Intercultural (Dis)Connections in the South Korean Rock Scene

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines intercultural interactions between South Korean (hereafter Korean) musicians and foreign musicians in the underground rock scene in Seoul. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted from 2016-2017, supported by the US Fulbright Junior Scholars program. This fieldwork included attending multiple concerts each week, as well as interviews, and analysis of media and promotional materials. In studying the intercultural interactions of local foreign musicians (mostly white, male, English teachers) and Korean musicians, I argue that a variety of markers, including place, genre, and nationality, are important parts of how individual musicians understand their connections and/or disconnections with other musicians. Foreign musicians in Korea employ a variety of ideologies and techniques to attempt to bridge perceived gaps between musicians.

The first chapter lays the groundwork understandings of the context of underground rock and the term "foreigner" in the Korean context. I also explain how understanding intercultural interaction through the similarities and differences in what Roger Schank and Robert Abelson call "situational scripts" helps to illuminate why certain groups of musicians work well together, while others do not. The second chapter focuses on understandings of place in relation to Korean rock music, discussing the way that the US military presence influenced the formation of Itaewon and Haebangchon as "alien spaces" (Eun-Shil Kim) within Seoul. I also detail the origin of the punk scene in the 1990s in Hongdae, and the subsequent gentrification that has pushed music venues out of the neighborhood. The third chapter looks at punk musicians specifically, detailing how the performance scripts of punk music help to create unity within the scene, although admitting there are still points of conflict around behavior. The fourth chapter looks at a network cluster of musicians who do not find unity in their genre, and details the way that different understandings about the scripts of performance cause conflict and disconnection. The fluidity of this performance network means that the groups never situate themselves fully in one script or another, and a balance is harder to achieve. The fifth chapter looks at the situations in which connections are created: the after-party. Again, similarities and differences in the understandings of social scripts play a role in how musicians gain opportunities in the scene. Finally, the sixth chapter analyzes two foreigner-run initiatives meant to expand the reach and influence of the underground rock scene in Korea. These each display a different ideology of how foreigners should act. Throughout these chapters, I work to understand how musicians connect across intercultural interactions, and the ways they stay disconnected.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation interrogates the exchanges between South Korean (hereafter Korean) and foreign musicians in the underground rock scene in Seoul. I focus on the places in which these interactions occur, the ways that each group expects the other to behave, and the networks that Korean and foreign musicians create and maintain. This work examines the factors that contribute to a cohesive performance experience at a multi-cultural rock show, and how Korean and foreign musicians navigate their differences. The emphasis on intercultural interaction brings a new vantage point to a musical scene currently underrepresented in academic research.

One function of this introductory chapter is to clarify terms used in this dissertation. First, what is meant by "underground," "rock music," and "scene." In this particular context, the term "Underground Korean Rock Scene" is used to refer to the cultural space that defines itself as any popular music that is not K-pop, the particular brand of idol music from Korea that has become popular all over the world. "Rock" is used by my interlocutors as an umbrella term, encompassing everything from light acoustic folk to heavy punk and metal music. Therefore, in this dissertation the term "rock" will be used rather generally. Rock music in Korea is essentially "underground," as besides a few outliers rock rarely gets mainstream attention to the same level as the music of K-pop artists and idols.

Here I frame my discussion of intercultural interaction in two ways. I start with an overview of literature on foreigners in South Korea, and trace how I began to research the interactions of foreigners and Koreans in the underground rock scene. I then provide an overview of research into intercultural interaction that underpins much of my dissertation. The ways in which intercultural interactions define the imagined Other resonated throughout my participant observation and interviews during my fieldwork. This led me to understand the social interactions between Korean and foreign musicians through differences (and similarities) in "situational scripts" (discussed at length below) or through interlocking behavior patterns.

I then go on to define the two main groups of musicians I discuss in this dissertation: the imagined community around punk music, and the multi-genre network centered on the band Visuals. While imagined communities are helpful for understanding how cohesive practices form, I argue that when I am analyzing specific groups of musicians and how they interact, network theory becomes more useful for understanding the literal performance connections that exist between individual musicians. This overview of the theories utilized in this dissertation is followed by a presentation of how, methodologically, I studied intercultural interactions in Korea.

Underground, Rock, and Scene in South Korea

While doing preliminary research in the summer of 2014 to determine the focus of my PhD dissertation, I stayed in the neighborhood of Hongdae in Seoul. Hongdae is known for its clubs, music and art. Music is a constant in this area—whether it's buskers with acoustic guitars on street corners, bands playing in small venues, or the loud bass thumping from open dance club doors. The initial draw to this neighborhood, for me, was the large number of widely varied musical happenings in such a small physical space; Hongdae is approximately half a square mile

with (at that time) around 45 music venues and hundreds of bands performing each week.[1] As I explored this neighborhood more, I became interested in live performance of rock music in the club spaces of Hongdae, as well as the ways in which the scene is expanding outside of this space.

The live rock performance scene in Korea during my fieldwork was sonically diverse. In this scene "rock" seems to be a fluid and encompassing term which allows for some flexibility in instrumentation and sonic palette. Some musicians, such as those performing metal and punk, are relatively insular in their interactions, while other musicians do not focus on subgenre affiliations at all. Most writings and documentaries on the underground or "indie" rock music scene in Korea focus on punk rock starting in the mid-1990s.[2] However, the scene has splintered, resulting in many different subgenres of rock being referenced and emulated.[3] With the myriad of musical sounds and different ideologies of practice, it was hard to argue that all the musicians I interacted with belonged to a single community. "Musical scene" is defined by Will Straw as a "cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization."[4] This description of a cultural space works well for the Korean rock scene, especially because it allows for differentiation within the scene. This helps to explain how groups like punks often describe themselves as both part of the "Underground Rock Scene," but also refer to themselves as the punk (sub)scene: connected to a larger cultural space, but also differentiating themselves through specific practice.

Most of this music is independent of the mainstream industry in Korea, which is dominated by Korean idol pop: all boy or all girl singing and dancing groups with hip hop and house music influenced sounds. Because Korean idol pop looms so large in the Korean music industry, the cultural space of the underground scene is basically defined in its opposition to it. To emphasize even further this positioning of the scene against the mainstream industry of idol pop, I tend to utilize the term "underground" when referring to this music.[5] Besides a few notable exceptions, rock music in Korea tends to be under the radar of mainstream distribution and promotional channels. The use of "underground" is also a bit tongue-in-cheek, as the majority of the venues where this music is played are literally underground; basements are cheaper to rent,[6] and the majority have had good soundproofing to help avoid complaints from upstairs neighbors.

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[1] Doindie, "공연장 [Venues]," *DoIndie*, accessed December 24, 2019. http://www.doindie.co.kr/venues (website was removed March 10, 2020, version archived December 24, 2019 can be found here: https://web.archive.org/web/20191224130536/http://www.doindie.co.kr/venues).

[2] Stephen Epstein and Tim Tangherlini, dir., *Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community* (New York: Filmmakers Library, 2002), DVD and Stephen Epstein, "Anarchy in the UK, Solidarity in the ROK: Punk Rock Comes to Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (July 2000): 1-34.

[3] Stephen Epstein and Tim Tangherlini, dir., *Us & Them: Korean Indie Rock in a K-Pop World* (Seoul: Traumatic Productions, 2014), DVD.

[4] Will Straw, "Systems of Articulations, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music," *Cultural Studies* 5, no. 3 (1991): 373.

[5] There are some sections of the scene (not discussed in this dissertation) that are relatively industry-like in production and could arguably be understood as less "independent" or "do it yourself," which is why I hesitate to describe the scene as "indie" (short for independent).

[6] Julie Yoon, "Parasite: The Real People Living in Seoul's Basement Apartments," *BBC.com*, February 10, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51321661.

"Underground" also helps to emphasize the rhetorical work that "rock" does as a generic term for the music being performed, as "rock" at its core is defined in opposition to "pop." From the perspective of scholarly analysis of rock discourse, rock is valorized as a serious, authentic, and masculine form of popular music, whereas music that was described as trivial, fabricated, or feminine was degraded by rockers as "pop music."[7] The hierarchy of value created by this discourse means that within the sphere of rock music, the closer something is to "pop" in sound, construction, or presentation, the more likely it is to be seen as less "rock" and therefore less valuable. In contrast, the highly manufactured industry of Korean idol pop rarely makes an attempt to hide the constructed, and by rock standards inauthentic, nature of its music. This is why rock works is both a description of genre and a description of ideology. Subgenres of rock are often discussed by underground musicians, and some certainly group themselves around specific genre identities (punk and metal being the two most common in my experience). When subgenre influences are relevant I will bring that to the forefront. But "rock" will be the general term used for the overall scene that stands in contrast to mainstream Korean idol pop.

Straw also argues that the term "scene" is called upon to do many different tasks: scene is used both for specific local activity and as a way to connect practices dispersed all over the world.[8] Rather than seeing this as a problem, Straw sees "scene" as a metaphor for urban flux and fluid sociabilities, making this flexible term a possible option for discussing not only musical practice in South Korean rock, but highlighting the importance of space and place in the development and fluctuation of the scene. Certain places, typically neighborhoods, in Seoul are associated with rock music. While there are some neighborhoods, specifically Myeongdong and Hongdae, that have associations with Korean led rock practices, the origins of rock performance in Korea were in neighborhoods near United States military bases throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Chapter two will focus on the way that musical practice has been attached to different places in Seoul and elsewhere in South Korea over time, specifically looking at the way certain spaces were associated with certain nationalities, performance characteristics, and sounds. Neighborhoods positioned next to the United States Yongsan military base, such as Itaewon and Haebangchon, are understood as being "alien spaces" within Korea, and to associate with them is to associate with foreignness.

Music-Making Foreigners in Korea

In order to understand connections between foreignness and place, it's important to understand the concept of "foreigner" in Korea. At the end of 2016, in the middle of my year-long fieldwork, there were over 2.05 million foreign residents in South Korea, around 4% of the population. This was more than double the 910,000 foreign residents counted in 2006.[9] A 2018 survey showed that 61% of Koreans did not see migrant workers as "members of Korea."[10] Korea's monoethnic monoculturalism, in making political identification coequal with ethnic and

[7] Chris Atton, "Writing about Listening: Alternative Discourses in Rock Journalism," *Popular Music* 28, no. 1 (2009): 54.
[8] Will Straw, "Scenes and Sensibilities," *Public Culture* 22-23 (2002): 248.
[9] Yonhap News Agency, "No. of Foreign Residents in S. Korea More Than Doubles in Decade," *en.yna.co.kr*, June 21, 2017, https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20170621005100315.
[10] Se-jeong Kim, "61% of Koreans View Foreigners not Members of Korea," *The Korea Times*, January 3, 2018, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/01/113_241885.html.

cultural identification, creates a seemingly uncrossable divide between Korean citizen and foreigner. In doing this, however, both the category of "Korean" and of "foreigner" are seen as two homogenous and never overlapping groups, when this is certainly not the case. Even long-term foreign residents who follow Korean cultural rules, speak the language, and have families with Koreans will always be seen as foreigners.

Because Korea is often viewed as an ethnically homogenous country, the influx of foreigners has created social strain and fears of discord. Due to the increase of foreign residents, the Korean government has created policies related to *damunhwa* (다문화, multiculturalism). Looking at these policies in relation to Gerard Delanty's varieties of multiculturalism, this form of multiculturalism, on the surface, seems like interculturalism, or a celebration of cultural difference as a positive virtue that improves the country. However, in practice these policies are more akin to liberal multiculturalism, in which the focus is assimilation to a national culture and "way of life."[11] Many scholars criticize this assimilationist tendency of Korea's multiculturalism policies.[12] While immigrants will never be able to fully assimilate to Korea's ethnically rooted monoculturalism, it is assumed that they must assimilate culturally in order to understand the specific socialities of Korean life. A 2017 Korean Immigration Service brochure outlined the five tenants of the new immigration policy "Vibrant Korea growing with immigrants." One of these tenants was titled "Social integration: Promote social integration that respects shared Korean values," which focused on creating "self-reliance" of immigrants by creating systems to ensure they can become members of "our society" by learning Korean language and culture.[13]

The word *waegukin* (외국인), or foreigner, applies to anyone that is not ethnically Korean; however, there are many different types of foreigners, from different countries and of numerous ethnic and racial backgrounds, who have come to Korea for different reasons. While foreigners are often mentioned in newspapers as a monolithic group, different categories of foreigners have positive or negative connotations attached to them. Because *damunhwa* policies arose and evolved from the concept of multicultural marriage and families, most Koreans think of *damunhwa* as related to foreigners who married Koreans and their offspring.[14] Most literature about multiculturalism is focused on foreign brides (many of whom are from Southeast Asia) and other groups that are imbedded in Korean families.[15] Six of the seven core tasks for supporting multicultural families outlined by the Seoul city government are focused on social integration of multicultural family members.[16]

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[11] Gerard Delanty, *Community* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 98-99 and 103-104.
[12] John Lie, "Introduction," in *Multiethnic Korea? Multiculturalism, Migration and Peoplehood Diversity in Contemporary Korea*, ed. John Lie (Berkeley: Institute of Asian Studies, 2014): 22-23.
[13] Korean Immigration Service, "Open Korea: Dreaming of Globalization," 2017, accessed July 9, 2020, http://www.immigration.go.kr/sites/immigration_eng/download/bro_eng2.pdf.
[14] Soon Kim Chong, *Voices of Foreign Brides: The roots of Multiculturalism in Korea* (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 2011): xxi.
[15] Caren Freeman, *Making and Faking Kinship: Marriage and Labor Migration between China and South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2011) and Kim, *Voices.*
[16] The Official Website of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, "Multicultural Family Support Project," 2014, accessed April 23, 2015, http://english.seoul.go.kr/policy-information/international-exchange/multicultural-family-support-project/.

Race often place a factor in the understanding of *waegukin* as well; a 2014 survey by the Asan policy institute showed that Koreans had a more positive opinion about immigrants from majority white countries like the United States than ones from majority non-white countries like Nigeria.[17] It has been said that the white foreigner is often seen as the default in Korea; up until recently if a Korean textbook had a foreigner in it, it was probably a white foreigner.[18] Nadia Kim argues that Korean colorism, and preference towards whiteness, actually stems from a convergence of a myriad of factors that pre-date the United States' occupation of the country, but nonetheless "primed Koreans for the White-over-Black institutional order imported by the U.S. military beginning in 1945."[19]

The majority of the foreign musicians I worked with were white men from the US or the UK. The demographics of the foreign musicians I encountered was heavily influenced by the fact that the majority of them came to Korea to teach English. As Collins and Shubin argue, when looking to hire a native-speaking English teacher, "employers desire a particular kind of teacher, with preferences around nationality (USA and Canada), age (early-mid 20s), ethnicity (white), and qualifications that influence the location, remuneration, and availability of jobs."[20] Although most of the foreign musicians I talked to were in their 30s, almost all of them came to Korea in their early-mid 20s. It is well known that English teaching jobs are often difficult to get for non-white foreigners, even if they are from one of the seven countries one had to be from in order to get an E-2 teaching visa: US, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, or New Zealand. Despite these countries being multicultural, it was well known that many *hagwon*s (학원, after school English tutoring companies) would only hire white applicants. The common practice of requiring a photo with one's resume in Korea also led to discrimination towards applicants of color.[21] Most musicians of color described some types of discrimination they faced in the workplace, but said they rarely if ever had issues with this in the rock scene.

While there were a few musicians I interviewed who were not white and not Korean, none of them identified as black. Black people in Korea are often stereotyped as good dancers, singers, and rappers, but specifically in relation to hip hop genres, not rock.[22] Whiteness, like English, has often been seen as the norm in rock music, despite its origins with black creators

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[17] Claire Lee, "'Koreans Not Ready for Multiculturalism: Ratio of Biracial Babies Rose to 4.7%," The Korean Herald, July 20, 2014, Accessed July 9, 2020 http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20140730000857.
[18] Matthew Lamars, "Why Korea Must Embrace Multiculturalism - Groove Magazine," *Groove Magazine*, June 30, 2013, accessed February 23, 2018, http://groovekorea.com/article/why-korea-must-embrace-multiculturalism/ (no longer available, version archived February 23, 2018 available here: https://web.archive.org/web/20180223054824/http://groovekorea.com/article/why-korea-must-embrace-multiculturalism/).

[19] Nadia Kim, "Race-ing Toward the Real South Korea: The Cases of Black-Korean Nationals and African Migrants," in *Multiethnic Korea? Multiculturalism, Migration and Peoplehood Diversity in Contemporary Korea*, ed. John Lie (Berkeley: Institute of Asian Studies, 2014): 217.
[20] Francis L. Collins and Sergei Shubin, "Migrant Times Beyond the Life Course: The Temporalities of Foreign English Teachers in South Korea," *Geoforum* 62 (2015): 98.
[21] Jason Strother, "Ethnic Bias Seen in South Korea Teacher Hiring," *NPR.org*, July 9, 2017, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=11826937.

[22] Sarah Hare and Andrea Baker, "Keepin' It Real: Authenticity, Commercialization, and the Media in Korean Hip Hop," *Sage Open* 7, no. 2 (April-June 2017): 7.

like Little Richard and Chuck Berry.[23] While there was certainly a correlation of whiteness and rock that came along with rock's adoption into Korea, the fact that rock music has been widely available to Koreans for a long period of time meant that most Korean musicians I talked to did not see whiteness, or even foreignness, as an indication that someone would know more about rock music. In fact, as I will discuss later it was sometimes the opposite; foreign musicians of any race were often seen as less professional and skilled than Korean musicians.

The majority of the musicians I interacted with were men. The female musicians I interviewed were almost exclusively Korean. Rock is often associated with the expression of masculinity.[24] Female performers were typically lead singers, although there were a few all female bands, or bands with female drummers. In terms of performance and presentation, some preferred to emphasize their femininity, while others performed in a more aggressive manner. All women discussed issues of being talked down to, harassed, and treated poorly; for many this was just expected in a rock scene. Despite differences in the experience at shows and after-parties, the expectations around behavior were not gendered. Men and women in the scene tended to act in similar ways, especially as audience members, and at the after-party. The majority of the discussion was around differences and similarities between Korean and foreign participants; as such, that will be the focus of discussion.

Academic research about foreign English teachers and foreign exchange students is usually related to their work or school lives. One notable exception is Keewoong Lee's 2015 article focused on Western migrant bands, which includes some bands in the musician's collective Loose Union, which I will discuss in chapter six. His article emphasizes the privileges necessary to participate in the scene as a foreigner, and why English teachers make up the bulk of musicians in the scene. He points out that "[English Teaching foreigners] are given access to middle-class work and leisure spaces that other migrant workers cannot access, which can be used as a stepping stone to enhance their life opportunities."[25] He also argues, rightly so, that these English-speaking musicians have an easier time than many others in Korea: "Other migrants face various disadvantages and discrimination if they do not speak Korean, but [English-speaking foreigners] do not feel this pressure because Koreans are standardized to speak English."[26] Many of the foreign musicians I talked to spoke little to no Korean. While

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[23] Maureen Mahon, *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race,* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004): 7.

[24] Sheila Whiteley, "Introduction," in *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender,* ed. Sheila Whiteley, (New York: Routledge, 1997): xix.

[25] Keewong Lee, "이주민들의 탈영토화된 음악실천과 코즈모폴리턴 문화공간의 생산:서양계 이주민 밴드를 중심으로 [Migrants' Deterritorialized Music Practice and Production of a Cosmopolitan Cultural Space: Focusing on the Western Migrant Band]." *한국대중음악회 [Korean Society for Popular Music]* 15 (2015): 79. Translated by author, original Korean text as follows: "그럼에도 불구하고 이들은 다른 이주노동자들은 접근할 수 없는 중간계급 노동 및 여가 공간에 대한 접근권이 주어지며, 그것은 이들이 자신의 생활기회를증진하는 발판으로 사용될 수 있다."

[26] Lee, "Migrants," 80. Translated by author, original Korean text as follows: "다른 이주민들의 경우 한국어를 못할 경우 다양한 불이익과 차별에 직면하게 되지만, 이들의 경우는 한국인들이 오히려 영어를 사용해야 하는 것으로 규범화되어 있기 때문에 이러한 압력을 크게느끼지 않는다."

some blamed the fact that their job required them to speak only English with their students, and that they did not have the opportunity to learn, others felt guilty for not being better at Korean, and worked to improve their skills. But this does not diminish the fact that linguistically, English speakers have an easier time accessing the scene without Korean skill than other speakers.

Lee's article concludes that while the foreign musicians he interviewed for his research discussed their music making as cosmopolitan, in reality for many of them "the band activity is the practice of creating a home-like space and everyday life in a strange environment called Korea. The practice of achieving this goal through bands and music is a unique practice of English-speaking diaspora that is rarely found in other migrant groups in Korea."[27] He goes on to say that their desire to recreate what they experienced at home for their own comfort is more parochialism than cosmopolitanism. Despite this, their involvement in the scene and their different experiences of music performance do end up creating a cosmopolitan spaces as heterogeneous actors mix and learn from each other. This discussion of "home" comes up at multiple points within my dissertation, although in my experience different foreigners understand this concept in very different ways, with variation in the resulting heterogenous scenes created out of the interactions. With this dissertation, based on different research methodologies and from an outsider (rather than Korean) perspective, I hope to add to and expand this conversation of the unique interactions that (mostly white, male Western) foreigners and Koreans have in the rock scene.

Throughout this dissertation, I focus on the ways that my foreign interviewees discussed their view of how foreigners "should" act, usually described in terms of "good" and "bad" foreigners. This rhetoric was typically used to hold up the speaker as a "good" foreigner, and create this imagined figure of the "bad" foreigner that they measure themselves against. This phenomenon was not something I alone experienced in the music scene; other groups comprised mostly of white Western foreigners I interacted with regularly outside of the rock scene also often used this kind of self-positioning to justify their behaviors when interacting with Koreans. My goal throughout this dissertation is to make this discourse more transparent, and to articulate the ends for which it is being used.

Diasporic Koreans

Parts of this research will also work to complicate the static categories of "foreigner" and "Korean," as there are groups that end up between these categories. I interacted with many musicians and promoters who are ethnically Korean but born and/or raised abroad. Many of the earliest musicians and venue owners in the 1990s were Koreans who had the opportunity to study abroad in the United States and brought the music they enjoyed back with them. Some even had experiences playing or participating in music scenes abroad. For others, the music was a way to express the frustration they felt from reverse culture shock. When asked about his musical history, one musician said "I was in elementary school [in the United States]. After that I

[27] Lee, "Migrants", 85. Translated by author, original Korean text as follows: "밴드와 음악을 통해 이러한 목적을 달성하는 실천은 한국 내 다른 이주민집단들에게서 좀처럼 발견되지 않는 영어권 디아스포라들의 독특한실천이다. 그런데 흥미로운 것은, 조사대상자들이 한국행과 관련하여다양한 이유를 거론하고 있음에도 불구하고 음악은 그 하나로 언급되지 않고 있다는 점이다."

came back to Korea and I found so many wrong things. I wanted to be rebellious and so I formed my punk rock band."[28] These Korean musicians also hold an identity between two worlds, not feeling like "typical" Koreans in ideology or culture, but also not seen as foreign.

Members of the Korean diaspora are typically not called *waegukin* (외국인, foreigners), but *kyopo* (교포, nationals), giving them the status of being connected yet separated from Korea. The Overseas Koreans Act of 1998 created the F4 visa, which allowed eligible ethnic Koreans to stay in Korea for up to two years. This was originally meant to bring in capital from rich diasporic populations like Korean Americans, with its provisions allowing F4 visa holders to buy real estate and make financial investments. However, other populations, like Korean adoptees, utilized the right-to-work provision to stay up to two years in Korea, eventually finding stable jobs and settling there.[29] Members of the Korean diaspora and Korean adoptees involved in the scene such as performers, promotors, and club owners have difficulties with regard to how they are identified. For many diasporic returnees, "Korean" is not a static category, and rigid rules of ethnic inclusion and exclusion play a role in alternatively making them "Korean" insiders or disregarded "foreign" outsiders.[30] Foreigners often expected Korean diasporic returnees to be bridges to Korean musicians; returnees, however, often found navigating Korean linguistic and social rules to be a frustrating process. The lack of visible difference often led to a stronger backlash at cultural conflicts or misunderstandings.

Intercultural Interactions and Social Scripts

During the summer of 2015 I returned to the neighborhood of Hongdae, and I was able to meet with groups of foreign musicians I learned about from a colleague at UC Berkeley, who used to play in the scene.[31] I noticed some interesting differences in the ways these foreigners understood and navigated the scene compared to the Korean musicians I had observed before. As I continued to explore these differences, I found that they gave vital information about cohesion and conflict in social interactions between Koreans and foreigners. Much of the research about global encounters between local and foreign musicians focuses on the result of encounters rather than the encounters themselves.[32] The research that does focus on musical encounters is often about jazz, where improvisation leads to clear compositional collaboration in the moment. However, I argue that even in rock and popular music, performance is not simply recreating the song from the CD, or recreating the experience of the practice. There are certain participatory discrepancies in each performance, and as Charles Keil asserts, it is important to discuss these with musicians, asking where they think the "magic of participation is coming from."[33] Music-making, in both collaborative composition and performance, requires close interactions and

[28] Jonghee Won (punk musicians and owner of Club Skunk), in interview with author, July 16, 2017.
[29] Eleana Kim, "Our Adoptee, Our Alien: Transnational Adoptees as Specters of Foreignness and Family in South Korea," *Anthropological Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 506-507.
[30] Helene K. Lee, *Between Foreign and Family: Return Migration and Identity Construction Among Korean Americans and Korean Chinese* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018): 137.
[31] Thanks to Bridget Martin for helping me with that information.
[32] Bob W. White, "Introduction: Rethinking Globalization through Music," in *Music and Globalization: Critical Encounters,* ed. Bob W. White (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012): 8.
[33] Charles Keil, "Participatory Discrepancies and the Power of Music," *Cultural Anthropology* 2, no. 3 (Aug 1987): 279.

understandings between the music makers. It can also illuminate the ways that musicians from different groups understand each other in the process of intercultural interaction.

Intercultural interaction, as defined by Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin, "refers to the behavior (including, but not limited to, verbal and nonverbal communication) that occurs when members of different cultural groups engage in a joint activity."[34] Originally as I embarked upon my research, the main focus was on the joint activity of performance; much of my early fieldwork included recording and observing both performers and audiences of mixed cultural backgrounds at shows. However, as I continued to research I realized that the shows themselves were not the only joint activities people were participating in. The activities that led to the creation of a performance opportunities, such as networking and promotion, were also important points of joint activity that also led to intercultural interactions. Performance, promotion, and the socialization that leads to networking are all sites of intercultural interaction that are necessary to interrogate to get a full understanding of the social dynamics at play.

In my research I found it useful to discuss these sets of expected behaviors at the joint activity of music making in terms of a situational script. The concept of "social scripts" stems from Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* and his imagery of social interaction as theatre. In their book *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge,* Roger C. Schank and Robert P. Abelson define different types of social scripts. The book combines Schenk's background designing artificial intelligence with Abelson's research in social psychology. One type of script discussed in this book that is particularly useful in the case of intercultural interaction in music is situational scripts. These scripts require three things: "1) the situation is specified; 2) the several players have interlocking roles to follow, and 3) the players share an understanding of what is supposed to happen."[35] Thinking about behavior in terms of a script helps to understand what schema participants are working with. In the case of the Korean rock scene, a different understanding of the first requirement often led to conflicts in the third.

One may think of a music performance as a situation, but the specifics of how one is supposed to act in a classical music concert and a rock concert are very different. Even the expected behaviors at rock shows can differ based on factors like the venue and the genre. The way one would expect to act at a folk acoustic rock performance in a café is very different from how one would act in a large stadium. Musical situational scripts are highly complex; audiences, performers, bartenders, door managers, and others are all participants in the situational script of a rock show. One person can hold multiple roles in different moments at the same show, and therefore have intimate understandings and expectations of others' behavior in those interlocking roles within a larger situational script. This is why in this dissertation I often refer to "participants," which is a way to indicate that those involved may take on multiple roles over the course of the performance situation.

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[34] Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin, "Intercultural Interaction," in *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, ed. Carol A Chapelle (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, LTD, 2019): 1. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1446.pub2

[35] Roger C. Schank and Robert P. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977): ii, 61.

Situation script theory has been used by multiple scholars to help analyze intercultural social interaction in a situation such as this one that is complicated by the inclusion of migrants.

> The migration process requires continual and close reading of the new environment, as migrants constantly compare it to the familiar culture and society that they left behind. Through their available interpretive schemas, migrants attribute importance and meaning to their new "reality" and locate themselves against and within new cultural scripts and unfamiliar social hierarchies.[36]

One could argue that the intercultural interactions in the Korean rock scene constitute two migrations: first of the rock situational script that is taken to Korea, where it was adapted and understood within the local context, and then the migration of Western foreigners who had to locate themselves against a somewhat-but-not-fully familiar situational script of a Korean rock show. The disconnection between their familiar rock show script and the Korean rock show script creates conflict, which participants often attempt to remedy.

The third requirement of situational scripts (that the players share an understanding of what is supposed to happen) would seem to remove the viability for comparison in situations where players do not share an understanding of what is supposed to happen. However, this actually proves helpful for analysis of obstacles to the success of a script, a concept that is part of situational script theory. Each individual participant has a plan that informs their situational script. This plan is based on their previous experiences, cultural backgrounds, and other information they have gained about how one can achieve their goals within the specified situation. When both foreigners and Korean "players" participate in the situational script, actions in their scripts that do not properly interlock can lead to failure to achieve the goals of the script, unless one of the players does take a prescriptive action to resolve the obstacle. The prescriptive action is taken with the intent of shifting the situation to help achieve one's goal.[37] But if the participants who face an obstacle have conflicting goals they are trying to achieve by acting out their situational script, this can make it difficult for either to be successful.

It is important to have background on the situational structure of shows I experienced during my fieldwork, in order to understand the basic mechanics of how they operated. Shows could start anywhere from 7 pm -10 pm, and often lasted well into the night. The typical format for shows was 20-30 minute sets, with breaks between bands of indeterminate length. Sometimes these breaks were longer if a band needed more time to set up or if the venue was empty because people were still smoking and talking outside. Anywhere from four to six bands could play per show, although some had many more bands involved. While some shows were put together by venue owners, and therefore the participants often did not know each other, the majority of the shows I attended were put together by members of the bands that were playing. What I found most interesting is that performance line-ups were rarely categorized by genre, or created due to similar styles of performance.

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[36] Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport, "Homecoming, Immigration and the National Ethos: Russian-Jewish Homecomers Reading Zionism," *Anthropological Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2001): 1-14, quoted in Julia Lerner, Tamar Rapoport and Edna Lomsky-Feder, "The Ethnic Script in Action: The Regrounding of Russian Jewish Immigrants in Israel," *Ethos* 35, no. 2 (June 2007): 172.

[37] Schank and Abelson, *Scripts*, 53, 70.

In chapters three and four I will discuss the ways in which intercultural interactions within the performance space often stem from different understandings of the musical situational scripts associated with a particular style of music performance. If two people participating in a similar genre from different cultural backgrounds have the same "directions" in their situational script, one can surmise that the genre is a major factor of the situation that orders the script. Often, if the situational directions of two participants don't line up, they have to improvise in order to keep the performance successful. The success or failure of interaction with others is dependent on one's flexibility to change or adapt a script and take prescriptive actions to "correct" someone else's unexpected action.

Defining (Dis)Connection

Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, in their discussion of intercultural interaction, go on to complicate the static idea of "cultural groups," arguing that "We are all members of multiple different cultural groups (e.g., professional, organizational, religious), each of which can be said to have its own culture in terms of values, norms, and patterns of behavior."[38] The argument they make, originally from a 2009 book they wrote, is that an interaction becomes intercultural when "the cultural difference between the participants is significant enough for one of more of them to notice its impact."[39] In the context of my research, these noticeable differences were typically categorized through discussions of imagined communities.[40] Different imagined communities with understood affinities like genre, nation, and place with defined practices, stereotypes, and actions were often referred to as different types of scenes by my interviewees. As I stated earlier, underground rock in Korea is referred to as "a scene," especially when compared to other institutions like K-pop. But it includes within it a myriad of other sub-scenes, although my interviewees never used that term. They often saw themselves as part of a larger indie or underground rock scene, as well as a member of smaller identity-based scenes within that larger scene.

As I mentioned earlier, Straw states that scene is called upon to do many different tasks. In the situation of my fieldwork, it had two main tasks: to describe the overall cultural space that was antithetical to mainstream K-pop, and (when modified with an adjective) work as a shorthand for defining imagined communities within that scene that had connections to larger constructed concepts of nation, genre, and place. I consider it important to use the term this way in order to recognize the rhetoric used by the musicians I talked to during my fieldwork. Musicians I interviewed referred to things like the punk scene (a genre based category), the foreigner scene (a culture-based category), the Daegu and Busan scenes (space based category), as well as many others. There were also scenes that held multiple meanings. The HBC scene, for example, refers to three overlapping defining ideas: the place where the music making happens (the neighborhood of Haebangcheon), the fact that most musicians who play there are foreign musicians, and the common knowledge that most musicians who play there are amateurs or cover bands. So utilizing "HBC scene" in conversation could either refer to the space itself, the demographics of the performers, or their level of professionality, depending on the context of the

[38] Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, "Intercultural Interaction," 1.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

reference. Because of this, the term "scene" is used in my research to refer to these imagined communities that often have multiple layers of meaning tied to their label. These "scene" terms are often used to describe who is "inside" and "outside" of the speakers view of themselves: "They are part of the HBC scene but I play in Hongdae" or "They are part of the Korean scene, I don't perform that way."[41]

Genre Based Scenes

Chapter three discusses one of these imagined communities: the punk scene. Punk has decades of history in Korea; as I will discuss in chapter two, Punk was tied to the origins of the Hongdae scene in the 1990s. Punk functions less as a genre category of sound than as a complex subculture with ideological, visual, sonic, and performance aspects that have traveled the globe (relatively) intact. Punk is anti-authority, anti-mainstream, and centered on a "Do It Yourself" indie ethos.[42] There are certain situational scripts attached to participating in a punk show: performers are loud and energetic, audience members are always moving, often in specific ways, and the music works as a form of catharsis. Because foreign and Korean participants alike understand both the larger subcultural markers and the situational scripts of performance associated with punk, the experience in a performance with multi-national participants is generally cohesive.

There are a few caveats to this assertion which I will also discuss in chapter three. One is that not all punk musicians have the same understanding of the details of acting out an anti-authority ethos. Some foreign punks lean toward anarchism, being purposefully aggressive and creating conflict with Koreans. Other foreign punks, often ones who have been in the scene longer, are more focused on understanding and respecting Korean norms of punk music, taking a more egalitarian approach. These longer-standing punks often work to push aggressive foreign punks out of the scene with the aim of protecting the relationship between Koreans and foreigners.

Another is that while punk functions as an imagined community with shared situational scripts, not every show is strictly a "punk" show. For a number of social and economic reasons, punk musicians will sometimes play on shows with groups of very different rock subgenres, with differing expectations of performance behavior. Many other subgenres of rock performed in the scene do not have the same subcultural contexts that have travelled with the genre like punk. So a show that is understood by *all* participants to be a "punk" show will be cohesive, but mixed genre situations become a different story.

Performance Based Networks

These mixed genre performances led me to also analyze the scene with a different metric. While examining imagined communities can help show points of similarity between foreign and Korean participants along ideological terms, in this dissertation I will also look at more literal ways of understanding intercultural connections. As I mentioned, Punk shows were not always strictly "Punk." The majority of shows I went to during my fieldwork had a mix of many

[41] Paraphrased from a number of encounters and interviews.
[42] Kevin C. Dunn, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016): 11-12.

different genres playing together. There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important to note is that most shows are organized, not by venue owners, but by musicians who rent out the venue. Many of these musicians who organized shows cited friendship or other social connections as being a more important factor in programming shows than genre cohesion. These multi-genre shows built on social ties are what led me to define connections through network terminology.

When I am trying to discuss a specific group of musicians that regularly interacted with each other and socialized together, such as in chapters four and five, I utilize network theory terms, such a group or clusters. As L. Ripley Smith argues, "The social network perspective is uniquely suited to intercultural research because it focuses on what is between, or inter, cultures. It is truly a relational perspective, yet recognizes the importance of individuals, or nodes, in the system."[43] These terms help to emphasize the existing relationships, both social and performance-based, that exist between musicians. By documenting performance-based ties through my research, I was able to assess the effect those ties had on intercultural interactions. Because social ties often create performance networks, performance clusters typically include multiple genres of music, each with different types of situational scripts.

Using network theory also helped to define network clusters in the scene of musicians who often played together, and to determine central nodes who did much of the labor around organizing shows. A network cluster is a set of individuals, or nodes, that are grouped based on a criterion of similarity. These clusters can vary in size, which is the number of nodes (people), and in density, which is the degree of connectedness.[44] Musicians with a large amount of relational and networking capital often functioned as central nodes that connect otherwise disparate clusters and cliques. A central node is a person who resides at the crossroads of information flow with a network. In my work, central nodes have a high degree of betweenness—in that they work as facilitators that connect two or more network clusters together.[45] Shows that are curated by these musicians often include musicians from different performance network clusters that may not normally interact. In a multi-national context, these central nodes often worked to connect performance clusters that were majority Korean with ones that were majority foreign.

Chapter four describes the network cluster centered on the band Visuals. The three musicians in this band operated as central nodes, often creating performances that mixed Korean and foreign participants. These three musicians, Ali, Ethan, and Jon, each played in multiple bands, some of which sounded similar to Visuals, but others that did not. Their multiple social ties with different performance clusters created enough interconnections to warrant analyzing them as the center of their own network cluster, hybridized both in genre and nationality.

This multi-genre, multi-national network cluster often had observable conflicts in the situational scripts of performance that affected all participants. There was some ambiguity in the

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[43] L. Ripley Smith, "Intercultural Network Theory: A Cross-Paradigmatic Approach to Acculturation," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23 (1999): 634.
[44] Charles Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, Findings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 46. For an example of network theory used in music scholarship, see: Benjamin Brinner, *Playing Across a Divide: Israeli-Palestinian Musical Encounters,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[45] Kadushin, *Social Networks*, 31-32.

way audiences should listen due to the compositional techniques of those bands at the center of this cluster (Visuals, Mountains, Tierpark and Space Boutique). Their complex yet repetitive music could be understood through close listening or as atmospheric music, depending on one's viewpoint. Although (or maybe because) there were many genres involved in this network cluster, the conflicts in situational scripts were understood to be cultural in nature. Koreans understood the situation one way—as a professional, almost classical music style performance; foreigners understood these shows as more of a party, where not all attention needed to be on the performers.

