a wild dream.

Trainees are filtered with an evaluation system. This involves their physical appearance, weight, and skill at dancing, singing, and other intangibles. Trainees who do not pass are cut, and the high turnover rate and low debut chances leads to a highly competitive atmosphere where the trainees often do not form friendships. This is one of the main criticisms levied at the K-pop industry as a whole. Although appealing, bubbly, and bright, the reality of trainees is a very dismal upbringing and very small chance of success. For every successful group, there are hundreds of trainees who will never debut, and will have spent their whole life learning skills for a career that will never happen. Although often ignored within Asia, as K-pop expands into the West, these issues are being brought into the spotlight and creating scrutiny for the industry.

Elite trainees begin competing for specific roles once they have established their baseline level of talent. These roles serve a variety of purposes, and most groups have a lead singer, rapper, backup singer/rapper, and most controversially, almost every group has a visual member. The visual is an individual chosen based on physical appearance and appeal to fans. While plastic surgery is quite normalized in Korea, it is almost ubiquitous in K-Pop. Most trainees have some form of minor plastic surgery, and it is usually recommended from the company. Particularly interesting is that since these individuals are still growing, the plastic surgery is often

⁶ Hyun-Su Yim, “A rare glimpse of the ‘factorylike’ K-pop idol training system,” *The Korea Herald*, January 18, 2019, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190118000551>.

⁷ Elaine Chong, “I could have been a K-pop idol - but I'm glad I quit,” *BBC News*, February 13, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-51476159>.

speculative, with doctors performing changes in the hopes that it will look better once the individual is grown. This speculative plastic surgery is another ethical question plaguing the industry, one that becomes louder with each effort to expand beyond Asia.

If a trainee is able to pass through all of these checkpoints, they are ready to debut. They are then assigned a group. Groups have a specific group image, genre, and individual personality for each member, some of which may conflict with the actual personality of the person that they are assigned to. Once a personality is assigned, the trainee is expected to behave in that manner for all public appearances. Many artists have been documented behaving counter to their manufactured personalities. Former trainee Elaine Chong interviewed with the British Broadcasting Corporation, citing the false personality as a reason that she quit rather than debut.⁸

Once a group is debuted, the idols are then legally in debt with the company, as they must repay the company for the training, room and board, and plastic surgery that occurred during the trainee phase. This debt, along with the strict process, gives the company great control over their groups and creates an advantageous contract situation for the company. From an outsider's perspective, this appears highly controversial, but within the K-pop world it has been normalized. Since only the acts that debut have debt, it is seen as a tax on the successful rather than charging everyone to train with the company. The system is one of the reasons for K-Pop's great success, as the companies can generate and keep most of the revenue, except for massively popular artists.

Mental Health Within K-pop:

The trainee system cannot be mentioned without specifically highlighting the impact it has on the trainees' mental health. In the past few years, there have been a number of high profile suicides in K-pop, and Korea as a nation has the highest suicide rate in the world.⁹ Kim Jong-hyun, Choi Jin-ri (Sulli), and Goo Ha-ra are among the idols who have passed away. Their remaining comments largely frame their mental health as a chief struggle in their life, with both feelings of inadequacy and bullying among causes of these issues. The effect of the trainee system on these artists cannot be understated. Sulli herself said that: "My life is actually empty. I feel like I'm lying to everyone by pretending to be happy on the outside".¹⁰ False personalities and the constant competition and pressure creates an unhealthy environment, one that K-pop as a whole has to deal with before it threatens to collapse the industry.

K-pop within Korea:

K-pop within Korea encompasses a larger subset of Korean Music as a whole. While K-pop's popularity overseas is consistent with its domestic popularity, as evident in South

⁸ Chong, "K-pop idol."

⁹ "World suicide rates by country," *The Washington Post*, 2005, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/suiciderate.html>.

¹⁰ Crystal Tai, "Exploding the myths behind K-pop," *The Guardian*, March 29, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2020/mar/29/behind-k-pops-perfect-smiles-and-dance-routines-are-tales-of-sex-ism-and-abuse>.

Korean music charts like Gaon and Melon, other varieties of Korean music are often consumed. In recent years, “trot,” the oldest iteration of Korean popular music, as well as Korean rap and indie music have been massively popular within the country. Korean trot music has particularly experienced a revival due to singing competition programs such as “Mister Trot,” “Miss Trot,” and “I Like Trot.”¹¹ Although these genres have been overshadowed by the popularity K-pop holds globally, Korean indie music (K-indie) and Korean rap have continued to maintain a steady following among students and young professionals in South Korea. Korean rap and hip hop particularly received a boost in its profile from 2012, due to the popularity of the TV competitive reality series *Show Me the Money* that featured mainstream and underground artists from around the country.¹² When seasons of *Show Me the Money* were aired in August 2015 and July 2016, hip hop was the most popular genre in one of South Korea’s most prominent music charts, the Mnet Top 100.¹³ In 2015, the show *Unpretty Rapstar* was broadcast to focus its feature on female rappers. The Korea Foundation, one of South Korea’s most well-renowned non-profit public diplomacy organizations, additionally remarked in 2016 that Korean hip hop holds a significant place within *Hallyu*, the Korean Wave, which was originally restricted to include Korean pop music and culture in the past.¹⁴ Korean music, and the term K-pop encompasses a wide variety, much of which is not reflected in international K-pop consumption. It is important to note the trends arising within Korea, as these often dictate the path for more internationally facing artists as they continue to adapt to stay relevant.

K-pop Internationally:

Korea is a relatively small market, and in order to grow, many of the entertainment companies have looked into international expansion. This segment seeks to chronicle the past endeavours of Korean entertainment companies internationally.¹⁵

K-pop has been hugely successful in terms of its sales and record charts even throughout 2020 in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 alone, there were five K-pop albums that sold over 1 million copies each, and one of BTS’ albums recorded over 4 million recorded sales.¹⁶ To recoup lost income from the lack of live performances and concerts, entertainment companies have also put forth the idea of online concert events, and utilized artists’ social media as a marketing tool to persuade fans to spend on the latest merchandise or

¹¹ Regina Kim, “K-Pop Is Only Half the Story of Korean Pop Music,” *Rolling Stone*, December 9, 2020, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/kpop-korea-culture-trot-indie-genres-1100124/>.

¹² KH디지털2, “Han Dong-chul, mastermind of Korean hip-hop boom,” *The Korea Herald*, April 12, 2016, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160412000578>.

¹³ Lee Joo-Yun, *A study on the cultural and social aspects of hip-hop in Korean popular music*, 2019.02.28.

¹⁴ Melissa Leong, “How Korea became the world’s coolest brand,” *Financial Times*, August 2, 2014, <https://financialpost.com/news/retail-marketing/how-korea-became-the-worlds-coolest-brand>.

