

CROSS-CURRENTS



EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

K-pop Reception and Participatory Fan Culture in Austria

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Abstract

K-pop's popularity and its participatory fan culture have expanded beyond Asia and become significant in Europe in the past few years. After South Korean pop singer Psy's "Gangnam Style" music video topped the Austrian chart in October 2012, the number and size of K-pop events in Austria sharply increased, with fans organizing various participatory events, including K-pop auditions, dance festivals, club meetings, quiz competitions, dance workshops, and smaller fan-culture gatherings. In the private sector, longtime fans have transitioned from participants to providers, and in the public sector, from observers to sponsors. Through in-depth interviews with event organizers, sponsors, and fans, this article offers an ethnographic study of the reception of K-pop in Europe that takes into consideration local interactions between fans and Korean sponsors, perspectives on the genre, patterns of social integration, and histories. As a case study, this research stresses the local situatedness of K-pop fan culture by arguing that local private and public sponsors and fans make the reception of K-pop different in each locality. By exploring local scenes of K-pop reception and fan culture, the article demonstrates the rapidly growing consumption of K-pop among Europeans and stresses multidirectional understandings of globalization.

Keywords: K-pop, participatory fan culture, social media, national image, globalization, "Gangnam Style," ethnography, Hallyu

K-pop and its participatory culture (Jenkins 2006) have spread quickly among fans in Europe, boosted by social media (Marinescu and Balica 2013).¹ The number of K-pop fans in Austria had already been increasing for several years (Sung 2012, 2013b), but the sudden popularity of "Gangnam Style," accompanied by a rising awareness of South Korea's national image and of K-pop, sharply increased the local participatory fan culture.² After Psy's video topped the Austrian chart in October 2012, the number of local K-pop events sharply increased. These were

organized by longtime K-pop fans, many of whom had been fans pop for more than ten years, and local promoters with different drives and aims. Smaller private K-pop-related activities, like K-pop clubbing and K-pop karaoke, already took place among East Asians in Austria, but large-scale public K-pop events are new. These events are promoted by local and institutional sponsors, such as the Korean embassy, the Korea House of Culture (Korea Kulturhaus Österreich), the Korean Association of Austria (Verein der Koreaner in Österreich), and private businessmen. Longtime K-pop fans are no longer satisfied with being consumers and are now acting as creators of the next generation of K-pop fans. They are motivated to organize and lead these events to provide more connection among K-pop fans, and sponsors consider it worth promoting such events to support Korea's national image and benefit their own products.

This article explores the post-“Gangnam Style” period of the K-pop scene in Austria. By focusing on K-pop participatory fan culture in Austria between February and August 2013—drawing on qualitative interviews with fans, organizers, and sponsors of such events and participant-observation of two major K-pop events held in Vienna—it contributes to an understanding of the reception of K-pop on a global scale. The main questions addressed in this article are: Who are the organizers of local K-pop events, and what are their aims and drives? Who participates and why?

Though Austria's approximately one thousand K-pop fans are not as numerous as in neighboring countries and their numbers are growing relatively slowly, K-pop participatory culture creates a specific space for fans in this region to interact and communicate within one another and with other Korean communities and institutions in Austria. As an ethnographic case study of K-pop reception and its associated participatory culture in Austria, this article contributes to our understanding of how the local situation of Korean institutions, fans, and private sponsors' interaction with participatory fan culture construct the local specificity of the K-pop scene in Europe and argues for the importance of understanding K-pop participatory culture from local perspectives.

Ethnographic Research on K-pop in Austria

Scholars have argued that the study of popular music is deficient in ethnography. Ethnomusicologist Timothy D. Taylor states in his book *Global Pop* that “many analyses of globalization more often than not fail to take into account experiences of real people” (1997, xvi).