Within this performance cluster, because these conflicts in situational scripts were understood to be cultural, discussions of Korean and foreign behaviors were often categorized as different "scenes." Within this network cluster, musicians who were more closely associated with the "Korean scene" acted a certain way, and ones associated with the "Foreigner scene" acted another way. So even within my multi-genre network analysis, these ideas of imagined communities, this time around nationality, play a role in how musicians categorized the behaviors of both themselves and the Others. Throughout the interviews I conducted, most musicians had surprisingly similar viewpoints on how a typical Korean participant and a typical foreign participant would act, regardless of the interviewee's positionality.

There was also typically a view towards one being the positive course of action, and the other being negative. But it was not always predictable from the demographics of the speaker as to which group was described as the "better behaved" one. For example, some Korean musicians would bash other Korean musicians for being too stiff, or too rehearsed. They would praise foreign musicians, and say that they themselves identified as "more foreign" in performance style. More commonly, foreign musicians would deride other foreign musicians for not learning Korean, not respecting Korean performance culture, or not interacting with Koreans. They would argue, to some extent, they behaved more like Koreans. While some musicians expressed affinity for the imagined community of the Other, none fully identified themselves as belonging entirely to the other community, knowing that this was impossible due to Korea's mono-ethnic concept of national identity.

The point of this research is not to create a definitive list of differences between Korean and foreign musicians in terms of space, media, performance and socialization. What I have focused on is reflecting the ways the musicians I talked to and interacted with, both Korean and foreign, described their understandings of their own practices and those that they classified as "Others." Combining their interviews with my experience in the field, I have worked to understand what actions and behaviors led to the creation of those assumptions of difference, and how they reflect the values of those who are speaking.

Attempts to Create Connection: The After-Party and Foreigner-Run Initiatives

Chapter five compares the genre based and network based analytics by focusing on another situation that was necessary to facilitate the creation of shows: the after-party. When shows were finished, the participants (both audience members and musicians, although again these are overlapping roles) would hang out together and socialize, getting to know one another. This was another situation where the script was split along cultural lines, at least for the multi-genre network cluster. Koreans preferred to go to a restaurant after shows, eating and drinking

together, while foreigners preferred to either stay at the venue and drink, or go to another bar where mingling and drinking was the main focus. These different understandings of expected behavior once again led to conflicts, and at some points hindered the ability to create the relationships necessary to put shows together. I will then contrast this by returning to the punk community, and address the ways that intercultural interaction at the after-party was discussed by punks, and the way that they often felt a connection based on genre ideology that made it easier to overcoming differences.

This dissertation concludes with a chapter that shifts the focus from interpersonal interaction to the creation of systems to support intercultural interaction. I will discuss two groups run by musicians that operated as central nodes. The first, DoIndie, worked to connect Korean musicians with global circuits of festival performance by creating English language media; a project that also made it easier for local foreign fans and musicians to learn about the venues and bands that were popular in the scene, and even to promote their own music. The second, Loose Union, was a musician's collective that worked to leverage the combined resources of both foreign and Korean musicians to help foreign musicians gain better access to Korean performance opportunities, and worked to create a more cosmopolitan scene. These groups had differing goals, and are emblematic of the different views on how foreigners could best contribute to the Korean scene.

Methodology and Limitations

The bulk of my research was based on participant observation, interacting with both Korean and foreign musicians in the underground rock scene. The emphasis of my participant observation was social interactions in practice and performance. I watched practice sessions and performances, and hung out after shows. This allowed me to see how the performers and audiences interacted with each other, and to observe inter-performer and inter-audience interactions. I attended at least 2-3 shows a week, recording them with both sound and video equipment. I typically attempted to position myself in such a way that I could record the performers and the audiences, to get a better understanding of all participants' behavior. My goal was to examine not only the mechanics of collaborative composition but also the ways in which that collaboration helped build relationships and friendships between people of different backgrounds, including how partners deal with tensions or misunderstandings that arise during this process. I also observed the levels of non-practice/performance interactions and of interpersonal communication.

Once I had spent some time embedded in the music scene, and getting to know musicians in a variety of social circles and musical practices, I started to do more formal interviews with participants, focused on a few different categories of questions. First, I asked them to detail their musical history, what their background was, and how they ended up being part of the underground scene in Korea. The order of the subsequent categories varied depending on when a set of questions became relevant in the person's life story. Typically early on I asked basic clarifying questions about the mechanics of forming a band, starting to perform, and techniques for promotion. Next I would often ask about locations; what venues they liked to play at, what neighborhoods they thought were best, and their opinions on other locations and venues. Another set of questions I would ask had to do with communication when writing and recording music, especially in multi-lingual or multi-cultural bands. This often led to discussions of differences

between Korean and foreign musicians and audiences. The final set of questions all centered around categorization; what genre(s) they would label their band(s) as belonging to, what they felt the nationality of their band was, and how they arrived at those labels.

In addition to participant observation and interviews, I analyzed the promotional materials used by bands. Posters, flyers, online Facebook events, and promotional websites were all valuable sources of information. The iconography used by bands helped me to understand larger genre or art worlds to which the musicians were connecting themselves. Because of the many subgenres that the scene now encompasses, these iconographic connections were an important way that different bands are showing their relation to different subgenres, ideologies, and international circuits of performance. I also looked at online newspaper articles about underground rock in Korea, and the way that the music is positioned. It was important not to only look at mainstream media, but also underground magazines and websites, and expand this search to include both Korean and foreign sources. These media sources were useful in helping to document the histories of foreign interactions in different underground rock spaces and scenes that were discussed by my informants in interviews.

There are a few limitations to the conclusions this dissertation draws. When I came back to Korea after preliminary fieldwork trips in the summers of 2014 and 2015, so much had already changed. People that I met had left; venues I made contacts with had closed down, and streets in Hongdae looked completely different. I joked that trying to write a dissertation about a living, shifting scene was like trying to write a book in the sand. As such, this dissertation will mainly focus on my Fulbright funded fieldwork period from August 2016 to August 2017. Some information and insights from preliminary fieldwork research may also be included, but will be properly dated. All of the quotes for interviews used in this dissertation are from 2016-2017, with little to no consultation after this time. The viewpoints and opinions expressed may have changed since they were originally discussed with me. The majority of what is written here is a snapshot in time; attempting to understand and decode the social interactions that I experienced in the contexts that I experienced them.

Along the line of viewpoint, I also recognize that my positionality as a white woman likely had influence on how I experienced the scene. The way that my questions were answered, especially around race and gender, were influenced by my intersecting identities. I was also married while in the field, and although my spouse was not present, I feel my "off limits" nature made it easier for me to be seen as "one of the guys,"[46] giving me benefits of social protection from harassment. Also, like other foreign female musicians and participants, the quick ties I was able to create may have helped insulate me from some of the more unpleasant aspects of navigating the scene as a woman.[47] Finally, my position as a scholarly researcher from UC Berkeley opened many doors for me, as well as my status as a Fulbright Junior Researcher. One's university and government affiliations mean a lot in Korea, and made making some connections easier than it would be for others.

[46] Similar to what Catherine M. Appert describes as being an "honorary male" in a male dominated hip hop scene in "Engendering Musical Ethnography," *Ethnomusicology* 61, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 451.

[47] This is something that other foreign female musicians and participants discussed; feeling 'looked out for' by some foreign male musicians who not only supported their work, but came to their defense if they were being harassed. Female Korean musicians did not describe the same kind of support from foreign or Korean men.

Significance

This research regards Korea, not simply as a monocultural nation-state, but as a place of pathways through which people affect each other beyond national and ethnic borders. Due to the increase in foreign workers in Korea, understanding how these interactions in the underground rock scene take place and the privileges and prejudices held by both sides is important in order to give a fuller picture of multicultural action in South Korea. Conceiving of not only permanently settled multicultural families but also temporary workers as having a cultural impact in South Korea expands the understanding of multiculturalism in the Korean context. This study also contributes to Korean diasporic studies as it will work to give attention to members of the Korean diaspora who return to Korea, a group that is currently underrepresented in scholarship.

This research will contribute to the study of global and contemporary popular music in South Korea. My focus on the rock scene as articulated by bands that include both Koreans and foreigners helps to better understand multicultural interactions and creation of creative arts in South Korea. The focus on urban spaces and neighborhoods contributes to understandings of the connections between urban development and design and artistic/musical practices. This work on the underground rock scene in South Korea will make visible a scene that is constantly shifting in terms of the people involved and subgenres performed. My project contributes to a relatively small body of literature on foreigner/local relations in popular music studies and ethnomusicology. Thinking about this scene as a place of opportunity for intercultural interaction gives a different view of rock in Korea than has been previously explored.

CHAPTER 2 PLACES FOR ROCK MUSIC IN SEOUL

In my research, place proved to be an important part of how musicians understood themselves and each other. Both the places where musicians choose to perform and the places that they criticize create assumptions and expectations that work as shorthand to help define a musician and their ideology. For both foreign and Korean musicians, live performance is still a major factor in regard to two processes: how bands get heard and seen, and how connections are made for future shows. Also, how big of a crowd they can draw--which seems at times to matter to them more than the music they produce. Their understandings of place are intimately entangled with their live performance, no matter what musical style they practice.

In this chapter the term "place" is often specifically tied to ideas of nation. Within Seoul there are locations that are viewed as holding a closer association with the foreign rather than the Korean. This is especially true for particular neighborhoods in the urban area of Seoul, for particular performance venues in those neighborhoods, for music festivals both local and global, and even for communities on the internet. Associations of rock music in that variety of places are both historical and ever-changing, strongly linked with stylistic sub-genre or not, and distinguished as foreign, Korean or both.

Yi Fu Tuan, when describing the creation of "place," argues that visible markers, combined with both lived experience and an effort of the mind, is what turns a neighborhood into a place. The combination of an individual's personal experience ("What is or what constitutes *my* neighborhood?"), the idea of community ("What is *our* neighborhood?") can then lead to a larger sense of the neighborhood in relation to others ("What is *the* neighborhood…as different from adjoining areas[?]").[48] He goes on to argue that the reputation a neighborhood has may depend far more on the viewpoint of outside groups than locals. The perceptions and experiences of those outside the neighborhood begin to color the way that locals also see themselves and their relationship to others.[49]

A great deal of commentary in my ethnographic research centered on associations with places that are historically and/or presently understood to be "Korean neighborhoods" or "foreign neighborhoods." The "foreign" places in Seoul, often near military bases and therefore associated with the United States military, created pockets of what Kim Eun-Shil refers to as a deterritorialized and "alien space."[50] The interactions between Koreans and foreigners within alien spaces differ from ones in Korean spaces. Over time those interactions created the perceptions of what it means to be a Korean or foreign musician who performs in and associates with foreign spaces, versus a Korean or foreign musician who performs in and associates with Korean spaces. These associations have layered meanings, conjuring different stereotypes about performers and assumptions about musical style, skill, and ideology that are steeped in historical and current understandings of place.

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[48] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 170-171.
[49] Tuan, *Space and Place*, 172.
[50] Eun-Shil Kim, "Itaewon as an Alien Space within the Nation-State and a Place in the Globalization Era," *Korea Journal* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 35.

Places in Seoul, both physical and imaginary, are constantly shifting. They can drastically change over time based on the enactment of urban development policies. The 1960s post-Korean War reconstruction era led to rapid urbanization, forcing major changes in Seoul. Large amounts of rural to urban migration caused the city to be covered quickly in squatter housing. The government sponsored slum cleanups to replace makeshift homes with high rise apartments, often redesigning entire neighborhoods in the process.[51] Until the 2000s, Seoul's urban development policies were typically based on forceful displacement of residents to make way for redevelopment, rather than a focus on inclusive regeneration of places.[52]

More recently, the focus of urban planning shifted from necessary functional rebuilding to renewal and aesthetic development. This has not slowed the rate of change, however. Seoul is a constantly changing city, and a neighborhood can be almost unrecognizable from one year to the next.[53] I witnessed this myself: Between my summer fieldwork trip in 2014 and the start of my fieldwork year in 2016, major sections of neighborhoods I frequented had changed so much that they almost felt like different places. I expect that much has changed again since my fieldwork year ended in 2017.

In this chapter, I aim to think not only about the larger forces and histories at work within the different neighborhoods that foreign and Korean musicians inhabit, but also about the individuals who are situated at the center of these changes, and the actions they take to attempt to create places for music in such a constantly changing environment. In his 2007 book *Music and Urban Geography,* Adam Krims looks at connections between changes in world cities over the last few decades and changes in music cultures. He describes the aspects of place identity as "a mixture of natural geographic features, historical structure (itself largely formed from earlier economic/cultural configurations), and economic and cultural dispositions of the present."[54] Sara Cohen critiqued Krims for his focus on larger historical structures and forces, often ignoring the agency of both historic and current individuals in the formation of place identity. She argues that musicians interact with the material environment to create and recreate musical landscapes, and that "these musical landscapes are diverse and contested, multilayered and intersecting."[55] Keeping both the importance of historical context and personal experience in mind, I use a combination of historical sources, media and interviews with Korean and foreign musicians who were historically (and are currently) involved in these neighborhoods to give a multifaceted history of rock neighborhoods in Seoul and illuminate how musicians and venues in these neighborhoods came to be closely associated.

The chapter begins with a focus on foreign spaces of rock performance in Seoul, starting with the history of the relationship between rock music and place in Seoul from the 1950s-1980s. First Itaewon, and later Haebangchon, were locations that catered to the leisure activities of

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[51] Jini Kim Watson, *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 101.
[52] Blaz Kriznik, "Transformation of Deprived Urban Areas and Social Sustainability: A Comparative Study of Urban Regeneration and Urban Redevelopment in Barcelona and Seoul," *Urban Izziv* 29, no 1 (June 2018): 87.
[53] Tom Downey, "Welcome to Seoul, the City of the Future (page 2)," *Smithsonian Magazine,* November 2012, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/welcome-to-seoul-the-city-of-the-future-83736950/?page=2
[54] Adam Krims, *Music and Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 29.
[55] Sarah Cohen, "Bubbles, Tracks, Borders and Lines: Mapping Music and Urban Landscape," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 137, no. 1 (2012): 169.

foreign residents, and where many non-Koreans found a sense of home. I then shift focus to neighborhoods that were more associated with Korean-led histories of rock music. I start with a brief discussion of early scenes of rock performance, and then shift to Hongdae, where the Korean "scene" as it is understood today is said to have emerged in the 1990s. I discuss issues of gentrification and spatial change in Hongdae in the late 2000s that have led some musicians to move to other neighborhoods, such as Mullae and Mangwon. Most musicians have found it difficult to shift the perception within and outside of the scene that Hongdae is the only place for rock performance in Seoul.

Rock in an Alien Space: Itaewon

While rock music has been performed and heard in many different places in Korea, its origins are closely associated with the American military. Rock and roll was first heard in Korea during the American occupation in the late 1940s and the Korean War in the 1950s, through the American Armed Forces Korean Network (AFKN) radio broadcasts. Early Korean rock musicians learned to play by listening to the radio. It is a generalizing truism to say that such a medium transcends space and place, but a particular place played an important role in early dissemination of rock: many musicians also learned through records they were able to hear in jukeboxes or music cafes, which were usually near the American military bases. The first opportunities for performance were at military clubs for American military personnel at and around military bases during the 1950s and 1960s. Korean musicians playing not just rock, but also pop and R&B, often found jobs playing at military clubs for American GIs during the 1950s and 1960s. [56] Alongside pop girl groups like the Kim Sisters, rock bands played a genre called Group Sounds, modeled after British bands like The Beatles and The Monkeys. While most Group Sounds bands were more focused on performing than recording, and played many covers, Shin Jung-hyeon's Add Four released what is considered to be the first Korean rock album in 1964, with original songs like "빗속의 여인 (Lady in the Rain)."[57]

[56] Roald Maliangkay, "Supporting Our Boys: American Military Entertainment and Korean Pop Music in the 1950s and Early-1960s," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, ed. Keith Howard (Kent: Global Oriental, 2006), 23, 27.
[57] Min-Jung Son, "An Odyssey for Korean Rock: From Subversive to Patriotic," *Asian Music* 43, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2012): 50.

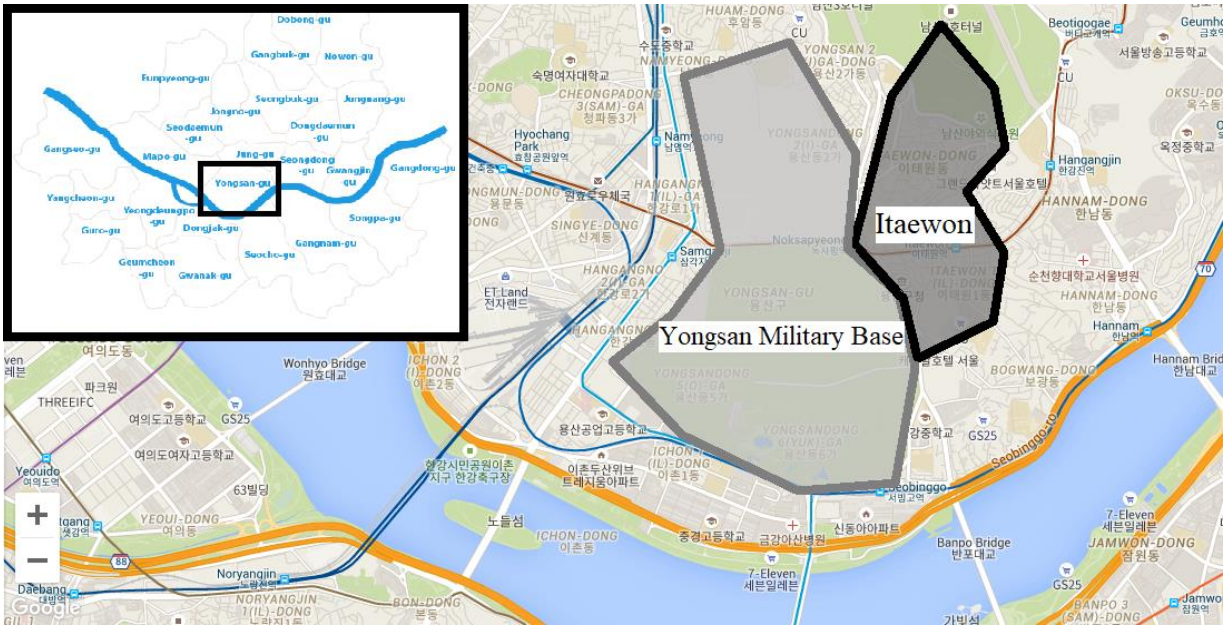

Figure 2.1 Yongsan military base and Itaewon[58]

One of the larger American military entertainment zones was Itaewon, a neighborhood near the Yongsan military base in Seoul, [shown above in Figure 2.1]. Originally a strategic base for the Japanese military during the colonial period, Yongsan was taken over by the US military in 1945.[59] Apartments built for American military in the 1960s led to the creation of a deterritorialized and "alien space" around the base that catered to foreigners. At that time the military camptown in Itaewon was called the "Las Vegas of Seoul," a place of hedonistic entertainment for American military.[60] Many influential rock musicians, including the previously mentioned Shin Jung-hyeon, starting playing in this "alien space" within Seoul.[61]

As early as the 1970s, Itaewon was seen as such a foreign place within Seoul that it almost served as a tourist destination for Koreans. During that time period the entertainment place in the neighborhood was divided in three sections: One was filled with bars catering specifically to American soldiers (which excluded Koreans), another section was constituted by prostitution clubs for American soldiers, and the third section had nightclubs for Koreans who wanted a taste of American culture. Music was often a central part of discussions by Koreans interviewed by Kim Eun-Shil who frequented Itaewon in the 1970s and 1980s; according to them, the neighborhood was synonymous with both rock and country music. Many of the Korean

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[58] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul-서울아카이브," *Seoul Solution*, accessed May 17, 2020, https://www.seoulsolution.kr/en/content/statistic-seoul; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean," accessed May 17, 2020, https://snazzymaps.com/style/124771/google-maps-clean with additions by author.
[59] Kim Gamel, "US Military Leaves Rich History, Environmental Concerns as Yongsan Move Gains Momentum," *Stars And Stripes*, Feb 26, 2018, https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/us-military-leaves-rich-history-environmental-concerns-as-yongsan-move-gains-momentum-1.514046
[60] Kim, "Itaewon," 35, 37-38.
[61] Jason Strother, "The US Military's Yongsan Garrison Leaves a Mixed Legacy in Seoul," *Public Radio International*, December 26, 2017, https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-12-26/us-militarys-yongsan-garrison-leaves-mixed-legacy-seoul

college students who frequented Itaewon in this time period saw their affinity for American culture as a marker of elite taste. It was not always easy for Koreans to spend time in Itaewon; according to Kim Eun-Shil, "In order to have a good time in Itaewon, [Koreans] had to speak some English, have some knowledge of music, and be confident enough to say 'This is our country. I have the right to go where I want.'"[62] The fact that Koreans needed to assert their right to inhabit a place within their own borders demonstrates how both Koreans and foreigners saw Itaewon as a non-Korean place.

The Korean government has had a complicated relationship with Itaewon and its associated cultural products. The government censorship of rock during the dictatorships of Park Chung Hee (1963-1979) and the Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1988) was often justified by its "foreign" nature. Rock was a target of censorship and suppression due to rock's valorization of a lifestyle of sex and drugs and its association with military camptown life. Under Park Chung Hee, the government took more and more control of the music industry.[63] Many popular songs with Japanese influence were banned for their "foreign color" (외색-*waesaek*), but rock songs were often banned by the government for their "vulgar lyrics (*kasa chŏsok*), immature singing style (*ch'angbŏp misuk*), or aggravating mistrust and cynicism (*pulsin p'ungt'o chojang*)."[64] These official reasons reflect the government's view that rock music was both a socially and politically destabilizing force.

By the 1970s, Group Sounds bands had been associated with "hippie" culture, characterized by long hair, psychedelic sound, leftist politics, and purported drug use. In January of 1975, Park Chung-Hee declared an emergency order to protect a stable social structure by censoring popular music with subversive images and culture.[65] When this censorship did not stop rock musicians from writing songs against the government, on December 4, 1975, Shin Jung-hyeon and four other musicians were arrested in what newspapers of the time referred to as the Marijuana Scandal (대마초 파동 *daemacho padong*).[66] This led to the criminalization of marijuana, and the investigation and subsequent banning of many musicians from performing in Korea.[67]

Foreign Places and Community: Itaewon and Haebangchon (HBC)

By the late 1980s the Itaewon neighborhood had become a corrupt and crime-ridden neighborhood—one in which the city of Seoul would re-invest as a place to attract tourists during the 1988 Olympic Games. In the 1990s, the city government, along with the Itaewon's merchant association, agreed that the neighborhood should no longer be a cultural place catering

[62] Kim, "Itaewon," 45-46.
[63] John Lie, *K-Pop: Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 63.
[64] Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin, "The Birth of 'Rok': Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Globalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 22.
[65] Son, "Odyssey," 50-51.
[66] "The obviously trumped-up marijuana charge made a mockery of the rule of law, since there was no clear legal ground for the prosecution of marijuana use. The Law on Hemp Control was enacted nearly five months after the marijuana scandal had broken. Only then was marijuana possession made a felony, punishable by up to ten years in prison." (Kim and Shin "Birth of 'Rok,'" 222).
[67] Kim and Shin, "Birth of 'Rok,'" 221-222.

only to the US military. Rather, it should be a multicultural area for all foreigners, as well as a free tourist zone and a shopping center. Businesses in Itaewon started catering to other foreign residents and tourists.[68] The expansion of Itaewon from a military camptown to a multicultural place created room for other marginalized groups in Korea to find a home. Many newly arrived Muslim migrant workers in the late 1980s and early 1990s frequented the Central Masjid of Seoul in Itaewon, and *halal* restaurants catering to these immigrants opened in the neighborhood.[69] Itaewon was not just for racially or nationally marginalized groups, however; the first well-known gay bar in Korea opened there in 1995, and the majority of gay bars and drag clubs in Seoul are still in Itaewon today. Koreans who started and frequented these bars saw foreigners as more accepting of gay culture.[70] This shift in branding from "alien space" for the military to a "unique foreign place" allowed for behavior that was outside the norms of Korean culture.

While Itaewon still has a reputation for illicit behavior, some of that association has been curtailed by the institution of a curfew for military personnel since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001.[71] Deemed as a "readiness call," or a way to make sure that members of the military are able to properly discharge their duties to defend the peninsula if necessary, this curfew meant that troops were required to be on base, in their residences, or hotel rooms from 1-5 a.m. While there was an attempt to relax the curfew in 2010, public outcry over alleged crimes by military personal in Itaewon led to its reinstatement.[72] This curfew had a huge effect on recreation businesses in Itaewon that catered to foreigners in the 2000s, with many closing down or shifting to cater to other clientele.[73]

Although the new patrons of these recreational businesses were not always that different demographically from the American military personnel, a new population of foreigners had been steadily increasing since the 1990s: Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs). The popularity of "globalization" (세계화, *segyehwa*) during the Kim Yeong Sam regime (1993-1997) led to an overhaul of English language curricula, including the hiring of native speakers of English to conduct language learning classes fully in English. The reforms (often referred to as English Fever) also made English a mandatory subject from third grade onwards.[74] By 1995, "Reinforcing Language Education" and "Reinforcing Globalization Education" were a prominent part of the education reform goals.[75] NESTs were in high demand, and their numbers increased exponentially during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

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[68] Kim, "Itaewon," 47-48.
[69] Doyoung Song, "Spatial Process and Cultural Territory of Islamic Food Restaurants in Itaewon, Seoul," in *Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts*, ed. Lai Ah Eng et al (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusok Ishak Institute, 2013), 236-237.
[70] Kim, "Itaewon," 57.
[71] Kim, "Itaewon," 38.
[72] Kyle Rempfer, "US Forces Korea is Lifting Its Curfew for 90 Days to Dee if Troops Can Behave," *Army Times*, June 17, 2019, https://www.armytimes.com/newsletters/daily-news-roundup/2019/06/17/us-forces-korea-is-lifting-its-curfew-for-90-days-to-see-if-troops-can-behave/.
[73] Kim, "Itaewon," 62.
[74] Hyera Byean, "English, Tracking, and Neoliberalization of Education in South Korea," *TESOL Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (December 2015): 871-872.
[75] EPIK: English Program in Korea, "Timeline," accessed Jan 27, 2020, http://www.epik.go.kr/contents.do?contentsNo=84&menuNo=334.

Many of the musicians I worked with in the late 2010s originally came to Korea as English teachers--some arriving as early as 2001. Most talk about Itaewon as a common destination for entertainment and everything from more authentic Western food to items like deodorant and Western style toothpaste, which was hard, if not impossible, to find in those days. Many spent time at bars and clubs in Itaewon proper, but when talking about performing most I spoke to were really referring to Haebangchon (often known as HBC) not the central area of Itaewon. Itaewon proper is typically referring to the area around the Itaewon subway station on line 6, and businesses that are on or around Itaewon-ro (Itaewon street), which starts at the Yongsan military base and continues directly East.

Haebangchon is an old shanty town on a hill directly north of the base that housed North Korean refugees after the Korean War. This is how it came to be called Haebangchon, which translates to "Liberation Village."[76] Haebangchon is actually closer to the military base and a subway station called Noksapyeong. To get to Haebangchon road, you walked North from this station around 500 meters, which took you directly past the Yongsan military base, blocked from view by a large brick wall. Unlike Itaewon road, which is flat, expansive, and lit with neon signs, Haebangchon is windy, hilly, and at the time of my fieldwork, filled with smaller boutique-type stores, cafes, bars, and restaurants. As many stated, it was the cleaner, more "gentrified" foreigner area in Seoul [Figure 2.2].

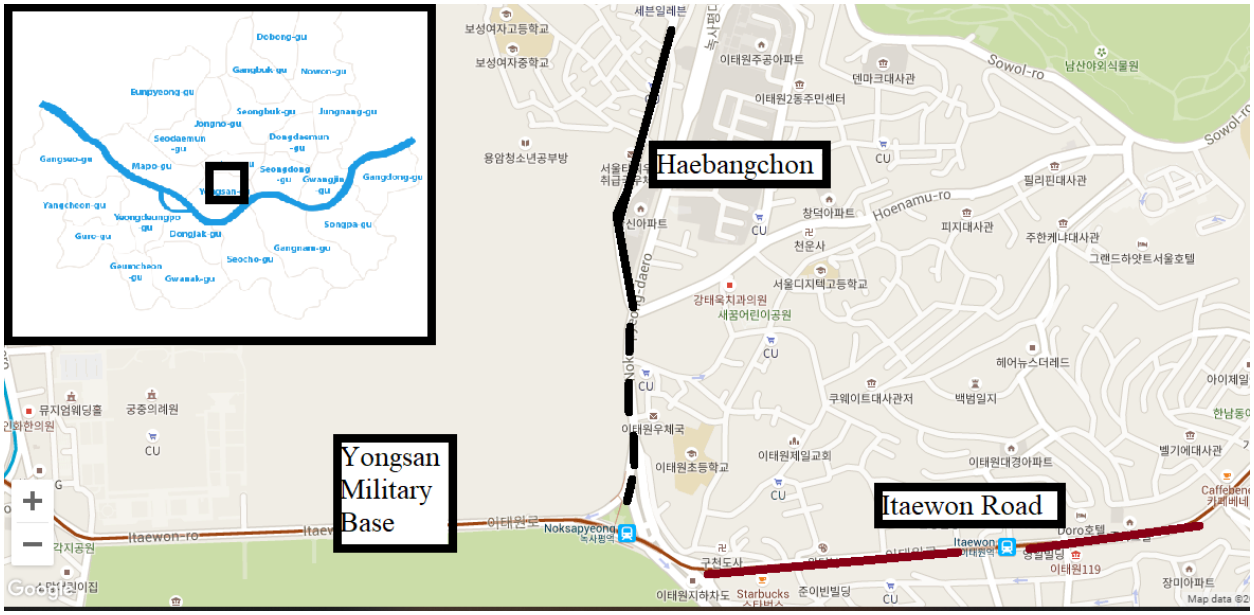

Figure 2.2 Haebangchon and Itaewon Road[77]

[76] Pil Ho Kim, "In Liberation Village: The Production of Cinematic Space for Early North Korean Refugees," *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema* 11, no. 2 (2019): 137-138.
[77] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul."; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean" with additions by author.

The Origins of HBCfest

But it wasn't always a gentrified neighborhood. Lance Reegan-Diehl, a Canadian studio musician who moved to Haebangchon in 2001, said that in the early days there was only one bar, Phillies, and a few other stores, but it was mostly a residential area. It was, and still is, a highly multicultural residential area, as many foreigners find it easier to get an apartment in Haebangchon than other places in Seoul. The most recent data I could find, from 2013, stated that 8.5% of the residents of Haebangchon were not Korean citizens.[78] While located away from central Itaewon, the neighborhood still seemed to have some issues with military partying and with shady business practices in the early 2000s.

Lance became a major figure in Haebangchon in the mid-2000s, when he and James Gaynor started HBCfest, a local multi-site festival using bars, restaurants, and other places along Haebangchon road.[79] Lance was trained as a studio engineer, and worked as a session musician; this was his job in Korea as well. Around 2005, a few more bars had opened up on Haebangchon street. Lance and James had been running open mics in Itaewon, and approached the bars with the idea of having a music party night. Lance was just starting work on his studio, Deeleebob Records, and had equipment the bars could rent to mount the performances. The first HBCfest took place in July 2006, and according to Lance, twenty-nine acts performed. The first festival was problematic. None of the venues had permits, although technically this was not necessary as the shows were inside private venues and none of the performers were getting paid.[80] Police stopped by around 8 pm, and as is common in Korea, everyone stopped playing when they arrived, and then immediately resumed when they left.[81] Despite these issues, the festival was deemed a success by Lance.

After experimenting with different dates and numbers of festivals per year, HBCfest has now become a biannual Spring/Fall festival. The festival included over 100 bands when I attended it in 2016, spanned 15 venues, and lasted for two days. While there were some bands that played regularly, wrote their own music, and were well known by Koreans, foreigners, or both, most of the performers were amateurs or cover bands. A few venues were strictly acoustic, while others had room for a full band setup.

Because there are no sidewalks up Haebangchon road, barricades had to be put up to create walkways so that pedestrians did not wander on the street and block traffic. While the festival is overall lucrative for the businesses, including Lance's equipment rental business, the festival is disruptive to the neighborhood and makes it impossible to get around. The HBCfest webpage recognizes this disruption, and has a few points about dealing with these issues on their

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[78] So-Yoon Shin, "해방촌, 또 하나의 코즈모폴리스," *한겨레21 (Hankyoreh 21)*, July 18, 2013, http://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/34992.html

[79] John Redmond, "Expat Music Fest to Feature 115 Acts," *The Korea Times*, April 28, 2015, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/05/177_177934.html

[80] Lance also had a business license to legally rent the equipment- Lance Reegan-Diehl (Organizer of HBCfest and owner of Deeleebob Studios), in interview with author, February 8, 2017.

[81] I've been told that police are required to respond to noise complaints, but don't actually care to do anything, so they keep coming back only because residents keep calling them.

"About" page for the festival, which serves as a letter to participating businesses (in both English and Korean):

> We understand that in Hae Bang Chon [sic] it can be a bit noisy and crowded on this day. We ask that you let your neighbors know about the upcoming festival…We know by our efforts you are also profiting from this small music festival which takes place inside our bars. This makes you just as responsible to speak to neighbors and to also help keep people inside your business balcony, or place of business. Try to suggest people walk behind the yellow line on the street and do not block traffic…We hope that if you wish to keep these two great days of business going for yourself, you will also help us keep the festival going by talking to neighbors and helping to keep the streets clear. This is not a street festival. All music is inside our places of business.[82]

The disruptive nature of the event, coupled with the amateur nature of the performers, help to shape understandings of Haebangchon as a neighborhood for foreigners and foreign entertainment. It also paints a picture of foreign musicians as unprofessional and amateur. While there have been some Korean bands playing at HBCfest, many purposefully avoid it.

For many foreign musicians, being associated with HBC often carried with it the connotations of being less connected with Korean culture and musicians. HBC was seen by those who disliked it as a cultural enclave, where foreigners did not have to learn about Korean culture or deal with the discomfort of being "Other." In HBC, most bars and restaurants feel like they could be in any English-speaking country, but most often the United States; I often joked with friends that HBC felt like what the American section of the World Showcase in Disney's Epcot Theme Park would be like. While some appreciated the comfort and reprieve that this neighborhood afforded, others worked to perform in places that were more supposedly Korean, and to connect with Korean musicians. Musicians who wanted to be taken seriously did not want to be associated with the unprofessional stereotypes that followed "HBC musicians."

Korean Places of Rock Music: Myeongdong and Hongdae

Itaewon was not the only historical neighborhood of rock performance, however. As demand for performers in the military clubs waned in the 1960s, rock spread to more Korean-associated places away from the military base. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, rock musicians also cultivated an underground club culture in Myeongdong, playing Sunday shows at small Music Cafés and, later, performing daily live shows at larger Music Salons.[83] Myeongdong is located North of Itaewon, but the neighborhoods are separated by Namsan, a large mountain, requiring anyone trying to get from one neighborhood to another to go around rather than over.

The music performed in these cafes was softer and intimate, and more closely related to American folk rock in both sound and in politics. In the 1970s and 1980s, this new genre, often called *pokeu* (포크 or folk, not to be confused with *minyo* 민요, the word for traditional Korean

[82] Lance Reegan-Diehl, "Hae Bang Chon Festival since 2006-About," *Deeleebob.com*, accessed Jan 17, 2020, http://www.deeleebob.com/KMW_HBC/HBCAbout.htm
[83] Kim and Shin, "Birth of 'Rok,'" 213.

folk song)[84] moved to Korean college campuses. A subset of these songs, called protest folk, were used to protest the dictatorships of Park Chung Hee and Chun Do Hwan, using Korean versions of American-style folk protest songs, as well as new compositions. Due to its political nature, *pokeu* was also a target of government control. While many of these songs were technically banned, they were well known on college campuses and often performed.[85] Despite the censorship and crackdowns on rock places and culture, musicians continued to carve out a place for performance.

Punk's First Wave and Club Drug

The place most often associated with Korean rock performance today by both Koreans and foreigners is Hongdae, a neighborhood near Hongik Arts University (Hongik Daehakyo), and in the shadow of two larger institutions, Yonsei University and Ewha Women's University [Figure 2.3, below]. Hongdae was a residential area in the 1950s and 1960s. As Hongik University grew in the 1970s, more artists started to cluster their studios around the school. In the 1990s, there was a major shift in the way youth consumed and performed popular culture in the late 1980s/early 1990s. The end of almost twenty years of military dictatorship led to the rise of young people as a distinct social category that, for the first time, had the spending power and access to both the social and technical aspects of consuming and making popular music.[86] The café culture trend catering to the youth led to an influx of cafés for daytime entertainment, which was followed by a boom in club venues for nighttime entertainment.[87]

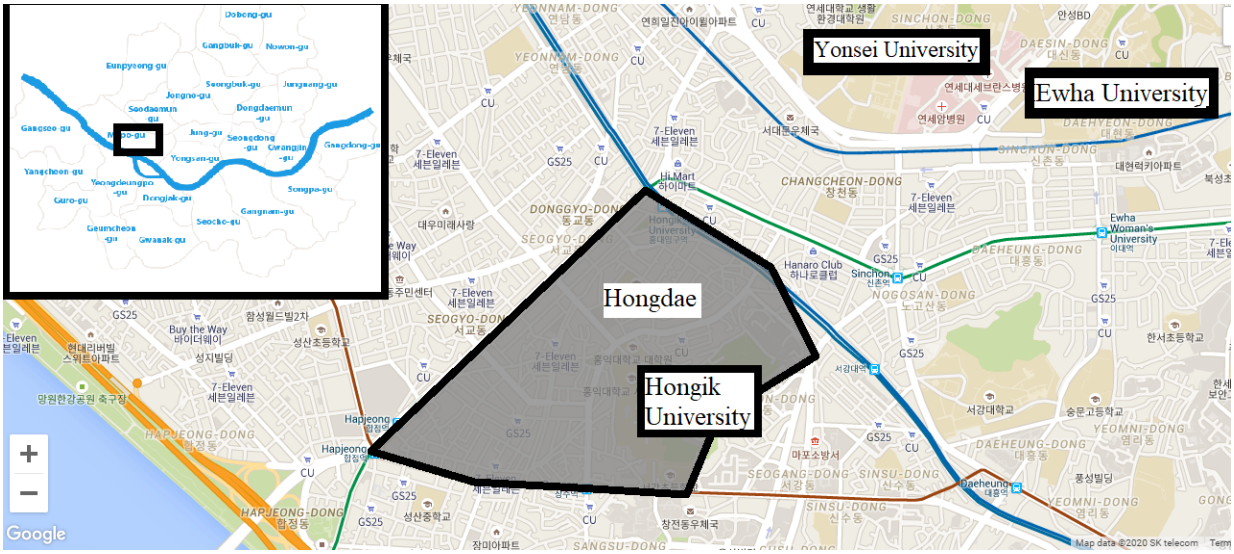

Figure 2.3 Hongdae in Relation to Yonsei, Ewha, and Hongik Universities[88]

[84] Aekyung Park, "Modern Folksong and People's Song (Minjung Kayo)," in *Made in Korea: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Hyunjoon Shin and Seung-Ah Lee (New York: Routledge, 2017), 84.
[85] Son, "Odyssey," 52.
[86] Lie, *K-pop*, 72-73.
[87] Mu-Yong Lee. "The Landscape of Club Culture and Identity Politics: Focusing on the Club Culture in the Hongdae Area of Seoul," *Korea Journal* 44, no. 3 (2004): 70.
[88] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul."; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean" with additions by author.