¹⁵ Joong-Bong Choi and Roald Maliangkay, *K-pop - The International Rise of the Korean Music Industry* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁶ Tamar Herman, “Millions And Millions: Physical K-Pop Album Sales Stay Strong In 2020,” *Forbes*, October 12, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tamarherman/2020/10/12/millions--millions-physical-k-pop-album-sales-stay-strong-in-2020/?sh=6b969e9abaaa>.

albums. The accessibility of K-pop music items for fans in recent years has been a significant factor for the increasing sales and profits. In the United States, for example, having K-pop merchandise available at local distributors and major retailers like Target as well as online stores operated by entertainment companies like SM Entertainment and BigHit Entertainment allowed fans based internationally to easily purchase goods of their favorite artists.¹⁷ K-pop albums have also occasionally topped the *Billboard* music charts, with BTS claiming five albums, SuperM claiming one album, and Blackpink claiming one album as number one. K-pop artists have also routinely been recorded on the *Billboard 200* chart, with BoA being the first to do so with her album *BoA* in 2009.¹⁸

K-pop sets itself apart from other music genres due its immense popularity across the world. This is due to K-pop's ability to blend many international styles and genres and the increasing connectivity of the world through social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram.¹⁹ K-pop has expanded its presence in differing degrees across most of the globe, with its impact most pronounced in East and Southeast Asia, but also in the United States, Latin America, and Europe. The following map shows K-pop's global impact.



Figure 2: International Presence of K-pop in 2020²⁰

In East Asian countries such as Japan and China, K-pop has been met with remarkable success but also various forms of resistance that can be attributed to historical and political

¹⁷ Herman, "Millions."

¹⁸ "BoA Signs With No. 1 Hollywood Agency," *Korea Times*, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/art/2009/10/135_44423.html.

¹⁹ Katherine Kim, "The growing international influence of K-Pop," *The Spectator*, April 18, 2019, <https://spec.hamilton.edu/the-growing-international-influence-of-k-pop-edd0ef8035ff>.

²⁰ Joo-ri Jung and Jihae Lee, "Map showing K-pop's popularity by global region released," *Korea.net*, August 27, 2019, <https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Culture/view?articleId=174587>.

tensions. Korea was a colony of either Japan or China in some form until the 1950s. Animosity between the countries is not uncommon, and although progress is being made, undeniable tensions still linger. In Japan, K-pop is popular to the extent that groups include Japanese members and often make their debuts in the market by releasing Japanese versions of their Korean releases. However, the lingering tensions that remain between Japan and South Korea have at times culminated in demonstrations against *Hallyu* in the form of an “Anti-Korean Wave.” One example of this animosity is demonstrations in Tokyo against TV stations that air Korean dramas.²¹ Actions like these are a direct backlash to the increasing popularity of Korean entertainment. To the West, K-pop is also massively popular in China. Entertainment companies have incorporated strategies such as having Chinese members in groups, giving Korean members Chinese-sounding names, or making subgroups with predominantly Mandarin-speaking members to cater to its Chinese audience to increase K-pop’s overall marketability.²²

The K-pop entertainment industry has also considerably impacted Chinese entertainment companies in their idol production. In order to have Chinese entertainers achieve greater popularity globally, Chinese entertainment companies have also recruited industry experts of K-pop. Although political tensions over South Korea's alliance with the USA affected K-pop’s popularity in 2016, K-pop overall has allowed greater understanding between the two countries, and its rising popularity has corresponded to an increase in the number of Chinese tourists in South Korea.^{23 24}

For decades, K-pop has also reached North Korea through South Korea broadcasting K-pop from its 11 loudspeakers across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) demarcating the border between the two countries, but propaganda efforts by the South Korean military intensified between 2015 and 2016 as it broadcasted two to six hours daily at irregular time frames.²⁵ However, greater dissemination of K-pop and Korean media over time to North Korean citizens through devices like USB drives and SD cards via distribution channels such as underground networks and accessible technology has allowed North Koreans to consume Korean entertainment for educational and enjoyment purposes.²⁶ Before the early 2010s, consumers of Korean entertainment were mostly middle-aged elites in North Korean society who preferred watching Korean dramas over listening to K-pop. However, advanced smuggling networks leading up to 2016 has enabled younger generations of North Koreans to become exposed to

²¹ Dong-A Ilbo, *Japan's right-wing groups hold rallies vs. Korean pop culture*.

²² John Kang, “Why Alibaba Bought \$30M Stake In K-Pop Giant SM Entertainment, Home To EXO And Girls' Generation,” *Forbes*, February 11, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkang/2016/02/11/why-alibaba-bought-30m-stake-in-k-pop-giant-sm-entertainment-home-to-exo-and-girls-generation/?sh=6b34442ca556>.

²³ “China's ban on hallyu,” *The Korea Times*, November 23, 2016, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/11/202_218799.html.

²⁴ Emiko Jozuka and Sol Han, “Why South Korean companies, entertainers are getting cold shoulder in China,” *CNN*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/23/asia/south-korea-china-thaad-retaliation/index.html>.

²⁵ Lukas Oakley, “How K-pop Became a Propaganda Tool,” *The Outline*, April 24, 2018, <https://theoutline.com/post/4269/k-pop-propaganda-south-korea-north-korea-demilitarized-zone>.

²⁶ Jieun Baek, *North Korea's Hidden Revolution: How the Information Underground Is Transforming a Closed Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

K-pop content that is reminiscent of the rise of *Hallyu* globally.²⁷ More recently, K-pop has played a role in both deteriorating and ameliorating relations between North and South Korea. In 2018, K-pop groups like Red Velvet and Korean artists such as Seohyun from Girls' Generation performed at Pyongyang as part of the Spring is Coming concert in collaboration with North Korean performers which was perceived as increased willingness of both countries for greater cultural engagement with one another.²⁸ However, K-pop's perception has since then soured in North Korea. Kim Jong-un has labelled South Korean pop culture as a "vicious cancer" that could lead to North Korea's downfall if left unchecked due to its impact on younger North Koreans' "attire, hairstyles, speeches, [and] behaviors."²⁹

History of Modern Korean Music

Origins of Korean popular music:

Korea's first popular music originated in the Joseon Dynasty where court music and folk music, or *minyo*, such as the *pansori*, the *pungmul*, and the *nongak* flourished. *Minyo* contained both instrumental music and singing, and featured a diverse array of instruments with wind instruments and drums being prominently featured.³⁰ These traditional styles remain alive today, but do not hold general popular appeal.

Modern Korean popular music started to develop with the arrival of American missionaries in Korea. The most notable missionary was episcopal pastor Henry Appenzeller in 1885, just before the beginning of the Korean Empire.³¹ Appenzeller introduced Western hymns and instruments to the Korean peninsula. Although Korea's first introduction to Western music was in a theological setting via hymns sung at churches and schools in the 1890s, early Korean popular music songs nicknamed *changga* were typically Western melodies like "Oh My Darling, Clementine" sung with Korean lyrics.

In the early 20th century, Korean popular music evolved as a mechanism to counter Japanese oppression during Japanese colonization of Korea.³² As colonization of Korea continued, resistance against the Japanese resulted in the emergence of the Trot music genre, which is sometimes equated to Korean folk music. Trot is known for repetition and rhythm, and has continually changed throughout the last century. It occasionally resurfaces into the Korean mainstream, most notably through acts such as Super Junior in the mid 2000s. Trot continued to change during the Korean War due to the presence of U.S. military bases within Korea in the

²⁷ Je Son Lee, *Do North Koreans like K-pop?*, NK News.