Sarah Cohen, a popular music scholar, also criticizes research on popular music that fails to include ethnographic research and argues that popular music should be treated as social practice and process:

An ethnographic approach to the study of popular music, involving direct observations of people, their social networks, interactions and discourses, and participation in their day-to-day activities, rituals, rehearsals and performances, would encourage researchers to experience different relationships, views, values and aesthetics, or to view familiar context from an alternative perspectives. (1993, 135)

In general, there is a need in popular music studies for in-depth qualitative empirical research, research that takes into account listeners' own experiences and perspectives (Williams 2001, 223). A considerable amount of quantitative research on popular music has been conducted but much of it lacks insight into people's experiences and perspectives, largely because the listeners' own accounts of their experiences and perspectives are absent (Williams 2001, 223).

Few ethnographic studies of K-pop reception and its fan culture in general, and fewer still in Europe, have been completed. Because of K-pop's growing popularity in Europe, however, some scholars have attempted to explore this phenomenon in local contexts (Cha and Kim 2011; Marinescu and Balica 2013; Sung 2012, 2013b). For example, Cha and Kim (2011) studied the reception of K-pop in Paris, where the SM Town World Tour, produced in June 2011 by South Korea's largest entertainment company, SM, turned out to be quite successful in attracting local attention.

Ethnographic study of K-pop reception in Austria has been carried out during two different periods, from 2010 through 2011 and again starting in February 2013. These studies—before and after “Gangnam Style”—show that the K-pop scene in Austria has drastically changed. Earlier research indicated that most K-pop fans in Austria were East Asians, and that social media played a significant role in enabling them to construct their own regional identity apart from that of the dominant culture (Sung 2012, 2013b), but later research shows that the number of local and Eastern European fans—from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and other neighboring countries—has increased. Further, these fans are no longer only consumers and listeners of K-pop but also leaders trying to transform the Austrian K-pop scene from a spectator culture to a participatory culture (Jenkins 2006).

K-pop fans are not as numerous in Austria as they are in Paris or the United Kingdom, but this article emphasizes the importance of a case study of K-pop in Austria. Though it is a small country, with only about 8.5 million people, it is surrounded by eight different countries: the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein. This geographic location makes Vienna an international center, easy for K-pop fans in neighboring countries to reach. Furthermore, immigration into Austria has diversified in recent years, especially from these neighboring countries.³ Many K-pop fans not only travel to participate in fan events but have strong connections with one another.⁴

About 2,500 Koreans, 3,000 Taiwanese, 2,500 Japanese, and 15,700 Chinese immigrants live in Austria (the actual size of the Chinese community is estimated to be about 30,000 when illegal migrants and refugees are taken into account). East Asian immigrants in Austria are primarily students, migrant workers, and corporate expatriates. Some of them decide to permanently in Austria after their study or contract is over. They are considered a fairly unproblematic minority, rarely causing social conflicts with the host society (as other groups have). Austrians on the whole are ill informed about East Asian societies and cultures, partly because information about Asia is limited via the mass media and a lack of cultural understanding. Before “Gangnam Style,” South Korea did not enjoy a clear image among Austrians and was considered a nation not uniquely different from China or Japan. To improve Korea’s image in Europe, Korean national institutions have actively promoted South Korea and its culture, including in Austria. For example, the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts and other institutions visit Europe occasionally to promote Korean traditional music and dance (Sung 2013a).

From time to time, visiting musicians have performed in Austria. A “Korean Night” held in Vienna in 2005 provided one opportunity to introduce Korean traditional culture to the Austrian mass media. After attending the concert, Barbara Wolschek, chief editor at the foreign policy department of the public broadcaster ORF, said, “Now we can look beyond the EU and let our eyes turn to Asia.”⁵ Such reactions emphasize the usefulness of promoting South Korea’s national image. Until recently, South Korea has been known mainly by Austrians for its political issues with North Korea; therefore, it has always seemed serious and dangerous. Although the South Korean government has made an effort to upgrade South Korea’s national image as dynamic and trendy, it has not attracted much attention in Austrian society until recently. The

popularity of “Gangnam Style” piqued Austrians’ interest in the reasons for K-pop’s success and made them aware of the global success of the South Korean economy. In interviews, K-pop fans say that their fascination with K-pop is partly due to their fascination with South Korea’s economic growth and its national branding. After the K-pop boom and “Gangnam Style,” the image of South Korea evolved from that of a serious and dangerous place to that of a cosmopolitan country where people know how to enjoy their lives.