The 1990s rock scene in Korea is closely related to what Heather Kruse describes as "alternative clubs" that emerged as performing venues at or near universities—the proximity to which was one of the elements necessary for the rise of a thriving indie rock scene.[89] The Hongdae arts scene relied on a complex array of different artists including visual artists, musicians, filmmakers, publishers, and even internet developers who collaborated or otherwise worked side by side. By the 2000s, regular events like Free Market Day, where local artisans can sell their products around the local park, and Club Day, where one flat fee gets you into multiple clubs for the night, as well as other yearly arts and culture events, solidified Hongdae as an important arts district.

The music of Hongdae in the 1990s was mostly associated with the punk subgenre of rock, associated with a larger subculture of specific visual styles, clothing choices, and performance practices. This was similar to a larger trend of punk and hardcore scenes developing across Asia during this time period. The rise of grunge in the 1990s and the subsequent punk revival in North America played a pivotal role in the way the underground scene in Korea developed.[90] While Korean punk music certainly had influences from 1980s punks, 1990s American? Unclear pop punk groups like Green Day were often mentioned by musicians in interviews as the group that got them into punk music.[91] These connections, as well as a more in-depth discussion of punk in Korea, will occur in chapter three.

The origin narrative of the punk scene my informants gave was very similar to the one that Stephen Epstein details in his own research on punk during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This first wave of punk music was centered around a specific venue in Hongdae, Club Drug, which opened in 1994 [Figure 2.4]. The venue rose to prominence in 1995 with a Kurt Cobain tribute concert on the anniversary of his death. The punk community then grew through "Street Punk Shows" that were played around the neighborhood.[92]

[89] Holly Kruse, *Site and Sound: Understanding Independent Music Scenes* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2003), 20.
[90] Stephen Epstein, "Us and Them: Korean Indie Rock in a K-pop World," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, issue 48, no. 1 (November 30, 2015): 3.
[91] Trash Yang Moses (punk musician), in interview with author, May 5, 2017.
[92] Hyunjoon Shin, "The Success of Hopelessness: The Evolution of Korean Indie Music," *Perfect Beat* 12, no. 2 (2012): 153.

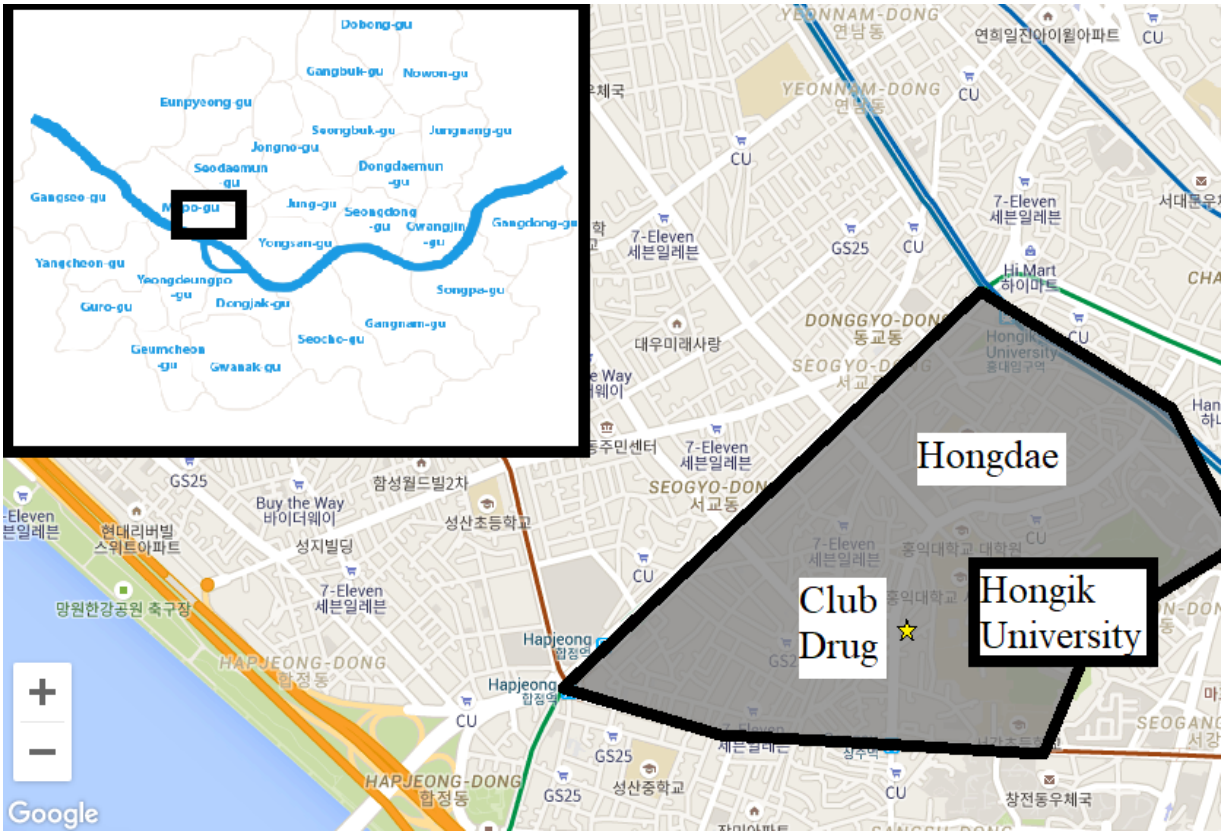

Figure 2.4 Location of Club Drug in Hongdae[93]

This punk influence was not only in musical style, but in culture as the performance, visual, and fashion aspects of punk were adopted along with the sounds. Posters for shows were plastered around Hongdae, as well as occasional graffiti, giving the neighborhood a visually punk aesthetic. Punks walked the streets of Hongdae dressed in leather or flannel, and Mohawks were not uncommon; all were markers of the punks' subculture.[94] The combination of the Club Drug venue, the street performances, and the posters helped to give Hongdae strong associations with punk music and culture.

It is necessary to emphasize that, while the original punk venue was called Club Drug, most punks were not using illegal drugs based on accounts from this time period. The owner of Club Drug, Yi Seok-mun, chose the name to "suggest the casting off of inhibitions and the free-spirited lifestyle that drugs represent"[95] rather than to imply that the patrons of the club used drugs. Club Drug also had a large number of high school age patrons, who used their drink ticket to buy one of the many varieties of canned soda available at Club Drug.[96] As Stephen Epstein stated on his experiences at the venue: "Only rarely on the fifty plus nights I attended Drug or

[93] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul."; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean" with additions by author.
[94] Trash Yang Moses, interview.
[95] Stephen Epstein, "Anarchy in the UK, Solidarity in the ROK: Punk Rock Comes to Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (July 2000): 4.
[96] Trash Yang Moses, interview.

other clubs did I see youth whom I suspected to be in an altered state, and in virtually all cases alcohol may have been the chosen substance."[97] This was not typically described as related to the straight edge punk subculture that eschews drugs and alcohol, but seemed to be more of a logistical decision. Although alcohol was not served in the venue, it was (and still is) cheap and easy to procure alcohol outside the venue to drink during or between the shows.

Club Drug was not only the home venue for many punks, but it also facilitated recording and distribution of music. Two of the earliest and most successful punk bands were Crying Nut and No Brain.[98] Those early punks tended to refer to their music as Joseon Punk—a term coined by the band No Brain, and that is how many current punk musicians still reference these 1990s punk bands as a generation. In 1999 the Club Drug label released a compilation CD called *Joseon Punk* of bands that played at the venue [Figure 2.5].[99]

Figure 2.5 조선펑크 (Joseon Punk) album cover

The term "Joseon Punk" was intended to evoke a sense of national identity. *Joseon* (조선) refers to an era prior to Japanese colonization, and therefore a time untainted by the cultural suppression and modernization to come. The cover of the "Joseon Punk" compilation also reflects the nationalist sentiment by featuring a guitar-wielding image of Admiral Yi-Sun-shin, a Korean military hero who thwarted Japanese invasions in the late 16th century [as seen in Figure 2.5, above]. Despite the band names on the cover being written in English, the phrase "Joseon Punk" is written vertically along the side in *Hangeul* (Korean script). Epstein argues that

[97] Epstein, "Anarchy," 4.
[98] Jon Dunbar (journalist and punk enthusiast), in interview with author, June 1, 2017.
[99] Stephen Epstein, "We Are the Punx in Korea," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, ed. Keith Howard (Kent: Global Oriental, 2006): 193-194.

this reflects the efforts to localize this foreign musical culture, as well as the fact that the target audience was entirely domestic.[100]

Punk's Second Wave and Club Skunk Hell

The first generation of punks started to lose momentum in the early 2000s when many, like the members of Crying Nut, went into their mandatory military service.[101] The owner of Club Drug was looking to close or move the venue. As luck would have it, the lead singer of the band RUX, Won Jonghee, wanted to move his small, living room size Club Skunk venue from Sinchon, a location closer to Yonsei, into Hongdae. [102] He took over the former Club Drug location, renaming it Skunk Hell II,[103] and opened in 2004.[104] Club Drug's owner later opened a venue few streets over, named DGBD.[105] Jon Dunbar, a Canadian journalist and active member of the scene, describes his experience of the change from Club Drug to Skunk Hell II as follows:

> The first thing I did when I arrived in Korea was seek out the punk scene. I found Drug on my second night and stumbled down the stairs in pitch darkness. Looking back now I'm surprised I didn't fall down and die. About a month after I arrived [in Korea], Drug closed and Jonghee bought out the space. I showed up on a weekday night looking for him, only to find him inside the new Skunk Hell with Jonghee and Urchin of Couch, armed with spray-paint. They were covering up the old graffiti on the walls with their own. At first I was shocked at this act of desecration—this place was a historical landmark of Korean punk—but then Jonghee said "It's time we make our own history." Of course our spray-paint was covered up numerous times, but because I was there on that night I always felt like it was my club too.[106]

This anecdote helps to illustrate the difference between the first and second waves of Korean punk. Rather than looking to history in order to localize punk music, the second wave punks were forging their own path to find a place for Korean punk in a global punk context. The second wave recognized the debt it owed to the first wave of musicians and venues, but at the same time wanted to pave their own way. Epstein illustrates this difference by comparing the

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[100] Epstein, "Us and Them," 9.

[101] The requirement for Korean men to serve in the military between 18 and 28 continues to be a disrupting force in the Korean punk scene. The enlistment includes up to two years of training and service, depending on where they serve. It is difficult, if not impossible, to continue to go to punk shows and practice with a band while doing military service. The dress codes also often meant punks had to shave their hair, an especially sad prospect if they had spent time growing out a Mohawk or other distinctive punk style. A musician leaving for military service often had farewell shows as if they were leaving the country, rather than just signing up for the military. Many bands that get together in their late teens or early twenties are faced with the dilemma of when to go into military service. Is it best to get it over with and get the band back together afterward? Or to wait until later and spend more time making music? Sometimes a whole band with go on hiatus to do military service together, while other bands will replace members as they leave. Some punks never come back to the scene after military service, which can hurt the scene's growth and sustainability.

[102] Jonghee Won (punk musicians and owner of Club Skunk), in interview with author, July 16, 2017.

[103] Although it was typically just referred to as Skunk Hell, or Club Skunk, unless differentiating it from the former location in Sinchon (Skunk I), or to its later move to Mullae (Skunk III).

[104] Jonghee Won, interview.

[105] According to multiple interviews and conversations, DGBD is short for Drug-Blue Devil, as it was also run by people who used to own a club called Blue Devil.

[106] Jon Twitch et al, "Memories of Skunk," *bROKe in Korea* 7 (September 2008): 12.

nationalist symbolism of the Joseon Punk compilation album with the 2003 compilation "We Are the Punx in Korea," where the entire title was written in English, and "We Are the Punx" much larger than the "in Korea" part of the title. The imagery of the cover—three punks with mohawks, leather jackets, and boots, standing in front of a brick wall with posters on it—works to connect Korean punks to a larger, international punk context [Figure 2.6].[107] While the actual location of the home base venue had not changed, the name and ownership change signaled a different focus.

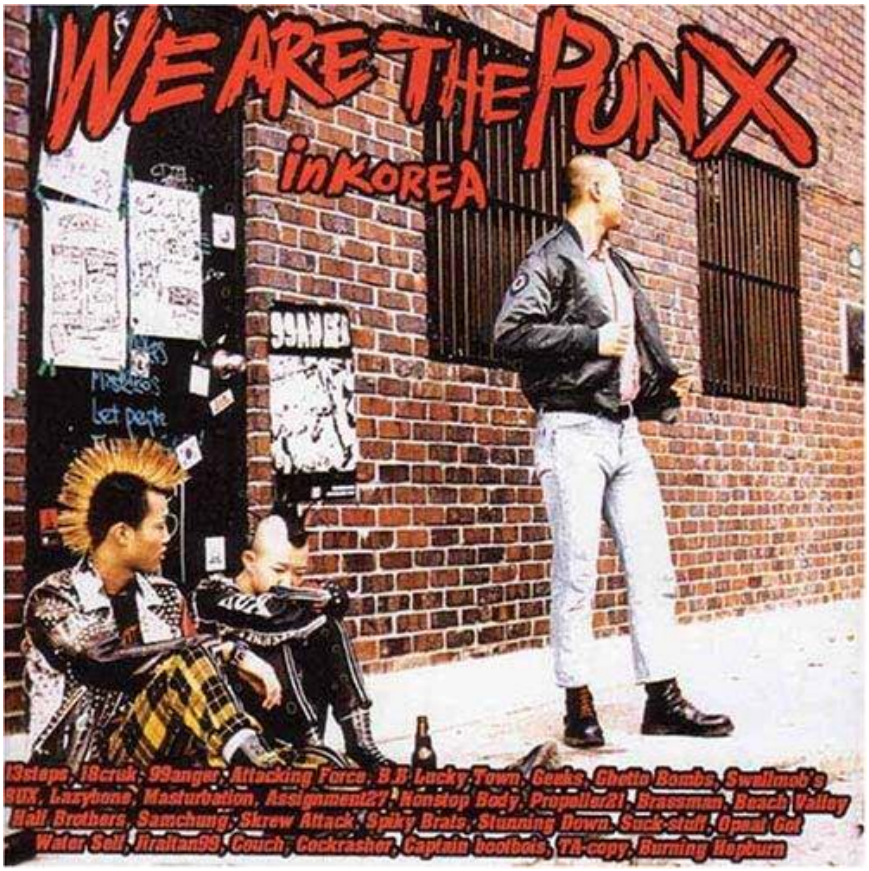

Figure 2.6 We Are the Punx in Korea album cover

The Fight Against Gentrification in Hongdae

As HBC was becoming a center of music-making for some foreign musicians in the late 2000s, major changes were taking place in the Hongdae punk scene. The nightlife of the area was shifting away from live music, and gentrification was starting to take its toll. Attendance at Skunk shows was waning: some Saturday shows would only have ten paying customers.[108] The lack of fans, and increases in rent, created a situation where it was hard to keep Club Skunk

[107] Epstein, "Us and Them," 9.
[108] Jon Twitch and Jungy Rotten, "Escape from Hell: Skunk Hell Quietly Closes its Doors," *bROKe in Korea* 7 (September 2008): 3.

running financially. This was not helped by a lax door price policy. When asked about door prices and paying rent, Won admitted that

> I was really into punk rock so I didn't want to sell out and I wanted to stay punk as a punk club. So everything was so cheap. My [entrance fee] was like 5000 won or 7000 won and even that money, if we knew [the people coming in] we let them without charging. So what happened was that people who came to our places and didn't pay and only the new people had to pay. Even then, it wasn't much. We call them new faces. "There is another new face."[109]

The door income mostly went to paying rent, but it still wasn't enough to keep Skunk afloat. Friends often supported Skunk and donated money to pay the rent, but to many this was "just delaying the inevitable."[110] Won also seemed ready to start a new chapter, attending university and playing more with his band.[111] Won likened Club Skunk to a military bunker, and argued that "To run the bunker, it's very hard to be a soldier."[112] Instead of running a venue, he wanted to focus on making music.

It was clear to many that the closing of Club Skunk in 2008 was the end of an era of punk domination in Hongdae. A fanzine called *Broke in Korea* (which will be discussed in chapter three) detailed the closing of Club Skunk with an interview with Won and former Skunk manager Yoo Chulhwan (posted in English and Korean), a "Memories of Skunk" article with twenty-one contributors as well as an extended retrospective by editor Paul Mutts. The cover of the issue is the hollowed out Skunk building.[113]

The lack of a "home base" from which new punks could discover the community around the music and become invested took a toll on the scene. The Fall 2009 issue of *Broke in Korea* ended with a letter to young punks urging them to support their scene:

> There was a time when there were new bands almost every weekend in Hongdae. You could never look at a flyer and recognize every band that was playing. It seems like those days are long gone. Most shows include a mix of the same bands you've seen over the past two weeks, and don't get me wrong, I love hardcore, but why doesn't anyone play simple punk rock anymore? So many of us are getting old. It's time for the next generation of kids to start their own bands and start playing shows. Your first lineup, or the first band for that matter, might not work out, but keep writing, keep trying new things, talk to local band members and club managers to get some shows, and most importantly, never stop playing. There are plenty of cheap practice studios around Seoul. Find one, gather your friends, and start contributing to the scene that keeps you entertained every weekend.[114]

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[109] Jonghee Won, interview.
[110] Twitch and Rotten, "Escape from Hell," 3.
[111] Jonghee Won, interview.
[112] Twitch and Rotten, "Escape from Hell," 3.
[113] Twitch, "Memories of Skunk," 12.
[114] Jon Twitch, ed., "Support Your Scene," *bROKe in Korea* 10 (Fall 2009): 24.

Interestingly, the call is in English first, and then translated into Korean. It is unclear if the message is focused more towards Korean or foreign punks.

While some assumed that the center of punk would just move to a new club, and some other location would take over as the "bunker," this did not seem to be the case. There was no longer one clear location to which they were all tied. Instead, the punk community went where the shows were. There were (and still are) some venues that are more "punk friendly," and some are even owned by former and current punk musicians, but the protective "bunker" that Club Drug and Club Skunk provided was never really replicated.

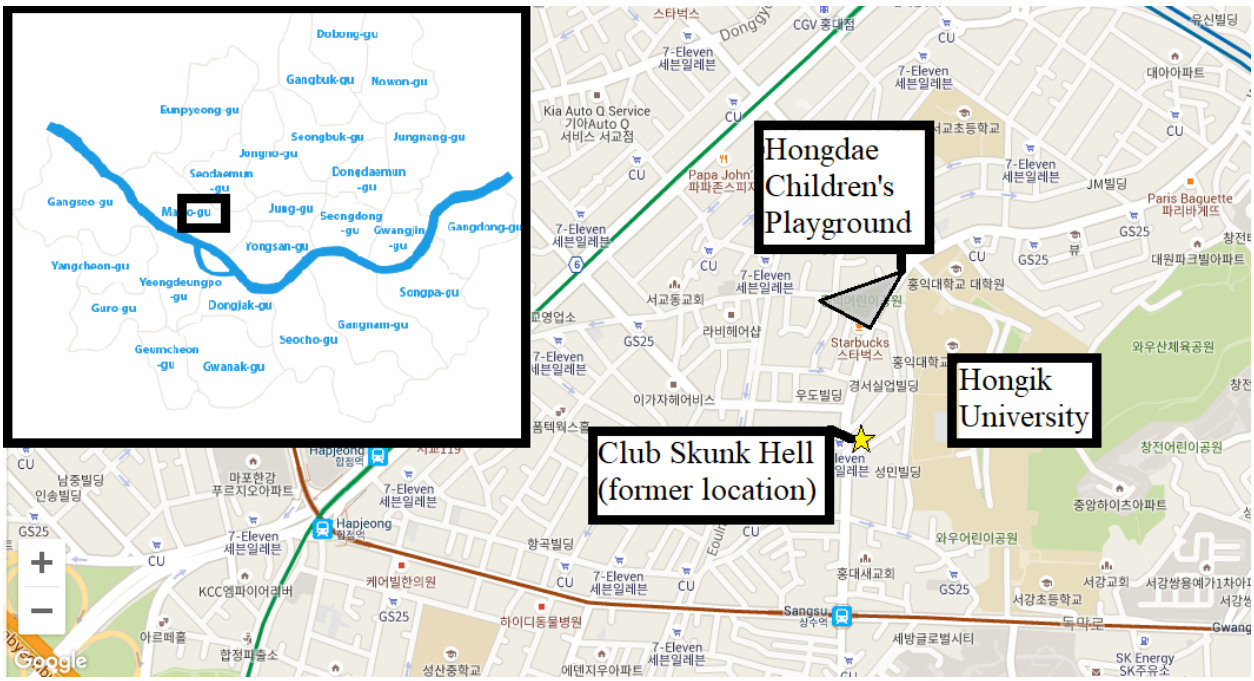

Figure 2.7 Hongdae Children's Playground[115]

The most commonly talked about venue post-Skunk closure was Club Spot, situated next to Hongdae Children's Playground, a park in the center of Hongdae that was a common punk post-show hangout [Figure 2.7]. However, a lot of so-called "Skunk punks" did not go to Club Spot shows. According to Jeff Moses, former manager at Club Spot, "A lot of the people that were loyal every weekend--Skunk Hell people--just stopped coming out. For them, the club was their scene, not like the scene was their scene."[116] This was not the case for everyone, but it did change how the community of the punk scene functioned.

Hongdae children's playground actually played a central role in the attempt to "take back the neighborhood." After show hangouts were an important part of Korean punk culture (which will be discussed in chapter five). The park specifically was a place that Korean and foreign punks saw as belonging to them. Because Korean subways stop running at night, many punks

[115] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul."; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean" with additions by author.
[116] Jeff Moses (punk musician), in interview with author, April 10, 2017.

would hang out in the park from the end of the show until the subway started running again in the morning. Many anecdotes from the early days were focused on this park. But by the 2010s, there was a sense that these public places in Hongdae were being overtaken by other groups—college students, hip hop and rap musicians, dance clubs, and other styles of music. Some described these new people as "hip hop rich kids" because of the way they dressed in expensive brands that were associated with hip hop style, like Susi, Nautica, and even Tommy Hilfiger. As punks were pushed into a smaller and smaller corner of the park, there were sometimes violent confrontations between the groups. If the police showed up, everyone would scatter to avoid being charged.[117] While some felt that the park is for everyone, others attempted to defend what they saw as their place. This sense of displacement was felt by both Korean and foreign punks.

In the summer of 2010, a series of shows referred to as "The Purge Movement" took place in Hongdae children's playground. The goal was to both remedy the lack of new punks in the scene and combat the changes in Hongdae culture by playing free shows outdoors, trying to promote "punk bands to people who'd never been exposed to them before."[118] The Purge Movement was started by Jeff and Trash Moses, with the help from Won Jonghee and Byeongjae of the Swindlers. Jeff, an American English teacher, was married to Trash, a longtime Korean punk and former member of BB Lucky Tone. The two of them wanted to put on an outdoor festival, but couldn't find a suitable location. Outdoor shows cost more than a typical show to put on, with equipment and van rentals often costing between 200,000 and 250,000 won (about $164-$205 US in 2010).[119] Venues typically had all of the equipment already set up, including amps and drum kits, which made it much easier to perform.

Despite the extra cost, outdoor performance was an extension of busking on the street that was, and still is, a common occurrence in Hongdae. It was not just musicians performing on Hongdae's streets. Dancers, beatboxers, rappers, magicians, and other acts would vie for the attention of the crowds. This was still the case during my fieldwork in 2016; I would see performers bunched on the main busking street or packed in the playground with only 10-15 feet between them, competing for sonic space and attention. Jeff and Trash's growing frustration with street performers taking over Hongdae playground (a hangout spot for punks since the early days), combined with the fact that the scene was in a lull and lacking mainstream exposure for punks led them to the idea of playing in Hongdae Children's park to purge Hongdae streets of undesirable music styles and performers.[120]

The Purge Movement was meant to take advantage of the busy foot traffic to give people a taste of punk, hoping to convince them to go to clubs, like playground-adjacent Club Spot. With this in mind, they planned most shows on Sunday, as to not compete with club shows, as Sundays typically did not have club performances.[121] Different punk bands participated in each show, and the reception seemed to have been generally positive. However, as journalist Jon Dunbar put it in a retrospective post after the playground was renovated in 2017, "Ultimately, the

[117] Trash Yang Moses, interview.
[118] Jon Twitch, "Purging in the Park," *bROKe in Korea* 11 (Winter 2010): 6.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Trash Yang Moses, interview.
[121] Twitch, "Purging the Park," 6.

more we tried to preserve the playground through such declarations and territorial claims, the more we lost it to the hated normal people."[122]

The closing of Skunk and the invasion of Children's Playground was part of a larger wave of change and gentrification of stores and businesses in Hongdae. The increase in venues, dance clubs, and night life made Hongdae an up and coming place to start a business, especially those that catered to youth. The gentrification was exacerbated by an exponential number of "urban renewal" projects and "markers of hyper-consumerism—malls, chain stores and international franchises"[123] that were built in the area at the time. In 2010, the attempt to tear down one set of buildings for an urban renewal project was disrupted by a sit-in where music was an important part of the protest. All the tenants of the three buildings near Hongdae station had left except for the noodle restaurant Dooriban. After they and their customers were forcibly removed, the owner came back to occupy the building in a sit-in, demanding better compensation for their business. During this protest occupation, the third floor was turned into a music venue, with shows put on by a makeshift "committee" of artists that was eventually called as the Jarip Music Association.[124] Jung Yong-taek's documentary *Party 51* gives an insider view of the story of Duriban, protest concerts and the musicians involved. [125] The *Party 51* title references the 51+ festival, a show where over 51 bands participated to support the anti-gentrification message. The sit-in lasted 531 days, forcing the company to give the owners a settlement that was more reasonable and included enough money to relocate the shop.[126]

Punks on the Move

Despite this supposed victory, the gentrification of Hongdae continued, causing rents to skyrocket. Some music venues moved out of Hongdae in an attempt to avoid the constantly increasing rent prices, while others shut down entirely. The idea of Hongdae as the center of underground music is still pervasive to this day, despite the smaller number of venues and issues with gentrification. This is actively harming the scene in the eyes of many musicians, as this pervasive understanding of Hongdae makes it hard to associate other spaces with Korean rock.

Most Korean and foreign musicians I talked to said that Hongdae is "dead," despite still playing there. In the early 2010s they really didn't have much of a choice, because all the resources for music making, like venues, practice rooms, government-sponsored events, and even busking locations, were concentrated in Hongdae. It was hard for other neighborhoods to grow a scene.[127] The small size of South Korea and the excellent transportation systems (getting from the top to the bottom of the country only takes 2 hours and 15 minutes by Korea Train

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[122] Jon Dunbar, "Hongdae Playground Through the Ages," *The Korea Times*, September 12, 2017, http://m.koreatimes.co.kr/pages/article.asp?newsIdx=236365.
[123] Shin, "Success of Hopelessness," 154.
[124] Alex Ameter, "Creating Independent Culture," *DoIndie,* May 17, 2014, http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/posts/creating-independent-culture (website was removed March 10, 2020, version archived June 23, 2019 can be found here: https://web.archive.org/web/20190623125037/http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/posts/creating-independent-culture).
[125] Yong-taek Jung, dir., *파티 51 [Party 5]),* (2013; Seoul, South Korea: 51+ films, 2014), DVD.
[126] Ameter, "Independent Culture."
[127] Jon Twitch, "Escape from Hongdae: Korea's Underground Music Scene Seeks to Expand," *bROKe in Korea* 15 (Dec 2012): 15.

Express) also meant that other cities often had a hard time building a local scene. If a band was serious about making music, they were forced to try and get gigs in Hongdae. However, Hongdae's gentrification meant that musicians were looking to move their scene to a new neighborhood—one that felt like Hongdae in the so called golden days of the mid 1990s. There are a few neighborhoods where punk attempted to find a new home, but only two were really talked about during my research: Mullae and Mangwon.

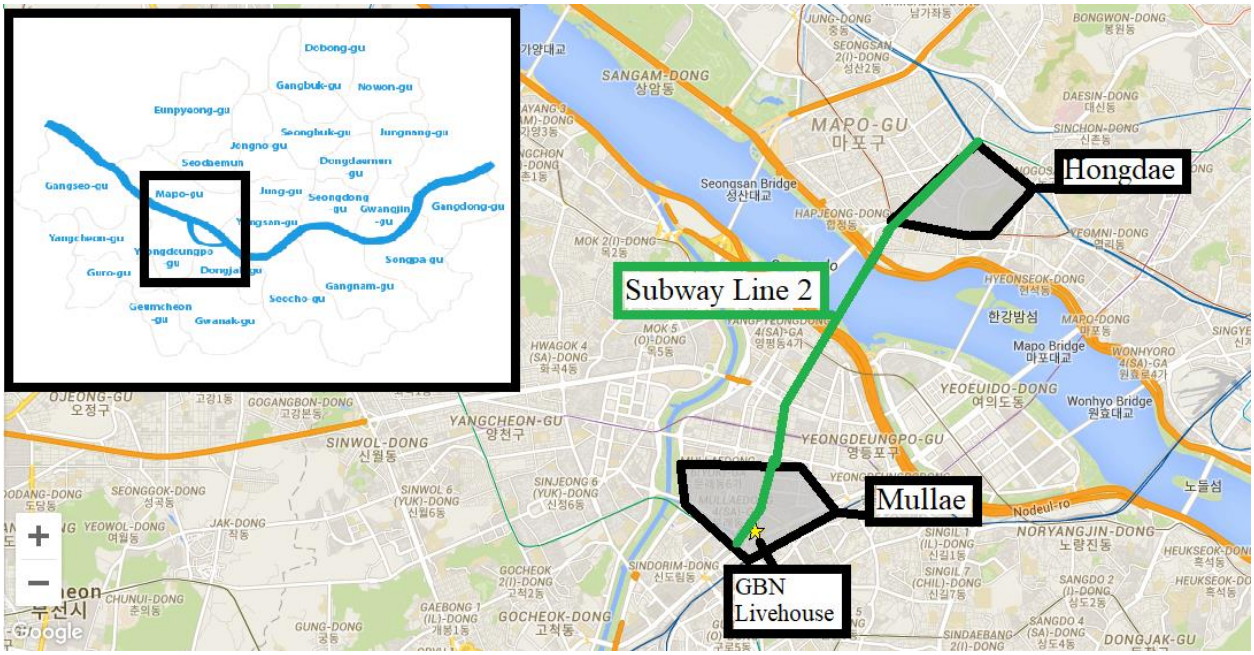

Figure 2.8 Hongdae and Mullae, connected by Subway line 2[128]

Mullae

Mullae [shown in Figure 2.8], is a deindustrialized steelworks district south of Hongdae. The location was ideal because rent was cheap, and musicians could be as loud as they wanted without worrying about residential complaints. In addition, there were other visual and performance arts galleries also snapping up old industrial buildings for their own use.[129] Mullae was also seen as a great choice due to its location relative to Hongdae. While the two neighborhoods are separated by the Han River that splits Seoul in half, they are connected by the Line 2 subway, and only a ten minute ride apart. Despite this, one of the obstacles that musicians and promoters who were trying to branch out of Hongdae found to be almost insurmountable was overcome—namely, the distance of new neighborhoods and the difficulty of getting to the venues. Co-founder of the Independent Musician's Collective, Kyungha, is quoted as saying "'When the location is inconvenient, psychologically, people feel distant even if it is not far away physically.'"[130] While many still struggled with Mullae by feeling that it was too far away

[128] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul."; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean" with additions by author.
[129] Twitch, "Escape from Hongdae," 15.
[130] Twitch, "Escape from Hongdae," 15.

from other venues and after show hangouts, in Hongdae, the relative proximity of venues to other forms of entertainment helped draw people in.

Alternative Space Moon was the name of a venue that opened in 2011, and was run by half-Korean artist Katrin Baumgaertner from Germany.[131] The name of the venue, Moon, is also the Korean word for door. The punks who told me about this venue had mixed reactions to it. Part of this was due to the fact that the venue had performers of a wide variety of musical styles, making it hard for Moon to find a consistent audience, and leaving punks to dislike it. Baumgaertner also typically paired local Korean performers with international performers touring in East Asia, which was harder to promote.[132] There was some disagreement among people I interviewed about whether Moon, as it was most commonly referred to, had more or less foreigners than the typical shows in Hongdae. Because of the variety of music styles, the opinion likely depended on what shows people were attending.

Moon closed in December 2015, and the name was changed to GBN Live House when it was reopened under a new ownership in 2016. The new owner, Yuying Lee, took out all the chairs and redid the stage, making it easier to remove the barrier between the audience and the performers.[133] In my interviews, many Korean and foreign punks (especially those not around during the 2000s) talked about GBN like it was the new Club Drug, or the new Club Skunk: a home for punk music in Korea. Others were more skeptical of this claim, still feeling that one or two venues in Mullae would shift public perception from Hongdae as the only rock neighborhood to Mullae as the place for rock.

Despite the lack of agreement, most will admit that GBN is known for its politics. The Wi-Fi for the venue is named "NAZIPUNKFUCKOFF." A lot of resentment was building between the newer generation of punks and some of the older punks who used "racist/Nazi symbolism and related ideas in their music and live performances," including "doing the Sieg Heil Nazi salute on stage, creating merchandise with obviously racist slogans, and intimidation towards bands refusing to appear on a bill with these bands."[134] On August 22, 2016, the Korean Punk & Hardcore Facebook page made the decision not to promote shows that "expose people to the glorification of some of the worst ideology the world has ever seen."[135]

Jon Dunbar, a Canadian journalist and one of the moderators on the page, talked about the discussion about this issue he had with others who moderate the site with him. It started with some fighting and threats on the page talking about the band Samchung, a band known for its use of Nazi-related imagery. At first Dunbar did not want to blacklist the purported Nazi bands, but instead give them tongue-in-cheek labels:

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[131] Jan Creutzenberg, "Happy Birthday Moon!" *Seoulstages.wordpress.com (blog),* Sept 2, 2013, https://seoulstages.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/happy-birthday-moon/; Twitch, "Escape from Hongdae," 15.
[132] Chrissy Pak, "The Best Kept Secrets of Seoul," *Theculturetrip.com (blog),* Aug 10, 2017, https://theculturetrip.com/asia/south-korea/articles/the-best-kept-secrets-of-seoul/.
[133] Yuying Lee (Owner of GBN), in interview with author, July 15, 2017.
[134] Korean Punk & Hardcore, "(한국어 번역 밑에) Many people took notice of the anti-Nazi picture that accompanied last week's list of shows," *Facebook*, August 22, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/koreanpunkandhardcore/posts/1101412763241430.
[135] Ibid.

> I was kind of against it. I was like, "Let's add it but just, like, put a disclaimer." Like, some people know the show is happening, because if we don't say it, then I kind of feel like we're incomplete. Just put it up and be like, "These guys, by the way, are pro-Nazi," or something like that. "These guys have a tendency to Sieg Heil," you know? I think [in the] last shows from before they went [and blacklisted these bands], I remember I labeled them, because I always label which genre a band is, I was like, "Play with these guys and you will never get to Germany," or something like that.[136]

But in the end, Dunbar conceded to blacklisting these bands and not including them on posts about shows. The ban soon expanded to groups that were apologists for these "Nazi punk" bands, or that continued to associate with those punks and play shows with them. Dunbar worried that the scene was splintering along different "ages, cohorts…and spaces."[137]

In interviews, most people discussed these political issues in relation to age and the Korean cultural doctrine of respecting one's elders. Punks that were considered more left-leaning saw everyone as equal, regardless of age. Therefore, when younger punks critiqued older punks for their political views, this should have been acceptable, as everyone should be respected equally. But more right-leaning punks thought that older punks should be respected and not questioned. These more conservative punks also demanded that younger punks use honorific language with older punks, and expected younger punks to always do what is asked of them by older punks. Much of the debate was not only around issues of racism and sexism, but generational issues rooted in Korean culture.

Foreign punks typically did not have to deal with issues of elder respect. Firstly, most foreigners were in their mid to late 20s when they joined the punk scene; not in high school or college like Korean punks. So the age difference was not as large between them and many older punks in the scene. But more importantly, they were foreign. They get a "pass," as they put it, and are not expected to understand Korean social norms. Often, foreigners were aware of these and other social norms, but would use their outsider status to get away with not doing what was socially expected of them. Foreign punks typically supported younger Korean punk's attempts to make the scene more egalitarian.

Mangwon

The other often-discussed venue outside Hongdae was Club SHARP in Mangwon. Mangwon is the area directly West of Hongdae [Figure 2.9]. The area is more residential, although stores and restaurants dominate the main roads, including those leading to Mangwon traditional market. The area is quieter than Hongdae, and busier during the day than it is at night. In 2016, Club SHARP opened in a basement in the southern part of Mangwon. SHARP stands for "SkinHeads Against Racial Prejudice," also a reaction to some of the controversial political views of some older punks in the scene.[138]

[136] Jon Dunbar, interview.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.