²⁸ "South Korean K-pop stars perform for Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang," *The Guardian*, April 1, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/01/south-korean-k-pop-stars-perform-for-kim-jong-un-in-pyongyang>.

²⁹ Sang-hun Choe, "Kim Jong-un Calls K-pop a 'Vicious Cancer' in the New Culture War," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/11/world/asia/kim-jong-un-k-pop.html>.

³⁰ *The Concise Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 2*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1189-1223.

³¹ Daniel Davies, "Henry G. Appenzeller: Pioneer Missionary and Reformer in Korea," *Methodist History* 30, no. 4, (July 1992):195-205.

³² Daniel M. Davies, "Henry Gerhard Appenzeller: His Contribution to Korean Independence, Democracy, and Modernization," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 57, no. 0 (1988): 197-230.

1950s.^{33 34 35} Entering the late 1990s, Korean music had a strong foundation in history, but also borrowed from American, Japanese, and martial musical styles. Over the next few decades, K-pop would become a dominant entertainment force across the globe and the rise would be coined with the term *Hallyu*.

Government investment:

In the mid 1990s, the South Korean government began exploring the potential of creating a nationally protected entertainment industry. This led to the establishment of the Ministry of Culture in the late 1990s and the start of an era marked by increased investment in entertainment.³⁶ These governmental systems would form the precursor to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism that began in 2008.³⁷ Government investment largely took the form of grants and funding given to entertainment companies for specific projects or actions on behalf of the Korean state. These initial grants would later pave the way for *Hallyu*.

Beginnings of K-Pop (1950-1990s):

Emergence of Korean pop and idol culture

The Kim Sisters, which comprised of Sue (Sookja Kim), Aija (Aija Kim), and Mia (Minja Kim), were a Korean-born American singing trio that paved the way for future Korean artists and are considered to be the first South Korean music group to achieve fame and success in the United States.³⁸ Although the sisters spoke no English, they achieved widespread fame by performing renditions of American pop songs soulfully and singing them entirely phonetically. During their career, the Kim Sisters made 22 appearances on the Ed Sullivan show and were the first Korean artists to appear on the Billboard chart.

Between the early 1960s and the late 1980s, the South Korean music scene was transformed by the influence of folk music, hippie culture, and later by ballads. Modern K-pop was not incorporated fully into South Korean music until the 1990s when Korean pop musicians began to incorporate more Europop and American popular music styles into their repertoire.

Early Korean K-pop groups

³³ Ingyu Oh and Hyo-Jung Lee, "K-pop in Korea: How the Pop Music Industry is Changing a Post-Developmental Society," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 3, no. 1, (May 2014): 72-93, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ach.2014.0007>.

³⁴ Seung-Ah Lee, "Decolonizing Korean Popular Music: The 'Japanese Color' Dispute over Trot, Popular Music and Society," *Popular Music and Society* 40, no. 1, (2017): 102-110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2016.1230694>.

³⁵ Hye-Jung Park, "From World War to Cold War: Music in US-Korea Relations, 1941-1960" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2019), 1-194.

³⁶ Kat Chow, "How the South Korean Government Made K-pop a Thing," *NPR*, April 16, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/04/13/399414351/how-the-south-korean-government-made-k-pop-a-thing>.

³⁷ "Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism," Korea.net, accessed August 10, 2021, <https://www.korea.net/AboutUs/Ministry-of-Culture-Sports-and-Tourism>.

³⁸ "A Brief History of K-pop," The Los Angeles Film School, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.lafilm.edu/blog/a-brief-history-of-kpop/>.

Seo Taiji and Boys

Seo Taiji and Boys was active from 1992-1996, trailblazing a way forward for K-pop acts. They are often considered the dawn of K-pop and the first K-pop group. Upon their TV debut, the group performed “Nan Arayo (I Know)” and were panned by the judges on the music show they were performing on. After being awarded the lowest score of the night and criticized for focusing too much on dancing and not enough on singing, “Nan Arayo (I Know)” proceeded to occupy the top of the charts for the next eighteen weeks. The public termed the new style as “rap dance” and it exploded in popularity.³⁹

Seo Taiji and the Boys coincided with both musical and economic phenomena that formed the perfect basis for their explosive debut. South Korea, along with the rest of the world, was experiencing an economic surge in the early 90s that allowed for young people to have disposable income for the first time. This disposable income was combined with a desire for American-style music. In the 80s, Korean music was dominated by the aforementioned trot music, which was largely slow paced and focused on acoustic instrumentation. Seo Taiji and Boys’ high tempo American inspired music was a breath of fresh air that appealed to the youth of the nation.

Perhaps the largest impact of Seo Taiji and Boys was a rebirth of domestic Korean music. Five years after their debut, domestic music acts went from half of the music market to two-thirds. In the years following 1992, Seo Taiji established himself as the first Korean teen Idol, and changed the course of Korean music history. The idol phenomenon has been part of Japanese pop for decades, with singular individuals, often the most popular member of a band, marketed as a parasocial relationship toward viewers. These idols are typically good looking, talented, and the subject of intense public scrutiny as a result of their popularity. In the years following Seo Taiji, the idol phenomenon would become the norm for K-pop.

As suddenly as they appeared, Seo Taiji and Boys were gone. Their 1995 album “Seo Taiji and Boys IV” was a massive commercial hit, but Korean government censors were highly critical of the song “Sidae Yugam (Shame of the Times).” The lyrics “Gone are the era of honest people,” among other references to government corruption, were the source of the criticism. Seo Taiji responded by deleting the vocals and only keeping the track as an instrumental instead of changing the lyrics. Soon after, in early 1996, Seo Taiji and Boys announced their retirement in protest of the censorship rules.

Seo’s retirement left a void in the Korean entertainment industry, one that many companies and bands would soon begin to fill. Member Yang Hyun-suk would go on to establish a company called YG entertainment, and other members became writers and producers in the industry. Seo Taiji and Boys’ brief career forever changed the landscape of Korean music, shifting power from broadcasters and government censors to the artists and companies that produced music.⁴⁰

³⁹ Noah Yoo, “Seo Taiji and the Boys,” *Pitchfork*, July 5, 2020, <https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/seo-taiji-and-boys-seo-taiji-and-boys/>.

⁴⁰ Yu Kang, “From BTS to TVXQ to Seo Taiji and the Boys, how K-pop’s biggest boy bands have evolved the genre over 30 years,” *South China Morning Post*, March 28, 2020,

H.O.T.

It did not take long for the void left by Seo Taiji and Boys to be filled. H.O.T. was formed in 1996 by SM entertainment.⁴¹ The acronym stood for Highfive of Teenagers and it consisted of members Moon Hee-joon, Jang Woo-hyuk, Tony An, Kangta, and Lee Jae-won. Their second single “Candy” was a massive hit, and led to the beginning of their successful careers. The band grew in popularity, but was limited by one major factor: the Asian Financial Crisis.