Since few Austrians have had the chance to experience Korean pop culture directly, the images they receive from music videos or movies through social media are crucial in creating their impressions of South Korea, and they are surprised to see how advanced and developed the country is. Jay, a K-pop fan in Austria, says

I love Korea. I have never been to South Korea, but I really want to save money and travel there. I like their tradition, how they are, and the language. I am also very curious and want to know how Korea managed so well. With the war and all that, they still doing [*sic*] very well. The landscape is also very nice from the drama. It looks really nice there and gives better image to me. Before, when we talk [*sic*] about Korea, they always talk about the [*sic*] North Korea and all that, but through music everybody can believe South Korea is in the form. Not all the time about the political things, but people really lives [*sic*] there, and they are happy. (Interview with author, June 25, 2013)

As previously stated, K-pop’s popularity in Austria is not immense, but it is growing. According to Park Jong Bum, president of the Korean Association of Austria,

German and Austrian people are very conservative, and they have a very strong pride on their own things. They are very slow but very exact. Compared to Paris and UK, German people are very slowly reacting to Hallyu or K-pop. But as you know, there was a K-pop audition, and it was pretty successful, and there was a K-pop dance festival in the Weltmuseum. Even in Austria, it is evident that K-pop even attracted them. If K-pop can be popular among Austrians, it is likely popular all over Europe. (Interview with author, June 10, 2013)

As Park points out, K-pop’s popularity has spread in Europe, but its popularity in Austria has not been studied because of the small number of fans and the slow growth of their numbers. In my opinion, case studies of K-pop in Austria are valuable because the country’s geographic location, multicultural environment, transforming image of Asia, efforts by Koreans to promote K-pop to local fans, and active fan base make its fan culture more dynamic and specific compared to that

in other part of the Europe. Its geographic centrality makes Austria a hub for K-pop fan culture in Europe, as does its online and offline participatory culture.

Is K-pop an Intra-Asian Cultural Flow?

Hallyu (the “Korean Wave”), the term for the rapid growth in popularity of South Korean popular culture outside of South Korea’s national borders, has been the subject of much attention by scholars in various fields of study (Chua 2006; Jung 2011; Shim 2008; Shin 2009; Sung 2008, 2013b). This sudden cultural flow spread unexpectedly quickly and, in contrast to many scholars’ expectations, it has continued to do so, becoming stable in many localities. Many scholars have been interested in understanding Hallyu in light of globalization (Chua 2004; Iwabuchi 2002), as its spread challenges the idea of a West-dominated globalization process, which emphasizes the unidirectional influence of Western pop on non-Western pop music. For example, the study of Asian pop is usually dedicated to the influence of Western pop on Asian settings (Morelli 2001). The rise of K-pop brings a new type of cultural flow into the conversation, one that interacts within Asia under the terms “intra-Asian cultural flow and trans-Asia cultural traffic” or “East Asian pop culture” (Iwabuchi, Muecke, and Thomas 2004). According to Shin, a K-pop researcher, South Korean pop culture—or, more precisely, the group of Korean cultural industries who are its agents—is just a new player in this complex and multidirectional traffic (2009, 507). The growing consumption of K-pop among Europeans offers another perspective on globalization: that the direction of influence is changing from West to East to East to West.