Figure 2.9 Club Sharp location in relation to Hongdae[139]

Club SHARP's location in a mainly residential neighborhood caused some problems for the venue. Many of the musicians in the scene, both Korean and foreign, smoke. Because smoking is illegal in bars and venues, most had to go outside between sets to smoke. Even if patrons don't smoke, they often followed their friends outside to converse and socialize. There was no bar at Club SHARP, but the convenience store above the venue got a lot of business on show nights. The plastic tables and chairs outside the store were also well used, before the show as well as between sets. Going outside to both smoke and get drinks meant that the audience members and musicians spend time outside, often after residential quiet hours, and talk, making a lot of noise.

There have been many noise complaints from residents, and often the owner or a friend is outside having to ask people to quiet down, or reminding them not to talk too loudly. During my fieldwork there was a notice posted on the doors to the venue, in both English and Korean:

> Hello, Club SHARP is a DIY club based on an underground culture in South Korea. We want to thank lots of people who come to our club. But, there are people living near the club in ordinary houses. We have to be quiet when we are talking outside (especially around or after 9pm) otherwise we WILL disturb them and they WILL call the police. If you want to smoke and talk outside PLEASE do it on the road in front of the convenience store right next to the club. Often people have called the police and they always show up. This will make it hard to continue running our club. For those of you who care about us and love us, WE NEED YOUR HELP in this matter. We will keep working hard and make the right underground culture. Thank you for visiting Club SHARP always.

[139] Insert image from Seoul Solution, "The Statistics of Seoul."; Larger image from Snazzy Maps, "Google Maps Clean" with additions by author.

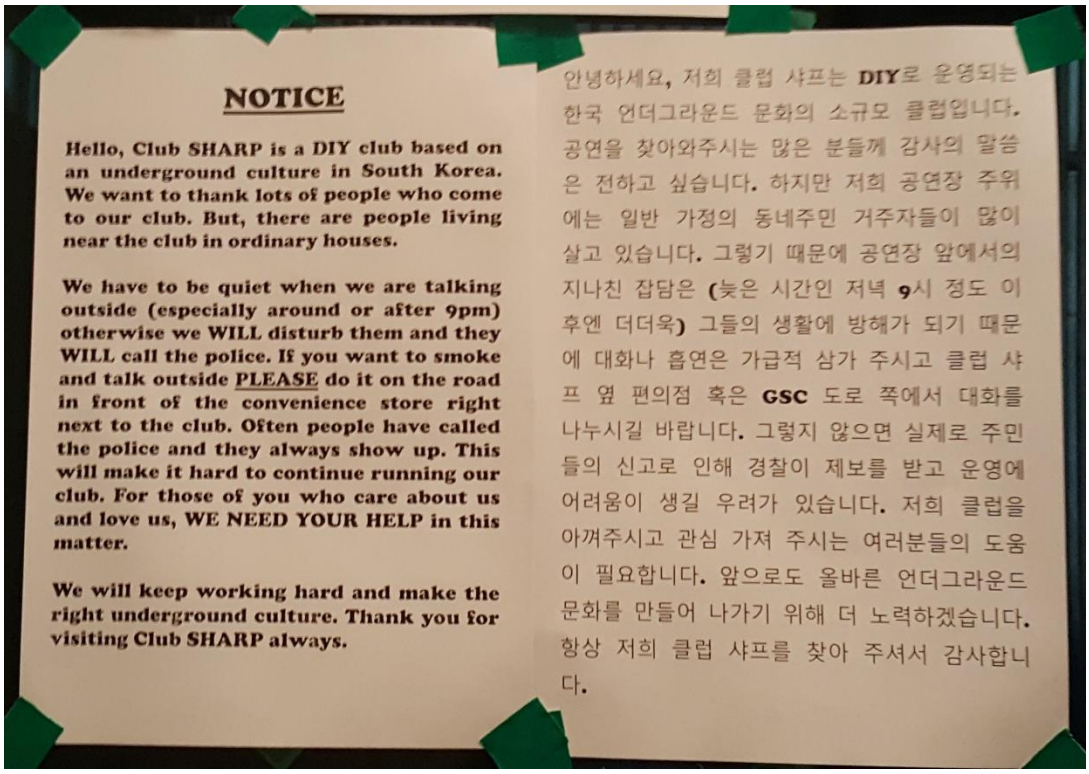

Figure 2.10 Fieldwork image from the door of Club Sharp, October 7, 2016[140]

The noise issue is almost exclusively an outside problem: the stairs down to the venue are covered in sound absorbing material, and the door at the bottom of the stairs that leads to the actual venue is extremely heavy and also covered in soundproofing. Even in the stairwell it is hard to hear a band even at their loudest, and the person selling tickets just inside the door is also in charge of making sure the door is never propped open, or left open any longer than necessary during a set.

The upside to Club SHARP's location is the nearby nightlife. There are a set of Korean BBQ restaurants near the venue, although in Korea these restaurants are rarely called "Korean BBQ." These were typically referred to as "meat" restaurants by foreigners, or s*amgyeopsal* (삼겹살, pork belly) restaurants if they wanted to use the Korean term. The bars in Hongdae are also not too far away; I did not experience a situation where the majority of the group went to Hongdae after a show, but I was told it does happen occasionally. This was the main downside to GBN's location; there were no good places for an after-party, and musicians often dispersed after a show or they all went back to Hongdae to go to Samgyeopsal restaurants they knew and loved.

Conclusion

At the time of my fieldwork, I went to shows every Friday and Saturday night. While there were a few exceptions, I could be found in one of three places: Hongdae, HBC, or Mullae. These three neighborhoods were also used as shorthand for the type of show you were going to

[140] Fieldwork Photo by author, October 7 2016.

see: a Mullae show was going to be punks, an HBC show was going to have majority foreign musicians and bands, and Hongdae shows would include musicians who were typically performing and socializing in a more Korean style. Different venues within these neighborhoods had different reputations, but in general being an “HBC musician” or a “Hongdae musician” carried connotations about sound, professionalism, but above all, nationality.

Neighborhoods like Itaewon and HBC were both “alien spaces” within Korea, associated with foreignness and almost viewed as outside the nation. They were designed to cater to Americans preferences due to their proximity to the Yongsan military base, but have continued to serve as places for those who are “othered” in Korea. Hongdae, in contrast, has been closely attached to the growth of post-dictatorship youth subcultures and the origin of the punk scene in Korea. It grew to be viewed as the place for underground music making for many different styles of rock. But that moniker has led to gentrification and the commodification of that subcultural capital, pushing punk musicians out of the neighborhood and forcing them to find new places of belonging. These overlapping ideas of place, nation, and genre are an important context to gain a better understanding of how musicians view themselves and others in intercultural interactions.

CHAPTER 3 PUNK GENRE AS BASIS OF SCRIPT IN INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

This chapter discusses the intercultural interactions in the imagined community of the "punk scene" in Korea. Punk as a genre has a close association with the spaces of rock performance developed in the 1990s, as outlined in the previous chapter. There was a sense of connectivity between punks, both foreign and Korean, as well as a long running historical connection to early punks. Part of that may have been due to the fact that musicians and bands who originally started in the 1990s (such as Crying Nut and Rux) still had a presence in the scene during my fieldwork. There is also a long memory of punk socialization and interaction—interviewees (both foreign and Korean) I talked to in the punk scene had been part of it for years, if not decades, and had knowledge of its histories, conflicts, and changes over time, even if they had not participated in those changes themselves. During shows that I experienced, foreign and Korean punks would typically interact with little to no issue. Both foreign and Korean punks understood the way that a punk audience is expected to act, as well as typical ways they should perform as punk musicians and audiences, and there was little visible conflict around this behavior.

I argue in this chapter that the nature of punk as a music genre combined with a set of social practices, creates a basic performance script for all participants, and helps to make intercultural interactions more positive than situations where there is no unifying genre script. Punk comes with an expected set of actions and ideologies, both in performance and outside of it, which are (generally) the same in punk communities all over the world.[141] In that way, it functions as the situation from which participants are drawing their scripts of performance. As people involved understood the basis of the expected practices of performers and audience members through a lens of genre practice, there was less conflict between Korean and foreign participants, and new participants of either group were able to quickly observe and become included in the social practices of performance. This shared understanding also helped participants determine the situational script of performance, as well as the "goals" of a good performance based on genre metrics. While the shared performance script does not solve all conflicts and problems, it helps to create a starting point that all participants, regardless of nationality, understand.

First, I will discuss some of the global "markers" of the punk subculture, and how each of those markers were adopted locally by early Korean punks, as well as what I observed during my fieldwork. I argue that of the ease of intercultural interaction in punk performance is directly related to the ways that scripts of performance are tied into the globalized understanding of how a punk scene operates. That both foreign and Korean punks had a similar understanding of how to perform the social scripts around ideology, fashion, sound, and movement helped to create a sense of unity. When the audience had a lot of members who did not seem to understand or want to participate in punk performance behavior, however, problems or misunderstandings could arise. Most of the disconnections and conflicts discussed by punk musicians and fans in

[141] As discussed in many articles about punk, including Kevin C. Dunn, *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016): 20-21 and Stuart Borthwick and Ron May, *Popular Music Genres: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004): 77.

interviews was not between Koreans and foreigners, but between those that understood punk music (and how to properly enjoy it, according to the Korean scene) and those who did not.

While this shared understanding of genre norms helped to facilitate intercultural interaction, there were still barriers for foreigners trying to participate in the punk scene. The two most prominently discussed were language barrier and the stereotypes associated with negative foreigner behavior. The second half of this chapter will focus on *Broke in Korea*, a fanzine started by a white male foreigner and a half-Korean male in 2005, which was, in part, used as a way to overcome these linguistic and social barriers in the punk scene. During the 2000s, the number of foreigners increased exponentially due to a need for English language teachers in Korea. The issues of language and the way that Korean culture affected the adoption of punk made it hard for some foreigners to participate in the scene. Foreigners interested in punk often expressed difficulties with "discovering" the punk scene in their early days in Korea. The zine, and its affiliated websites and message boards, helped promote the scene to local foreigners. More strikingly, the magazine endeavored to give new foreigners a social primer on how to behave in a Korean punk context. These rules help to illuminate how foreigners understood the Korean punk scene and their place in it.

Punk Genre: Globally and Locally

Punks in Seoul are understood to be the root of the resurgence of underground music in the 1990s in the neighborhood of Hongdae. Although punk as a genre has its roots in the 1970s, due to its late adoption in Korea it functions almost as a genre out of time. As discussed in chapter two, many of the early venues in Hongdae were known as punk venues. While I had attended a few shows with punk artists during my preliminary fieldwork in 2014 and 2015, I did not start attending punk shows regularly until 2016. By this point, most of the famous punk venues had closed. Club Spot closed in 2014, and although the venue DGBD was still hosting shows, they had gotten a reputation for not keeping up their sound equipment, and few musicians played there anymore.[142] Despite this decline in venue numbers, there were still punks shows almost every week during my fieldwork.

Despite the changes in time and venue, Stephen Epstein's ethnographic description of a typical night at Club Drug in the late 1990s is not too dissimilar from my own experiences of punk shows in 2016. A few things have changed: smoking bans mean that clubs were no longer filled with smokers, and the entry fee was two or three times higher: 10,000 or 15,000 won (~$9-$14 in 2016) as compared to the 5,000 won (~$4 in 1998), Epstein explains. But the 7:30 performance time was still the norm (although it can be anywhere from 6-8 pm); most venues, like the original Club Drug, were still literally underground, in basements of larger buildings; seating was still lacking, and uncomfortable when available (most people stood); and crowds were enthusiastic, jumping, pogoing, slamming, and moshing in typical punk fashion.[143] This performance behavior was tied directly to the musician's association with punk culture.

[142] Jon Dunbar (journalist and punk enthusiast), in interview with author, June 1, 2017 and Ian White (punk musician), in interview with author, February 16, 2017.
[143] Stephen Epstein, "Anarchy in the UK, Solidarity in the ROK: Punk Rock Comes to Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (July 2000): 3-4.

"Punk" as a musical subculture is hard to define along a singular axis. Instead, it is necessary to understand the ideological, sonic, visual, and performance markers of punk to see how they traveled around the globe. While punk, at its core, can be understood as an anti-mainstream attempt to carve out space for music creation on the artist's own terms, as punk disseminated throughout the world, the music and ideology have been tied into culturally situated social practices and subcultural trappings; the local visual, sonic, and performance markers nonetheless converge to create the idea of punk in a global context.

In this section I will discuss each of these markers: ideology, fashion, sound and movement, and explain how global understandings of these markers were put into practice in Korean scenes. I will then use materials from my experience and interviews to show that most punk musicians are not worried about a divide between Korean and foreign audiences, but a divide between in-group punks and new fans who lack understanding of the punk lifestyle.

Ideology

Kevin Dunn, in his book *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*, argues that Punk is an ideology that imagined a new way of being in "a two-part process: a rejection of the status quo and an embrace of a do-it-yourself ethos."[144] This rejection was articulated in punk in a few different ways throughout time and place. Lyrics in punk often focus on "providing an exposition of working-class dissatisfaction with so-called 'normal' society, and frequently focuses upon concerns that are particular to young people."[145] While the subjects that punks are dissatisfied with vary widely over time and place, that core sentiment of expressing frustration and rejection of social norms tends to be the core of punk ideology.

As punk traveled all over the world, it often valorized the lack of dependence on mainstream support and existence on the margins of society;[146] this was certainly true of the origins of the Korean punk scene. Korean and foreign musicians both described a "learning by doing" mentality in the Korean punk music scene. Picking up new instruments, learning how to do sound at shows, and other skills were often learned in the moment, when they were needed, with a DIY mindset. Many Korean musicians discussed enjoying the sense of rebellion against norms and the freedom that came with embracing the punk subculture. Stephen Epstein also traces the ways that second wave punk became more direct in its criticism of Korean mainstream culture and lifestyle. Korean punks of the 2000s were rejecting dominant ideologies, with prominent band Rux's webpage saying "'fuck korea, fuck anarchy, fuck liberty, fuck all authority, and fuck you all.'"[147]

Because punk is understood as an anti-mainstream product, using sounds or performance styles that are seen as "too pop" can lead to criticism. But the line between what is "punk" and what is "pop" is different for every musician and fan. When punk musicians in Korea had to play with musicians of different genres, these issues of pop connections could sometimes come to the

[144] Dunn, *Global Punk*, 11.
[145] Bothwick and May, *Popular Music*, 78. This quote discusses the social-realist style of punk, the article also argues there is also an art style of punk more focused on theories of art/more cerebral.
[146] Jeremy Wallach, "Living the Punk Lifestyle in Jakarta," *Ethnomusicology* 52, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 106.
[147] Stephen Epstein, "We Are the Punx in Korea," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, ed. Keith Howard (Kent: Global Oriental, 2006): 197.

forefront. Most shows that were clearly understood as punk during my fieldwork were at GBN Live House or Club Sharp, both discussed in the previous chapter. I also saw punk shows in other locations, and even saw punks playing with bands of very different genres. This was partially due to social connections between bands; some punks had friends outside the punk scene, or were in both punk and non-punk bands. This was especially common with foreigners; sometimes punk bands with foreign members would play at shows with other foreign musicians they were friends with, despite a complete difference in genre and performance style. However, this difference in genre was often called out, with punk bands making fun of their friends that do more introspective versions of rock.

Due to this anti-mainstream ideology, there were often expected speech acts performed to distance punk music from other forms of rock, especially if they happened to play a show together. At a show in 2016, a punk band comprised mostly of white men were performing at a venue after musicians who played lighter, more contemplative versions of rock. The lead singer introduced his band by saying "We're a punk rock band. Yah, we play moving around music, none of this stand in the back and nodding your head hipster bullshit, right?"[148] before launching into an up-tempo screaming number. I believe he was attempting to do two things with this statement: First, he wanted to separate his band from music that is trying to be cool, as punk is by definition not attempting to be mainstream. Second, he was giving the audience a sense of what was expected of them. This dig at the previous bands was, from what I could tell, a good natured one; the musicians of the bands involved were friends, despite their different tastes in music. These mixed genre shows will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.

Fashion

Fashion is an important way that punks delineate themselves from other groups. The visual aspects of punk are often tied to these fashion statements. Many different articles talking about punk describe its "uniform" in scenes all over the globe: typically mohawked or spiked hair, clad in leather, with combat boots or canvas shoes.[149] There are, of course, variations and differences in different places and times (piercings, tattoos, studded clothing), but many of these clothing choices are still used as shorthand to show one's punk positionality.

In looking at the Stephen Epstein and Tim Tangherlini documentary from the late 90s, *Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community*, one can see that many punks in Korea sported some of these aspects of the punk rock uniform, with interviewees in leather, mohawks, and chains.[150] However, some also styled themselves in ways more reminiscent of mid 1990s Green Day; shorter spiked and dyed hair, t-shirts, and loose ties in a parody of professional culture.[151]

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[148] December 3, 2016 "Super Fresh" show at Thunderhorse Tavern in Haebangchon.

[149] A few examples of this: Epstein, "Us and Them," 9; Wallach, "Living the Punk Lifestyle," 100, 105, 111-112; Craig T. Palmer, "Mummers and Moshers: Two Rituals of Trust in Changing Social Environments," *Ethnology* 44, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 154; Gerfried Ambrosch, "American Punk: The Relations between Punk Rock, Hardcore and American Culture," *Amerikastudien [American Studies]* 60, no. 2/3 (2015): 217.

[150] Stephen Epstein and Tim Tangherlini, dir., *Our Nation: A Korean Punk Rock Community* (New York: Filmmakers Library, 2002), DVD.

[151] A good example of the fashion trends of this time can be found in Crying Nut's music video for their biggest hit *말달리자 (Let's Ride the Horse):* Drug Records 드럭레코드, "크라잉 넛 - 말달리자 MV [Crying Nut-Let's Ride a Horse MV]," *YouTube*, May 14, 2014, https://youtu.be/g5PiPAskKPU.

Considering that the punk scene in Korea started in the mid-1990s, simultaneously with bands like Green Day leading a post-grunge punk revival in the United States, it makes sense that this mixture of classic punk dress and 90s revival aesthetic was present when the scene first started.

During my time in Korea, there were still a few people-- typically older, first generation punks--dressing in leather with mohawks, but most people did not dress this way. Instead, most people at punk shows wore dark clothing (red, black and grey being the most common colors), had tattoos and piercings, and some men had longer hair. Graphic T-shirts and hoodies were the most common clothing items, but that was not much different from shows of other genres of rock, at least among male participants. Female punks typically dressed like the men, but some younger female punks did wear more glammed-out punk outfits, with leather, fishnets, and dramatic makeup.

There was an aspect of authenticity to this decision not to sport the punk uniform; after one show, when I was socializing with a foreign musician, he went on a rant about how people who dress normally in their daily life and "put on a punk costume" were not *really* being punk. His rant was aimed towards Koreans, but I have heard similar things from other Korean musicians as well. Many of the first generation musicians who still dressed in this classic punk uniform dressed that way most of the time.

Figure 3.1 Two posters utilizing punk fashion and aesthetics to promote shows[152]

[152] Left: The Kitsches, "Updated Their Cover Photo," Facebook, March 14, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/Kitschesthe/photos/a.550061485021095/1391598290867406/?type=3&theater; Right: The Kitsches, "Added a New Photo," Facebook, July 13, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/Kitschesthe/photos/a.557243784302865/1922960291064534/?type=3&theater.

Fashion imagery was also utilized in promotional materials and in the visual culture of the scene. Show posters in the scene occasionally referenced these punk articles of clothing, from mohawks and leather to studs and piercings. In chapter two I discussed the cover of the "We are the Punx in Korea" album, and its use of punk imagery. While not the most common graphic used for punk shows, it was certainly present in the visual codes used to convey the scene. Other posters would include pictures of musicians in the midst of performance, screaming or moshing in the crowd, another way of visually signaling that this was punk music. Both of these are exemplified in Figure 3.1 [above].

Although fashion of punk still played a role as a visual marker, these did not function as a way to signal that someone did (or did not) understand punk subculture, or how knowledgeable they would be about the situational scripts of a punk show. I've seen people decked out in all the punk regalia hanging out in the back of the venue, while people in button up collared shirts moshed in the center of the pit. Unlike the other markers on this list, the use of fashion during my fieldwork did not seem as important as other markers, like ideology, sound, and movement.

Sound

The sonic markers of Korean punk fit larger understandings of punk sound used when it is sold as a market product by corporations: high energy, short songs with few chords, being an often used definition.[153] Korean punk music typically fits the sonic definition outlined above: songs are fast, short, loud, and often (but not always) heavily distorted. In fact, a common performance type at GBN live house was the "10 minute set" shows: bands would have 10 minutes total on stage to play as many songs as they could; after 10 minutes, the sound would be cut and they had to leave [Figure 3.2] There was a wide variety in sounds within the scene; some punks were more melodic, or had influences from other genres, the most common being Ska punks, who utilized Ska rhythms and sometimes alternative instrumentation (like horns) in their bands.

[153] Dunn, *Global Punk*, 11.

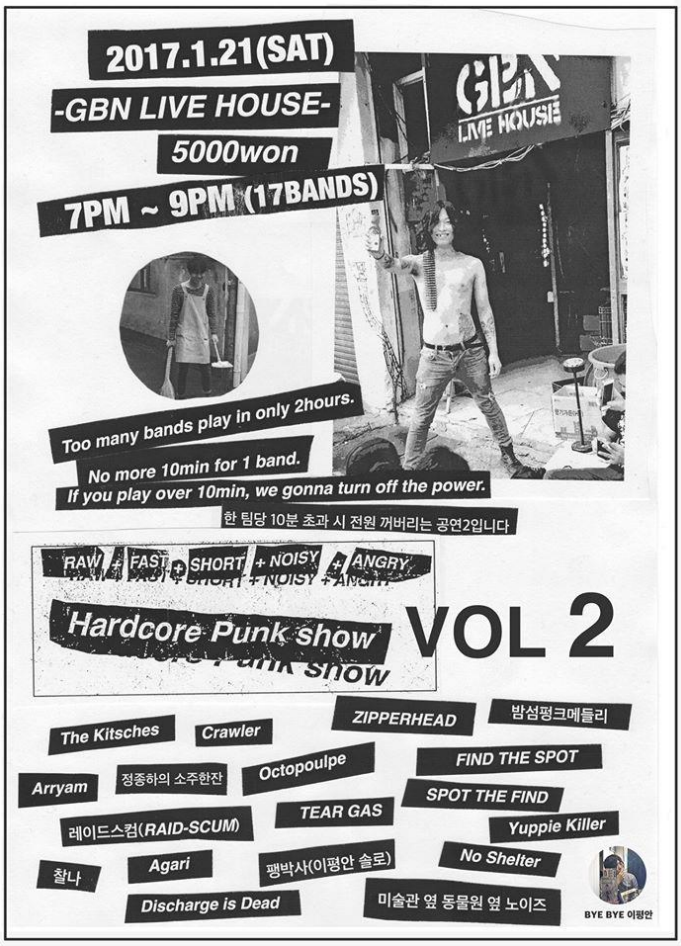

Figure 3.2 Poster for a "10 minute show" explaining the concept[154]

Another important sonic marker of punk is its choice of instrumental timbre and vocal styles meant to provide a form of catharsis. The screaming of the singer and the distortion of the instruments, combined with the movement of performers and audience members alike, is utilized as a way to give participants "a chance to express personal and collective rage through specific practices, such as screaming along with vocalists or participating in the slam dance."[155] The music allows fans and musicians alike to express emotions in a way that is typically not culturally acceptable.

Punk shows in Korea are also a collective, cathartic performance for both musicians and audiences. In Korean punk shows there was very little divide between audiences and performers. During performances, the fans often leaned into the microphone to scream with the singer, or the singer turned the microphone to crowd members like a sudden *noraebang*[156] moment, allowing random audience members to take over singing. Musicians knew each other's songs well: many

[154] Dongyu Boogie Lee, "RAW FAST SHORT NOISY ANGRY Hardcore PUNK Show vol.2—Event," *Facebook*, event on January 21, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/events/1230597833698899/.

[155] Kelly Tatro, "The Hard Work of Screaming: Physical Exertion and Affective Labor Among Mexico City's Punk Vocalists," *Ethnomusicology* 58, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 432.

[156] *Noraebang (노래방)* is Korean for singing room, and is the term used for karaoke in Korea.

bands, both foreign and Korean, did covers of other local bands' songs. Punk songs were in both Korean and English, with Korean musicians often singing in English but typically not the other way around.

Movement

In punk music, the physical movement of both audience and performer are an important part of defining the genre. The way an audience is "scripted" to conduct themselves include movements like pogoing, which is jumping up and down, and slam dancing, which is where participants slam into each other. These activities typically happen in the mosh pit-an area where the slam dancing has created some space as participants bounce off each other.[157] Crowds that were a mix of Korean and foreign participants in punk, showed little to no disconnect in their situational script around physical behavior, as the participants were familiar with the physical vocabularies of punk.

The design of the punk venues I experienced in Korea created a lack of separation between the performers and the audiences.[158] Both GBN Livehouse and Club Sharp had stages only a few feet off the ground, and enough space between the sound speakers that fans could easily reach the stage. Although audiences were relatively still for the first few bands, as the crowd got more energetic, fans would often jump onto the stage and dive back into the crowd. Performers would also often dive into the audience, dragging microphone and amp cords with them. Some punk shows I went to were in photo studios or other non-traditional venues with no stage at all, and by the midpoint of a band's set, the crowd and performers were thoroughly intermixed.

Moshing, thrashing, and other violent or aggressive dance motions actually have many social rules and understood norms of behavior. Injuring others is not the goal of these movements; it is more a "parody of violence," or a "mockery of machismo."[159] The goal is not to incite violence or injury others, but to make these hyper-aggressive movements humorous. Even when I observed accidental injuries at shows, both parties would typically apologize and laugh it off (although I have heard stories that this is not always the case). But it is important to note that most of the shows I went to included so-called "regulars" in the scene who not only knew the "rules" of Korean punk, but were also known by Korean musicians and fans, and therefore any untoward aggressive behavior was understood to be an accident. New or unknown participants that were overly aggressive or violent at shows were often socially shunned or verbally reprimanded between band performers. If they were really aggressive, especially towards female punks in the pit, a group of Korean and foreign guys would often surround and contain the new

[157] Kevin Dunn, "Never Mind the Bollocks: The Punk Rock Politics of Global Communication," *Review of International Studies* 34 Cultures and Politics of Global Communication (2008): 194-195.
[158] This is actually uncommon; typically there is a "buffer" of fans between the pit and the performers: William Tsitsos, "Rules of Rebellion: Slam dancing, Moshing and the American Alternative Scene," *Popular Music* 18, no. 3 (October 1999): 406.
[159] James Lull, "Thrashing in the Pit: An Ethnography of San Francisco Punk Subculture," in *Natural Audiences: Qualitative Research of Media and Effects*, ed. T. R. Lindlof (Norwood: Ablex, 1987): 242, quoted in Craig T. Palmer, "Mummers and Moshers: Two Rituals of Trust in Changing Social Environments," *Ethnology* 44, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 156.

fan during the show and force them to the edge or out of the mosh pit so they could not hurt anyone.

Punk's Performance Script

In situations of intercultural interaction, punk musicians tend to have less conflict with the situational script than other groups. Punk has been adopted in Korea with many of its cultural rules of performance intact. A foreign punk fan is likely looking for a punk scene particularly, and therefore knows what to expect. Most of the foreign punks I have talked with were already into punk music back home, and specifically searched online for punk shows and venues in Korea. In the same way, new Korean fans usually come with their friends and are told what to expect, or they come because they are interested in punk music and culture.

There is also a sense of community and some educating about punk for new attendees that was inherent at shows I attended. Musician and Club Skunk Hell owner Won Jonghee talked about the process that he saw Korean fans go through when they first experienced a punk show:

> When [a] Korean audience [member] comes to punk gigs for the first time, they are really still. They are like, "Can I move? Wow look at all these people, what do you call that?" That's moshing. It's stage diving… [then they ask] "Can I do that?" They go in step by step knowing "Okay, I can be rebellious. Just for the clothing and stuff. Can I have a tattoo? Would that be allowed?"[160]

For new fans, there was less judgement about a lack of understanding of punk conventions. When I went to shows people were friendly and welcoming in ways I didn't see at other styles of rock shows. There certainly was judgement of each other's style and music amongst more long-time musicians, which often came out during interviews. But for new participants there was not a sense of social isolation for not "getting" how to do punk music. They were only treated poorly if they were not willing to learn.

For those less familiar with punk conventions, being physically present near the stage at a punk show creates a "trial by fire;" being near the mosh pit, you will often find yourself pulled into these physical activities regardless of your opinion on the matter. As moshing and slam dancing consists of pushing and shoving, anyone in the path of that movement can get swept into it. In this way participants are quickly taught the expected behavior; acting irritated for getting bumped into by a mosher was often the quickest way to lose the goodwill of punks and not be welcomed into the community. There was also space to stand along the edges of the venue, for those who do not wish to be too physical. But often, the movement of the crowd would sweep you in, and you would end up part of the frenzy.

The times where I put down my camera and joined the pit, if I fell or was jostled too hard, I would often be propped back up by someone near me who, regardless of whether they were Korean or foreign, usually tried to catch my eyes and check if I was okay (either verbally, or with an okay/thumbs up hand sign). Punk shows I attended at GBN and Club Sharp both had a supportive and kind audiences; which may seem ironic considering the external perception of aggressiveness that seems to define punk movement. Even if someone was new, there was a

[160] Jonghee Won (punk musicians and owner of Club Skunk), in interview with author, July 16, 2017.

welcoming and friendly atmosphere, as long as one was participating (or attempting to participate) in the socially expected way.

Punk versus Non-Punk: Conflicts in Music Culture

Much of this analysis about the smooth operation of audience action at punk shows presupposes one thing: that the audience knows it is a punk show. Due to the way that genres are intermixed when programming shows at Korean clubs, there were times where the majority of the bands programmed to play at a show were not punk; this often meant that the majority of the audience was not a punk audience. When the one or two punk fans started to mosh or slam dance when their favorite band started performing, other audience members sometimes became angry at being jostled about. According to foreign punk Jeff Moses, the amount of participation in an audience is "not a Korean-foreigner thing. It's a people who go to [punk] shows thing, people who don't go to [punk] shows thing."[161] If the majority of the audience goes to punk shows, regardless of their nationality, there will likely be cohesion in the way the audience interacts with each other and the performers. If the majority of the audience does not go to punk shows, regardless of their nationality, they will unlikely know that moshing, pogoing, or any of the other typical physical behaviors of punk audiences will happen.

I used a few factors to anticipate if the audience behavior would align with what I expected for a punk show. The first was the band list. If all of the bands were punk, I could assume this was a punk show. If I didn't know all the bands on the list, I would look at the second factor: the venue. Shows at GBN were usually punk. Club Sharp did have occasional non-punk shows, but it was also a good assumption that Sharp shows were punk. The third factor was the marketing. As I discussed above, there were specific visual markers on posters that would help indicate that a show was a punk show.[162] But also, some venues that typically hosted a variety of rock styles would specifically label shows as a "Punk Show" on their posters. If a show was a mix of punk and non-punk bands, the program order was often a telling factor. If the punk bands were all playing at the end, sometimes the non-punk performers would play first to "warm up" the audience enough that moshing would start when the punk bands came on. Finally, once at a show, I would look for familiar faces (in other words, punk regulars); the more punks in the audience, the more likely that they could gently—or not so gently—force the rest of the audience to participate in their preferred manner.

But even keeping all these factors in mind, there were still some shows that did not have as much physical activity in the audience, or between audiences and the performers. This leaves punk performers frustrated with what they perceive as a lack of interest or enthusiasm from the audience; as many punk performers told me, they gauge how well their performance is going by the action of the audience. There was a certain type of discomfort I felt when punk bands were performing with high energy and aggressive movement, and that was not being reciprocated by audiences. I believe this is why punk musicians I talked to, more than any other group, had specific venues that they preferred over others. It was at places like GBN and Sharp that they

[161] Jeff Moses (punk musician), in interview with author, April 10, 2017.
[162] Although some of these markers did overlap with metal shows, making it more difficult to determine on some occasions. There was also some overlap between the behaviors of metal fans and punk fans, but also specific differences that are unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter.

could more reliably count on a knowledgeable audience who properly understood punk culture, physical vocabularies, and expected actions.

Barriers to Entry

In order to understand why punks seemed on the surface to be unified in their actions, it is important to look back at how early foreigners viewed their place in the scene, and the way they positioned themselves in it. The level of clarity around how to perform the social scripts of punk in Korea is not just due to the understanding of punk subculture, but to efforts by foreigners to educate other foreigners on how to adopt Korean social norms. The early foreign punks who worked to overcome linguistic and social barriers set an example of what was expected for foreigners who would engage in the scene. Most foreign punks that started participating in the scene in the early to mid-2000s discussed the lack of English language material as a major barrier to entry. It was hard enough to find venues and learn about punk performances in general, and not knowing, or only having a rudimentary understanding of Korean made it even harder. But these punks were also fighting against a second barrier: stereotypes around macho-aggressive foreigners who often came into the Korean scene and acted violently in the name of being "punk." Foreigners have worked throughout the years to push these foreigners out of the scene, and to clearly articulate rules of behavior for foreigners that wished to participate. This section of the chapter will explore the way these two barriers have been addressed through the most commonly mentioned source for English language news about the scene: the *Broke in Korea* zine and message board.

Broke in Korea

The *Broke in Korea* zine was started by Jon Twitch (aka Jon Dunbar) and Paul Mutts (aka Paul Brickey). Jon is a white Canadian journalist who moved to Korea in 2003. Soon after he became involved in the scene, he was given control of Skunk's English language website and started a personal blog (daehanmindecline.com), where he posted pictures, both of punk shows he started going to and photos from other urban explorations.[163] Paul is half Korean-American and used to play with Won Jonghee's band RUX, as well as Suck Stuff and Heimlich County Gun Club.[164] According to Jon, Paul had just moved to Korea for the second time in 2005, and they "were both unemployed at the time, living off our respective women."[165] They wanted to start a zine, and when brainstorming a title, looked for something that would include ROK (Republic of Korea). They settled upon Broke (sometimes styled as bROKe) because it "came to represent how we identified with a highly talented, yet inevitably doomed, musical community."[166] The magazine was physically printed and passed out at shows. Jon managed the zines, gathering articles, editing, publishing, and distributing the physical copies, while Paul was in charge of the affiliated *Broke in Korea* message board, which was used to promote shows and create a sense of community for the English-speaking punks and readers of the zine in Korea.

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[163] Jon Dunbar, interview. Separate from Broke in Korea, the website (Daehanmindecline) is still in operation as of writing this dissertation. *Daehanminguk* translates to The Republic of Korea; the website name is a play on that (Korean decline). He also posts pictures of urban exploration in abandoned or soon to be demolished neighborhoods.
[164] Jon Dunbar, in Facebook messenger communication with author, June 13, 2019.
[165] Jon Twitch, "Letter from the Editor," *bROKe in Korea: Best of Broke* (December 2011): 2.
[166] Ibid.

The first issue of *Broke in Korea* (March/April 2005) shows what foreign punks considered to be most important for new punks to know, and what was expected of foreign punk fans joining the Korean scene. The most prominent, and therefore important, piece of information was location; the zine endeavored to create clear directions to the home of punk at the time, Skunk Hell. The last page of the zine had a clear map and instructions on how to get to Skunk II, played with humor typical of the zine as well as the punks I have encountered. At the top of the map is Jeffy, a character in the Family Circle comics, muscled up significantly and dressed in a loincloth. The caption says "Help Jeffy get from Sangsu Station to the show in Skunk Hell." The hand drawn map shows the important streets and major landmarks like Children's Park, Hongdae University, and the ever present 7-11 that was still often used in verbal directions for finding other venues during my fieldwork. Descriptive instructions are written out below the map in English. It is important to note that instead of giving directions from Hongdae station, which is on the popular Line 2 that encircles the city of Seoul, the directions are from Sangsu station on Line 6. Line 6 connects Hongdae with Itaewon, the neighborhood where most foreigners spent their free time. This fact also indicates that the map is meant for foreigners.

Broke in Korea is a mix of typical zine content (interviews, CD and show reviews, news) and some unique sections. In keeping with the goal to cultivate a close-knit scene, there are articles by foreign musicians and fans about their experiences and reminisces of scene antics. Jon Dunbar argued that "This zine has always been written [with] members of our community in mind, and it's filled with in-jokes, insinuations, and crossword clues. You'd have to be part of [the scene] to know the answer."[167] The crossword puzzles in later issues are especially difficult without context, and reference situations of which only a few people are aware.

Much of the zine is written from a foreign perspective, although there is a clear expectation and hope that Korean punks are also reading it. In the first issue, a photo essay titled "Crashed Out" with pictures of (mostly Korean) punks passed out in interesting places and awkward positions is captioned: "Where most of us foreigners come from, passing out in public will first get you kicked out of the bar and second get you in a jail cell. That's why we can't resist the opportunity for a good prank, or at least humiliate [people that pass out] somehow, such as by taking pictures. See if you can spot yourself."[168] The use of "us foreigners" first makes it seem that the caption is solely addressing foreign punks and pointing out the peculiarities of Korea the photos represent, a common trope in writings geared towards foreigners in Korea. But the caption then ends with "See if you can spot yourself," which makes it seem like the caption is also speaking to Korean punks. This puts the first part of the caption in a slightly different light. The writers are also trying to explain to Koreans why foreigners react the way they do to Koreans blacking out in public; for many foreigners passing out like this in their home country would be a bad or dangerous situation, whereas in Korea drinking to this extent is not abnormal behavior in the course of a night drinking.