The causes and effects of the Asian Financial Crisis will be discussed later, but the impact on H.O.T. was their decision to record an album in Chinese to make up for lower record sales in South Korea. This was the first instance of a Korean artist directly appealing to another country. In 2000, they would perform in Beijing, and over 13,000 fans attended. These successes did not go unnoticed in the K-pop world, and other companies would soon begin imitating them.

Like Seo Taiji and Boys, H.O.T would only last a short span. In 2001, the group was unable to agree to new contracts with SM entertainment, leading to Tony, Jae-Won, and Woo-Hyuk leaving and forming another group, JTL, at Yejeon media. All of the members would go on to have somewhat successful solo careers, but as of 2016, still remain disbanded.

Slump in K-Pop in the late 1990s and Asian financial crisis

In July of 1997, Thailand unintentionally triggered a financial crisis that would sweep across Asia, resulting in market collapses in Hong Kong that would ripple into South Korea. By devaluing the Thai *baht* relative to the US *dollar*, foreign exchange reserves would be increasingly strained over the coming months.⁴² This strain resulted in the devaluation spreading to neighboring markets like Indonesia, Philippines, and South Korea. As a result of the devaluation of the South Korean Won, investment into Korea slowed, and the International Monetary Fund had to roll out a 40 Billion USD program to help stabilize these economies.⁴³

As a result of the IMF program, South Korea took on a large amount of debt, and the country's previously robust entertainment sector slowed. The citizens of South Korea no longer had the same level of disposable income and thus, the country went through a period of economic hardship. These financial issues would result in changes in the marketing procedures of entertainment companies. Both China and Japan were largely unaffected by the 1997 financial crisis, and Korea's entertainment companies would begin to focus on both of these markets.

In response to the economic recession,, the conservative and independent majority in South Korea's government decided to utilize music to the country's advantage while improving South Korea's national image and building its cultural influence. In the late 1990s, the South Korean government invested millions of dollars into developing a Ministry of Culture that would

<https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/entertainment/article/3077280/bts-tvxq-seo-taiji-and-boys-how-k-pops-biggest-boy-bands>.

⁴¹ Hannah Waitt, “The History of Kpop, Chapter 5: H.O.T, BoA, and the Rise of the Idols,” *moonROK*, July 21, 2014, <http://www.moonrok.com/history-k-pop-chapter-5-hot-boa-and-rise-idols/>.

⁴² “Asian Financial Crisis,” Federal Reserve History, accessed August 10, 2021, <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/asian-financial-crisis>.

⁴³ “Asian financial crisis,” Asian history [1997-1998], Britannica, accessed August 10, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Asian-financial-crisis>.

include a specific department towards K-pop and began to regard K-pop as an industry that ought to be protected.⁴⁴ Particular measures the government initiated from the late 1990s comprised of and were not limited to building multi-million dollar concert auditoriums, refining hologram technology, and regulating *noraebangs*, or karaoke bars, to uphold the interests of entertainers in K-pop.⁴⁵ The expansion of *noraebangs* allowed K-pop to be ingrained in Korean culture and become synonymous with student life and a hangout spot for friends to get together. Additionally, greater accessibility of K-pop through *noraebangs* allowed K-pop groups and songs increased visibility to the general public.

K-pop in the 2000s:

As K-pop entered a new decade, there was significant doubt regarding the viability of profit generation in the face of decreased album sales in South Korea.⁴⁶ The album sales decline was quite severe, with the best selling album of 2001 selling 1.68 million copies, and 2002's selling 0.64 million. Album sales for the top selling album would only return to over 1 million in 2013, and it took until 2018 to exceed 2001's sum.⁴⁷ Companies would respond by exploring other markets. K-pop eras are often termed as generations, and in the early 2000s, we would see the transition between the first and second generations of K-Pop, as artists that debuted in the booming 90s would hand the torch to second generation artists, who were engineered to seek success outside of Korea to keep making profits. The shift between the first and second generations can be loosely defined as changes to appeal to Japanese and other Asian markets. Some notable acts that headline the second generation are TVXQ and BoA.

Popularization of K-pop in Japan

Japan has a population over twice as large as South Korea and a much larger media market. With their close geographical proximity, it was only natural that K-pop's first international expansion was into Japan. This has led to a long term tradition of releasing music in Japanese and teaching trainees Japanese in order to appeal to the Japanese media market. Nowadays, almost all idols speak both Korean and Japanese, and many also know English and Mandarin. This shift in advertising toward the Japanese saw an increase in revenue, and showed that K-pop could be viable outside of its home nation.

The main strategies employed in appealing to the Japanese market include recording & re-recording songs and albums in Japanese, television appearances to expand audience, and often including a Japanese member. This time period kick-started the widespread norm of having idols from other nations join K-pop groups to bolster the audience. Even with these strategies, success in Japan largely hinged on if the public caught on with the artists. These next few sections will focus on artists who managed to have widespread success in Japan despite the many barriers

⁴⁴ Chow, "South Korean Government."

⁴⁵ Chow, "South Korean Government."

⁴⁶ Oh and Lee, "K-pop in Korea," 72-93.

⁴⁷ "2018년 Album Chart," Gaon Music Chart, accessed August 10, 2021, <http://gaonchart.co.kr/main/section/chart/album.gaon?nationGbn=T&serviceGbn=&targetTime=2018&hitYear=2018&termGbn=year>.

Korean artists faced. Japan is the traditional primary money making market for K-pop, and success in Japan is what separates elite companies from middling ones.

TVXQ

TVXQ (Tong Vfang Xien Qi) was formed in 2003 by SM Entertainment and is considered one of the hallmark groups of the second generation of K-Pop. The five member group consisted of U-Know Yunho, Max Changmin, Hero Jaejoong, Micky Yoochun, and Xiah Junsu.⁴⁸ The first generation groups such as Seo Taiji and Boys and H.O.T. had already established an international appeal for K-Pop, and popularity was steadily growing overseas. The second generation cemented K-pop as more than just a passing fad.⁴⁹

TVXQ heavily focused on incorporating visual elements into their performances, and were most notable for their incredible success throughout the 2000s. Their song “Mirotic” and the album of the same title remain some of the best selling and influential K-Pop music.

Similar to H.O.T., TVXQ also had contract disputes with SM Entertainment. In 2010, Jaejoong, Yoochun, and Junsu left SM while Changmin and Yunho remained as a duo. Still active to this day, TVXQ are known as the “Kings of K-Pop,” maintaining popularity in Asia, and hold the record for the most foreign number ones in Japan.

TVXQ achieved foreign success not only in Asia but also in Australia. The band toured overseas often, and focused on marketable content such as television to engage listeners. In part, their success can be attributed to SM’s absolute dominance over K-pop in the early 2000s. Being SM’s premier group made TVXQ the faces of K-pop.