The early circulation of K-pop (before the international success of pop group Super Junior in 2009) was primarily limited to Asian countries and overseas Asians (Sung 2008, 2013b). Although South Korean mass media emphasized the global influence of Hallyu, most of the audience consisted of East Asians or East Asian immigrants in Western countries. Now that K-pop fandom has increased in Austria, Asian K-pop fans there are in fact comparatively few, and most of them are either Austrian, second-generation Asian Austrian, or other Europeans living in Austria. If the East Asian K-pop fans were strongly connected to their home culture and attached to trends in their home culture through social media (Sung 2012, 2013b), the Austrian K-pop fans are closely linked to one another through community and local events, and they even travel to participate in local events in neighboring countries. K-pop has become one of the most powerful cultural products in East Asian cultural traffic now reaching the West. If earlier studies

emphasized the growing power of South Korea in East Asian contexts, it should now be seen as the burgeoning power of East Asian pop in Western contexts. The K-pop boom proves that popular music does not just move from West to East; the trend should not be considered unidirectional. Especially since European fans tend to travel to K-pop events, the study of K-pop reception and fandom in Europe involves the new idea of the mobility of popular music and its fandom and brings new attention to this East Asian cultural traffic.

Who Organizes and Participates in Local K-pop Events in Austria?

This section is based on participant-observation of two major K-pop events, held from February to June 2013 in Vienna, and on interviews conducted with the event organizers, sponsors, and participating fans. These events were sponsored by the South Korean embassy, Korean business companies (including Hyundai and Samsung), and local companies run by Koreans (including the Youngsan Group, World Culture Network [WCN], and Akakiko⁶), as well as Korean associations in Austria, including the Korean Association of Austria and the Korea House of Culture.⁷ Qualitative interviews were held with the organizers of these events, Christian Schleining, Anja Hillebrand, and Bai Sujin; the president of the Korean Association of Austria (which often sponsors such events); and fans who participated in these events as masters of ceremony or judges.⁸ Through these two events, I explore participatory fan culture in Austria and interactions among public and private institutions, sponsors, fans, and local organizers and how they set up different local atmospheres in each locality of the European K-pop scene.

Austria's Next K-pop Star

“Austria’s Next K-pop Star” is a K-pop audition show that was organized mainly by Anja Hillebrand, an Austrian K-pop fan, and Bai Sujin, a voice professor at Prayner Music Conservatory in Vienna. Bai had already organized various K-pop events, such as “K-pop *Nolja*”⁹ (literally, “Let’s Play K-pop”), at the Korea House of Culture before she organized this audition. Approached by Hillebrand, who had participated in the *Nolja* event, Bai decided to solicit sponsors and organize a K-pop audition. Hillebrand’s knowledge of K-pop as a longtime fan and connection with other K-pop fans throughout the Austrian fan community, combined with Bai’s professional singing career, made them a perfect match to get financial sponsors such as Park Jong Bum, the CEO of Youngsan Group¹⁰ in Austria, for this event. In an interview, Bai

said her reason for organizing the audition was to find talented individuals and introduce them to South Korea (she thinks potential exists to find a hidden star from Austria). In this audition, Bai acted not only as organizer but also as main judge and voice trainer. After the first round of the competition, she trained the remaining sixteen contestants for their live performances, helping them to improve greatly. Bai said,

I really had fun teaching them, and I found out what they really want. They really want to be a good singer. Some of them really have deep musical talent, so they can really be serious about being a K-pop idol. They are very serious about K-pop. As you know, many were K-pop fans already for many years. (Interview with author, June 11, 2013)

Unlike other judges, who give more credit to good singers and dancers, Bai was pretty sure about what kind of singer she was looking for: “There are many great singers who have a powerful voice, but there are many good singers like that in Korea. That’s not what we’re looking for. We want something unique that Korea might be interested in. It has to be something different” (interview with author, June 11, 2013).