The zine also has an awards segment (the Brokeys) which illustrates the sense of delineation created between foreign and Korean musicians. Readers can send an email to vote for

[167] Jon Dunbar, Facebook messenger.
[168] Jon Twitch, "Crashed Out," *bROKe in Korea* 1 (March-April 2005): 6. Issue 6 of bROKe in Korea includes what could be considered a follow up to this article, simply titled "Head Art: Don't Pass Out," showing images of the sharpie drawing done to the faces and bodies of people who passed out drunk. (Jon Twitch, "Head Art: Don't Pass Out," *bROKe in Korea* 6 (May 2008): 8.

different categories in the "Brokey Awards," including ones for best foreign band, foreign musician, saddest goodbye to a foreigner, and most irreplaceable foreigner.[169] Some of these have generalized equivalents; there are categories for best punk, hardcore, and new bands, and categories for best bassist, guitarist, singer, and drummer. It could be argued that "most missed Korean army guy" is similar to saddest goodbye to a foreigner. But these categories separate the scene into "foreign" categories and "Korean" categories, reflecting a sense of separation between the people involved.[170]

The physical *Broke in Korea* magazine was supported by a short-lived message board. The last record in the Wayback Machine internet history website for the *Broke in Korea* message board is May 2008.[171] According to most interviewees who were in Korea in the late 2000s, the message board turned out not to be the best place to build a safe, supportive community for English language punks; the site was often overshadowed by trolling behavior, and fights with extreme conservatives. It mainly became a site for political arguments rather than a place to learn about punk and promote shows.[172] Paul left Korea in 2007 and joined the US Army.[173] It is not clear when the site officially shut down, but according to Jon, it was not intentional; Paul likely missed "a notice of renewal or something."[174]

Jon Dunbar started the longer-lasting digital community page for English language Korean punk information: the "Korean Punk & Hardcore" Facebook page in 2005.[175] While not labeled with the "Broke in Korea" name, and not directly associated with the *Broke in Korea* zine, most people I spoke to saw the page as connected to *Broke* because it was also run by Jon. Jon or another moderator usually posted once a week, announcing the shows all over the country (not just Seoul), and then posting detailed information for each show in the comments. The Facebook page also works to help new fans find out about shows in Seoul, and provides an album full of clear maps to different venues where shows typically take place. Most posts are in both Korean and English.[176]

The *Broke in Korea* zine is published sporadically, but still going strong, typically having new issues one or twice a year. The zine is free and available both physically and in a digital

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[169] Jon Twitch, ed. "The 2006 Brokeys," *bROKe in Korea* 3 (Winter 2006): 24.
[170] It is ironic that the category of "best female musician" was removed after the first Brokeys because it was "sexist," but as Jon pointed out, no one complains that these foreigner categories are "racist." (Twitch, "Letter from the Editor," 2).
[171] "bROKe in Korea-Punk Rock in Korea-bROKe," *Proboards,* archived May 30, 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080530161454/http://brokeinkorea.proboards46.com/index.cgi?board=zine
[172] Most of these fights were "one alt-right poster against the rest of us" as Jon put it in our interview. He published a separate zine that was basically this poster's rants, which he called "Fuck the Internet Verv" which can be found at the same site of the Broke in Korea downloads (Jon Dunbar, "Index of /broke," *Daehanmindecline*, accessed June 10, 2019, http://www.daehanmindecline.com/broke/).
[173] Jon Dunbar, "November Archives," *Daehanmindecline,* archived April 27, 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080427171943/http://www.daehanmindecline.com/archive/archive/200711.html; Jon Twitch and Paul Stuckey, "So Long Suckers," *bROKe in Korea* 5, Winter 2007, 3.
[174] Jon Dunbar, Facebook messenger.
[175] Korean Punk & Hardcore, "Korean Punk & Hardcore - About," *Facebook*, accessed Jan 27, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/pg/koreanpunkandhardcore/about/?ref=page_internal.
[176] There have been a lot of visitor posts and much community engagement on the page; although in 2019, the majority of posts were people asking about shows, or musicians trying to promote their shows.

archive on Jon Dunbar's website, daehanmindecline.com. [177] It is difficult to get a physical copy without going to a punk show; the first time I met Jon Dunbar in fall 2016 he was handing out stacks of Broke in Korea Issue 23 to anyone at a show who would take them. He typically points people to the archive if they ask for a copy once the printed ones run out.

Language Barrier

While the second wave of Korean punks (see chapter two) had utilized technology to solidify a sense of community, foreigners had a more difficult time getting information and "breaking into" the scene due to the language barrier. Inevitably, foreigners stumbled upon shows and venues. Jeff Moses, an American punk musician, described his early days as a foreigner in the scene:

> The first show I went to, the white people at the show were Jessie, Jon Dunbar, Tel, Rachel Kind, and Paul. Maybe one or two people I didn't know. There were a handful of foreigners who went to punk shows. People that hang out in Hongdae, they didn't find out. You had to search to find [it]…I went to Itaewon, met these girls at a bar, they looked kind of punky, and the one girl said, "Tell me about [the music scene]..." there's just this [word-of-mouth] thing to find it. There was no Myspace, or Facebook page yet. So, it was really hard to find. There weren't many foreigners.[178]

Although the Skunk label, associated with second wave venue Club Skunk Hell, had a rudimentary English language website including a message board as far back as 2002,[179] most foreigners I interviewed who resided in Korea in the 2000s reported that the main barrier to the scene for them was language. All the promotional materials, Daum cafes, information, and community building was in Korean. Most foreign residents did not have enough Korean language skills to be able to find and understand this information. Even when the information was understandable it was still difficult to decipher. Most foreigners who were around at this time have a story about how they tried to follow a tiny map in the bottom corner of a flyer with no luck, or stumbled onto a club accidentally, or had very inaccurate directions from a secondhand source that caused them to miss shows.

One of the original goals of *Broke in Korea* was to create a bilingual zine that included contributions from both Korean and foreign members of the scene. There have been many attempts to make *Broke in Korea* completely bilingual, but the time needed to get translations usually ends up delaying the magazine, and so far no magazine has been completely bilingual. In our 2016 interview, Dunbar said the original hope of the zine was to have "articles written and translated in both languages to allow cultural exchange between the few foreigners involved in the scene at the time and the Koreans. However, this proved way too much work, and by taking the path of least resistance we ended up here."[180] The letter from the editor in the second issue laments this fact: "Our biggest failing with issue 1 was in never completing the translations. The original idea was to run it bilingual, but we couldn't get help. It's important to us to reach

[177] Dunbar, "Index of /broke."
[178] Jeff Moses, interview.
[179]Skunk Label, "Skunk Label," archived August 6, 2002, https://web.archive.org/web/20020806224340/http://skunklabel.com/etop.html.
[180] Twitch, "Letter from the Editor," 2.

foreigners who are genuinely interested in our scene, but we also want the opportunity to let our Korean readers know what's on our minds. This is your country and we don't want that to change." There was more than a year between Issue 2 and Issue 3, again due to waiting for translations. The letter from the editor in that issue stated that many articles became "outdated" waiting for translations and had to be scrapped. There was also the idea of having the entire third issue written by Koreans, and then translated into English, but that idea never came to fruition.

Despite never reaching the goal of being completely bilingual, *Broke in Korea* helped facilitate cross-lingual understanding between foreign and Korean punks in other ways. One of the more interesting features in almost every issue is the "Say What!?! Misheard Lyrics in Korean Punk Songs...Revealed" segment. This segment features the lyrics and translation of popular punk songs of the time, especially those often misunderstood by foreigners. Along with the translation is a brief background paragraph on the artist and the topic of the song, sometimes with direct input from the artist. This segment works to bridge the language gap and help foreign punks understand what Korean bands are singing about.

Even though Dunbar was frustrated about the lack of bilingual material in the zine, it seems that the creation of English language material ended up being useful for Korean punks as much as foreign ones. As early as April of 2005, the Broke in Korea board was listed on Club Skunk Hell's English language page under "Send us feedback on our message board."[181] This connection to an important punk venue as their "message board" shows the way that Broke in Korea was integrated into Korean digital spaces. So although there may not have been the amount of cultural exchange that was originally the goal, the zine and boards worked to help Korean punk reach English-speaking audiences and create an English language digital community that was connected to the Korean language one.

Social Behavior: The 15 Commandments

While language caused difficulties for foreigners trying to find shows and get to know the punk scene, differences in the social behaviors of foreign and Korean punks caused conflicts once foreigners starting going to shows. Some foreigners discovered at their first show that what it meant to "act like a punk" in terms of anti-mainstream ideology was understood differently by Koreans and foreigners. The over-the-top anarchist behavior of some foreign punks clashed with the less aggressive punk lifestyles and actions that had been adopted by Korean punks in the 1990s. To avoid a rift between Korean punks and foreign punks, foreigners who had joined the scene early on worked to police the behavior of other foreigners.

This denouncing of bad foreigner behavior is best illustrated with an anecdotal example. On April 16, 2005, a male American Airman and a female Canadian English teacher snuck up the stairwell from the basement venue Club Skunk Hell during the last band's set and began to have sex. Both were extremely intoxicated and did not heed warnings by Club Skunk Hell owner Won Jonghee to stop. What is worse, the couple was having sex against the door of a residence, and the occupants were likely inside, as the owner of the building was informed of the situation. The male was chased away by other foreigners, and according to an informant, he was

[181] Skunk Label, "Skunk Label," archived April 7, 2005, https://web.archive.org/web/20050407015618fw_/http://www.skunklabel.com/eman.html.

arrested for a fight elsewhere in Hongdae and given an Article 15 by the military, meaning a reduction in rank, 45 days extra duties and a fine of up to 45 days' pay (often called a 45/45). Neither participant was ever seen at a show again. In a *Broke in Korea* article about the incident, the male is reported as saying to another foreign punk that Korean punks were too uptight and rioting, public sex, and chaos are part of the punk lifestyle. Both Korean and foreign punks quoted in the article condemned his remarks, arguing that foreign punks should conform to the norms of the Korean scene.[182]

That incident, combined with some of the questionable graffiti in the club (particularly the spray-painted Korean word *Ddaesship* 떼씹, which translates to group sex), led to accusations that Skunk was a sex club. The residents of the building threatened to sue Won if the graffiti wasn't erased, so on April 21, Won and some volunteers painted over most of the graffiti outside Skunk.[183] As they were covering the graffiti closer to the club's entrance, they were told the stairway into the club did not need to be erased, so some graffiti remained.[184]

The incident had a rippling effect throughout the scene, and led to a pushback on foreign punk behavior. Skunk Hell's webpage in November of 2005,[185] a few months after the incident, included the following disclaimer in English:

> **This is not your country.** If you're new to Skunk Hell, try to keep a low profile until you figure out how things work. If you get too drunk, try to pick up Korean punk girls, mosh too hard, or heckle bands you know nothing about, you will find yourself very vulnerable in a room full of angry punks and skinheads. If you're looking for fights, loose women, or you don't like Koreans, there are several alternatives just a few blocks away."[186]

While not officially referencing the situation, it makes it clear the kinds of tensions that arose from the increase in foreign punks involved in the scene. Fighting, racism, heckling, and sexism were not problems that just foreigners created; but the lack of respect for the norms of not just Korean culture, but Korean punk culture, was what caused much of the tension.

Although the first issue of *Broke in Korea* was published before this incident, it shows that foreigner behavior was already an issue being discussed. Next to the map showing how to get to Skunk Hell on the first issue of *Broke in Korea* are "The 15 Commandments of Korean Punk," written by Paul Mutts (Brickey). These commands are meant to pre-empt any undesirable behavior that reflects poorly on all foreigners. About half are focused on the basic information

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[182] Jon Twitch, "Group Sex in Skunk Hell: Sensationalist Headline Shakes Community," *bROKe in Korea* 2 (Fall 2015): 2.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Jon Dunbar, interview.
[185] Between the situation discussed here and the announcement was also what is referred to as "The Music Camp Incident," where two punks stripped on live television during a RUX performance, which led to generally negative opinions of the punk scene in the general public. This announcement, while direct at foreigners, may also be a way of deflecting opinions about negative behavior onto foreign punks.
[186] Skunk Label, "Skunk Label," archived November 8, 2005, https://web.archive.org/web/20051108180852/http://www.skunklabel.com/eman.html

about when shows are, how they function, and what to expect. These were the rules focused on procedure and general mechanics of how shows operate:

> *1. Get here early. Shows here usually start around 6:30 or 7:00pm and end around eleven, give or take.*
>
> *2. You can always ask for an encore. In fact, it's rather encouraged.*
>
> *3. Show up with the right currency. Remember, you're in Korea. There aren't money exchanges everywhere, and your money isn't as awesome as you think.*
>
> ---
>
> *5. There's usually an after-party after the shows, and if you stick around someone will invite you along. Just be sure and pitch in for the bill.*
>
> ---
>
> *7. Bringing drinks in the club is fine, if not encouraged. If you break a bottle, especially in the moshing area, make every effort to clean up the pieces.*
>
> ---
>
> *10. If you have a bag or jacket you want to take off (and keep relatively safe) give it to anyone behind the counter and be sure to remember who you gave it to. Jon or some other foreigner will usually be back there to help you. I've been going to punk shows in Korea for many years, and I have not seen something actually stolen*
>
> ---
>
> *15. We have shows just about every Saturday in Skunk Hell. One show is rarely advertised more than a week in advance, so we have schedules just like how all the bathrooms have toilet paper.*

Many of the things discussed here can differ from scene to scene, like start times, drink policies, and scheduling. So those parts of the list are meant to help acclimate new punks from a logistical/functional standpoint.

The other rules on the list, however, are focused on behavioral aspects of the scene, and work to (comically) illustrate what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior for foreigners. Most of the other points on this list could be considered variants on rule #4:

> *4. Being an asshole at a show doesn't make you punk; it makes you an asshole.*

The list also drew a line between what was "acceptable" punk behavior, and behavior deemed destructive to the scene. Some new foreign punks seemed to think that punk ideology meant "anything goes," and all behavior should be acceptable. But more established and

assimilated punks like Brickey and Dunbar pushed back on this. Some of the points on the list dealt specifically with Korean culture:

> *9. There's a time and place for everything. The time for macho-man shirtless screaming is inside, during the show. For the most part, Koreans are still not quite comfortable with shirtlessness. Besides, you need a tan and a bodywax.*
>
> ---
>
> *11. Be polite. That's very important in this country if you haven't already guessed. We see enough foreigners that a rude one wouldn't be missed.*
>
> *12. You'd be surprised at how many Koreans speak English, but don't expect them to use it around a stranger. In all honesty, you should be making an effort to learn Korean.*
>
> *13. The customary hierarchy rules apply even at a punk show, more or less. Pour drinks for your friends, use both hands, don't treat locals like dogs and stupid shit like that. Common sense is a rare commodity.*

Most of these have to do with social rules and larger cultural norms in Korea—not being shirtless outside, pouring drinks using both hands, and not treating locals like "dogs" (the Korean word for dog is an insulting swear word when directed towards someone). But in general, these rules are all pointing towards respect and politeness towards Koreans; not expecting them to cater to the foreigners, but requiring foreigners to cater to the norms of Koreans.

Other rules focused specifically on levels of violence and aggression, and how those would be dealt with by other punks:

> *6. No stupid soldier bullshit. You shouldn't even be in the area anyway, so don't make an ass of yourself or you'll get booted, or worse*
>
> ---
>
> *8. Take off any wrist spikes or Casio watches before getting in the pit. If you don't, you'll get picked on. By me.*
>
> ---
>
> *14. Watch those elbows in the pit. You'll know if you're being a little rough. We'll know.*

Number 6 is especially important to note. Although many foreigners that first got into the scene were in the US military,[187] there weren't as many by this point. Nevertheless, there was a distinct anti-military theme in the rhetoric around "bad" foreigners in the zine. One foreign punk argued that the scene has rarely been anti-foreigner, more anti-military.[188] I found the "No stupid soldier bullshit" echoed in many interviews I did with both foreign and Korean punk musicians

[187] In fact, American GIs were the ones who gave Club Skunk its name, because it had no air conditioning. (Jonghee Won, interview).
[188] Ian White (punk musician), in interview with author, February 16, 2017.

during my fieldwork. Jon Dunbar, talking about helping foreigners find the scene, added "One of the big issues was we'd have kind of meathead military guys coming and then moshing really hard like punching little girls in the pit."[189] The assumptions about military personnel meant that new foreigners who fit preconceived notions of "military bros"—muscular, loud, aggressive—were typically watched closely by foreign punks when they first arrived.[190] Established foreign punks would intervene, verbally or physically, if the "army guys" acted out of line. But this did not mean that soldiers were not welcome in the scene; as long as they behaved appropriately, they were welcome to participate. Although this was not just military bros; during my fieldwork I saw foreign punks reacting warily to groups of new foreigners at performances, keeping an eye on them and looking for negative behavior. They would only act if the new foreigner became aggressive or acted outside of the expected norm.

I argue that early foreign punks were adamant about conforming to Korean norms and expectations due to the experience they had "discovering" the Korean punk scene, and the way that experience affected their understanding of their place in it. Foreign punks I interviewed who started in the 2000s tended to get their start by going to Korean punk shows, entering a Korean punk space, often as individuals. They were drawn to punk spaces because of the musical genre and the socialization associated with it; although the norms ended up being slightly different from those in their home countries, they still gave them a sense of home through the genre. They first found a sense of musical belonging in Korean punk clubs in Hongdae, rather than in foreign spaces like Haebangchon or Itaewon. They also often discovered these clubs as individuals, and rarely saw other foreigners at shows. Early foreign punks recognized they were walking into an already existing social space that, while similar to punk scenes they were used to in their home countries, had its own histories, rules, and structures. As solo visitors in this new space, they found it important to follow the social norms in order to fit in. Even as more solo foreigners trickled into the scene, there was still an emphasis on integrating with Korean punks and respecting the scene.

This list of commandments found in *Broke in Korea*, while joking in nature, reflects the anxieties of those early foreign punks to the influx of larger groups of new foreign punks who were not aware of the rules and etiquette of the scene. Too many aggressive foreign punks who refused to be respectful of Korean norms could create a rift between Korean and foreign punks in general, or create a toxic culture in the punk scene. Foreign punks were (and still are) often dogmatic about policing the foreign contingent of the scene themselves. As Jon Dunbar stated in an interview, "us foreigners were committed to helping new foreigners come into the scene and know how to behave and all the stuff and things like that. We want to try to keep the scene sustainable because too many foreigners could ruin a scene." [191] Part of this was chasing away people who give foreigners a bad image like the man in the sex incident cited at the beginning of this section. Much of the frustration had to do with foreign punks trying to prove they are more punk than Koreans by acting violently, spraying beer on everyone, groping women, or generally breaking social rules.[192] Many stories of so-called "bad foreigners" ended with fist fights, shouting matches, or the "bad foreigner" getting chased away. Most of the long-term foreign

[189] Jon Dunbar, interview.
[190] Most of the anti-military bias actually seemed to come from non-military foreign punks, not Koreans.
[191] Jon Dunbar, interview.
[192] Jon Twitch, "Punk Apartheid," *bROKe in Korea* 3 (Winter 2006): 11.

punks I interviewed ascribed to a doctrine of "When in Rome," trying to make foreign punks to adapt and adopt the norms of Korean punk culture.

Conclusion

Genre plays an important part in social cohesion during performances I attended. When there is a clearly defined genre, with specific social conventions and scripts, both performers and audiences have a sense of what is expected of them, regardless of their cultural background. Genres like punk have traveled the world with their distinct scripts of performance relatively unchanged. If participants are familiar with the genre, they understand what performers and audience members are expected to do, and what the goals of a punk show are. The main point of conflict came when shows were a mix of punk and other genres, where audience members' unfamiliar with (or not wanting to participate in) punk performance scripts disrupted another's ability to enjoy shows in the way they expected.

This globalized understanding helps to facilitate more cohesive intercultural interaction with these musicians than groups that do not have this genre basis. There is a blanket understanding of global punk culture; much of the typical and expected behavior is already well known by foreign punk fans before they arrive in Korea. Foreign punks endeavor to work with Korean punks, assimilating to local differences in punk culture and affirming Korean punks' ownership over the scene. Broke in Korea, the zine created by foreign punk fans and musicians, was a way to document the punk scene and create a sense of community while also teaching foreign punks about Korean social norms and how to be a "good" punk in Korea. The English language material helped a myriad of other foreigners access the scene. However, this influx of foreign fans and musicians meant that the balance between Korean and foreign punks also needed to be protected from aggressive foreigners who may upset the social ecosystem. Foreign punks tended to push these "bad foreigners" out, physically and socially isolating them until they no longer participated in the scene.

CHAPTER 4 SITUATIONAL SCRIPTS OF PERFORMANCE

IN MULT-SUBGENRE, MULTI-CULTURAL PERFORMANCE NETWORKS

Punk was certainly not the only genre of rock being played in the Korean underground scene. Both foreign and Korean punks operate very differently from musicians of other musical styles in my research. However, without that shared understanding of genre practice and the sense of belonging that comes from an association with a musical subculture and its community, intercultural interaction became a more complicated situation. In my observation (and participation) of these multi-subgenres, multi-cultural performances, I saw that there were situations where there seemed to be disconnections between how some participants expected others to behave and what actually occurred. Many of the disconnections I observed throughout my fieldwork had to do with conflicting understandings of situational scripts. Although there are many behaviors that seem universal to rock shows, there were certainly differences in the way Korean and foreign musicians understood the norms of rock performance.

In a situational script, the situation needs to be specified. Without clear situational guidelines, like ones outlined by the tenets of genre (as was described previously with punk performance), participants have to draw from their experience and the context as they perceive it to form an understanding of what the situation is, and therefore what the situational script should be. These differing situational understandings of the both the situation they were in, and the goals of that situational script entailed, were the source of much of the conflict at multi-genre shows.

In this chapter, I analyze conflicts in situational scripts that occurred in a performance network centered on a band called Visuals. I first explain why this group was chosen as the center of this network, and what other bands were included as radial arms of the network. I then examine why the situational scripts for performance were ambiguous for participants. I argue that the combination of ambiguous practices of listening combined with musicians with genres of different levels of energy and styles of performance led audience members to struggle with what kind of "situation" the performance was, and how to properly act in that situation.

Finally, I describe how this lack of clarity in expected actions led participants to base their behaviors on other familiar scripts. I outline the differences in ideology of visual style, performer/audience interaction, and audience behavior to illustrate how differing "scripts" dictating how participants should act played out in the contexts of the shows I experienced. The goals of these two scripts, close listening versus socialization, were different, which made it a struggle for both of these to be fully fulfilled. The "directions" on how participants should behave were often in direct conflict with each other, leading to power struggles of which script would prevail, or if the conflict of the two would lead to no one fully enjoying themselves.

These different scripts also meant that audience members were judging performers by different metrics. Those that preferred the more professional, concert-like behaviors of Korean-style scripts saw the behavior of others as disrespectful and disruptive. On the other hand, those that preferred the more social, party-oriented behaviors of the foreigner-style script thought others were too stuffy and serious, and didn't get the "feel" of rock culture. While it is important

to note that not all Koreans preferred Korean-style, and not all foreigners preferred foreigner-style, this is how my interlocutors categorized the sets of behaviors that make up the two scripts.

A Multi-Subgenre, Multi-Cultural Network Cluster

In this chapter, I have chosen to focus on a band called Visuals and their surrounding social and performance networks. Visuals was a band that started during my fieldwork, and included three musicians who were already members of multiple established bands. Ali Safavi, an Iranian by way of the United Kingdom, played bass. Jonathan [Jon] Jacobson, a mixed-race American played drums, and Ethan Waddell, a Korean adoptee who grew up in the United States, played guitar. Ali and Ethan were both part of bands (Mountains and Table People, respectively) that were in an organization called Loose Union that I will discuss in Chapter 6. Jon was a member of the band Tierpark, which while not officially a member of Loose Union, had close connections with many members, and even made an appearance on the Loose Union "Live at Union Studios" YouTube series.[193]

Each of the members of Visuals were also part of other bands that predated my fieldwork. While some of these bands were of varying genres, from folk to punk, each member had a band playing music that had some compositional similarities to Visuals. These bands, Tierpark, Mountains, and Space Boutique, became like spokes, connecting Visuals to other performance networks. Jon also played guitar in the band Tierpark, with his Korean-Australian wife Sehee as the lead singer, Laurent, a Belgian architect on drums, and Nathan, a white American on bass. One of the bands Ali was in, called Mountains, started when he first lived in Daegu, a city a few hours away from Seoul by train. The lead singer was a white British songwriter named Stephen and the drummer was a Korean adoptee raised in Canada, Andrew. Mountains labels themselves as Math Rock, which is described by guitarist Stephen on his "Let's Talk About Math Rock" website as "structured chaos."[194] Both of these bands predated my fieldwork, and are still performing at the time of writing this dissertation. Ethan played guitar in a variety of projects, and towards the end of my fieldwork he was part of a band called Space Boutique, which was comprised of former members of the Loose Union band Table People; Korean Myoung on bass and Korean Seoyoung on drums. They started to work with Korean singer songwriter Hyunwoo, and while their songs are more experimental-electronic rock than Post Rock, they share sonic similarities to the other three bands I discuss.[195]

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[193] Loose Union, "Tierpark | Shadow Play [그림자림그] | Live At Union Studio," *YouTube,* September 4, 2015, https://youtu.be/EOZ8He9ndi8.

[194] Steve Hazel, "Math Rock Guitar Lessons – Let's Talk About Math Rock," *Let's Talk About Math Rock,* accessed July 12, 2020, http://letstalkaboutmathrock.com/.

[195] In turn, these four bands have members who are then connected to different social networks of music making, sonically, culturally, and spatially. For example, Sehee used to be a solo singer-songwriter, and stays connected to musicians she knew before she joined Tierpark. Through her connections, Tierpark was a part of a Korean musician's collective called "Feed My Frankenstein." Ali often invited musicians from Daegu to play in Seoul with his bands, and Mountains was in Loose Union before its decline. Ali was also in a punk band, called Machines, and would sometimes curate shows that mix these two worlds. Ethan was in another band, Grey Watson and the Visions, which had a rotating roster but centered on Grey Watson, the white American songwriter, lead singer, and guitarist. Grey Watson was very connected to music making communities in HBC near Itaewon, and the bands he invited to play were closely related to foreign networks of folk performance.

These bands were able to play together semi-regularly due to the social connections they had, which helped secure venues for their shows. Even if Visuals was not playing, the members of Visuals often came to support their band member's other bands. Most shows were musician-curated. In some situations shows in the scene are curated by venue owners, and musicians have to audition to be on the roster of bands included in these shows, but a majority of venues were available for rent. The rental price varied widely depending on the musician I asked, and often was negotiated based on how much the venue owner thought they would make based on the band lineup the musician provided. This was a situation where having personal connections with venue owners made putting a show together easier. The four bands I mentioned often curate their own shows, and were well connected with many venue owners all over Korea. Occasionally these bands were invited to play by other friends and musicians they knew.

I chose to center on Visuals because each member of the band had multiple other bands they played in, both at the time of my fieldwork and predating it that led them to curate complex multi-subgenre, multi-racial, and multi-spatial networks of performance. The musicians in Visuals also have long histories of playing music in Korea, and therefore have cultivated social and performance networks connected to different spaces, genres, and social groups. The demographics of their shows, in terms of nationality, thus fluctuated wildly depending on which bands they were playing with that night. This means that there was often not only a mix of situational scripts associated with different musical styles, but also a mix of foreign and Korean participants, all together leading to different expectations and understandings that created conflict amongst groups.

I would argue that there are two main components that led to participants choosing different situational scripts of performance at these shows. The first is the compositional techniques that Visuals, Tierpark, Mountains, and to some extent Space Boutique, utilized when writing their songs. The repetitive yet complex nature of Post Rock (the genre they all in some way associate with) can lead one to see this music as either something to be enjoyed by listening closely, or something that creates an ambience or mood as background. The second component is that while the bands I have centered on in this network cluster utilize those techniques, not all of them did.

Issue 1: Ambiguity of Expected Listening Due to Compositional Techniques

In order to understand the conflicting situational scripts at shows put on by bands in the network of musicians, it is important to examine the compositional techniques that connect the central bands of this cluster. The complex yet repetitive style that these bands featured led to conflicting ideas about how this music should be enjoyed. While Visuals, Tierpark, Mountains, and Space Boutique all had their own list of multiple subgenres of rock that they drew from, there were certain compositional and performance techniques that connected these bands. "Post Rock" is a term I sometimes use to refer to these bands, because the musicians sometimes used it as one (of their many) genre descriptions. Post Rock is defined as a "genre of experimental rock

music that combined elements of art rock, jazz, and alternative with electronic influences to create richly textured soundscapes."[196]

Post Rock songs typically utilize "nontraditional rhythms, melodies, and chord progressions" that repeat and build to create "ambience by altering the colour and quality of the sound."[197] The bands in this group typically had repeated melodic ideas. Besides the use of layering a repetition, the use of complex meters was also a feature in many Post Rock bands. Most common was the use of 7/8, but sometimes bands utilized a unique mixture of meters to give repeated melodic ideas a more unsettling feeling. Here is an example of a multi-meter guitar line from the song "불꽃 (*Bulkkot*-Flame)" by Tierpark.

*Figure 4.1 Transcription of guitar lines in the song "불꽃 (*Bulkkot-*Flame)" by Tierpark (3:06-3:55)* [198]

Another defining feature of these bands was the layering of these melodies on top of each other using guitar pedals that could record and loop the sound during live performance. From about two minutes to the end of the Visuals song "Make Mine Remarkable," layers are added and removed to change the texture of the overall song. While I indicate measure numbers in my analysis, it is important to note that the timing of adding or removing layers was more flexible. The performers would often watch each other closely and someone would indicate when they would add a new part or shift to the next section. This was often due to technical issues in recording and looping back the melodies, which if done improperly would throw off the rest of the song.

[196] Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Post-rock | music | Britannica," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, last updated November 18, 2016, accessed July 12, 2020, https://www.britannica.com/art/post-rock.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Tierpark, "불꽃 (Bulkkot)," *Bandcamp*, October 8, 2013, https://seoultierpark.bandcamp.com/track/bulkkot; Transcription by author.

Layer 1 (in 6/8): Sixteenth alternating notes in harmony between guitar and bass. These are recorded using a pedal and then looped.
Layer 2 (2:21): After 8 measures, the guitar comes in with distorted chords, playing them on the downbeat of every other measure After another 8 measures (2:35), bass joins with a note played at the same intervals as the distorted guitar chords
Layer 3 (3:03): After 16 measures, the distortion from layer 2 drops out, as well as the bass repeated sixteenths from layer 1. The guitar adds a harmony layer of sixteenths above his original recorded guitar line (which has been looping since 2:05).
Layer 4 (3:14): After 6 measures, the guitarist plays a lower pitched layer of dotted eighth notes in a melody pattern similar to so-re-mi-do (P4-M2-M3). This emphasis on four beats per measure destabilizes the feeling of 6/8, making the sound feel like a 4/4, with triplet sixteenths
Layer 5 (3:21): Four measures later the bass comes in with running eighth notes. This creates a hemiola effect against the guitar line.
Layer 6/7 (3:29, 3:35): After 4 measures, the guitar adds another layer of harmony above the dotted eighth note rhythm, and a drum hit 4 measure later signals the start of the a third harmony to this line pitched even higher.
Removing layers (3:50): After eight measures of all parts going together, the guitarist then starts shutting off different layers using his pedal board, while the bass adds another harmony layer to the so-re-mi-do pattern. The layers were recorded on different channels so they could be turned on and off as needed. By at this point the guitarist is no longer playing, but controlling the different layers he has recorded on his pedal board, and waiting for the signal from the drummer and bassist to shut them all down at the same time. This kind of performance required a lot of nonverbal communication between performers, as getting the lines recorded and played back properly when performing live could cause some of the timings to change.

Figure 4.2 Structural Analysis of "Make Mine Remarkable" by Visuals (from 2:05-end)[199]

Post Rock often has an introspective but energetic sound, leading to questions of how it should best be enjoyed in a live setting. Its complexity could draw one in to focused, attentive listening, but it repetitiveness creates a blending of sound that could be seen as mood-setting background music. The main divide between audiences seemed to center around how the listeners thought this music was "best enjoyed." Should audiences participate in focused listening, adopting a classic music-like situational script? Or was this music meant as background sound, to set an atmosphere for a social gathering? Korean and foreign participants seemed to draw from other social and situational scripts when setting expectations at a show that

[199] Loose Union, "Visuals | Make Me Remarkable | Live at Union Studios," *YouTube*, December 8, 2016, https://youtu.be/kk13Qnf2V2Y; Analysis by author.

included Post Rock bands. The reason for the difference in situational scripts for these two groups is related to a difference in listening goals.

Issue 2: Multi-Subgenre Performances

This uncertainty about the "best" way to listen to Post Rock was exacerbated by the wide variety of bands these groups played with, and the different genres the bands played. Once I started tracing performance networks that were connected to these four groups, the genres of music at shows became highly varied, and many of those musical techniques had little to do with how the bands outside of the core set I discuss here sounded. Even when my network of musician friends was small, I still had many Friday and Saturday nights where there were multiple gigs with musicians I knew playing. Although I could not attend them all, tracking these different line-ups of performances gave me the opportunity to understand the strength of performance-based connections by how often bands played together.

I consider Visuals to be the center of this social cluster, and the three other bands are closely related in genre and have overlapping personnel, leading to closer social and performance-based ties. This does not mean these four bands played together at every show. Often, one or two of the bands would play a show where the line-up included two or more other bands, who often had very different sounds and compositional techniques. Some shows included punk bands, folk rock groups, acoustic singer/songwriters, grunge inspired bands, and electropop groups, just to name a few. The bands they played with were also varied in terms of their racial/cultural demographics. While the four groups I mentioned above are generally a mix of foreigners and Koreans, the other two or three bands on the show's lineup could have members that were all Korean, all foreigners, or a mix of the two.

Band	**Number of shows**	**Bands Genre**	**Race/Gender demographics**
Rough Cuts	8	Slacker Rock	4 white men (UK, US)
DABDA	6	Pastel Psychedelic (Math Rock)	3 Korean men, 1 Korean woman
Airy	5	Singer/Songwriter (Acoustic Folk)	Korean woman
Grey with the Visions	3	Folk Rock	Korean US adoptee, 1 Korean woman (for some shows) 3 white men (US, Canada)
Tallulah Bankhead	3	Folk Rock/Psychedelic	3 white men (US, Canada)
Octopouple	3	Punk/Electronic	1 white man (France)
Machines	3	Punk	Iranian-Brit, 2 white men (Ireland, US)

Figure 4.3 Frequency table with characteristics of common bands

Figure 4.3 is a frequency table showing bands that played shows during my fieldwork with at least two of the four central bands I am discussing. These bands also played at least three different shows that included one or more of the four central bands; I've listed the number of shows in the next column. I've also included these bands racial, gender, and national demographics, as well as the most common genre tag they use on social media and music distribution sites. With these most frequent bands, there is a mix of genre styles, nationality and gender. Some are more energetic styles, while some are more contemplative. This again adds to the conflicting ideas on how audience members should act and react.

There are a number of both social and musical ties that led this eclectic mix of bands to play together. First, there is personnel overlap between Visuals and two of these bands: Ethan was also a member of Grey Watson with the Visions, and Ali was a member of the punk band Machines. The members of Rough Cuts were good friends with the members of Visuals, and musicians in Rough Cuts had ties to bands in Loose Union, which help explain why they show up most often with Visuals and similar bands, despite their very different genres. It is also noteworthy that the drummer of Rough Cuts was Patrick Conner (whose initiative DoIndie will be discussed in Chapter six). Grey Watson with the Visions and Tallulah Bankhead were both fronted by Grey Watson; the Visions band was active during the first half of my fieldwork and Tallulah Bankhead was formed in the last part of my fieldwork.. Octopouple, a solo artist from France, had a connection to the group through Machines, but his performance style also included a lot of looping and technology. He played drums, but used certain patterns to trigger previously recorded guitar loops, vocals, and other sounds that filled out his songs.

It is important to note that all the aforementioned foreigner majority bands play genres that are up-tempo and energetic. Some of Tallulah Bankhead's performances were more improvisatory, but the others tended to play genres where they expected energy from the crowd, through movement, head bobbing, or other signs of interest. DABDA, one of the bands with a majority of Korean musicians on this list, has sonic and compositional similarities to Post Rock composition techniques, making it one of the only groups that is connected to the central three groups in terms of genre. Airy, the Korean singer and songwriter, had often played as an opener for Loose Union shows, and she was friends with lead singer Sehee of Tierpark. Her performances were usually solo acoustic guitar, and her songs strongly emphasized lyrics and story, much like the American folk music of the 1960s and 1970s. During my fieldwork she experimented with playing her songs on electric guitar, and with Korean men on drums, bass, and rhythm guitar. But her songs were more contemplative and slower in nature.

It is important for me to recognize that while I am grouping these four bands together due to their musical similarities and overlap in personnel, they each have their own identity and their own social connections that are not always shared across bands. The next chart (Figure 4.4) includes bands that played at least two shows with one of the four bands. I've also listed which bands they played with, and the number of times they played with them. Note that the sum of these numbers will often exceed the number of shows they played with the central bands, as sometimes two central bands were on the same show with the other bands listed.

Band	**Number of Shows**	**Played with bands:**
Rough Cuts	8	Visuals (7) Space Boutique (1) Mountains (3)
DABDA	6	Visuals (3) Space Boutique (1) Tierpark (2) Mountains (2)
Airy	5	Visuals (2) Space Boutique (1) Tierpark (2)
Grey w/ Visions	3	Visuals (2) Space Boutique (2)
Tallulah Bankhead	3	Visuals (1) Space Boutique (2)
Octopouple	3	Visuals (2) Space Boutique (1) Mountains (1)
Machines	3	Visuals (2) Space Boutique (1) Mountains (2)
Daydream	2	Space Boutique (1) Tierpark (2)
Summer Coats	2	Visuals (1) Mountains (2)
Hate Hate Cake	2	Space Boutique (1) Tierpark (1)
Khorhaj Chora	2	Visuals (1) Space Boutique (1)
Mohana	2	Visuals (1) Tierpark (1)
Pakk	2	Visuals (1) Mountains (1)
Sears	2	Visuals (1) Tierpark (1)
Blue Turtle Land	2	Space Boutique (2)
Clamano	2	Tierpark (2)
DJ Jahero	2	Space Boutique (2)
DJ 정전(Jeong Jeon)	2	Tierpark (2)
DyoN Joo	2	Tierpark (2)
투명 (Tu Myeong)	2	Tierpark (2)

Figure 4.4 Frequency Chart showing the group(s) with which each band performed.

It is important to note that the majority of bands not on the previous table are Korean or majority Korean (with the exception of one, Summer Coats). Thirteen bands played with at least two different bands, which shows the way that the four bands are connected through

performance networks. However, six bands played with the same band in two different shows, which illustrates that while these four bands are connected, they each have their own disparate performance networks that they are also drawing from to put performances together, and those ties are not being shared across groups.