BoA

Kwon Bo-Ah is a singer-songwriter more commonly known as BoA.⁵⁰ She debuted under SM entertainment at the age of 13, and has retained her popularity over the course of the 2000s and is still relevant to this day. Her Japanese album “Listen to My Heart” catapulted her into the mainstream music industry in Japan.⁵¹ She is often compared to Japanese Teen Idol Hikaru Utada, and would go on to be one of Japan’s most beloved artists. Of the twenty albums she has released, ten have been in Korean, nine in Japanese, and one in English. She has continually been heavily marketed to Asian nations outside of Korea, and is one of SM’s great successes. BoA represents K-Pop’s ability to appeal to the Asian mainstream, and showed that female solo acts were a viable business option for entertainment companies, leading to support for solo acts.

The transition from South Korean pop music from “gayo” to “K-pop”

In South Korea, pop music was conventionally branded as “gayo” for its domestic audience to refer to an umbrella term for all Korean popular music. However, since the 2010s, South Korean pop music has transformed its label to “K-pop” to fit its venture to the global

⁴⁸ “TVXQ!,” Artist, SM Entertainment Group, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.smentertainment.com/Entertainment/ArtistProfile/303?Code=&Page=>.

⁴⁹ “Kpop history 101: Generations of idol groups throughout the years,” Preen.ph, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://preen.ph/101194/kpop-history-101-generations-of-idol-groups-throughout-the-years>.

⁵⁰ David Hickey, “BoA,” AllMusic, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/boa-mn0000322754/biography>.

⁵¹ Oh and Lee, “K-pop in Korea,” 72-93.

music scene. This change in labels to focus specifically on commercialized pop music coincided with the digital restructuring of the Korean music industry as the largest entertainment companies became more successful and influential by 2010 and entertainment companies began to form burgeoning partnerships with foreign entertainment companies and record distributors.⁵² In 2021, Big Hit Entertainment and Universal Music Group announced an expanded strategic partnership to enhance fan experiences and artist opportunities while increasing the global reach of K-pop music and culture internationally.⁵³ The same year, JYP Entertainment announced a strategic partnership with China's Tencent Music Entertainment Group to cooperate further on joint marketing and promotional events and to provide greater content to Chinese K-pop music fans.⁵⁴ The Korean music industry's flexibility and embrace of its transformation due to the digitization of music in turn significantly enhanced the viability of K-pop in the global market during this era of rapid technological growth in the entertainment world.⁵⁵ The term K-pop was originally coined around 2005 when artists like BoA and TVXQ topped Japan's music chart Orion in 2005. However, it was popularized once again in 2011 when Korean pop artists like Kara, Girls' Generation began to perform internationally and made media appearances in Europe, East and Southeast Asia, and the United States.⁵⁶

Korean Film & Drama:

Beginnings of K-Drama

Korean Drama began in the mid 1950s with Choi Chang Bong's *Death Row Prisoner* most often cited as the first major success. Throughout the 60s, K-Drama continued to expand as broadcasting companies began to control most of Korea's entertainment sector. Government involvement played a major factor in K-Drama's rise, as there were often collaborations between the government and producers to place anti-communist themes and traditional Korean values into the media. The largest boom was in the 70s, as the government amended the laws to allow for broadcasting companies to make advertisement revenue. This legal change led to greater involvement with the production and advertisement of K-drama.

Throughout the 80s and 90s, K-Drama mimicked popular Japanese dramas, utilizing the same trends and aesthetics but placing a Korean twist on them. As censorship began to relax in the late 90s, darker dramas began to gain popularity while action and true crime genres also began to take form. As K-dramas entered the 21st century, success continued to increase, and

⁵² Solee I. Shin and Lanu Kim, "Organizing K-pop: Emergence and Market Making of Large Korean Entertainment Houses, 1980-2010," *East Asia* 30, (2013): 255-272.

⁵³ Universal Music Group, "Big Hit Entertainment And Universal Music Group Announce Expanded Strategic Partnership," *Cision*, February 17, 2021, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/big-hit-entertainment-and-universal-music-group-announce-expanded-strategic-partnership-301230449.html>.

⁵⁴ "K-pop agency JYP to ink partnership with China's Tencent," *The Korea Herald*, March 24, 2021, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210324000429>.

⁵⁵ Jimmyn Parc and Shin D. Kim, "The Digital Transformation of the Korean Music Industry and the Global Emergence of K-Pop," *Sustainability* 12, no. 18 (September 2020): 77-90, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187790>.

⁵⁶ "Korean Popular Music (K-pop)," The Academy of Korean Studies, Naver, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?cid=46662&docId=2458624&categoryId=46662>.

with the rise of the internet it was possible to easily advertise to people outside of Korea. Today, K-Dramas span a wide range of topics and settings and retain a unique voice, leading to great international appeal.

Similar to the rise of K-pop, Korean cinema has observed increased commercial success and international recognition since 1997, so much so that this period of resurgence within the South Korean film industry has been labelled as a renaissance. One of the effects of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis was the increased involvement of *chaebols*, or large industrial conglomerates controlled either by a family or a singular owner, in the South Korean film industry. These *chaebols* allowed for the South Korean film industry to prosper in the long run by supporting young, promising directors and introducing good business practices and ethics into the industry.⁵⁷ With time, this was noted with more variation in South Korean films generally, and a greater willingness within films to address critical social issues that had been previously ignored by media and society.⁵⁸ Starting from the late 1990s and 2000s, a new type of Korean cinema genre simply titled “New Korean Cinema” that focused on blockbuster movies and creative genre films led the way for increased attention and spotlight put on the Korean film industry as a whole.⁵⁹ One of South Korea’s first blockbusters, Kang Je-gyu’s *Shiri* (1999) was quickly followed by Park Chan-wook’s *Joint Security Area* (2000), Kang Woo-suk’s *Silmido* (2003), and Kang Je-gyu’s *Taegukgi* (2004). *Silmido* and *Taegukgi* in particular were box office successes as 10 million people domestically each, approximately counting for about one-fourth of South Korea’s population.

Recognition in international film festivals

South Korean films began to garner recognition and acclaim in international film festivals like Cannes Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival, and the Tokyo International Film Festival from the 2000s onwards. Park Chan-wook’s 2003 film *Oldboy* set the precedent for future international attention towards South Korean cinema after it won the Grand Prix at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.⁶⁰ Bong Joon-ho’s films *The Host* (2006) and *Snowpiercer* (2013) garnered heavy praise from foreign film critics and became some of the highest-grossing films of all time in South Korea as well.⁶¹ Bong Joon-ho’s most recent film, *Parasite* (2019), which reflects on the social inequality and anxious younger generation in South Korea, is only one of three films to be awarded both the Palme d’Or and the Academy Award for Best Picture.⁶²

⁵⁷ Beng Huat Chua and Koichi Iwabuchi, *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).

⁵⁸ Haeryun Kang, “It’s not just ‘Parasite.’ Korean cinema has a deep, rich history,” *The Washington Post*, February 13, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/02/13/its-not-just-parasite-korean-cinema-has-deep-rich-history/>.

⁵⁹ Darcy Paquet, *New Korean Cinema: Breaking the Waves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

⁶⁰ Alexander Chee, “Park Chan-wook, the Man Who Put Korean Cinema on the Map,” *New York Times*, October 16, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/t-magazine/park-chan-wook.html>.