Hillebrand also played a prominent role in this audition. A student in the Korean studies program at the University of Vienna, she is well known in the local fan community for her knowledge of K-pop and acted in this capacity as a judge and leader of the program:

I was a K-pop fan for long time already. My friend, Jasmine [another organizer who operates background music for the singers] and I were both interested in Asia since kindergarten. We loved China in the beginning and then Japan, and from 2000 to 2004, we started to love Korea. I love all East Asian countries, but I love Korea the most. I feel warm whenever I think about Korea. It is a very special feeling. (Interview with author, May 10, 2013)

Hillebrand added that she would also love to find a talented star to sell to South Korea: “I like it so much that I want this to be my profession. It would be what I love to do. It is like you make money from your hobby” (interview with author, May 10, 2013). She fully devoted herself to this audition program. While Bai was training contestants in vocal technique, Hillebrand selected K-pop pieces of different genres to find one that would best fit their voices.

The first K-pop audition in the “Austria’s Next K-pop Star” series was held on February 16, 2013, at the Korea House of Culture. Fifty-one contestants competed. After selecting sixteen of these contestants to proceed to the next level, the judges organized six live shows, which were open to the public. The live shows were held every other week on Saturday nights starting on March 20. The size of the audience varied from time to time, but usually one hundred to two hundred people attended. Each live show was enthusiastic and exciting, with the participants showing off their talents as well as their potential popularity as stars. During each live show, two or three participants were eliminated (the judges became emotional as they asked them to leave the show; Hillebrand sometimes even cried). At the end of the series, a K-pop star was selected.

As a guest judge for this competition, I found it fascinating and informative to be a participant while also observing as a researcher. The main judges were Anja Hillebrand, Bai Sujin, and local fan Franz Brunner; Choi Kyoungju (an ORF radio producer), Nobert Mosch (a Taekwondo representative), Christian Spatzik (an Austrian actor), and I joined as auxiliary judges. There were many discussions about which contestant was most suitable to be Austria’s first K-pop star, during which I learned a lot about the factors that went into the selection process. Bai gave more credit to the singers whose voice color and technique were unique and could not easily be found among Koreans singers. Some judges tried to give extra credit to contestants whose age and dancing skill were most like those of a K-pop idol. The final winner, Youngkwang (Lukas), was deemed by most of the judges as the most suitable because he had all the traits that they thought a K-pop star should have: he was young (thirteen at the time), spoke multiple languages (French, Korean, English, German), was a good dancer, and of course possessed a distinctive singing style. He was born in France to a Korean mother and a European father, and he still attends French school. He attracted many female fans during his live performances and proved his potential to be a K-pop star.

Another important person to be mentioned is sponsor Park Jong Bum of the Youngsan Group. Park revealed that he sponsored this K-pop audition to promote South Korea and its art to Austria and to Europe: “As long as it is something that might contribute to promoting Korea as well as give a bridge to the cultural exchange, and to let the second-generation Koreans to know their own culture, it is necessary to sponsor such an event and I will do my best to do so” (interview with author, June 10, 2013). He added that as an immigrant, he feels he owes much to Austria, and therefore he wishes to return something to Austrian society. For him, sponsoring K-

pop events satisfies both of these intentions. He is happy that Austrian fans love K-pop and wants to create an event for them to participate in; he considers this a good way to promote Korean music and culture.

In the future, Hillebrand, Bai, and Park plan to continue this K-pop audition yearly and search for talented Austrian K-pop stars, whom they would like to promote in the South Korean music industry. As long as they continue to profit, they plan to produce such auditions on a regular basis. After the original event's success, Hillebrand and Bai organized an official Facebook community under the name of Mindeullae (Dandelion). Its purpose is to organize K-pop events more regularly in Austria to provide participatory fan culture on a regular basis. Since Mindeullae was organized in July 2013, smaller K-pop events such as K-pop quiz and karaoke nights have been held at the Korea House of Culture in Vienna, providing an opportunity for K-pop fans to come together on a regular basis.

K-pop Dance Festival Vienna

The first K-pop Dance Festival Vienna, one of the most distinctive and largest K-pop events ever held in Austria, was held on June 1, 2013. It was organized by Christian Schleining, a thirty-three-year-old Austrian man who has been a K-pop fan since 2008. After deciding with the Korean embassy that Weltmuseum would be a great place to hold such a festival, he searched for sponsors willing to support the event. The festival's partnership with WCN (World Culture Networks) drew many sponsors, such as Samsung, Akakiko, and Hyundai. If "Austria's Next K-pop Star" was a local event, "K-pop Dance Festival Vienna" was a regional event, with more participants from neighboring countries around Austria.