Conflicting Situational Scripts

While there are likely many mixed genre performance networks in Seoul, I chose to focus on this one because of their mix of both genres and participant demographics at shows. At shows where these bands played, I was able to observe patterns of different actions that Korean and foreign participants displayed, as well as how those participants dealt with conflict. Due to the fact that this group does not see their unity in their genre, the musical situational scripts of how to act were unclear.

In this section I will discuss the scripts utilized in the "situation" of shows that included bands of multiple genres that I mentioned in the previous tables. Because there were multiple genres involved, there was a lack of clear, subgenre-based scripts. Therefore, participants organized their scripts around specific goals. When my interlocutors described the behaviors of the Korean-style script, the goal was based on listening to the performers, sitting and watching respectfully and supportively; this set of behaviors was described as similar to how one behaves at a (Western) "classical music" concert. For the foreigner-style script, the goal described by participants was socializing and having a good time, using the performance as a background; the show was like a party, where the performance was happening as a reason to "hang out."

Musicians and audiences who followed the Korean-style script saw performing as a professional activity, and as such, they drew from situational scripts closely related to (Western) classical music performance scripts. Audiences had a goal of focused listening in these multi-genre shows. The bands typically played music that was meant to be complex and well performed, and there was little movement by performers, who dress professionally. Before a song started, the singer would often describe the meaning or story behind the song, like a form of verbal program notes. Audiences saw attentively and listened to performers at these shows.

For foreigner-style audiences and performers, the goal of these multi-genre shows was to attend an entertaining social event. The music was meant to create a mood. The goal for both performer and audience was to "have fun," whatever that meant to the individual. Therefore shows often have a party-like atmosphere. Performers sometimes sacrifice clarity of sound for emotional atmosphere, they move around with high energy, and are dressed more casually than bands who followed a more Korean-style script. There was little to no talking between songs. Audiences were typically standing, and they drank and talked to each other during performances, sometimes right in front of the performers.

The shows the musicians in this network cluster programmed often alternated between majority Korean with one or two foreign bands, and majority foreign with one or two Korean bands. As audience demographics often mirrored performer demographics, this led the balance to shift widely from show to show, meaning that no one set of actions was typical. However, certain bands with foreign members were often discussed as "more Korean" if they performed in the Korean style, and therefore tended to draw a "more Korean style" audience. The same

happened in the opposite direction; Korean bands that performed more like foreign bands were discussed as being "more foreign," and drew a foreign style audience. Some foreign musicians described these bands as "better" than other Korean bands, which shows how systems of value were layered onto a musician (or audience's) ability to perform the expected situational script. The bands at the center of this cluster were often good at code switching between what was expected of them at a majority foreign show, or a majority Korean show. But some of the bands that were more peripherally related were a bit shocked by the disconnection between their expectations of audience behavior and what they experienced.

For the rest of this chapter, I will discuss some of the major points of conflict between these two scripts found in this network of musicians as discussed by interviewees: the clothing and visual style, the performer's communication with the audience through lyrics and between-song banter, and the audience behavior. I will discuss the viewpoints of both sides through anecdotes and interviews, and how these conflicts often played out in practice. I found that as I started to define and describe these differences, I could better understand where the criticisms of "foreigner-style" bands by Koreans, and "Korean style" bands by foreigners were coming from. Each of these points of conflict is an issue where different ideas of what makes a "good" rock band created different systems of value for Korean and foreign musicians.

Clothing and Visual Style

The first major difference between the Korean-style script and the foreigner-style script had less to do with acting out a situational script, and more with the social script that led participants being judged while acting out the situational script: the way that bands dressed and styled themselves on stage. While many musicians discussed this issue peripherally in interviews or informal conversations, it was best defined in a conversation I had during my interview with the Tierpark's lead singer Sehee. She is Korean-Australian, and the rest of Tierpark are foreign men. At first I was asking Sehee about any difficulties she faced in the scene that she felt were related to gender. She started discussing the pressures for female lead singers to dress in a way that portrays the image of her band. But as she continued to explain the issue, she started to discuss her male foreign bandmates and their view on image. In doing so she articulated a difference between Korean and foreign male performers:

> The rest of [Tierpark] does not care at all [about fashion], they just wear a singlet, you know, whatever, oh yeah, a shirt…they're not, like, image conscious at all. A lot of people that I talk to, and I ask them for feedback… And some people, some of my friends, mention that "You know, you should ask your band members to dress better," Some Korean friends of mine, they really said that. They literally like, pointed out, like "Oh Jon was wearing this singlet one time, like, that's not cool in Korea, you know." And they're like "Oh you know, your band members might be much cooler if they cared a little more about that." It's only from the Korean friends I have [heard that], not [from] the foreign friends.[200]

In the interview I admitted to her that criticisms of the way her bandmates dressed initially surprised me. The men of her band, Tierpark, tended to dress in t-shirts and jeans or shorts. Their

[200] Sehee Kim (lead singer and guitarist of Tierpark), in interview with author, June 2, 2017.

clothes were not always the cleanest looking or new, but in my mind that is what rock musicians looked like, so it did not give me pause. But as she talked about these criticisms, I started to reflect on the Korean bands I had seen play with Tierpark.

> Author: Because I think with the foreigner scene, especially with guys…the t-shirt, jeans…that's just what you do. But with the Korean male musicians [your band plays with] that I see, it's very much more…not even like dressed up, but just like, well groomed
>
> Sehee: Yes, Yes
>
> Author: Like a very clean, nice [looking]
>
> Sehee: or they have to be very indie looking, you know, very funky…very wacky in a way. It's either one of those, very clean cut, very nicely groomed, or very like "I don't care [what you think].'[201]

This was the basic dichotomy between Korean and foreign band musicians in this social circle that we ended up discussing: Either bands were clean cut and dressed up, or off the wall, not caring what anyone thinks of their weird style. The clean cut style could be a kind of geek chic, with button ups and glasses, or for women a more natural, feminine style of dressing, with flowy clothing and flower patterns. The off the wall style was often crazy colors and unusual clothing items.

Some foreigners also dressed in this "I don't care" way, but Sehee mentioned a very important difference: For Korean musicians, this look was often understood as a stage persona, whereas for foreigners, being "odd" was an important aspect of their personal identity. A Korean musician with a wacky stage persona would not wear the same clothes on the street, she argued, whereas a foreign musician likely would. This emphasis on the importance of visual representation to Korean musicians was echoed in other interviews with musicians in this performance cluster.

This difference in separation of stage persona and real life may be a point where the cultural ideas of authenticity come into play. Scholars writing about Western rock culture describe authenticity as a type of social capital that, if lost, causes someone to lose credibility. For foreign musicians in Korea, the idea of being the same on and off stage was an important way of performing that rock authenticity; what you see is what you get. Putting on an image to be more successful would be a form of selling out, at least to many foreign rock musicians, as to them the point of the image is to get attention and be commercially successful.[202] But in Korean music culture, the idea of getting away with things one normally would not dare to wear or do in everyday life is the benefit of a stage persona. With K-pop in particular, one can be socially

[201] Ibid.
[202] Michael Coyle and Jon Dolan, "Modeling Authenticity, Authenticating Commercial Models," in *Reading Rock and Roll: Authenticity, Appropriation, Aesthetics,* eds. Kevin J.H. Dettmar and William Richey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 20.

punished for their personal life reflecting the "mediated image" meant for consumption.[203] While this musical style is certainly not K-pop, there still exists an understood separation for some Korean musicians between the on-stage persona, and the way they are allowed to act on-stage and the real life person, and how they are expected to act in society. Fitting in with what is expected, both in action and in the mediation of one's self-presentation, is an important skill in Korea. Having "nunchi (눈치, tact)," or being able to read the room and know what a social situation calls for in terms of self-presentation and action, is something that is impressed upon Koreans from a young age as a necessary ability to cultivate in order to be successful.[204] These behaviors, of course, are not universal for all Korean musicians involved in this group, but the pattern was noticeable.

The way one dressed for performance was often seen as indicative of how that person was expected to act. For foreign participants, it was expected that the actions one takes to prepare themselves for the stage would indicate their actions both on and off the stage. This is why many of them adopted more informal clothing; this choice was meant to indicate a "more" authentic, informal way of acting in social situations. For Korean participants, however, there was a separation in their social script between the way one dresses and acts on stage and the way that one acts in social situations in Korean society.

Performer/Audience Interaction: Banter, Lyrics and Language

While sound and image play a role in the preparation and planning of performance, what happens at shows often reflects the conflicting expectations of Korean and foreign participants. Communication is an important part of audience and performer interactions. While the way a performer acts while playing is an important part of how they are understood, in this section I will analyze two types of performed communication: "banter" and lyrics. I use "banter" to refer to the talking done between songs of a band's set. There is often a few minutes where musicians are adjusting settings, amps, pedals, and other equipment between songs. This time is especially necessary for bands like Visuals, as the use of recording and looping technology during performance requires a lot of pre-performance setup, and that setup often needs to change between songs. Typically the lead singer will talk to the audience to keep them engaged until the rest of the band is ready to play. The language, style, and amount of banter a band did was often a point of disagreement between Korean and foreign musicians.

The primary issue of banter in this multi-cultural scene was a linguistic issue: Should musicians speak in Korean or in English? Most musicians gauged the crowd demographics, and chose a language they thought the majority of the crowd can speak. If the musicians were not as familiar with the language, this often led to discomfort, for both Korean and Foreign musicians. I have noticed, however, that Koreans tended to feel a requirement to speak English to a majority foreign crowd, whereas foreigners tended to stick to English regardless.

[203] Heather A. Willoughby, "Image is Everything: The Marketing of Femininity in South Korean Popular Music," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, ed. Keith Howard (Kent: Global Oriental, 2006): 100.
[204] Euny Hong, *The Power of* Nunchi: *The Korean Secret to Happiness and Success,* (London: Penguin Life, 2019), 5.

When asking foreign musicians in interviews, there were a few different opinions on banter language. Some foreign musicians had already decided if they were going to speak in Korean or not before the performance even started, regardless of what the crowd demographics ended up being. When asking foreigners about speaking Korean, some felt that speaking Korean was important to help Korean audience members feel comfortable with the fact that they are foreigners, even if there were only a few Koreans in the audience. Others felt that it would be pandering to throw out the one or two words they know in Korean. I often saw foreign musicians who used even a few simple words in Korean, like hello and thank you, be met with applause and praise by Korean audiences. Some musicians disliked this reaction, and felt this was patronizing, as they displayed the language skills of a child.

Korean musicians, on the other hand, often feel a need to switch to English if a foreigner is present. It was common to see a lead singer frantically gesturing to his or her guitarist or drummer in the middle of a set urging them to say something in English. I found this to be common even if I was the only foreigner in attendance. In full transparency, this often made me feel very awkward, as it felt like they were trying to start a conversation with me about their song mid-set. If I responded to this in Korean with "It's okay, I understand," I was then praised for my basic Korean skills, but they would still often speak in English, directly to me. I found it interesting that musicians were adjusting their behaviors for a single audience member; I did not see this nearly as often with foreign bands. This tendency for Korean performers to shift to English, while foreign performers would not shift to Korean, could be seen as symbolic of unequal power relations between the groups. In general, shows that included both Korean and foreign bands tended to be in English language spaces, where in my experience Koreans who had acquired this linguistic skill often switched to English in order to communicate. Part of this may have to do with the way English is seen as a form of social capital one can use for social mobility; being able to display ability in English is seen as a positive trait for success.[205] Many white collar jobs in Korea require English proficiency, even though studies have shown that jobs requiring English proficiency in Korea rarely use English on the job unless in a position that directly deals with foreigners.[206] This use of English language ability as a gatekeeping mechanism has led to English proficiency being a marker of social status.

The style and performance of banter is also different between Korean and foreign musicians. Most foreign musicians that I have interviewed feel that Koreans talk more between songs. However, when looking at videos from both Korean and Foreign performances the amount of banter is more heavily dependent on genre than nationality. Storytelling genres, or light pop musicians, often talk with audiences more, while heavier styles of rock will talk less. This is why I did not discuss banter when talking about punk music; it is almost nonexistent. The participants in this network cluster perceived foreign bands as spending less time talking to the audience than Korean ones.

The perception that Korean bands talked more was likely fueled by the difference in the purpose of the banter. Korean musicians were usually explaining what the next song is about, and their banter was often felt rehearsed. Musicians would use similar introductions for a song at

[205] Jin-Kyu Park, "'English Fever' in South Korea: its History and Symptoms," *English Today* 25, no. 1 (March 2009): 50-51.
[206] Joseph Sung-Yul Park, "The Promise of English: Linguistic Capital and the Neoliberal Worker in the South Korean Job Market," *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 14, no. 4 (July 2011): 446.

every show. Foreign musicians, on the other hand, would usually use banter to interact with audience members, responding to them in the moment and often reacting to specific audience members. I would argue that foreign musicians feel that Koreans have more banter because of the different style of banter: foreign musicians may actually talk more, but their speaking is often more reactive/interactive than a monologue, and therefore it doesn't feel like as much talking.

Another important part of communicating with an audience is lyrics. For most of the central bands in this cluster, vocals and lyrics were the last thing added to songs. Typically the guitarist would come to practice with a specific guitar riff they wanted to work on. In some bands, the group would collaborate on adding layers and textures to the songs, while in other bands the guitarist would come with most of the song already formed. But vocals were often seen as just another musical layer, and lyrics were added last. Visuals did not have a vocalist, whereas Tierpark, Mountains, and Space Boutique did.

Visuals bassist Ali often credited Visual's lack of lyrics with their ability to become popular. It also put them in circuits of performance with other non-vocal bands, and helped grow their performance network. In an interview before their first (and only) album came out, the three band members had an exchange about the importance of lyrics.

> Ethan: I think not having vocals helps to connect with Korean audiences more.
>
> Ali: Oh yeah. Absolutely.
>
> Jonathan: We're non-threatening.
>
> Ali: I noticed the same thing in Colours [Ali's previous Post Rock band in Daegu] as well. Just because we were instrumental, it meant we could play Korean shows with Korean bands and nobody really cared that we were foreigners. "You guys are instrumental so we can just listen to the music and it's fine". And then as soon as we started Mountains and we're singing in English most of the time, I noticed those shows fell away. And actually, we got more "foreign" shows.
>
> Ethan: It's a weird thing; when you hear vocals, there's something instinctual I guess where you connect to the music. But if the vocals are bad…
>
> Ali: I think it depends though. I like to listen to the melody of vocals. So in England I used to listen to a lot of Japanese bands, so I don't understand what they're singing about but the melody is nice so I'll try and "sing along".
>
> Jonathan: The thing about having vocals is suddenly the music has this narrative and if you can't understand the narrative then you feel a little bit left out. Sometimes the narrative doesn't have to follow the feel of the music.[207]

[207] Mike McGrath, "Visuals Interview," May 23, 2017, http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/posts/visuals-interview (website was removed March 10, 2020 version archived July 16, 2017 can be found here: https://web.archive.org/web/20170716171519/http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/posts/visuals-interview)

For the bands with vocalists, connection between sound and lyrics had different levels of importance depending on the band. Mountains' songs were mostly in English, although they do have a few Korean language songs. The singers of Tierpark and Space Boutique both sing in Korean. When talking with all three lead singers, they all mentioned that lyrics are supposed to be poetic and full of metaphors meant to reflect the feeling of the music, but this was emphasized more by Sehee and Hyunwoo, the singers of Tierpark and Space Boutique, than by Stephen in Mountains. They both discussed an "image" or idea that came from the sounds they were hearing (like a bullfight, or a tiger walking through the jungle) and then wrote lyrics around that topic. Stephen, the lead singer of Mountains, focused more on finding a topic that meant something to him, and possibly adapting the melody to fit those words. With this small of a sample size, it is hard to determine if this difference is due to culture, language, or gender (as Stephen is male and both Sehee and Hyunwoo are female).

However, when looking at the combination of banter difference and lyric styles in bands that played with Visuals and the other central groups, Korean performers often focused on the story behind a song when writing. This was then reflected in the way they do banter; they want to give you that context to fully understand and connect to the song. Foreign performers, generally, saw their songs as self-contained and did not feel the need to explain the meaning. As one foreign musician said "You don't have to talk for five minutes between every song. I don't care what the song is about, I'm here to see you play."[208] For them, the focus was not on lyrics, regardless of the language, it was on the music.

For both Korean and foreign musicians, banter and lyrics were both a point of contention. Korean interviewees wondered why foreign musicians do not discuss their music more at shows, while foreign participants expressed frustration and confusion at the level of detail that Korean musicians would provide to describe a song before playing. There were certainly bands that did not fit this profile, but this behavior was categorized by many interviewees along cultural lines: Korean bands that did not talk much were "more foreign," while some foreign groups that talked quite a bit about the meaning behind their music were seen as "more Korean."

Conflicting Audience Behaviors

As I typically stood in the back of venues, I could easily see the differences between the seated "classical music" mindset of many Korean audience members and the standing, talking, "party" mindset of foreign audiences. On April 7, 2017, I was able to see the band Visuals perform at two venues in the same night—at the first venue to a majority Korean audience, all seated in a venue in Hongdae and at the second venue to a majority foreign audience, most of whom were standing in a venue near HBC. In both recordings I was about the same distance from the band, with the same amount of people around me, but the difference in background noise and overall sound was striking. The sound quality in the venue with the majority Korean audience was very clear, with only the audible sound besides the band of the hum of an air conditioner. At the majority foreign audience show, the conversation could be heard between songs very clearly, even when the band talked to the audience. As the band started playing, you

[208] Mike McGrath (guitarist and singer), in interview with author, June 9, 2017.

could hear the hum of conversations in the bar increase as people struggled to continue talking over the band.

The audience and performer behavior was the most discussed and most visible difference between Korean and foreign participants of this performance network. Many interviews and informal conversations with both Korean and foreign musicians either brought up the "lack of energy" from Korean audience members or the "disrespectful behavior" of foreign audience members. The conflicting understandings led to frustration at multiple levels of interaction. Korean performers felt discouraged by the lack of courtesy from foreign audiences, and foreign performers lamented the perceived disinterest from Korean audiences. But there was also issues at the inter-audience level of interaction. The set of actions associated with "classical music" attendance directly conflicted with the actions associated with "party" attendance, leading to power struggles between audience members over how to act.

Korean-style audiences in this cluster generally followed what I have been calling a "classical music" performance script, due to its similarities to the silent, attentive nature expected of a classical music audience. Korean audiences typically sit or stand if there is no other option, intently watching the show. The focus is on the performance at hand. Drinking during shows is not common. Many venue owners complain about this, as it leads to them having difficulties maintaining their business. One owner said that even when free drink tickets are given, Korean audience members get a non-alcoholic cola or cider instead of getting a beer or other drink. After shows is a completely different story; Korean participants tend to save their drinking for the after-party (which will be discussed in chapter five).

The Korean audience member's situational script was typically as follows: Korean patrons first enter the venue, then try to find a place to sit. During the show, they sit silently while the song is played. Between bands, they typically stay in their seat, chat with their friends, or look at their phones until the next show starts. Some audience members will go outside to smoke (as smoking in venues is no longer allowed), but they typically do so quickly and if they hear the next band start, they will rush to get their seat back. Sometimes, Korean fans would be at the show only to see their favorite band; if this was the case, they would leave right after that set was done. Overall, the goal of a Korean audience member is to attentively enjoy the performance by a band (or bands) that they like. Most actions were centered on this goal; the social aspect of the music scene came after the performance was over.

Foreigner-style participants, on the other hand, follow what I have called a "party" script, as the focus is not on the music as performance, but as entertainment. For them, the activities an audience member does are based around what they want to do in order to have fun. If that means standing by the bar and talking to their friends during the song, that is fine. If it means standing up front and jumping/screaming/dancing, that is fine too. Sitting is seen as an odd behavior, and one that ruins the mood of the show by making it too "stuffy" or lacking in energy. Many foreigners who sat spent much of their time on their phone. Standing, even if one is not paying full attention, gives one the option to move from standing, to nodding, to dancing. Even if one is only standing, one is rarely still; crowds that were standing moved and flowed as people nodded or moved to the beat.

Foreigner-style audience members and performers drink often, sometimes going up to the bar during songs to order another drink. One foreigner hangout venue even has pen and paper by the bar so you can order your drink even when the bartender can't hear you. Others have their menu printed so that you can point to what you want to order. This also helps with any language issues. Between bands most foreign audience members went out to smoke, bringing their drink along. Even if foreign audience members did not smoke, they would come outside to hang out and talk to those that did. Sometimes the next band would start, but if they were in mid-conversation, or they didn't care about seeing the next band, they would stay outside and talk. There were multiple shows I attended with majority foreign audiences where someone would have to go upstairs (as venues were typically in basements) and yell at smokers outside to come in because the next band wanted to start, but there was no one in the venue.

Even if a foreign fan did not want to see the rest of the bands, they typically would not leave the venue entirely. If all the other smokers went inside, they would probably go too. That is because shows were social events first and foremost. It was considered extremely rude by foreign audience members for someone to leave right after their favorite band played. It was also considered disrespectful for a musician to leave after their set was done. Foreign participants got frustrated when Korean bands would play their set but not stay for the rest of the show. There was a tacit social obligation amongst foreign performers to stay and "support" other bands that were playing by joining the audience, even if they did not like them. Often foreign performers would refuse to publicize the order of performers, or only decide the order on the night of the show. That way earlier bands would have better attendance, as fans could not just come for the specific band they wanted to see and then leave.

The tension between these different understandings was visible, especially if the audience demographic was evenly split. Not only did the two scripts have different goals, but the actions in each script directly conflicted with each other. The behaviors required by a classical music script ruined the "mood" and "fun" of a party script, and the erratic and disruptive behaviors of the party script ruined one's ability to focus on a performance as the classical music script requires. These contrasting social and musical scripts helped me understand better the source of the animosity and irritation expressed by some Korean and some foreign audience members in these situations. The fact that the audience members are working off of different situational scripts, with different goals, can often lead to failure for one or the other group.

Korean and foreign participants would often attempt to take actions to get other audience members to participate in what they deemed to be the "correct" way. For example, I often saw Koreans glare at foreign audience members when they were talking too much or too loudly. Sometimes they would intervene, shushing the foreign fan or telling them to be quiet in English. More passive aggressive tactics included turning to another Korean and saying "so loud" in Korean (ironically, often saying it very loudly). Some foreign audience members listened to these admonishments, especially if there weren't many foreigners in the audience. But sometimes foreigners would react rudely and continue to talk, leaving Korean audience members with no choice but to ignore them or to move away from them.

Another example of how participants take action to remedy different understandings is in the issue of sitting versus standing. Typically, if there were chairs, foreign participants would stand in the back behind the chairs. But some complained that this ruined their experience of the

performance; there was not enough "energy" in the crowd. So occasionally, foreign audience members would stand in front of the chairs, forcing other audience members to stand if they wanted to see the show. Many venues did not have a very high stage (if there was any difference in elevation between the band and audience at all), so this action was something they saw as a successful way to force Koreans to participate in a way foreign audience members wanted. Some musicians who disliked seated audiences would move the chairs off to the side of the room before the show started, if this was possible. By controlling the layout of the space, they were able to influence audience behavior to their benefit, even if the majority of the audience was Korean and would prefer to enjoy the show in a different way.

Conclusion

While there were certainly other conflicts between Korean and foreign musicians in multi-subgenre performances, the fashion outlook, the style of communication, and audience interactions were the three biggest points often brought up and complained about. Foreigners felt that Koreans were too stuffy, and didn't "get" rock's more laid back, party culture. Some of these criticisms bordered on racist stereotypes, saying that Koreans practice too much and don't understand rock because they study it like a school subject and try to play it "perfectly;" they are not able to understand how to "feel" it. Koreans thought that foreigners were disrespectful and didn't care about the work the performers were doing. They often viewed performers as being sloppy and unprofessional, not caring if their audience enjoyed the show and only focusing on their own enjoyment of the spotlight.

But while these categories were discussed along cultural lines, musicians understood that differences in behavior of the "Other" were not strictly because they were Korean or foreign. Informal conversations about these general differences were often centered on bands that did not follow these understandings: "Most Korean bands are stuffy, but X group is more raw and really gets rock music" or "Most foreign bands are sloppy and lazy, but Y group performs really well and has an interesting sound." By phrasing things this way, the people I talked to were creating value hierarchies, elevating certain bands above others from an outgroup based on their own ideas of what makes a good performer or a good audience member. Because the musicians and audiences lacked clear genre outlines of what a "good" and "bad" performer would be, they valued actions that followed scripts they are familiar with: For Korean participants, to be (or support) professional performers, and for foreign participants, to have a good time doing a hobby.

With the multi-subgenre, multi-national network cluster of musicians centered on the band Visuals combined with a more obscure subgenre and more intermixing of sounds in their social network, there is not a clear situation script for how performers and audience members are expected to act. That lack of a shared situational script leads participants to draw from other scripts to achieve their goals. Because Korean performers tended to take performance more seriously as a possible career, they and their audiences tended to draw from a classical music-like situational script. Performers were audience oriented, explaining the details of the meaning behind the music, and audience members were quiet and attentive. Because foreign performers saw making music as more of a hobby or social activity, they tended to draw from a party-like situational script, with less emphasis on performance and more on socialization. Performers

interacted with audiences in a relaxed, social manner, and audiences acted in whatever ways brought them the most individual enjoyment.

CHAPTER 5 INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION IN SOCIALIZING CONTEXTS: THE AFTER-PARTY

This chapter compares the musicians associated with the multi-genre, multi-national network cluster with musicians that associate with the imagined community of the punk subculture in Korea to examine the mechanics of creating and maintaining the relationships necessary to put on performances. While there were many ways that musicians met and forged relationships, one of the most important was the after-party. Here I will discuss the importance of after-show socializing, the typical practices of socialization, and how social separation in this aspect of the scene creates barriers to networking between Korean and foreign musicians.

The work of securing social connections after shows, and leveraging those connections, was necessary for musicians to be able to secure more gigs in different locations around Seoul. This was especially true for foreign musicians, who needed to work with musicians who already had connections in Hongdae to get out of performing in foreigner neighborhoods like Haebangchon (HBC). Early in a musician's career, personal relationships and friendship networks often account for the majority of a group's performance contacts. H. Stith Bennett, in his book *On Becoming a Rock musician*, writes:

> Friendship networks between musicians result in gig contacts… [which] are passed along from musician to musician. Both the employer/employer friendship and the musician/musician friendship channel contacts in such a way as to form local circuits.[209]

Although Bennett was writing about circuits of performance in 1970s Colorado, this sentiment rings true in the South Korean rock scene. Getting to know, and being known, by both musicians and venue owners was necessary in order to secure gigs. While some musicians said that no actual transactions or plans were made at after-parties, others emphasized that getting to meet and interact with other musicians helped strengthen the social connections they needed to contact them later about show opportunities. In the Korean scene, the high number of musician curated shows meant that befriending musicians with a high number of social and professional contacts was often the best way to get more performance opportunities. This was especially true of individuals who tied disparate network clusters together.

Creating social connections after shows was essential to solidifying performance networks, both for those looking to program shows featuring their own bands, and those who wanted to play with bands in other socio-musical networks. I remember being part of many conversations with foreign musicians who saw a new Korean band and wanted to play with them due to sound or talent. But it was important for them to create the social connection by hanging out afterwards, to see if they were "cool" to hang out with. Therefore most performance clusters were based around social ties, and connections between musicians, which were often started at performances, but forged at the after-party.

In this chapter, I look at the mechanisms by which network connections were formed; the way that a central node functions, and the differences between networking tactics and socialization style for foreigners and Koreans in the scene. First, I will discuss how the social

[209] H. Stith Bennett, *On Becoming a Rock Musician* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980): 97.

aspects of creating and solidifying network connection occurs. The majority of this socialization happens at the "After-Party" (뒤풀이-*dwipuli*). After the last band is finished performing, the musicians and their friends would often hang out together. This was not an exclusionary affair; once I knew a musician or two it was relatively easy to be invited along. However, determining what the after-party was, and where it was being held, was not always easy. It was also possible to get left behind, as after-party festivities often moved from one location to another.

It is important to understand that Koreans and foreigners had different ideas of where after-parties are held, and how people are expected to act. These after-parties were important locations to get to know other musicians socially, and each style facilitated different types of interactions. Foreigner-led after-parties typically involved staying at the venue and continuing to drink, or going to a nearby bar. Second locations occasionally included food, but were typically other bars or drinking locations. In contrast, Korean style after-parties were held at *samgyeopsal* (Korean barbeque) restaurants. Typically one person organized the event and the purchase of food, and everyone else would sit, eat, and drink. These contrasting views of what a "good" after-party entailed often led Korean and foreign musicians to separate after shows and go to different locations, which was detrimental to the facilitation of intercultural network connections. In terms of both professional and social networking, bilingual central nodes often facilitated literal communication between musicians who did not speak the same language. The issues of after-party socialization, linguistic barriers to informal social connection, and quick bonds amongst visibly foreign musicians all had an effect on which musicians were able to get performance opportunities and which ones were not.

In the next section, I discuss the ways that being foreign often facilitated quicker and easier social connections, especially with other foreigners. Many foreigners were able to function as central nodes, which allowed foreign musicians to play shows with Koreans without actually networking or interacting with them, and vice versa. Often one's positioning as a foreigner was an asset in obtaining access to performance opportunities due to stereotypes about foreign audiences as providing lucrative business to venue owners. Some of the steps Korean musicians saw as necessary to get performance opportunities and fans were not necessary for foreign musicians. This "instant foreigner networking" amongst visibly foreign musicians and fans led to the quick formation of network clusters where "foreignness" was one of the main defining criteria, rather than sound. I will end with a discussion of how racial identity was often a double edged sword; it made it easy for foreign musicians to make more informal social connections that led to amateur performance opportunities, but at the same time negative stereotypes about foreign musicians made it difficult to access nationally branded funding and performance opportunities in Korea and abroad.

Finally, to tie this material back to the earlier discussions of punk, I contrast the after-party social interaction in the multi-genre, multi-national network cluster with the way the after-party functioned in punk communities. While each of these groups have faced similar barriers to intercultural interaction throughout this dissertation—differences in social behavior and a language barrier being the two main ones—I argue that comparing the two directly on this specific issue shows the ways that the ideologies attached to punk, and the connection that is brings, make it easier to overcome those barriers.

Punk musicians, as with performances, tended to be more cohesive in their understanding of after-party activities, going with the "Korean style." However, even if the foreign and Korean musicians ended up in the same location, the language barrier created a physical division of social groups at tables, bars, or standing in clubs between English speaking groups and Korean speaking ones. This issue of social separation has been a topic of conversation amongst foreigners for more than a decade. I will examine the ways that foreigners in the punk community have discussed the issues with this language barrier in the *Broke in Korea* magazine, and how in my fieldwork interviews they have redefined what "closeness" means in the punk context.

Defining the After-Party

After the last band performed at a show, friends, fans, and musicians typically hung out together for an after-party. Because almost all of the shows I attended had less than 100 people involved (including musicians and fans), and actually the majority were less than 50, it was possible for a large portion of the musicians and audience members involved to all go together to a bar or restaurant for the after-party. Some people would go home, or go somewhere with their significant others, but many would hang out at the venue and eventually make their way to a secondary location.

These after-parties were not formally announced events, nor were they regular enough in location or style for me to know where the after-party was going to take place. Some musicians told me the band that put the show together was expected to have an idea or plan for the after-party.[210] This was most typical for the majority of Korean or Korean organized shows, as described in the section below. As I will explain in the second half of the section, foreign majority shows were different both in organization and in style. The majority of the behaviors in this section are based on my experiences with Hongdae musicians who were connected to the Visuals social cluster, but some of these differences between Korean and foreign socialization were present in other groups of musicians as well. It is also important to note that the actual behaviors described here are similar for both men and women. However, as in the case in many rock scenes, the actual experience of networking was more complicated for women for a number of reasons, including discrimination, sexual harassment, and assault.[211] Many female musicians, both Korean and foreign, discussed these issues as part of their experience in networking.

[210] Ethan Waddell (musician), in interview with author, January 24, 2017.

[211] While it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter to fully analyze these issues, I would like to outline a few here: There is an imbalance of power, as most of the opportunities and social connections for new musicians are in the hands of men. Also shows are a nightlife activity, and as such, finding someone to have sex with is also on many musicians' minds; it is difficult to be taken seriously when some men will see you as a target for sexual conquest just as much (if not more than) as a fellow musician. Men tended to assume that most women were heterosexual and looking for a relationship. Because rock music is often associated with counter culture and upending social norms, and women's on-stage personas often include aspects of sex appeal, women in rock are assumed to be more sexually liberated and receptive to men's advances than typical Koreans. For foreign women, there was an automatic assumption that they were more sexually open, regardless of their participation in the rock scene. In addition to this, a number of female musicians mentioned that their friendliness, which is key to gaining access to performance networks, can also be read as flirting, and if a male musician misunderstands, that can jeopardize access to certain performance networks.

After-Party: Koreans

Korean after-parties have some vague similarities to *hweshik (*회식). *Hweshik* is a combination of the words *hwesa* (회사-office) and *shiksa* (식사 dinner). These "office dinners" are typically social bonding events that last long into the night, with "multiple rounds of alcohol at multiple venues."[212] The goal of these events is to build relationships with coworkers, and participation is often mandatory.[213] Typically these events start at a Korean BBQ restaurant, ordering meat and alcohol. The second stop might be at a bar, or at a Korean fried chicken place. Further rounds could be at bars, at *noraebang* (노래방-the Korean word for karaoke rooms), or dance clubs.[214] When participating in *hweshik*, leaving before at least the second or third location was highly frowned upon, and people I talked to were often coerced into continuing to the next location. These activities typically go well past midnight, and it was not uncommon during my fieldwork to see people in business attire stumbling around Hongdae in the early hours of the morning hailing one of the many cabs that streamed past the bars and clubs. *Hweshik* even took place on weekdays.

While Korean style after-parties were not nearly as stuffy or seen as mandatory like *hweshik*, there were some similarities in terms of drinking culture and format. When I asked Sehee, a Korean-Australian musician about socializing at Korean after-parties, she said

> I don't know how to describe it, but they do have unwritten rules about [how to socialize]. Kind of. And although Korean musicians are not typical Koreans, right? They tend to be more whatever and free about that, but if you go to actual, like, *hweshik*s, where you know "here, pouring" [mimed pouring a drink with two hands] all that really is like a big, you know, etiquette thing. With musicians, not so much, but even then you can feel it [at the after-party].[215]

There were structural similarities to *hweshik*: Korean after-parties often had multiple locations, the first always being a restaurant, the second possibly a bar or *noraebang*. Sometimes a group of people would just get drinks at a local convenience store and drink in a park. I found that the larger the group at the after-party, the less likely there would be multiple locations. It most often seemed that mobilizing a large group to all leave together was difficult, and if there were second and third locations numbers dwindled drastically. [216] Some of the drinking games and rules were observed at these dinners; even foreigners would police each other for not pouring with two hands, or filling their own cup, usually in a joking manner. It is likely that, rather than being directly related to *hweshik*, many of these behaviors and aspects are a common part of Korean

[212] Christopher Cha, "Drinking in South Korea: 7 tips on Handling a Hoesik," *CNN.com*, March 22, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/parts-unknown-bourdain-korea-drinking/index.html.
[213] Yewon Kang, "(Yonhap Feature) Sharing Markets Growing Among Young Consumers," September 03, 2012, https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20120830003000315.
[214] Da-Hae West, *Eat Korean: Our Home Cooking & Street Food* (London: Mitchell Beazley Publishing: 2018): 188.
[215] Sehee Kim (lead singer and guitarist of Tierpark), in interview with author, January 18, 2017.
[216] Some also said that the second/third/fourth location was less common because everyone is "too old" to stay out late; some had jobs or families and had to get home earlier.

drinking culture overall. But many of my interviewees, especially foreigners, understood these activities through the lens of their experiences with *hweshik*.

My own experience with Korean style after-parties was varied, but there was an aspect that I found similar to *hweshik* outside of the structure and etiquette minutia: how food was ordered and paid for. I never ordered anything at a Korean style after-party. Occasionally I would be able to see someone ordering for our group of tables, but most often someone would approach the venue owner and order for the entire group, which could be anywhere from fifteen to thirty or more, depending on how many people trailed along. Most often, towards the end of the night someone would walk around and say how much was owed per person, and you would pay them. It didn't matter if you drank or not, how much you ate, or what was ordered, the total was split evenly between everyone. Other times the headlining or organizing band would pay for everyone at the after-party.[217] This is also similar to experiences with *hweshik*; food is ordered as a group, and depending on the office either the bill is split or the boss pays for the meal.[218]

The last notable aspect of socialization in the Korean style after-party was the way the seating was arranged. I was almost always on the outside edges of the table set-up; typically surrounded by other foreigners, or Koreans that could speak English. The center of the table usually had the more prominent or senior musicians, and worked outwards to younger musicians. This seating arrangement was not explicit; but for both personal and cultural reasons I would usually wait until others invited me to sit somewhere, or until most of the chairs were taken. But I noticed that other foreigners, especially those with less Korean capability, would also be sitting on the outside edges. If I was one of the few English speakers in attendance, I would participate in Korean language conversations, but I was still usually on the edge of the group. According to Korean musicians, the center of the table was usually home to one conversation, with the majority listening to a single speaker at a time. However, in my experience on the ends of the table people engaged in many small pockets of conversation, with maybe two to four participants each. If you were bored with one conversation, it was relatively easy to pivot your body and talk to someone else. So even in the same after-party, the experiences of foreigners and Koreans was different.

I feel it is important to note that foreign participants referred to the connections between *hweshik* and the after-party far more often that Korean participants. As many of the foreign participants in the scene were English teachers, many learned about drinking culture and techniques through their experiences with their job's *hweshik*. It says a lot about the relationship that foreigners have with *hweshik*. A google search of the term (in its Romanized forms, not with *Hangeul* characters) led me to innumerable blogs from foreigner office workers and English teachers attempting to explain the so-called "rules" of this custom and how to get out of them as a foreigner; especially the forced drinking aspect.[219] Most of these blogs follow a similar format:

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[217] Ethan Waddell, interview.

[218]휘트니 whitney bae, "Why Group Dinners in Korea are Uncomfortable for Me (hweshik culture)," *YouTube,* May 12, 2016, https://youtu.be/bzJb-xu6nRA.