⁶¹ Christina Radish, “Bong Joon Ho Looks Back on ‘The Host’, ‘Snowpiercer’, ‘Parasite’, and More at SBIFF,” *Collider*, January 28, 2020, <https://collider.com/bong-joon-ho-interview-parasite-snowpiercer/>.

⁶² Steve Rose, “Parasite director Bong Joon-ho: ‘Korea seems glamorous, but the young are in despair’,” *The Guardian*, January 31, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/jan/31/parasite-director-bong-joon-ho-korea-seems-glamorous-but-the-young-are-in-despair>.

Current Situation:

Economic & Political Impact

South Korea has historically been regarded as a smaller country in Asia, both economically and geographically. Perhaps best known for the Korean War or for their role in the “tiger economies,” or booming economies in East Asia, in the late 1900s, few people outside of Asia were concerned with Korea’s involvement in the world.

In the modern day, Korean entertainment has become a massive force, stretching its influence all over Asia, and creeping into the western mainstream as well. This has created a robust national economy and expanded South Korea’s influence beyond Asia. K-Pop essentially served as a loss leader for Korea. Although the initial K-pop product did not generate revenue, the interest brought to Korean entertainment was worth the limited profit of the early stages of K-pop. While the government continues to fund K-pop, the initial success and investment has allowed for expansion to the point where the Korean entertainment industry is highly profitable. Now that the government’s initial goal of creating a robust entertainment industry is done, they will likely begin to employ K-pop to expand that influence. This committee holds the dual purpose of expanding Korean entertainment, and then utilizing that expansion as leverage in international negotiation or diplomacy. Each delegate should examine how best their role can fit into these goals, and how they can change the future of Korea.



Figure 3: Former UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon and Psy dancing to “Gangnam Style”⁶³

⁶³ “UN chief Ban Ki-moon goes Gangnam Style with rapper Psy,” *Metro UK*, October 24, 2012, <https://metro.co.uk/2012/10/24/un-chief-ban-ki-moon-goes-gangnam-style-with-rapper-psy-in-youtube-video-607323/>.

The role of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism

The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST) was created in 2008 with the main goal of educating both the Korean and International community about the unique culture of South Korea.⁶⁴ In addition to this, the ministry also aims to improve quality of life for citizens by bolstering these areas and assisting in driving tourism. While formerly part of the Ministry of Education, the MCST has evolved into its own entity, and its actions have ramifications both economically and politically for the people of South Korea.⁶⁵ The MCST is the primary mechanism with which the Korean government interacts with the entertainment industry, and will serve as the liaison between the two parties in this committee.

Korea Creative Content Agency

The Korean Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) oversees international promotion of Korean content and integrates several different industries, such as broadcasting, music, film, and gaming.⁶⁶ Affiliated with the MCST, the KOCCA's main work involves providing small loans to entertainment based companies.⁶⁷ To date, their work has involved weaving Hallyu into the student curriculum in South Korea. In particular, the social studies curriculum in Korea has been expanded, with K-pop introduced in the recent history section. However, in 2016, they rest on a shaky foundation. Some call the KOCCA redundant, and others believe that their roles should be integrated more closely into the MCST. It is unclear if the KOCCA will continue to exist going forward as a result of these redundancies. These questions will be important to address as the MCST seeks to expand their influence and impact.

Gaming

When the South Korean government began investing into the entertainment industry at the turn of the century, gaming was considered part of technology and was funded under separate ventures. However, as the internet has changed the planet, the ways of gaming consumption have changed. Nowadays, gaming falls under both technology and sports. The best example of this is KOCCA allowing entertainment grants for gaming. In the past few years, gaming has integrated itself further into Korean entertainment and sports.

An example of this is K/DA, a virtual K-pop group from the incredibly popular video game League of Legends. Korea is possibly the best country at League of Legends and has a claim as the best esports country in general. K/DA's Pop/Stars song has recently gone gold in the United States, and their success has set the stage for other virtual or gaming groups to follow.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ "About Us," Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, accessed August 25, 2021, <http://www.mcst.go.kr/english/ministry/minister/profile.jsp>.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, "About MCST."

⁶⁶ "KOCCA Introduction," Korea Content Creative Agency, accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.kocca.kr/en/main.do>.

⁶⁷ "KOCCA Introduction."

⁶⁸ Stephanie Minor, "League of Legends' Virtual Pop Girl Group KDA Goes Gold With Popstars Single," *The Gamer*, July 31, 2021, <https://www.thegamer.com/league-of-legends-virtual-pop-girl-group-gold-certification/>.

The impact of sports on gaming is also visible. With the rise of Korean soccer over the past few decades, sports based video games have also become popular. The soccer video game series FIFA was the third most played online game at Korean Internet cafes in 2020, and sports based games continue to grow in popularity.⁶⁹

Sports

Throughout the early 21st century, South Korea's breakthroughs in sports have led to a greater global awareness of the country's people and culture.

In 2002, the South Korea Men's soccer team finished 4th in the World Cup as joint-host nation, a record for an Asian team.⁷⁰ Since then, both former Manchester United player, Park Ji-Sung, and Current Tottenham Hotspur player, Son Heung-Min, have both become club superstars and brought substantial interest to Asian football. Their success with club and country have brought great interest to Korean sports, with the South Korea vs Japan rivalry gaining notice. South Korea holds the advantage as of now with a record of 42-40 against Japan.

In the sport of Archery, South Korea is perhaps the best nation in the world, having captured 27 Olympic gold medals as of 2021.⁷¹ Archery is considered one of the premier national sports, and there is a yearly archery competition among K-pop idols. In baseball, South Korea were the runners up in the 2009 World Baseball Classic, and third place in 2006. In the 2016 Rio Olympics, nine gold medals placed South Korea eighth in the world for the gold medal tally. Overall, Korean sports have been instrumental in introducing people to the country and its culture.

Korean Foreign Policy

Korea's role in international relations has been precarious throughout most of its history. Having been a colony of Japan and China at times, and being overrun in the Korean War, historically their voices have been silenced by international powers. Part of the initial appeal of the robust entertainment industry was to bring international awareness to the nation, and to help them express their voice. Having Korean celebrities with international followings helps expand their voice, even if it is tangentially.

One of the largest issues routinely brought up in South Korean politics is potential reunification with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Having an easily exportable culture has allowed for a larger international Korean presence. The more international goodwill that exists for Korea, the more likely that reunification will be looked favorably upon by the majority of countries. This is one of the primary issues the committee will face, and it's important to keep in mind how the committee's action will affect potential reunification or international goodwill. In terms of the current viewpoints for and against reunification, both governments have said that reunification is in the long term plans, but disagree drastically on the

⁶⁹ "Most played games in PC bangs based on time spent in South Korea as of January 2021," Video Gaming & eSports, Statista, accessed August 25, 2021,

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1113926/south-korea-most-popular-games-in-pc-bangs/>.

⁷⁰ "2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan™," FIFA, accessed August 25, 2021,

<https://www.fifa.com/tournaments/mens/worldcup/2002korea-japan>.