Schleining was introduced to K-pop by a Japanese friend while he was studying in mainland China. He says, "It was obvious that I learned about K-pop through Japanese friend. At that time, Asia was much influenced by the Korean Wave already. My Japanese friend was a K-pop fan already ten years ago when she introduced K-pop to me" (interview with author, June 21, 2013). Even after he returned to Austria from China, Schleining continued to enjoy K-pop and started to see its potential in the European market. About running two major K-pop websites, Ai-likeEntertainment and Kpopeurope,¹¹ he says,

I did all this business because I see the potential of the K-pop market in this region. There are huge differences from a different region like Paris and Germany in terms of the size, but the problem is that they are already huge. It's about time to develop this region. Austrians are very slow and conservative. So I think if something becomes a trend or popular at all, then it is already popular all over the world. The problem is that Austria is too small to do any kind of concerts, for it is too small in the size of the market, but if you see all the surrounding countries, such as Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic, there are some potential futures in this region. (Interview with author, June 21, 2013)

As stated by Schleining, K-pop Dance Festival Vienna was more exciting than previous events because participants came from many countries, including Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and France. Most of the groups said they were participating not only as a hobby, but because they wanted to help bring K-pop to Europe. As previously mentioned, the K-pop community has been active longer in Eastern Europe than in Austria. For example, a girl group from the Czech Republic, Oh My Girls (also called O.M.G.), won the K-pop contest in the Czech Republic in 2012 and was the grand prize winner of the K-pop World Festival 2012, held in Changwon, South Korea. This festival, initiated in 2012 and scheduled to be held yearly in Changwon, was planned by eleven different South Korean culture and information service institutions to spread and expand the base of Hallyu on the global scene. O.M.G., which won the second prize in the K-pop Dance Festival Vienna, had already experienced performing in major K-pop events in Europe and South Korea, while for many Austrian groups participating this was a new experience.

Although Schleining initiated the K-pop Dance Festival Vienna and was its main organizer, this event would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Korean Embassy in Austria, WCN Entertainment and Weltmuseum Wien and sponsorship from others. Major support came from the embassy and again from Park Jong Bum. WCN is a management service for cultural, social, and business-related events and is an affiliate of the Youngsan Group. According to Schleining,

WCN, Weltmuseum, and me—we all brought something in to this project, but no profit in terms of money. WCN wanted to make the profile bigger, and the museum wanted to attract people, and I wanted to bring bigger project, so it turned out to be a positive event, in which we all gained something. But I worked

five months for this project. All the people who participated would do it again but under different circumstances. (Interview with author, June 21, 2013)

After heated competition among seventeen dance groups, the winner was France's KPOP ALL STAR, which consists of four members from different ethnic backgrounds. The group's leader is the only member of Korean origin (actually, he was the only Korean participant among all the performers in this event). KPOP ALL STAR not only received thunderous applause from the audience but was also liked by the other participants for being good supporters offstage. The group is actually a combination of two groups: a girl group, called New G Crew, which won the BIGBANG Fantastic Baby Contest 2012, and two boys from DS Dancers, which brings dancers from South Korea to Paris to hold K-pop dance workshops. Except for KPOP ALL STAR, all the participants in the K-pop Dance Festival Vienna were from Austria and nearby countries. Among the seventeen groups that participated were Black Illusion, G.A.M.E. (Girls and Music Entertainment), HOME MADE ASIA, KPOP ALL STAR, Oh My Girls, One2Step, Secret Identity, MiXtery, etc. The names of the groups, except possibly Z.A.M.S. (based on Hungarian), are in or based on the English language, suggesting that they hope to extend their performance career in the region, or even on a global scale.