[219] A few examples of this: Jeremy Slagaoski, "The Culture Learning of Sojourning English Language Teachers," *Korea TESOL Journal* 14, no. 1 (2018): 50; Seansul, "Hweshik Culture – The Social Occasion Central to any Korean Workplace," *Hi Expat (englishspectrum.com),* December 19, 2014, https://www.englishspectrum.com/hweshik-culture-the-social-occasion-central-to-any-korean-workplace/; Serge Kajirian, "So You Think You're Ready for the Korean Drinking Business Culture? Think Again," *Medium.com,*

an ethnographic vignette of the author's first experience with *hweshik*, and then a list of rules, tips, and advice about how to, as they put it, "survive" a night of drinking and interacting with coworkers. Within the context of *hweshik*, the blogs also discuss Korean drinking culture, and respecting the hierarchy of the office: things like pouring/receiving drinks with both hands, turning away from more senior staff when drinking, and never saying "no" to someone pouring drinks for you, especially if they are more senior. But, most of the blogs concluded that as a foreigner, if you make an attempt to follow the rules, you will be fine. I found the same to be true for Korean style after-party events.

After-Party: Foreigners

With foreigner-run or foreigner-majority shows, it was unclear where the group was planning to go for the after-show festivities. While talking to Mike, a white British bassist in the band Rough Cuts, I brought up my own difficulty with trying to figure out where everyone was going for the after-party:

> Author: The biggest issue I see is that the show gets done and everyone is kind of like… [there's] no clear person to be like, "We are going to do this."
>
> Mike: Everyone has got different ideas about what they want to do as well. I think because everyone loved Eric, he could be like, "I want to do this," and three influential people would be like, "Okay, I'm going to go with Eric" and twenty people will come. They are just the leaders people follow around. Adam Brennan is kind of like that. He says, "I'm going to go to this bar," and everyone says, "Let's go to that bar."

Mike's analysis of the dynamics is accurate from my experiences with foreigner-run shows. I typically would make an effort to hang around the people who organized the show, or people I knew to be socially connected with a majority of the audience/musicians, to see where they ended up wanting to go. Those that had a lot of social sway were able to determine where the second location would be, and what we would be doing. Korean after-parties had a sense of security; everyone knows that everyone will go to the same place. With foreigner shows, it was more important to talk with or keep an eye on people you wanted to hang out with, to figure out where they were going and if you could tag along.

There were many times where we never left the venue after a foreigner-run show, especially if that venue served alcohol. People would stand in groups, some near the bar and others at tables, talking and drinking. Sometimes groups would make their way outside to smoke, and talk about going somewhere, but it rarely happened. Slowly numbers would dwindle, and eventually the venue owner would ask everyone to leave, or a group would head out for street food or to drink and eat elsewhere. Other times there was an effort to go to another location, typically another bar, but the number of people moving on was much smaller than in Korean style after-parties. There were occasional foreign shows that went to restaurants after things were

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June 8, 2017, https://medium.com/@kajirian/so-you-think-youre-ready-for-the-korean-drinking-business-culture-think-again-eae02d105bcb; Monica Williams, "How to Survive Hoesik in South Korea," *Transitionsabroad.com*, 2017, accessed July 14, 2020, https://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/living/articles/south-korea-hoesik-live-teach-english.shtml; Cha, "Drinking in South Korea."

done, but most often it was because one of the more dominant personalities made the decision to go. Sometimes there would be a split; some people would go to a restaurant, others to a bar.

While many Koreans found this indecision frustrating, it was also hard for them when the band who organized the show was deciding to stay at the venue. One foreign musician expressed disappointment when the Korean bands he had invited did not want to stay at the venue for the after-party with the rest of the musicians. One of the Korean bands ended up sitting by themselves at a table in the corner, and did not mingle or move to talk to different groups of people, which is what the foreign musician expected. He was "bummed" that they did not want to "hang out" with the other musicians. The expectation was that people would move from conversation to another. In my own experience, I often would get caught at the bar and never return to the group I was originally talking to, or go outside with someone when they went to go on a smoke break. The understanding was that you would talk with many different people; staying in one place all night was frowned upon, with people coming up and saying (in an admonishing way), "I haven't seen you all night!" and dragging you off to another conversation.

Food was less common at foreigner-run shows, but this was likely because they started later as well. Foreigner shows often had a posted start time of 8 pm, but didn't really begin until at least 9 pm. Korean shows could start as early as 6 pm, and were typically more on time. One Korean musician, Jiyeon Lee, thought that the earlier start time had "to do with the party. You get done with the show and people need to eat, they have to go home."[220] The later start time for foreigner organized shows meant that many would eat before the show, if they were able; others would grab quick snacks at the convenience store when they were hungry.

Many foreign musicians saw their more independent and individual focused form of networking as the better option for socialization, while Koreans tended to dislike it. Many foreign musicians felt that Korean style parties sometimes felt too formal, and they didn't feel they could be themselves, or move freely about the room. Some thought the Korean cultural norm of always eating with your alcohol was a bit odd, and would rather go to a bar where food wasn't necessary. While in interviews few Korean musicians expressed an outright dislike for hanging around and talking more informally, some were irritated by the lack of decisiveness in activity, and that it was hard to get everyone to go somewhere together. Often Korean musicians were the first to leave a foreigner-run show; sometimes just to get food, but typically they did not come back. Foreign musicians talked about being "disappointed" at best and "frustrated" at worst that Korean musicians would not go along with their understanding of socialization at an after-party. There was also a strong expectation that people should stick around, at least for a while after the show. There was still a sense that it is necessary to see others and be seen.

One downside to this mingling style of socialization at foreigner style after-parties was that it exacerbated the language barrier. I often had a difficult time understanding English speakers in the loud clubs and bars due to background noise; talking to someone in Korean added an extra layer of comprehension difficulty. The same was likely true in the opposite direction as well. One female musician from Ireland, Maggie, reflected on after-parties, saying "I do think that the Korean friends will tend to drift away more often but I think that's probably because they can't be bothered to speak in English and get a headache anymore, or I'm imagining this

[220]Jane Jiyeon Lee (musician), in interview with author, July 25, 2017.

because I would do that, you know?"[221] At the Korean style after-parties, while it was still loud, it was easier to find someone near you to help translate; if you were in the "foreigner" section at the end of the table, the people who were more bilingual tended to be a buffer between the English speakers and Korean speakers, allowing for more cross-language communication. In bars, it was hard to approach someone who you knew (or thought) spoke Korean or to find someone to help translate, if your Korean skills were not good enough.

Koreans not being able to converse while mingling was not always a problem; being "seen" did not directly translate to interacting (and speaking) with all the foreigners in the room. When talking to Mike in our interview about an upcoming show and who would hang out afterwards, he mentioned a Korean band that he loved to play with. I asked him if they spoke English well, and Mike said "Patrick just talks to them in Korean. We just love them. I don't need to talk to them."[222] Mike was referring to Patrick, the drummer of Mike's band Rough Cuts, and the co-founder of DoIndie (which will be discussed in chapter six). Mike didn't feel the need to speak with the band directly, but liked their style and that they would "hang" after shows.

In this example Patrick's fluent Korean and networks of performance through his association with DoIndie helped create connections that the other members of the band may not have been able to develop due to the language barrier. People like Patrick are central nodes; they connect disparate groups of musicians together in ways that would be otherwise unlikely. The majority of individuals I met who seemed to have connections with a lot of different types of musicians, in terms of both nationality and sound had one thing in common: they were fluent (or at least confident communicators) in both Korean and English. In order to facilitate connection, one must be able to converse with both Korean and foreign networks of performance. Often, in after-party social interactions, if the majority of the participants were Korean, these central nodes would be interacting mostly with foreigners, conversing in English. The reverse was also true; I remember seeing Patrick often socializing with the small group of Korean musicians hanging out at the venue after a show, rather than with the foreign musicians and audience members.

Even for central nodes whose Korean was not so fluent, their attempts to interact with Koreans after shows worked to endear them to Korean musicians, and gain access to performance opportunities. As an example outside of this network illustrates: I often saw TC Costello, a solo accordion player who played Celtic Gypsy-punk music, play shows in every neighborhood associated with music. He played shows with all foreign line-ups, all Korean (besides him) line-ups, and line-ups that were mixed. His Korean, by his own admission, was not native level; he spoke slowly, and occasionally had to substitute English words. However, the effort he put into speaking Korean, both on and off the stage, helped him create connections with Korean musicians.[223] What was most impressive was not his use of Korean, but his lack of visible nervousness when doing so. This was something, in full transparency, I envied; trying to informally socialize with someone comfortably in your non-native language is very difficult. But

[221] Maggie Devlin (musician), in interview with author, July 7, 2017.
[222] Mike McGrath (musician), in interview with author, June 9, 2017.
[223] His unique genre and instrumentation also helped him gain attention; while the first and arguably most famous Korean punk band, Crying Nut, did have an accordion player, seeing other accordion players during my fieldwork was extremely rare.

TC had a friendly and inviting social presence; even if his Korean was not perfect, his friendly attempts to connect were often received warmly.

Musicians who did not have the linguistic or social capital to be able to network with Koreans relied on these central nodes to be able to put on shows with Koreans, and to put on shows in venues in Hongdae. When I interviewed all the members of a band, there was often one or two who were "in charge" of putting on shows. These "organizers" needed to have strong social networks in order to facilitate performance. Bennett talks about this band dynamic as follows:

> Organizers initiate musician/musician interactions and handle logistical problems; joiners respond to calls for personnel and expect "just to play music." Both are necessary to the rock enterprise—they are less social types and more interactional presentations by which a group may be talked into existence. They have little to do with musicianship and recognize only the non-musical aspects of having a group.[224]

As Bennett emphasizes, the "organizer" type is not always the driver of the band musically; they simply have the social capital and skills to help facilitate the non-musical aspects of performance. For foreigners in the Korean rock scene who wanted to play outside of foreigner spaces, the "organizer" of the band needed to either be a central node, or be socially associated with one. Some bands had multiple "organizers," each connected to different circuits of performance that could help expand their networks.

"Instant Foreigner Networking"

Networking is a situation where foreign musicians have a strong advantage. While there were a few Korean musicians I would consider to be central nodes, most of them were foreign. As a minority within the scene, foreigners are a novel existence. When I first started exploring the scene, I worried about how to approach and make connections with musicians. I found that this fear was completely unnecessary; as a "new foreigner" (i.e. unknown) at a show I was often approached and talked to by foreign musicians without any effort to connect on my part. This was especially true as I was recording the shows, which made me even more conspicuous. One musician, Seth Martin, referred to this phenomena as "Instant Foreigner Networking." Foreigners would often try to place me within their understanding of their social network; who did I come to the show to see, who did I know, and, once I introduced my research topic, volunteering suggestions of who I should get to know.

It is important to note that "Instant Foreigner Networking" only occurred with participants who were visibly foreign. Participants who were Asian, regardless of their nationality or background, were often approached by foreigners as if they were Koreans. Most Korean diasporic returnees, as well as Koreans who spoke English, had stories about foreigners approaching them in stilted Korean, only to relax when they discover the person can speak English. Part of the "Instant Foreigner Networking" may have to do with gravitating towards those with whom you can comfortably converse in a social situation, without having to worry about a language barrier. But this meant that foreigners who, in any other situation might not

[224] Bennett, *On Becoming,* 43.

interact due to their dislike for each other's music, style, or professionalism, nonetheless ended up socializing and making connections directly due to their foreignness. These connections, regardless of the different musical tastes of the foreigners in question, could often lead to performance opportunities.

However, this does not mean that diasporic returnees did not function as central nodes. In fact, once their liminal status was discovered, they were called upon more often than others to do the work of bridging the gap between Koreans and foreigners. Foreign musicians thought that diasporic Koreans would be able to get opportunities that other non-Korean foreigners did not know about because of their ethnicity. During my fieldwork, I witness multiple situations where diasporic Koreans were approached in separate occasions by Korean and foreign musicians alike and asked to work as a go-between or translator to help others gain opportunities. Most of the diasporic Koreans I talked to in my fieldwork expressed dislike for being put in this position.

Another aspect of foreigner networks that made them easier to maintain was the interrelated nature of foreigner bands. Many musicians, especially those that were central nodes, were members of multiple bands simultaneously. To reiterate examples I have used before, during my fieldwork Ali of Visuals was also in two punk bands (Machines and Yuppie Killer), and still playing with his math rock band (Mountains). Grey Watson played solo shows, as well as shows with Grey Watson and the Visions, and another jam band called Tallulah Bankhead. I could include almost any foreign musician as an example, as many had at least two projects going simultaneously. The majority had at least one or two bands that were no longer performing as well; typically these groups disbanded due to a foreign member returning to their home country (or moving on to teach English in another country). Every time a band dissolved, some of its members might reform with additions; this would then change their sound and expand their social networks. Other times musicians would create projects with members of other bands that they admired musically and enjoyed socializing with; that is how Visuals was formed. Musicians were constantly forming and reforming connections as foreign musicians moved in and out of the scene.

While it may seem that the precariousness of these bonds would make networking difficult, it often made the networks stronger. Even though every foreigner you met might leave in months or years, it seemed that people were much more open to creating quick, deep bonds with each other, sharing personal details and stories relatively quickly.[225] There was a sense that the insecurity of the length of time the relationship would last meant that it was to be fully enjoyed for as long as it existed. It is also possible that when foreigners who were members of the dominant culture in their home country are suddenly the minority and the outsider, they cling to any social interaction that does not require the effort of cultural translation; social interactions that feel more familiar. In looking at the acclimation of "outsiders" to a new majority culture, communication studies scholar, L. Ripley Smith remarks,

[225] These kinds of quick, close connections were often useful as a foreign female to create these close, supportive networks to protect from harassment. Also, these close ties meant that foreign men were less likely to harass foreign women, as it would reflect poorly on them. Their social and musical networks were too closely connected, and if a female musician was vocal to others about sexual harassment this could (occasionally) reflect badly on the foreign male musician's standing in the network. This network protection was not the case for Korean women, however.

> same culture, or ethnic, social network composition is beneficial in the initial phase of adjustment (Kang, 1972; Kim, 1978; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Smith, 1997; Ying & Liese, 1991, 1994). The research in this area suggests that adjustment is positively related to the size of the local ethnic community and relationships with co-nationals because it contributes to the sojourner's sense of inclusion and security.[226]

Smith goes on to discuss how more heterogeneous social networks, including members of both groups, lead to more integration with the host community. What is unique about the case of musicians is the way that "organizers" within a band can increase the heterogeneity of the band's performance network, without increasing necessarily the heterogeneity of the social networks of individual musicians. While a band may play shows equally with Korean and foreign musicians, due to their "organizer's" function as a central node between Korean and foreign networks, the individual musicians within the band that are not in that "organizer" role often continued to have homogenous (foreigner majority) social networks, only interacting with Korean musicians superficially.

It was easy for some to rely on central nodes for introductions to Korean musicians, but harder to create or maintain those relationships individually, especially if there was a language barrier. So, in this way, it was possible for foreign musicians to have a heterogeneous performance network, but a homogeneous social network, at least at first. Often, the longer one was in the scene, the more Korean they learned, the more heterogeneous their social networks became as well. But for those with homogenous social networks, they were able to stay within the comforts of a homogeneous (i.e. foreign) cultural norm, and not adopt Korean styles of performance and socialization, even if they played with Koreans. This may be another layer to explain why the musicians and bands associated with the multi-genre, multi-national network cluster could not come to a cultural consensus; these connections, made through central nodes, did not always lead to the two networks merging into a heterogeneous network cluster. The behavior and structure of the after-party was then determined by which groups organized the show, or who was in the majority, rather than finding a middle ground between the two, or one group adopting the other's preference. Because their social clusters were not heterogeneous, the groups were not able to come together and have a unified script of performance or socialization. This divide in practice is why foreign musicians who preferred to perform and socialize like Korean bands were seen as "more Korean," and vice versa. Bands that had adopted the "Other's" style of performance or after-party were seen as part of the "Other" social network.

Foreign Identity: A Double Edged Sword

Part of the privilege foreign musicians held was identity based. Foreigners are able to get gigs easier, not only through direction connections in their performing social networks, but because of their assumed social networks with other foreigners. Multiple venue owners mentioned in interviews that foreign patrons drink more than Korean ones; this was also echoed throughout interviews with both Korean and foreign musicians. This, coupled with the

[226] L. Ripley Smith, "Intercultural Network Theory: a Cross-Paradigmatic Approach to Acculturation," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23:4 (1999), 648.

assumption that foreign bands will bring foreign audiences, led to an easier path for new foreign musicians to get big performance opportunities:

> Yeah. It's so much easier for us [foreigners] as well. I feel bad. We can immediately, like Eddie at [Club] FF just wants foreign bands and he wants people from Itaewon and Haebangchon to come. So you can just be a mediocre white band and you will go on FF like that. Korean bands who want to play those shows have to pay their dues and play those terrible Wednesday night shows to nobody and like they have to audition and stuff and play so many crappy shows before they are allowed to play FF on a Friday night. I know some white people who play generic indie rock and [Eddie] is like, "great, put them on," because they will bring people who drink.[227]

Club FF is one of the most famous live music venues in Hongdae; it is the first one I attended when I started researching this scene. It was well known for its free drink happy hour between 11 pm-12 am, while the last band was playing. But anyone who wanted the free drinks still had to pay the 10,000-15,000 won entry fee to see the show. It was typically followed by "DJ Eddie's Super-Fun Rockin' Dance Party," where Eddie played "indie rock from all over the world,"[228] which typically meant whatever patron requested of him. The strategy that Club FF used was a business tactic meant to draw the foreigners who came to Hongdae for its dance club scene, while trying to differentiate itself to being more rock dance club rather than hip hop or pop.

Eddie's strategy for drawing crowds to Club FF also had an effect on what time foreign bands performed. When I saw bands I knew with majority foreign musicians playing at Club FF, it was typically in that last slot of the night. The times I went to Club FF and a Korean band had the last slot, the audience was often shifted drastically to majority foreign by the end of that band's set, and some of the bands seemed stressed about engaging the audience, and trying to speak English. Alberto, a Spanish musician, argued that while at most shows the headliner is the last band, the last slot at FF is not ideal. "At ten [pm] you are seeing Korean people there and at 11 [pm], it's full of foreigners who get into a free bar… they are not there for the music."[229] While many musicians I spoke to grumbled about FF's rough atmosphere, with a lot of partiers who were not interested in music, few begrudged Eddie's business sense in programming shows the way he did, and utilize the free drink hour and dance party combination to help keep the venue afloat, as many others were shuttering due to gentrification. I also saw foreign bands occasionally get free bottles of whiskey or alcohol to share with their friends and fans after the set was over—another attempt to get musicians to stick around and buy more drinks, rather than leaving to a second location after-party.

While a foreign identity gave musicians some advantages, it also led to difficulty in gaining government-sponsored opportunities, or performances on larger stages. As I will discuss in chapter six, Loose Union was created, in part, to help facilitate those opportunities for foreign musicians.[230] The clash between nationality and ethnicity makes bands with non-Koreans

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[227] Mike McGrath, interview.

[228] As articulated on promotional posters for Club FF shows*:* Club FF - 클럽 에프에프, "Photos," *Facebook*, accessed July 17, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/pg/hongdaeff/photos/?ref=page_internal.

[229] Alberto Alba (musician), in interview with author, February 14, 2017.

[230] Chung Park (visual artist), in interview with author, July 20, 2017.

performing in Korea harder to place in a world music market fixated on nation of origin, at least outside the Western world.[231] Many musicians felt that, while they were able to get live performance opportunities in clubs due to the assumptions about foreign crowds, the stereotypes around foreign musicians made it harder for them to be taken seriously by indie labels or music producers locally, which was key to getting bigger gigs and into local and global festivals.

Much of this had to do with the way that the Korean government supported indie music through funding and promotion, like "Korea stages" at international indie festivals. Most foreign musicians assumed they would never be on one of these "national brand" stages, as bands chosen were usually uncomplicatedly Korean. There was one notable exception: prior to my fieldwork, the band Killer Drones, which was comprised of mostly white male Americans and one Korean, were invited to perform on the Cool Korea stage at the French *Nuits Sonores* festival in 2016, all expenses paid. The reaction to their performance was telling; When I asked him about playing on a Korea stage, the lead singer of Killer Drones, Grey Watson, said he would have been confused if he had been in the audience, thinking "What's this white boy doing up here, it's the Korea stage!"[232] Other musicians I talked to about the performance were baffled as to how Killer Drones were chosen. But according to Grey, a Korean representative for the festival had contacted them with the opportunity, and according to Grey he said "I know you are not Korean, but you are part of the Korean scene, so we want to invite you."[233] In the mind of this promoter, location was more important than ethnicity in determining if a band belonged on the Korean stage. The fact that both Korean and foreign musicians I mentioned this to were confused by this choice, however, shows that most in the scene do not see it that way.

Grey said trying to have a music career in Korea as a foreigner was a "totally idiotic idea," a sentiment echoed by many other foreign musicians. After my fieldwork, Grey moved to New York City to pursue a music career. Many foreign musicians argued that Korean bands, labels, and promotors do not take foreign musicians seriously due to their transient nature and stereotype of laziness and sloppiness. The only way some thought to counteract this was to act and present oneself as "more Korean," and therefore more serious about music. So it seemed that while foreign musicians, with a combination of their "instant network" and stereotypes about bringing lucrative audiences, were able to more easily secure opportunities early in their career, for most of them getting mainstream recognition eluded them.

Socialization in the Punk Community: A Comparative Case

For the final part of this chapter, I want to return to my earlier discussions on punk, to help illustrate how unified ideologies of genre can help to create not just a more cohesive performance experience but also cohesive social one. I will examine the conversations around social interactions in the punk scene, especially between sets or at the after-party. The punk community includes both foreigners and Koreans, and as I discussed in chapter three. Most foreigners either adopt Korean punk norms or are socially disconnected (sometimes forcibly) by other foreign punks. Most aspects of the punk ideology and of the performance style were

[231] Bob W. White, "Introduction: Rethinking Globalization through Music," in *Music and Globalization: Critical Encounters,* ed. Bob W. White (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012): 8.
[232] Chung Park, interview.
[233] Ibid.

understood as part of the larger global subculture of punk, and helped set expectations of the shows.

The cohesiveness the punk musicians had in music practice and performance was also found in the structure of their after-party; most followed the "Korean style" of going to a restaurant and eating together. While this is keeping with the "When in Rome" socialization style of foreign punks, most punks seemed to love this aspect of socializing. Despite the agreement on location and action, I did notice a high degree of social separation between foreign and Korean musicians after shows. When hanging outside between shows, the groups were typically segregated, with Korean punks in a few huddled groupings and the foreign punks all in one area. The same thing would happen at after-party restaurants; tables would be Korean or foreign.

Much of this social separation between Koreans and foreigners was a linguistic issue; the foreign conversation groups were all speaking English, while the Korean groups were speaking in Korean. There were some mixed groups, but typically they included one foreigner speaking Korean with a group of Korean, or vice versa. Trying to approach a Korean speaking group as a visibly foreign individual, or vice versa, can create awkward moments where one is either ignored, or an attempt to switch languages is made. Like with the multi-genre, multi-national network cluster, this leads to many gravitating towards people they know, who speak the same language they do, or who they know are fluent enough in their language to be able to converse comfortably. Although I must admit that as the night wore on, there was often a loosening of this separation, and both Koreans and foreigners would sometimes traverse to a table conversing in the opposite language. Their "liquid courage" gave them the impetus to test out their fledgling language skills.

It is important to understand the experience of early foreign punks and how it affected their viewpoint on intercultural interaction. Some of the first foreign punks were often the only foreigner at the show. They would still socialize with Korean punks, but the impetus was on them to try and speak Korean and work over the language barrier. As magazines like *Broke in Korea* and the accompanying message board became more well-known in the English speaking foreign community, the number of foreign punks increased. But this also meant they had the option to speak English and socialize with other foreigners, which is what ended up happening.

This brings a different angle to the concept of instant foreigner networking. If there are not many foreigners at a show, foreign fans are forced to find a way to interact and socialize with Koreans, or not socialize at all. However, as soon as there are a few foreigners involved, this social separation begins to take place. Foreigners, especially those new to the scene, are drawn to what is familiar and safe. In the larger context, this is a punk show; it is familiar, and similar to what they likely experienced back home, with a few clear differences. But once there are other foreigners, it can be even more like home, as they don't have to try and speak Korean. For foreigners who had been in the scene a long time, or have learned to forge relationships with Koreans, this way of grouping only with people who are alike defeats the purpose of having a unified, multicultural scene.

Due to the existence of the *Broke in Korea* fanzine, it is easier to trace long running discussions about intercultural interaction and social networking in punk scenes. I must note that this division between Koreans and foreigners was discussed during my fieldwork, but it was

certainly not a new anxiety: In 2006, *Broke in Korea* included an article called "Punk Apartheid." [234] The argument was that there were almost two scenes in Korea: the Korean one and the foreign one. While they all went to the same shows, they were often oblivious of each other. Most interviewed for the article cited the language barrier or the lack of cultural affinity as being the main cause of the schism. Others brought the discussion back to the previously discussed "bad foreigner" trope: As foreign fan Mike said, "There are the people who try to prove how punk they are by either spraying beer on everybody or by standing back knowing that they are more punk than the Koreans could ever be and talking amongst their little group. I wish the latter group would just fucking stay away." This ego and sense of superiority was highly frowned upon, and even during my fieldwork foreign punks were often self-deprecating and praised Korean punks over themselves.

Dunbar does recognize the irony of complaining about too many foreigners as a foreigner writing in a magazine run by foreigners. He remarks,

> By our presence we're continuing to the overcrowding of foreigners in the Korean punk scene. There is no solution to this Gordian Knot we've tied. The more zines we write, photoblogs we post, websites we make, the more foreigners there will be.[235]

Dunbar goes on to argue that it is not so much the number of foreigners that is the problem, but the wrong type of foreigners. As many interviewees in this article stated: Foreigners are welcome in the scene, as long as they assimilate to the Korean punk culture and are respectful. The things asked for here are similar to that original list in volume one of *Broke in Korea* (discussed in chapter three): understand Korean culture, be respectful, and learn Korean language. Most of the people in the 2006 article stating this were Korean, but throughout my interviews I most often heard a variant of this mantra from foreign punks, especially those who had been part of the scene for a long time.

For foreigners in the punk scene, there did not seem to be a similar double edged sword to foreign identity. Being foreign did not seem to have any inherent benefits or downsides. That being said, if one held onto their foreignness and did not try to interact with Koreans, or tried to wield their foreignness as a place of superiority, this was not looked upon favorably. The foreign participants I interacted with were often most successful because they made an effort to understand Koreans and interact with them in meaningful ways. There is certainly not a sense that foreigners somehow know better than Koreans about punk or punk history. As Won Jonghee, owner of Skunk Hell pointed out, "Foreigners from Europe or the States, they usually know about a lot of punk bands. They usually know it so they want to tell [Koreans]. 'Ok, so do you know Rancid? Unseen? Do you know Oxymoron? Do you know this or that band? Do you know about crust punk?' They really like to talk about it" but that line of questioning tends to "go [away] really fast" as they realize Koreans already know these groups.[236] In my own experience I most often saw foreign punks asking Koreans if they "liked" the bands they were asking about, not if they "knew about" the band (unless the bands mentioned were extremely

[234] Jon Twitch, "Punk Apartheid," *bROKe in Korea* 3 (Winter 2006): 11.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Jonghee Won (punk musicians and owner of Club Skunk), in interview with author, July 16, 2017.

obscure). This is a shift from a place of expected superiority to a more egalitarian understanding that everyone is capable of having knowledge of punk music and history.

When I asked both Korean and foreign punks during my fieldwork if they felt there was social separation between Korean and foreign punks, most said no. I then asked interviewees how they created and maintained friendships with a linguistic barrier. The almost immediate and unanimous response from all interviews: alcohol. While this was often said as a joke, many went on to explain that there was not a need for complex conversation in order to build friendships: simply being around was enough to create connection. The owner of GBN Livehouse put it this way: "It's good if [foreigners] can speak Korean deeply but I don't need to talk that deeply…Because talking about the music and joking, you are not coming to show off or talk about some serious problem."[237] However, this view was not shared by all, Many foreign musicians expressed regret for not knowing enough Korean, and some Korean punks expressed frustration with foreigners for inserting themselves into the scene without learning the language. But for many, the comradery in the act of performance was enough to feel a sense of connection.

Conclusion

The after-party is an important space of networking and social interaction, and one that can occasionally lead to problems with intercultural interactions. The issues that arise in this situation often have clear parallels to the issues that arise during performance that were discussed in chapters three and four. The after-party functions as another situation; while not a musical performance, in many ways it is a social performance. It brings into focus the overall differences between the two groups of musicians discussed throughout this dissertation.

In the case of punks, the adoption of the Korean style after-party meant that foreigners worked within its norms and relaxed the necessity for depth of connection. Simply interacting and socializing, regardless of the depth of that socialization, was enough to create ties between musicians. Even with the language barrier, the drinking party-culture of shows leads to interactions and stories. Punks already have a level of connections simply by labeling themselves as part of the punk subculture. As such, this subcultural status creates a basic connection immediately between Koreans and foreigners. Therefore, it is likely that this lack of need for deep social network ties stems, at least in part, from that direct connection of punk genre, culture, and ideology—a direct connection which in performance networks like the multi-genre, multi-national network cluster is largely absent, as these latter networks are mainly tied by social connection and not musical genre.

Despite this, there continues to be an ongoing discussion, especially from foreign punks, about the ways that the foreign punks and Korean punks are separated socially. Throughout my discussion of punk musicians, I have given illustrations of the ways that foreigners critique each other's behavior in order to keep the negative influences of "bad foreigners" out of the scene. This fear of social separation, much like the fear of overly aggressive foreigners at shows, is exemplified by this repeated motto in my interviews: a "good foreigner" should learn Korean, and interact with Koreans, rather than separate themselves. Regardless of the genre and ideological connections that tie them together, foreigners in the scene still hold each other to this

[237] Yuying Lee (Owner of GBN), in interview with author, July 15, 2017.

standard. To them, while there are some differences in the way that Korean and foreign punks operate, it is on foreigners to adopt the Korean style of being punk, and to chastise foreigners who don't for fear of creating a rift in the multi-cultural scene.

This has been contrasted with the multi-genre, multi-national cluster of musicians. Disconnections between Korean and foreign musicians' understanding of how to socialize at an after-party sometimes created rifts or separation between musicians. The way that central nodes operated to connect disparate performance networks together did not always lead to interconnected social networks. For some people, language and cultural barriers kept them from forming friendships outside of the performance setting. Because there was disagreement about the style of after-party (sit down meal versus informal mingling), it was harder to overcome these barriers. In some ways foreigners also had an easier time networking, due to the instant connection they had with other outsiders. They were also able to get advantages in the scene due to their identities as outsiders. However, for some, the frustration of being an outsider, and the stereotypes that came with it, kept them from moving up to more professional levels of performance.

This disconnect is also reflected in the performances I observed with these musicians: disconnections between Korean and foreign musicians' understandings of how to behave at shows created a rift or separation between musicians. Most of the difficulties in intercultural interaction with these groups were due to these different understandings of behavior. Without a unifying situational script, combined with the social pressures of adapting to local practices, foreigners and Koreans in multi-national and multi-genre networks had a more difficult time understanding the others' behavior. While some individual musicians would adopt some behaviors and views of the other, overall neither group fully adopt the practices of the other.

CHAPTER 6 FOREIGNER-RUN INITIATIVES

TO FACILITATE INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I'd like to take a step back and look at initiatives started by foreign musicians (who did not play punk music) to help illuminate the larger structures that supported the multi-genre, multi-cultural performance networks I encountered in my fieldwork. Foreigner-run punk initiatives that I have already discussed, such as *Broke in Korea*, were often focused on foreigner adoption of Korean norms, attempting to teach foreign participants what was expected of them, following the lead of Koreans. The initiatives discussed in this chapter take a different approach, actively attempting to grow and change the underground rock scene into a more multicultural one. With this material, I hope to illustrate how foreign musicians endeavored to create connections between Korean and non-Korean musicians. How these foreigners positioned themselves in relation to Koreans uncovers their ideology of how a "good foreigner" should place themselves within this Korean scene.

Foreign musicians without a specific genre or cultural affinity often started playing music in Korea very differently. Many talked about playing shows in foreigner associated neighborhoods like HBC or Itaewon, first making connections with foreign-populated places. For many of these musicians, these places were the main music "scene" of which they were aware. However, many of them quickly learned that (even though this is not always the case) if a band wanted to be "taken seriously," as many put it, they needed to attempt to make social connections with Koreans and play in places of performance associated with Koreans. By "taken seriously," most musicians were talking about gaining attention from Korean indie music businesses that promoted recorded bands in both local and sometimes global indie music performance circuits.

As some individual foreign musicians became more invested in music making, many were working to bridge the gap between what they perceived as the "Korean scene" and the "foreign scene." They wanted to play in spaces outside of foreign neighborhoods, and connect more with Korean musicians. Many of them were also frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of attention being paid to indie music in Korea overall, and wanted to use skills they had from their experiences in their home countries to help grow the scene.

To analyze the techniques used by foreigners to promote the underground rock scene in Korea, I selected two prominent, foreigner-originated projects on which to focus. The first is DoIndie, an organization with a promotional website and bilingual news whose goal was to promote and support the Korean independent music scene locally but primarily to help Korean musicians gain access to international scenes. The second, Loose Union, was a musicians' collective that aimed to bridge the gap between Koreans and foreigners by promoting performance opportunities and socio-musical collaborations of Korean and foreign musicians in the indie music scene. These projects overlap in time, although both no longer exist at the time of writing this dissertation. Both worked to serve different musicians and achieve different goals. There are many other journalist websites and musicians collectives within the Korean scene, run by both foreign and Korean musicians, but I have chosen these foreigner-originated group projects because of the way they illustrate different viewpoints on how foreigners should act, and how much agency they should have. While DoIndie is more globally and internationally focused,

attempting to bring Korean music to a global stage through larger promotional tactics and not centering on foreign participants, Loose Union is focused on interpersonal interactions and creating relationships within the scene that could purportedly help both foreign and Korean musicians succeed. Both large scale and small scale efforts are necessary in order to forge the connections needed for musicians to succeed.

Promoting the Scene to the World: DoIndie

The goal of DoIndie was to help Koreans get attention outside of Korea and to use the global experience of the people behind the business to bring Korean rock, as it is, to a global stage. DoIndie was started by Patrick Connor, who moved to Korea from England in 2006.[238] He started to play in bands and make music, but when he tried to promote his music in ways that he was used to back in England, he realized those avenues of promotion did not exist, especially in English. He talked about his earlier experiences, saying "I always heard people saying, well there's no Korean scene, and I'm like 'What are you talking about? There's loads of awesome bands.' But of course, if you can't speak Korean…good luck finding it."[239] He started working with Alex Ameter, the owner of an HBC venue called Powwow, who was also interested in promoting the scene. While there were some English language materials used by punk musicians at this time (as I discussed in chapter three), the language barrier in promotional material for Korean rock music in general was still a challenge. After years of discussion, they both put up collateral and launched DoIndie in 2014 as a business focused on both promotion and journalism.

DoIndie's first post on their website summarizes the group's mission: "DoIndie is a new website designed to help promote and support the Korean independent music scene both locally and internationally."[240] Patrick emphasized in our interview that the goal of the site was not to help local foreigners gain access to the scene, but instead to help Korean musicians gain access to international scenes. If he had a choice, he would not do the articles in English, as it was often difficult to get Korean language interviews translated. But Patrick said "Mainly, the reason I do [English language articles] is to help the bands get out of Korea. Because, for example, to go to America, you need English press to get a visa. And if don't have [English language press] they're not going to give you a visa."[241] This is why articles were in both Korean and English; in Korean to help promote bands locally, and in English to give bands something to use for international press kits and getting a performer visa.

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[238] DoIndie, "DoIndie Team," *DoIndie*, accessed August 22, 2019, http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/general_pages/doindie-team (website was removed March 10, 2020, version archived August 22, 2019 can be found here: https://web.archive.org/web/20190822010202/http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/general_pages/doindie-team).

[239] Patrick Conner (musician and founder of DoIndie), in interview with author, December 29, 2016.

[240] DoIndie, "Welcome to DoIndie," *DoIndie*, accessed March 9, 2019, http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/posts/welcome-to-doindie May 10, 2014 (website was removed March 10, 2020, version archived March 9, 2019 can be found here: https://web.archive.org/web/20190309015339/http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/posts/welcome-to-doindie).

[241] Patrick Conner, interview.

The site originally was staffed by both Korean and foreign volunteers,[242] fans of the scene who would submit interviews and help translate articles. There were technically two DoIndie sites: http://www.doindie.co.kr/en (English language) and http://www.doindie.co.kr (Korean language). Both domains had (pretty much) the same content, formatted in the same way. The website includes a database of bands and venues, with varying degrees of detail. The articles included show and album reviews, interviews with artists, playlists, and promotions for upcoming events/festivals. There were also "Band Introduction" articles that typically include playlists, band photographs, and notices of upcoming shows.

Patrick acknowledged that the English language site has the "side effect" of being good for foreigners in Korea by helping them find out about the scene. In 2015 when I was first exploring the independent music scene in Korea, I had multiple Koreans and foreigners alike suggesting DoIndie as the main resource for finding new bands and venues. While some of the venues listed were no longer in operation, and some of the bands no longer played, it was a helpful introduction to bands and a way to learn about new shows. Many foreigner musicians I worked with would interview each other, or sometimes interview Korean musicians, and submit those interviews to DoIndie to promote shows, albums, or other events. It was the go-to resource I would mention to people who wanted to learn about Korean indie music and find bands playing in all the different genres involved.

As a cofounder of DoIndie, Patrick Conner walks a tightrope between trying to help, and trying not to seem like an arrogant savior-type. He recognized that as a foreigner in his position, he did not want to come across as thinking that things should be done his way, and thus often emphasized that the comments he made were his opinion only. He told me that he always tries to be respectful and understanding, saying "There's a certain danger of being the foreign guy who thinks he knows best, and I have tried really hard to be the foreign guy who likes the indie scene… mainly, I'm just trying to help the bands and the music I like."[243] He sees DoIndie as a way for him to put his experience to use by creating supportive performance systems and models of promotion that assist the Korean scene to gain attention both locally and abroad.