⁷¹ Teresa Johnson, "4 Reasons Korea Dominates in Archery," *Archery 360*, November 2, 2016,

<https://archery360.com/2016/11/02/4-reasons-korea-dominates-archery/>.

form it will take. As for the people of South Korea, only a quarter favor reunification, but around 50% of citizens would like more cordial relations.⁷²

Another pressing international issue is Korea's Relationship with China. Currently, K-Pop is somewhat accessible in China, but is not an openly endorsed entertainment item. With Chinese artists such as Lu Han leaving for the Chinese market and working with big-name Western collaborators, South Korea is faced with China attempting to recreate K-pop on their own terms and keep the massive amount of revenue it generates within their own country. Formerly seen as a source of talent and a large market, China's attempt to create a domestic entertainment market and poach Korean trained Chinese idols places this market on uneven ground.

As Korean Culture, Sports, and Entertainment continues to expand, delegates will have to work together to understand how to leverage their influence to assist the international issues Korea faces. The dual goals of company or personal growth must be balanced with the international impact of the Korean entertainment collective.

Committee Members:

Cho Yoon-Sun - Minister of Sports, Culture, and Tourism

Cho Yoon Sun is the current minister of the MSCT. Educated at Seoul NU and Columbia Law, Cho Yoon-Sun became a member of the 18th National Assembly in 2008 as part of the conservative Saenuri Party. Cho has advocated for stricter governmental control of entertainment, and has also been listed as one of the most amicable members of the South Korean Congress.⁷³

Kim Chong- Vice Minister of Sports, Culture, and Tourism

Kim is the current second vice minister of the MSCT, a member of the Saenuri party, and a favored appointee of President Park Geun-Hye. Kim's personal views are closely guarded, but are likely a reflection of the President's desire for reform in the MSCT.⁷⁴

Yu Dong-hun- Senior Communications Official of Sports, Culture, and Tourism

Yu is a longtime member of the MSCT, and has been regarded as an effective administrator and manager. His strengths lie in tourism and marketing, and he is a longtime public servant.⁷⁵ Yu's political relationships remain central to his position, and he strives to be a force of continuity in the political landscape.

Park Yang-Woo - Former President of the Korean Association Of Arts Management

Park Yang-Woo is an influential politician who has been involved in many arts and culture ventures in the past. Park's latest endeavor is as non-executive Director of a yet to be announced entertainment company, and he retains his close ties to the MSCT as a former vice

⁷² Tom O' Connor, "South Korea Wants Peace, Less Certain About Unification 70 Years After War," *Newsweek*, June 25, 2020, <https://www.newsweek.com/south-korea-peace-uncertain-unification-war-1513480>.

⁷³ *Minister's Profile*, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Website.

⁷⁴ Kim Jae-Hyeun, *Yu Dong-hun appointed new vice culture minister*, The Korea Times.

⁷⁵ Various Editors, *Yu Dong-hun appointed new vice culture minister*, The Korea Herald.

minister. Park is a political independent, and notably studied abroad at City University of London.⁷⁶

Jung Kwan-Joo- Vice Minister of Sports, Culture, and Tourism

A prior presidential secretary for public communications, Jung was nominated in early 2016 as first vice minister. His background resides largely outside of politics, and he looks to bring in a fresh perspective. His appointment has been seen as part of President Park's desire to reform the Ministry.⁷⁷

Choi Jung Wha - President of Corea Image Communications Institute

Choi is the president and founder of CICI, a nonprofit that hosts the Korea Image Awards and Culture Communication Forum, looking to acknowledge and expand the influence of Korean culture. One reason for Choi's drive for expansion of Korea's cultural influence is since she has worked in diplomatic relations in the past.⁷⁸

Park Jung-Youl- Korean Culture and Information Service Director

The Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS) is a subcommittee of the MSCT focused on opening and maintaining Korean cultural centers in other countries. Essentially the branding division of the MSCT, KOCIS works to correct information about Korean culture.⁷⁹

Do Jong-Hwan - Korean Politician and Poet

Do Jong-Hwan is a poet and educational advocate. Previously jailed for his work as part of a teacher's union, Do ran for Congress as a member of the Democratic Union Party and took a role in the MCST after his election in 2012.⁸⁰ Later nominated for Minister, Do represents Korea's culture outside of its popular appeal.

Lee Soo-Man - Founder of SM Entertainment

A pioneer of Hallyu, Lee Soo-Man founded what is now the largest entertainment company in Korea. With revenues of close to 350 billion KRW yearly, SM produces talent such as Shinee, EXO, TVXQ, Girls Generation, and the recent NCT.⁸¹ A reclusive individual, Lee's main inspirations are artists such as Michael Jackson and the MTV phenomenon of the 80s.⁸²

Yang Min-Suk - CEO of YG Entertainment

Yang Min-Suk is the brother of Yang Hyun-Suk, who was a member of Seo Taiji and the Boys, largely credited as the first K-Pop group.⁸³ Currently the CEO of YG entertainment, the second largest entertainment company, Yang oversees acts such as Bigbang, iKOn, 2NE1, and the new Blackpink.⁸⁴

Wook Jung - CEO of JYP Entertainment

⁷⁶ *Minister's Profile*, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Website.

⁷⁷ 디지털2, *Jung Kwan-joo appointed vice culture minister*, The Korea Herald.

⁷⁸ *Corea Image Communication Institute*, Everybody Wiki.

⁷⁹ *Intro to Kocis*, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Website.

⁸⁰ *Poet Lawmaker nominated culture minister*, Yonhap News.

⁸¹ *NCT*, SMTown Website.

⁸² *The History of Kpop, Chapter 4: How Lee Soo Man's First Big Fail Resulted in Korea's Modern Pop Star System*, MoonROK.

⁸³ *Yang Min-Suk*, Bloomberg.

⁸⁴ *Blackpink*, YG Entertainment Website.

The JYP talent roster includes acts such as Twice and Day6. JYP was founded by Park Jin-Young, a singer songwriter who came to fame in the 90s.⁸⁵ Wook Jung is the current CEO and handles the business aspects of the company, while JYP handles music. Wook has been credited as one of the major factors in JYP's rise and the company seems poised for growth moving forward.⁸⁶

Bang Si-Hyuk - CEO of BigHit Entertainment

Bang Si-Hyuk has been instrumental in Big Hit Entertainment's rise over the past few years. Largely fueled by BTS's meteoric rise, Big Hit looks to make its name in the K-pop world for decades to come.⁸⁷

Park Choong-Min - CEO of Cube Entertainment

Cube Entertainment is known for artistic individuality, encouraging their artists to do their own production and songwriting. Park has been CEO since 2012, and Cube has established itself as a major player in the Kpop world.⁸⁸

Han Sung-Ho - CEO of FNC Entertainment

Han is the founder of FNC Entertainment, and since 2012 has expanded to both music and entertainment.⁸⁹ As a smaller company, FNC seeks to grow its business and benefits with much more direct investment from the Korean government.