According to Schleining, around 250 entrance tickets were sold for the event; , including the organizers and participants, about 400 people attended. During this dance festival, it was fascinating to see how people from different nations could easily connect with K-pop, because of its hybrid form, and with one another. Although "K-pop" stands for the popular music of South Korea, its fans have formed local communities of their own in Austria and elsewhere. As a result, K-pop Dance Festival Vienna was quite successful, one of the largest K-pop events to date in Vienna.

Conclusion

K-pop has become one of the most powerful cultural products in East Asia, and it is now gaining popularity around the world, including in Europe. Ethnographic research on the local K-pop scene in Austria demonstrates the growing number of European K-pop fans and the transformation of their role from consumers to providers and from observers to participants. Although this is a case study of a specific musical genre (K-pop) in a particular local scene

(Austria), the debate about K-pop should focus on the growing power of South Korea as a burgeoning source of East Asian pop in Western contexts. It also demonstrates that the study of popular music should consider the importance of globalization as multidirectional rather than unidirectional. It no longer moves from West to East but also from East to West, and within the Asian region. The study of K-pop reception and fandom in Europe brings new attention to the study of globalization of popular music. K-pop in the European context should be further explored in order to understand the multidirectional flow of K-pop in the global context. As an ethnographic study of K-pop reception and participatory fan culture, this article also contributes to an understanding of how local institutions, fans, and private sponsors' interactions construct a unique local popular-music scene, and it argues for the prominence of seeing the participatory culture surrounding popular music from local perspectives.

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Notes

- 1 This article is part of a collaborative research project, "K-pop on the Global Platform: European Audience Reception and Contexts," funded by the Korea Organization of International Culture Exchange (KOFICE). The project involves comparative research in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Austria in order to document the increase of K-pop fandom and its participatory fan culture in Europe.
- 2 According to a survey of two hundred university students between the ages of eighteen and thirty living in Vienna in May–June 2013, "Gangnam Style" changed their image of South Korea and motivated them to consume K-pop. Of the participants, 10 percent said they had noticed an increase in publicity about South Korea, and 25 percent said they had started to consume K-pop after "Gangnam Style" became popular.
- 3 According to the 2001 census, of Austria's roughly eight million inhabitants, more than 730,000 (or 9.1 percent) were foreign residents, with 62.8 percent coming from the successor states of the former Yugoslavia and from Turkey (Migration Information Source n.d.).
- 4 According to the K-pop website Kpopeurope.com, approximately four thousand members from all over Europe had joined the site to communicate with one another and receive newly updated K-pop news in ten different languages. Announcements about K-pop events held all over Europe are posted there.
- 5 Website of the Korean Embassy in Austria (http://aut.mofat.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/korboardread.jsp?typeID=15&boardid=8491&seqno=587480&c=&t=&pagenum=2&tableName=TYPE_LEGATION&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=).

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- 6 Akakiko is a Japanese chain restaurant in Austria run by Jeon Mi-Ja, a Korean who is also a director of the Korea House of Culture.
- 7 The Korea House of Culture is a stand-alone public building owned and maintained by a fund established by Koreans living in Austria and used only for Korean purposes. Its purpose is to promote Korean culture and build mutual understanding between Austria and Korea.
- 8 The judging for “Austria’s Next K-pop Star” was done by the organizers of the events, Anja Hillebrand and Bai Sujin, and a few invited judges, including myself.
- 9 “K-pop *Nolja*” is a small party for K-pop fans, which includes not only K-pop karaoke, but also games and quizzes in which attendees can take part.
- 10 The Youngsan Group was established in 1999 in Vienna, Austria. It exports Korean and Chinese automobiles and automobile parts to many parts of Eastern Europe and East Asia. Youngsan’s factory is located in Slovakia, but it has expanded to include branches in several parts of Europe, such as Russia and Ukraine.
- 11 Ai-likeEntertainment (www.ai-like.net) and Kpopeurope (We bring K-pop to Europe!, www.kpopeurope.eu).

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