Han Seong-Su - CEO of Pledis Entertainment

Han is the founder of Pledis Entertainment, a smaller company that notably manages Seventeen.⁹⁰ Currently, Pledis is focused on building up its assets and debuting successful new groups, particularly through survival shows. Similar to FNC, direct government investment would be a great boon to Pledis.

Stephen Kim - Kakao M CEO

Kakao M is a co-publishing company that helps smaller entertainment companies publish music. They possess copyright control over much of the co-published music, with the majority of its revenue from online sales.⁹¹

CK Kang - Studio Dragon CEO

Studio Dragon works in the K-Drama sphere, producing and distributing one of Korea's latest cultural exports. As a company, Studio Dragon finds itself less poised on the world stage to K-Pop companies, but leads in the world of drama production.⁹² As a largely film-based company, Studio Dragon's needs differ from other entertainment companies, and it must seek to find a balance between Korean success and its own cultural relevance.

Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation

⁸⁵ JYP Entertainment Website.

⁸⁶ *JYP Entertainment CEO enters 2020's top indie power players*, VLive.

⁸⁷ Raisa Bruner, *The Mastermind Behind BTS Opens Up About Making a K-Pop Juggernaut*, Time.

⁸⁸ CUBE Website.

⁸⁹ FNC Entertainment Website.

⁹⁰ Pledis Entertainment Website.

⁹¹ *Kakao M*, Crunchbase.

⁹² Studio Dragon Entertainment Website.

MBC is a public broadcasting corporation, focusing on both broadcasting and original production.⁹³ MBC derives its revenue both from the prominence of K-Pop/K-Drama within Korean culture, which runs counter to the desire for many companies to expand globally. MBC benefits from increased cultural relevance within Korea, but also should expand to look for more global revenue.

Ko Dae-Young - CEO of Korean Broadcasting System

KBS is another public broadcasting corporation, also facing similar issues to MBC. Notably, KBS has already established channels for international broadcasting and ready venues into the larger media market of Japan.⁹⁴

Seoul Broadcasting System

SBS is a broadcasting company that focuses on Channel 6 in Korea, but also has a number of international partners. Similar to MBC and KBS, national relevance for entertainment is an advantage for SBS, and they should seek to expand its revenue stream. Notably, SBS has significant radio infrastructure and parent contacts with construction.⁹⁵

Han Kang - Author

Han is a Korean author, best known for winning the Man Booker prize in 2016 for her novel “The Vegetarian.”⁹⁶ She has taught creative writing at the Seoul Institute of Arts and often incorporates progressive and feminist themes into her writing. Han’s personal views play a large role in her writing and character, and her prowess has brought great attention to Korean literature.

Son Heung-Min - Soccer Player and Current National Captain

Son is widely considered the best Asian soccer player on the planet, and currently captains the South Korean national team. He has a vested interest in expanding the popularity of South Korean sports along with working towards amending the compulsory entertainment clause for athletes.⁹⁷ As of 2016, he has just transferred to a new soccer club Tottenham Hotspur in London.

Kim Yuna - Olympic Figure Skater

Kim has represented Korea at the 2010 and 2014 winter Olympics.⁹⁸ As an athlete, Kim seeks to continue South Korea’s production of stellar talent and continue its Olympic legacy.

Park Ji-Sung - Retired Soccer Player and Manchester United Ambassador

Park is perhaps the most famous Asian footballer, having been the first to win the UEFA Champions League and lead South Korea to its record 4th place finish at the 2002 World Cup.⁹⁹ As a Manchester United ambassador, Park strives to continue the talent pipeline to the top of the European game and firmly establish Korea as an elite footballing country.

Im Dong-Hyun - Retired Archer

⁹³ MBC Global Media Website.

⁹⁴ KBS Global Website.

⁹⁵ SBS Website.

⁹⁶ *Han Kang*, Penguin Random House.

⁹⁷ *Heung Min-Son*, Transfermarket.

⁹⁸ *Yuna Kim*, Olympics.com.

⁹⁹ *Park Ji-Sung*, Transfermarket.

Im is a former world No.1 and Olympic gold medalist in archery.¹⁰⁰ South Korea is one of the premier nations for archery talent. Im, like many of the other athletes in this committee, is dually interested in both developing talent within Korea as well as helping that talent establish itself on the world stage.

Explorative Questions:

What actions should you take to consistently remain relevant in committee?

Very few of the positions in this committee are truly secure. There is a large overturn in diplomatic and political positions due to elections and policy changes. Some companies may also lack long term stability for CEO or other prominent roles. Governmental roles often change with each election and policy direction is fluid. In order to have an impact, both in your organization and in this committee's large scale perspective, you must ensure that you are able to remain a member. I encourage delegates not to be complacent about their party or company's position as this committee progresses.

What are the chief foreign policy issues Korea faces in the upcoming years?

The ultimate goal of Hallyu is to give a name to South Korea and help market the nation itself. Anticipate some of the potential issues that could arise for the nation in the coming decade. The important aspects to consider are how the Korean entertainment world can affect such issues, and the steps that need to be taken to have maximum impact.

Is it possible to attempt to enter the Western media market?

As of 2016, entrance into the western media market is on the tip of everyone's tongues. It's almost expected of some companies to pursue this avenue. However, it's encouraged to take crafty individualized steps to help enter this market rather than take the same model and apply it elsewhere. Remember how Korean entertainment styles changed as a result of marketing to China and Japan? A similar country specific approach is encouraged.

What are your priorities as an Individual or Organization?

It's important to keep your own personal goals in mind during this committee. As a politician or company or individual you will all have specific goals, and it is important to keep those goals in mind. Whether it be profit, fame, or even success for the good of the nation, I encourage you all to tackle these issues from your own perspectives.

Glossary Terms:

Trainee: see Trainee System section

¹⁰⁰ Im Dong-Hyun, World Archery.

Idol: see Introduction to K-pop today section

Debut: see Introduction to K-pop today section

Comeback: An artist's return to music after a long break or an extended period of hiatus after a controversy, but the term is more commonly used to refer to when an idol or a group releases a new song. Each comeback also includes a concept or a theme that an idol or a group keeps throughout their promotions and performances.

Bias: Refers to a fan's favorite member in a group. "Bias group" is also often used to describe a fan's all-time favorite group

Leader: This member is responsible for keeping the group organized and serving as the liaison between the group and their entertainment agency. Leaders also often speak on behalf of the group at awards ceremonies or in interviews.

Visual: Refers to the most attractive member of a group based on Korean beauty standards.

All-kill: When a soloist or a group is number one on all of the main Korean music charts: iChart Weekly, iChart Realtime, Melon Daily TOP 100, Melon 24 Hits, Genie TOP 100 Daily, etc.

Sasaeng: Fans who have crossed the line are closer to stalkers. These are fans who invade idols' privacy or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe in some way.

Sub-unit: A smaller K-pop group within a big idol group.

Fan chant: Words shouted by fans during performances. They usually include naming all the members of a group during the intro to their song, and then repeating specific words or lines throughout.

Aegyo: Translating directly to "acting cute" or "cute action," like the cute or childish facial expressions expressed by both male and female idols in the form of a baby voice, gestures, and more.

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