For a long time, Patrick did not want to be the face of DoIndie, or focus on his participation in the company, preferring to work behind the scenes and without attention. He works closely with the Korean volunteers and staff, and does not want DoIndie to be seen as a foreign entity, saying "Now I'll argue till I'm blue in the face that it's not a foreigner website. I'll sit there and argue with people about that all night long. It's not. I'm *a* foreigner, working for *a* website, that has ten Koreans on it…it's a Korean website, I just happen to be a foreigner." To him, DoIndie served Koreans, and works as a way to help Koreans gain access to international indie performance circuits. The fact that DoIndie also gave local foreign musicians access to the Korean scene and ways of promoting their music, was simply an unintended side benefit.

During my fieldwork Patrick played drums in a band with all foreign members (Rough Cuts), and a band with all Korean members besides himself, of course (Mohana). He was well liked by both Korean and foreign musicians I spoke with, and was seen as a helpful figure in the

[242] DoIndie, "About Us," *DoIndie*, accessed September 11, 2019, http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/general_pages/about-us (website was removed March 10, 2020, version archived September 11, 2019 can be found here: https://web.archive.org/web/20190911081233/http://www.doindie.co.kr/en/general_pages/about-us).
[243] Patrick Conner, interview.

scene. His ability to easily adapt to social situations including Koreans, foreigners, or both was one of his biggest strengths. His own bands rarely got special treatment on the DoIndie website or in show promotion. Patrick's service-oriented attitude to promotion and dislike of taking credit were two of his biggest strengths in keeping DoIndie from criticism. Patrick recognized his position as an "outsider," and did not want to be seen as someone who is judging Koreans or telling them what to do. At the same time, he wanted to be able to contribute his knowledge and opinions about different styles of promotion and information distribution to help the scene. Connecting Koreans with musicians from other countries, and helping them understand those other contexts, was DoIndie's way of "giving back" to the Korean scene the founders loved.

Expansion to Globally Focused Show Curation

DoIndie also worked to promote shows, performers, and venues, eventually branching out to create their own branded shows. It is important to note here how shows were organized and put on in the underground scenes. Most shows were programmed by musicians, not by venue owners or promoters. First, a musician reaches out to friends about putting on a show with other bands they know. Usually a line-up and date is tentatively decided on, and then a musician contacts a venue owner and asks to rent it. The musician-curated shows often have interesting dynamics, depending on what criteria the musician uses to choose bands. Many musicians that I have interviewed rated friendship over other factors like genre, sonic similarity, audience size and diversity, and even talent (although these other descriptors also play a role). While some bands played together almost every weekend, others tried to vary their lineups so that they played with different groups for every show. Some of these musician-curated shows have a specific purpose: birthdays, farewell parties, CD releases, or charity shows. Others were organized just because musicians hadn't played in a while and were looking to put something together. There were some venues that programmed their own shows from a roster of performers, and some promotional companies that organized shows, but musician-curated was the most common way a show was put together.

In 2016 Patrick took extra teaching jobs in order to pay two part-time Korean employees to help the business grow, and started to focus more on promoting and organizing shows, especially with international indie acts. Taking the connections he had made as a musician putting on his own and other shows, Patrick used those skills and promotional techniques to create connections between local and international acts. During my fieldwork DoIndie put on multiple shows, including some of the most popular bands in the Korean scene as well as guest artists from around the world. Many of these international acts were from a showcase festival in Seoul called Zandari Festa with which DoIndie worked closely. "Zandari" is a reference to a street bisecting Hongdae that has attracted many venues. In Korean, *Jandari* is the shortened form of "little bridge" (작은 다리-*jakeun dari*). The festival founder, Kong Yoon-young, hoped that people would "'experience the broader world through this small bridge.'"[244] The goal was to help build bridges between Korean and overseas artists as well as Korean and overseas music companies. In service to that goal, a large number of the performers at Zandari Festa were indie musicians invited from countries all over the world. Talent scouts from international labels and

[244] Jon Dunbar, "Zandari Festa Turns Hongdae to City of Music," *The Korea Times,* September 29, 2016, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/culture/2017/02/141_215054.html

distributors were also invited to come to Korea to see Zandari Festa, creating opportunities for Korean bands to go abroad.

The founder of Zandari and several other staff members had traveled to festivals and showcases around the world. They took the connections they made, and the lessons they learned, and applied them to organizing the first Zandari Festa in 2012. When I attended the festival in 2016, DoIndie had multiple showcase stages, giving some Korean and international artists multiple performance opportunities over the course of the festival. Many of these international bands returned to Korea at a later date with DoIndie-organized shows such as the ones I saw during my fieldwork. Notably, the bands Patrick played in were rarely programmed on these DoIndie shows, as Patrick was too busy running the logistics to be able to prepare and play.

When I interviewed Patrick in December 2016, his goal for DoIndie's future was to be an integrated system, including promotion, ticketing, webzine, and even a label. While many different groups are doing promotion, or ticketing, or have developed webzines and even creating some labels in the Korean scene, Patrick considered it important for one group to coordinate all those facets of promotion and to handle all of those forms of labor for musicians, thereby allowing them to focus on their music. As part of this integrated system, DoIndie was also focused on helping musicians make connections abroad through shows with international artists, performances at festivals abroad, and English language promotional media.

Patrick also wanted to rethink the way tickets for shows were sold. At the time of my fieldwork, most tickets were still sold only at the door. Patrick started to experiment with pre-selling tickets online through sites like Interpark, although it cost a lot to DoIndie to use those independent sites. But, as Patrick explained, the presales had a larger goal: "The ticket selling, the profit from the tickets isn't so important. The important thing is the email addresses that will be garnered through that."[245] Similar to the way that DoIndie was a repository for information on and for bands and venues, the presale ticket email list would be a repository of information on indie music fans in Korea that would be invaluable for promotion and community building.

But these Korean ticketing sites were difficult to access for foreigners unless they had an alien registration card. In order to create an account on many Korean websites, or to purchase things using an account, one typically needs to have a registration number. The policy was originally enacted to force people to use their real names on accounts, and decrease online bullying.[246] But it was often necessary to use a registration number to purchase items from Korean companies, or to use PC Bang computers. If someone is an unregistered foreigner (typically on a tourist visa), they are unable to buy tickets themselves. Even with an alien registration number, I was unable to purchase presale tickets on Interpark for a DoIndie run show during my fieldwork.[247] Some foreigners I spoke to would just email Patrick and ask him to hold

[245] Patrick Conner, interview.
[246] Eric Pfanner, "Naming Names on the Internet," *The New York Times*, Sept 4, 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/05/technology/naming-names-on-the-internet.html
[247] I occasionally had issues with the name on my Alien Registration Card not exactly matching the name on my passport, which would make the number/name correlation invalid (it was missing a space between Van and Nyhuis). This is what I think happened in this case, but I can't be certain. To be fair, the space in my last name causes issues with identification in the United States as well.

tickets at online prices that they would pay for at the door (as door pricing was higher than online pricing). But that only would work if you knew Patrick already.

Again, the challenge of the language barrier appears as a factor for foreigners: these ticket purchasing systems could be difficult to navigate without knowledge of Korean. This could be seen as another indication that DoIndie was not focused on creating access to the scene for foreign musicians and fans. Despite this, during my early fieldwork, almost every tourist booth, online resource, or social interaction where I tried to find information about indie music in South Korea pointed me towards the DoIndie website. For many I talked to, it was a portal to knowing more about Korean music, and learning about which venues to go to and when shows were happening. Creating an integrated system combining a webzine, promotion, and informational databases led to "accidental accessibility" for local foreigners in Korea.

Promoting Cosmopolitan Interactions: Loose Union

Although Loose Union and DoIndie were both focused on gaining the attention of the music industry, DoIndie was created to be a system that allowed Korean musicians to gain global attention, whereas Loose Union was a more grassroots organization focused on getting local attention. Foreign musicians were able to find ample opportunities to place in foreign-coded neighborhoods like Itaewon and Hongdae, especially due to events like HBCfest (see chapter two). However, making connections with Korean promoters, venue owners, and musicians was difficult for many foreign musicians. As I mentioned earlier, most shows in the scene were musician curated, meaning that connections to either venue owners or musicians who played in Hongdae and knew the venue owners was necessary to be able to break out of foreign places of performance. Loose Union was focused, at least in part, in helping facilitate those intercultural connections between Korean and foreign musicians. Their goal was to help grow the scene for Korean and foreigner indie music in general in the increasingly cosmopolitan city of Seoul.

In the early 2010s, Loose Union was started by Danny Arens, Adam Brennan, and Oliver Walker, when they brought together a group of foreign and Korean musicians, visual artists, and filmmakers who wanted to promote music and "get more eyes and ears on what was happening"[248] in the underground music scene of Korea. Danny and Adam were both musicians, and Danny was known for his excellent networking and Korean language skills. Oliver (Ollie) was a videographer who video recorded shows and helped produce promotional materials. The idea behind the "loose union" of musicians was to use techniques that individuals and bands had used to promote their own music, to help other musicians gain access to opportunities to play at festivals and generally promote each other's music.

Membership in the collective was most often determined by majority vote amongst members. Typically a band would have to be nominated by an existing member, usually in the Loose Union group chat.[249] Members would be included on Loose Union's internet resources, their website, Facebook page, and Twitter feeds. Loose Union also had a connection with Union Studios, run by a friend of the founders, Brad Wheeler. The members also got a better deal than otherwise available for recording at Union Studios, and creating promotional "Live at Union

[248] Adam Brennan (musician, founder of Loose Union) in interview with author, February 2, 2017.
[249] Patrick Walsh (musician), in interview with author, February 22, 2017.

Studios" YouTube videos to promote bands on the Loose Union YouTube channel.[250] Loose Union also held frequent shows, put out a compilation album, and released promotional short films about festival performances. The artists in the collective would help design posters and album art, and members would put up posters and help promote each other's work on their own social media. The musicians also benefitted from the networking skills of key members, who were able to get support from companies outside of Korea like Vans shoes and get larger festival performances for bands at places like Pentaport festival in Incheon.

When talking to musicians about the underlying reasoning for working as a collective, it seems Loose Union was meant to address some of the issues with access and image that foreign musicians had in Korea, as well as help bring some of their experience from abroad to Korea. Chung Park, a Korean-American visual artist who joined the collective shortly after its inception, describes Loose Union's philosophy and creation thus:

> I think the whole Loose Union thing—the brainchild comes from three members, Danny [Arens], Adam Brennan and Oliver Walker. So the three of them had this idea of like, "We are not doing open mics, HBC is too small a thing and it is very like, expat-y. The real opportunities are in working with locals, with Koreans, we have to mesh in and be cross cultural if we want to be taken seriously." And they felt like putting shows together with foreign and Korean bands would be a really great idea. They were trying to build a scene that they might have been used to back home, something that we felt like didn't really exist in Seoul. They existed for Koreans but for us how do we get to be a part of that and how do Korean bands and labels start to take us seriously.[251]

In this quote, Chung managed to condense into a few sentences three key issues discussed by my other interviewees associated with Loose Union. First, the impetus; there are stereotypes associated with foreign musicians, as being unprofessional and as they said, "not serious," about music making. This stems from the way foreign musicians perform in "expat" neighborhoods like HBC. Second, the action: In order to be taken seriously, foreign musicians felt they needed to show cultural understanding and have a "cross-cultural" or "cosmopolitan" mentality and work with Korean musicians. Third, the paradox: while foreign musicians wanted to be cross-cultural and not associated with what they called the "Expat" mentality, at the same time they wanted to "build a scene that they might have been used to back home." The techniques for promotion and ideas about scene building stemmed from their own experiences in other contexts, and often ran up against expectations that differed in Korean culture. I will explain each of these in more detail in the next section.

Stereotyping of Foreign Musicians

Many factors led to the stereotype that foreign musicians were not serious about their music. One was the nature of what was often referred to as "the expat scene." In most English language interviews I conducted with both foreigners and Koreans, the term "expat" was used as a derogatory descriptor for bands that were overly amateur or sloppy, or for spaces known as

[250] Loose Union, "Loose Union," *YouTube*, accessed Jan 27, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRmi3GLnm8I_-IGyZYLvmzw/feed
[251] Chung Park (visual artist), in interview with author, July 20, 2017.

hangouts that catered only to foreigners, to the point of making Koreans uncomfortable.[252] When talking about "expat" neighborhoods in interviews, I would typically ask for clarification, and most often interviewees were using it as shorthand for Itaewon and HBC. "Expat" in general referred to someone who was not aware of Korean cultural norms, made no attempt to learn Korean and often complained about perceived discrimination from Koreans. This imaginary "expat" was often held up as the negative image that foreigners in interviews measured themselves against: "I'm not like those expats, I learned Korean, I understand Korean culture, I play with Koreans."

HBCfest contributed to the stereotypes around foreign musicians and "expat" behavior. When I attended HBCfest, the quality of the performers varied widely. There is no audition process for getting a spot in the festival. If the festival coordinator, Lance Reegan Diehl, knew a band, he would give them a prime spot, but with others he would just place them earlier in the day, as the shows sometimes started as early as 2 pm. Based on my interview with Lance, pretty much anyone who asked was able to play. In addition, many of the less desirable locations for HBCfest events were restaurants such as Bonnie's Pizza, which is known as a popular restaurant for Koreans. The Korean patrons often did not seem to know that HBCfest was happening, and based on my observation they were not pleased with having their meal interrupted by an acoustic cover of Britany Spear's "Toxic."

An understanding of foreign musicians as cover musicians added to the stereotype; that perception was largely due to the large number of cover musicians at HBCfest, and the open mics at venues like Bedrock which featured mostly cover performers. The larger issue there was an assumption that foreign musicians did not have any original musical material. When I talked about my research on foreign musicians in Korea to Korean friends and scholars outside of the music scene, most said, "Oh, like cover bands? Why are you studying cover bands?" Bands who wanted to break free of the cover musician stereotype avoided the sounds of mainstream pop or rock. Instead, they focused on music with complex structures and rhythmic patterns, like the compositional techniques of Visuals, Mountains and Tierpark discussed in chapter four.

The equipment at HBCfest was also a factor that led to a perceived lack of professionalism. When I attended HBCfest there was no one from the festival organization other than the venue owner designated to run the rented equipment, which caused problems as the venue owner was often busy serving patrons. This meant that amateur musicians were left scrambling to try and make it work, or begging help from the crowd to help adjust settings. For foreign musicians who were used to performing in so-called "real" venues with dedicated equipment and experienced sound engineers in Hongdae, HBCfest was not "worth it" in their estimation. The only places these performers would play were those venues that held

[252] I should note that Koreans only used the word expat when speaking to me in English. In his article, Keewoong Lee addresses the lack of a good translation into Korean, replacing it with the Korean term for foreigners (waegukin) in his writing: "expat 이라는 말에 대한 적절한 번역어를 찾기 어려운 관계로 이 글에서는 일단 expat 을 '외국인'으로 번역하기로 한다." Keewong Lee, "이주민들의 탈영토화된 음악실천과 코즈모폴리턴 문화공간의 생산:서양계 이주민 밴드를 중심으로 [Migrants' Deterritorialized Music Practice and Production of a Cosmopolitan Cultural Space: Focusing on the Western Migrant Band]." *한국대중음악회 [Korean Society for Popular Music]* 15 (2015): 78.

performances year round, and had their own equipment and sound engineers. So once a band began to acquire a good reputation, or made the social connections necessary to play in Hongdae, they often stopped playing at HBCfest.

Another reason for the assumption that many foreign musicians likely did not take performance seriously was the transient nature of foreigners in Korea, specifically English teachers. Many English teachers were on year-to-year contracts, and never really "put down roots" or made long-term plans. "Teachers live their lives oriented towards imminent departure…the imminence of departure does not necessarily mean that individuals are actually going to leave or thinking in concrete terms."[253] Most foreigners talked frequently about leaving, and when they would decide to leave, it happened rather suddenly. Even with more so-called "serious" foreign bands, a member leaving the country and breaking up the band was a common occurrence. So, certainly not for all, but for many, music making was simply a social activity to pass the time and play with other musicians, not something they tried to make a career.

Overall, the visibility of foreign amateur musicians in places like HBC, combined with an understanding that foreign musicians were not likely to stay in Korea, meant that foreign musicians were not taken as seriously by Korean musicians and record labels. As many foreign musicians said in interviews, trying to have a serious career in music as a foreigner was ill-advised. They felt that they were constantly fighting against these stereotypes of their performance skills and professionalism. Between HBCfest and open mics at bars in both Itaewon and HBC, it was relatively easy for foreign musicians to get started playing for an audience. Many musicians made social connections at some of these open mics or performances and put bands together. The low barrier to entry for foreign musicians meant that many were making music as a distraction, a hobby, not something they hoped to turn into a career. For some, playing music was simply a way to make drinking money, and therefore it did not matter if they only played open mics and local foreigner bars.

To combat these stereotypes, foreign musicians who wished to show they were more serious about their music made an effort to remove themselves from the "expat scene" and play in Hongdae in bands that were "more Korean." There were many debates and discussions during my fieldwork about which bands that included foreign and Korean musicians were called "more Korean," and which ones weren't. Most of the characteristics of "more Korean" bands focused on language, performance style, and cultural understanding. Bands like Danny Aren's Used Cassettes, comprised completely of white male foreigners, are a good example. Their songs were often in Korean, and at shows I attended Danny mostly spoke Korean to the audience. Some foreigners I spoke with discussed them as "more Korean" at best, or pandering to Koreans at worst. But other bands with a mix of Korean and foreign participants, or all-foreigner bands, also took a strategy of singing in Korean and playing more cleanly and professionally to separate themselves from the stereotypes of foreign musicians.

It is important to note that these bands with foreign musicians would never be seen as "actually Korean," just "more Korean" than others. Foreign musicians rarely discussed their music as being "Korean," even if many members of their bands were Korean. The concept of

[253] Francis L. Collins and Sergei Shubin, "Migrant Times Beyond the Life Course: The Temporalities of Foreign English Teachers in South Korea," *Geoforum* 62 (2015): 100.

nationality becomes quickly complicated in the case of bands with a mix of Korean and foreign musicians, or bands with only foreign musicians, that formed and started in Korea. The reason for this stems from the way that nation of origin and ethnicity are so closely tied together in this context. When pressed, most admitted that a "Korean" band needs to be (majority, if not completely) ethnically Korean. By showing they understood and were attempting to follow Korean social norms, but never claiming to be Korean, these bands made clear that they understood Korean culture well enough to know they could not be part of it.

Rhetorical Positioning of the Loose Union Collective

To succeed in the face of that reality, Loose Union positioned themselves as a cross-cultural or cosmopolitan endeavor through several strategic actions. First, they emphasized the mix of Korean and foreign artists involved. Their promotional materials, pictures, and documentaries typically featured Korean and foreign musicians equally. Their rhetoric of cultural understanding and cosmopolitanism is best illustrated in promotional interviews that the three cofounders did to promote the collective. Loose Union was part of Vans #LivingOffTheWall documentary series in 2014. In the documentary, Danny, Ollie, and Adam spend considerable time illustrating their understanding of the difference between Western and Korean culture, and expressing their sympathy towards the struggles of Korean musicians.

When first mentioning Korea, Danny emphasizes the personal relationships with Korean musicians that underpin the Loose Union connections. He said, "Korean culture is very different from the cultures that we're all from, but showing an interest and really wanting to know the Koreans that we've been working with, and working on projects together, that's been really cool, and I think it's been really special."[254] This idea of "really wanting" to know Koreans was echoed in interviews I did with other members of Loose Union. Both Korean and foreign interviewees argued that the connections made between the Korean and foreign musicians were not superficial, or only a means to an end. In my interviews, Korean musicians especially talked about how competitive the Korean scene can be, and how hard it was to find people to support the early stages of the career of a musician. They appreciated the sense of comradery and connection that Loose Union provided. Foreign musicians talked about how they were often musically inspired by the Korean musicians in the collective. It should be noted that through the years multiple marriages occurred between Korean and foreign musicians in the collective, illustrating strong social (and romantic) connections as well.

In the Vans documentary, Adam and Ollie used their experiences as teachers of Korean students to compare Western adolescents to Korean ones, arguing that while Western teens are typically able to cultivate a myriad of interests (punk, indie, hip hop, guitar, football), Korean teens are not encouraged to do this. Adam says "A lot of kids here [in Korea], they just study. They don't have the free time to develop these intrinsic [sic] interests."[255] This characterization of Korean youth culture was common amongst foreign musicians I interviewed. It came from their own experiences interacting with Korean students as native English-speaking teachers, and seeing firsthand the pressures put on Korean youth. Most musicians I talked to were sympathetic towards their students, and frustrated with the system that required so much of them. This led

[254]Vans, "Loose Union | #LIVINGOFFTHEWALL | VANS," *YouTube*, September 22, 2014, https://youtu.be/0BmRMyjlNAA, 1:00.
[255] Vans, "Loose Union," 1:20.

them to be protective and supportive of young Korean musicians. At the same time, this mindset also led some to criticize Korean groups that sounded too polished as "studying" rock like it is a subject in school, and not "getting" the feeling of it. Those types of groups were not often picked to be involved with Loose Union.

The section of the documentary concludes with Ollie saying that the work they do in Loose Union is "very important for the new cosmopolitan Seoul that is starting to come out of the woodwork and onto the world stage. A lot of these [indie] bands don't have big record labels or much support, and so without collaboration no one is going to progress, nothing's really going to happen. Because there is not much you can do by yourself."[256] Here Ollie seems to be saying that the cosmopolitan nature of Loose Union reflects the shift in Seoul to a more cosmopolitan, global city; a rhetorical move that, in Korea at the time (2014), would have been appreciated as proper praise for Seoul as a city. As So Jin Park and Nancy Abelman have argued, in the Korean context, "nationalism and cosmopolitanism are not contradictory."[257] As such, referring to Seoul as "global" and "cosmopolitan," which are both positive traits in the Korean context, and then positioning Loose Union as a symbol of that, worked to give value to Loose Union as a collective.

Loose Union from the Perspective of Korean and Korean Diasporic Musicians

Korean musicians in Loose Union tended to be more internationally minded, and focused on eventually promoting their music abroad. Playing with local foreign musicians meant playing for local foreign audiences, who often acted very differently from Korean ones, and had different sound and style preferences. Annie Ko, Korean member of the group Love X Stereo, stated, "For us, foreign audience [in Korea] would be more directly involved into the music. They would drink and dance, and they like that really. They're more into the music and more into the atmosphere and the sound. As opposed to Korean audience, [who are] more into the looks."[258] Many internationally minded Korean musicians saw foreign audiences in Korea as a testing ground; if foreigner audiences liked their music, listeners abroad might like it too. Through my three years following the scene, a number of Korean bands who joined Loose Union were able to use the collective's connections, as well as others that they certainly forged themselves, to gain further popularity both in Korea and to get the opportunity to perform abroad—more so than any of the foreign groups associated with the label.

In discussing Loose Union as a group of Koreans and foreigners, it is easy for a category of people involved in the group to be ignored or erased: diasporic Korean returnees. I use this term to describe people of Korean ethnicity who were either born or spent the majority of their lives living somewhere else, but who have returned to Korea. Some of the musicians and fans I met during my fieldwork with Loose Union were Korean adoptees from countries like the United States or Canada, who often found work as English teachers, or got F4 visas as "Overseas Koreans" and spent time living and working in Korea.

[256] Vans, "Loose Union," 1:50.
[257] So Jin Park and Nancy Abelmann, "Class and Cosmopolitan Striving: Mother's Management of English Education in South Korea," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 77, no. 4 (Autumn 2004): 645.
[258] Annie Ko (musician), in interview with author, May 8, 2017.

Diasporic Koreans were typically called upon to help facilitate connections between Loose Union and Korean business. Diasporic Koreans I interviewed discussed not feeling "Korean enough," and being looked down on by Koreans for not understanding cultural norms. In my interview with Chung Park, I asked him if it was harder to work with foreign musicians or with Korean musicians. "I think the Korean side was more difficult for me only because even though I speak the language, just culturally, the [cultural] nuance[s], I had to be careful about. I felt like that also held me back in many ways." I then brought up the "foreigner card:" a slang term referring to the phenomenon where people who are foreign often get a pass for not understanding Korean culture. Chung responded: "Sure but then it's harder for me to play that card because I am Korean, I look Korean and the expectation becomes, 'well you should know better,' and 'if you didn't know better then why didn't you communicate that to us?'"[259] Because diasporic Koreans are not *visibly* foreign, they do not get that "pass" about cultural knowledge, regardless of their nationality or background.

The Slow Decline of Loose Union

By the time I returned for fieldwork in August 2016, most of the main bands in Loose Union were no longer active. All three of the leaders had either left the country or moved on from leadership of the group. Ali Safavi (who was discussed previously as a member of Visuals), had taken the helm as a member of Mountains, the only foreigner band left on the website. He organized a few shows during my fieldwork labelled "Loose Union" shows, most of which included new projects by band members of the previous foreign bands and some old and new Korean bands. But Loose Union didn't really have the same networking connections and promotional power it offered during its heyday, and use of the label has slowly fallen out of favour.[260]

A few different reasons surfaced in interviews for why Loose Union started to decline. One of the main reasons had to do with member disappointment. Many of the musicians I spoke to who were around during the height of Loose Union's popularity talked about how the group seemed to be very professional and powerful. Those who were asked to join the group saw it as an important seal of approval, a way to feel like they had "made it" somewhere. But they then expressed disappointment that they did not get as many benefits as they expected to receive; as more groups joined, it was harder to negotiate opportunities for every band. At the same time, some non-member foreign musicians perceived Loose Union to be exclusive or pretentious. By deriding "expats" who didn't understand Korean language and culture, and holding themselves up as examples of good (cosmopolitan) foreigners, members of Loose Union alienated some foreign musicians who still played in HBC and associated themselves with that neighborhood and lifestyle.

Members of Loose Union were aware of this perception of exclusivity, and addressed it in interviews. They felt that many foreign musicians had negative opinions of the founding members, especially Danny Arens. Danny's ability to network and his fluent Korean led to many opportunities for his band "Used Cassettes," including a recording contract with the indie label Magic Strawberry Sound. I was at their CD release party at the studio in 2015, and remember

[259] Chung Park, interview.
[260] Their twitter has not posted since August of 2017 and as of 2019 Loose Union shows are few and far between. The website is no longer active.

some in attendance telling me they felt Danny was pandering to Korean audiences and acting like a "performing monkey" on Korean TV in order to get famous; an opinion I occasionally heard echoed by others related to Loose Union. In addition, some members talked about being frustrated when friends who still played in HBC didn't want to play with Loose Union members because they thought Loose Union members were "a bunch of pretentious people."[261]

Frustrated with how people saw Loose Union, Mike McGrath of the band *Baekma* (백마-white horse)[262] that belonged to Loose Union, nevertheless understood where people were coming from, in a way: "Being inclusive and not coming off as wankers is tough. I was always like, 'man, you guys have the wrong idea about these people. They are all like really sensitive and nice and not assholes but you just think Adam Brennan is a dick because of his confident stage persona and he doesn't give a fuck about like making small talk with people he doesn't know or like. He is a really nice guy.'"[263] This animosity within the "foreign scene" left Loose Union in a position of betweenness: they were never accepted as fully "Korean" and the assumption of their pretentiousness became a divisive topic within the foreign scene.

Some musicians who played shows with Loose Union as well as in HBC, like Grey Watson, argued that there were talented, hard-working musicians in both groups, but understood that there are different "crews" and groups of friends with different values. Many of the musicians with whom Grey interacted in HBC played music more closely related to country or folk rock. These musicians often jammed together at venues like Alley Bunker in HBC, playing American folk songs and original pieces. While these folk musicians were not as interested in playing in Hongdae as Loose Union musicians were, I did witness many of these musicians reaching out to Korean musicians who played music influenced by American folk or other European traditions, like Irish music. There were also efforts to combine traditional Korean music and American folk music styles. Seth Mountain, a singer-songwriter interested in social justice, paired up with traditional Korean musicians to hold folk concerts and perform at protests. So although these folk musicians closely associated themselves with foreigner spaces, they also worked to play with Korean musicians. Their circle of collaborators was just different from the ones Loose Union curated.

Another major--arguably more pressing--reason that Loose Union declined was business related, namely, a decline in the need for their promotional services. A considerable number of interviewees talked about bands outgrowing Loose Union. As it operated in 2015, Loose Union seemed best at supporting obscure and up and coming bands, and helping them gain attention from Korean institutions such as recording labels and festival organizers. But once those bands had contracts with Korean labels, they no longer needed Loose Union's help and did not need to associate with them as strongly. Korean groups especially were able to use Loose Union to get a foothold into Korean institutions like promotion businesses, and no longer needed the informal musicians' collective to help them succeed.

[261] Alberto Alba (musician), in interview with author, February 14, 2017.
[262] "Riding the white horse" is slang for a Korean man sleeping with a white woman. Besides Mike, all the members of this group were foreign women, and yes, the name is purposefully political.
[263] Mike McGrath (musician), in interview with author, June 9, 2017.

Chung Park talked about wanting to make Loose Union more official, saying he wanted to make it a "registered business or organisation. Maybe we are still not making money but we are in the grid and people know us as an institution of some kind or organisation and we have managers and we have A&R and we have events. Maybe if we got some funding somewhere. That's where I saw the whole thing. Let's keep building this thing so that people start approaching us saying we want to invest in your thing." Because he was not a founding member, however, he felt it was not his place to push for this option if no one else was invested in it.

At the same time these business discussions were taking place, a large number of foreign Loose Union members were leaving, and many major bands were breaking up. By the time I started my fieldwork in August 2016, only three of the ten bands listed on the Loose Union webpage were still performing; two Korean bands and one all foreigner band. While many of the musicians in those defunct bands were still playing, it was under different band names, with different members, and often in totally different musical styles than the band associated with Loose Union. Senior members left Korea or went on to pursue other projects outside the Loose Union group. With all the upheaval, and so many leaving the scene, it is understandable that the collective did not take that next step to becoming a registered business or organization.

Although Loose Union was in decline by the time I started my year of fieldwork, this does not mean the social and performance-based networks they had forged completely disappeared. As Ruth Finnegan argues, "Local musical practices depend indeed on individuals' connections but also have a certain abiding structure over and above the links of particular individuals; so when one set of links—or bands or clubs—dissolve, others can be forged in their place following the same tradition." [264] Many of the musicians involved formed new bands, sometimes with each other and sometimes bringing in new musicians. These bands continued to play together, and with new musicians, forging new network connections and expanding others. The musicians discussed in chapter four had direct ties to the remnants of performance networks created and strengthened by Loose Union.

Conclusion

As I have previously discussed, foreigner-run punk initiatives typically attempted to create intercultural connections through adopting Korean norms of behavior. While the two groups I have discussed here took different approaches to facilitate intercultural interaction between Korean and foreign musicians, they were both effective in bridging gaps between Korean and foreign musicians. Loose Union, a musician's collective focused on promotion and collaboration, was created to help facilitate social connections between Korean and foreign musicians in the indie scene in general, and to create performance opportunities and group promotion within Korea. This group focused on a cosmopolitan ideology, attempting to distance itself from the enclave stereotypes associated with foreign spaces in Seoul. DoIndie was a music promotion site that included articles and stories much like a zine, but also worked to promote performance abroad and to create a database of musicians in Korea. DoIndie was focused on

[264] Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1989): 305.

making Korean rock music a global phenomenon, while inadvertently creating access for foreign fans and musicians.

Each of these groups promoted the type of scene they wanted to see. It is important to keep in mind, however, that all of these endeavors were started by foreign musicians. While they all certainly worked to include Korean musicians in their groups, and listen to what Korean musicians said, their viewpoint was still skewed towards implementing outside models and understandings of promotion and scene building. Foreign musicians also occasionally criticized or laid out plans to, as they put it, "fix" perceived problems with the Korean scene that they experienced. At the same time, many of these same musicians were quick to point out that because they were not Korean, they did not have ownership of the scene. They positioned themselves as "fans" or said they just wanted to help by lending their experience. These foreign musicians also controlled the narrative of what a so-called "good" foreigner was required to do when interacting with the Korean scene.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

The focus of this dissertation has been the intercultural interactions between Korean and foreign participants in the scene, examining the ways that they connect themselves together and set themselves apart. Throughout this text, I have worked to explain the intercultural interactions in the South Korean underground rock scene that I experienced during my participant observation fieldwork from 2016-2017.While there are many different ways I attempted to approach this material, I kept returning to the overlapping criteria of place, musical genre, nationality, and social networks. All of these factors played a role in how individuals construct their idea of the different "scenes" they are involved in (or position themselves against). They were also important to understanding why participants acted the way they did, and why connections as well as disconnections occurred.

The locations that musicians play in and associate themselves with have historical contexts that are evoked to explain these musicians' identities. "Foreign" spaces, such as Itaewon and Haebangchon, are associated with a lack of professionalism, cover bands, and an enclave mentality where foreigners can feel "at home" and without having to adopt Korean norms. Foreign musicians have to work to play outside of these "alien spaces," purposefully forging connections that will help them move into Korean spaces of performance, like Hongdae. Hongdae is known as the origin of the punk scene in Korea, but its association to gentrification and shifts in demographics have tainted this history, and led musicians to look for other neighborhoods with which to associate themselves.

Musical genre plays a role in the facilitation of intercultural interaction. It can function as a cohesive force, if it is well defined and understood by all participants in a similar way. While rock can seem to some like a singular genre category, there are actually a myriad of subgenres, each with different performance norms. These scripts of performance sometimes travel around the globe with the genre, such as the case of punk music. The interlocking markers of ideology, fashion, sound, and movement create a more or less global concept of what punk is, and how a punk show operates. As such, it is easier for foreign punk musicians to adopt the idiosyncrasies of different countries' local style such as Korean punk style and, as the notion of "situational" scripts emphasizes, to know how to behave in those situations.

If the subgenre does not have these clear performance norms, or performances mix a variety of genres, it becomes harder for participants to clearly understand the "situation" they are in. This causes them, consciously or not, to draw upon other situational scripts when determining what behaviors are expected in a given situation. This was a case with the performance network I discussed in chapter four. While many foreigner musicians viewed their performances like parties and thus as encouraging a party behavior, many Korean performers conceived their performances like concerts and as a possible career to pursue. The "constructions" of these two performance scripts were often in conflict, creating disconnection between participants. In rhetorical terms, these contrasting performance behaviors were codified as "foreigner" and as "Korean," despite the fact that many Koreans acted in a more "foreigner" style (and vice versa).

Network connections were often created and strengthened through after-party activities. In many cases, the multi-genre, multi-cultural networks led to social strain as the understandings of after-party activities differed between participants. Often central nodes, who were able to

facilitate interactions between Koreans and foreigners, were required to do much of the networking labor at these after-parties to create performance opportunities for foreign bands. This contrasted strongly with punk after-party socialization, where subcultural identity already created an underlying bond and familiarity. For many punk musicians and fans, crossing the language barrier to have "deep" conversations was not necessary; simply partying and "hanging out" was enough.

These network connections were also facilitated by foreigner-run initiatives, focused on creating connections between Korean and non-Korean performers. These initiatives also illustrated different viewpoints on how foreigners "should" act in the Korean rock scene. DoIndie was focused on utilizing the strategies foreign musicians had developed elsewhere to support and promote the Korean scene abroad. They did this, in part, by creating English language media to help with visa acquisition, and by putting on concerts with musicians from around the world to create global performance networks. Loose Union, on the other hand, was focused on creating a multicultural scene in Korea by directly connecting Korean and local foreign performers. This cosmopolitan vision was described as mutually beneficial. While the label is no longer used, and many of the original members are gone, the multicultural performance networks they created have continued to grow and change.

Things have continued to change since I completed my fieldwork in 2017. DoIndie's website was taken down on March 10, 2020, and replaced by two new endeavors: Beeline Records and hmm (Highjinkx Music Magazine), an online site that will cover "a more diverse range of genres," and that will only translate featured content into English.[265] Loose Union's social media is occasionally updated with former members' projects, but the majority of those involved have moved out of Korea.[266] In fact, most of the foreign musicians I interacted with are no longer in Korea. Through this research I was able to capture a moment in time, but one that I argue helps to illuminate understandings of the interactions between Korean and Western foreigners in alternative spaces, outside the workplace.

This research has documented foreigners' different viewpoints of their "place" in the Korean underground rock scene, and different mindsets around what "good" and "bad" foreigners do, which has a major effect on intercultural interaction in any social situation. Many of the things I heard from foreigners in the scene—the focus on proving one's adoption of Korean cultural norms, the goal of "helping" Koreans improve, frustration with an inability to forge connections—are all things I also heard, in one way or another, from different foreigners living in Korea about other situations, like their positions in their schools. Most white Western foreigners are dealing with these kinds of frustrations for the first time, and as such feel strongly about the "right" way to do things. My hope is that analyzing the mechanics of specific intercultural interactions through the lens of script theory has helped illuminate how these different views of what a "good" foreigner should do actually play out in musical contexts, and will contribute to a growing body of scholarship on the complex dynamics of the interactions of Koreans and white Western foreigners.

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[265] DoIndie, "Hello, everyone." *Facebook*, March 10, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/doindie.kr/posts/2819329144823052.
[266] Loose Union, "Loose Union – Home," *Facebook*, accessed July 12, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/LooseUnion/.

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APPENDIX A:

Full List of Interviewees

Name	Date of Interview(s)
Patrick Conner (DoIndie)	12/29/16
Jonathan Jacobson	1/6/17
Mark Lentz	1/9/17
Ali Safavi	1/11/17
TC Costello and Rebecca Davis	1/12/17
Sehee Kim	1/18/17; 6/2/17
Grey Watson	1/19/17
Ethan Waddell	1/24/17
Lauren Walker	1/25/17
Nathan Greenberg	1/31/17
Adam Brennan	2/2/17
Laurent Pereira	2/7/17
Lance Reegan-Diehl (Deeleebob Music)	2/8/17
Bruce Harrison	2/13/17
Alberto Alba	2/14/17
Octopouple	2/15/17
Ian White	2/16/17
John Starling	2/21/17
Gorimulgi (Gimin Kim, Tommy Powell, Byeongwoo Lee)	2/22/17
Patrick Walsh	2/22/17
Seth Martin	3/4/17
Zoe Yungmi Blank	3/10/17
Alex Cullen	3/15/17
Mimi Roh	3/16/17; 5/7/17
Brad Wheeler (Union Studios)	3/21/17
Brian Gilbert (ROK GiYeon)	3/30/17
Jeff Moses	4/10/17
Call Me Su	5/4/17
Hyunjoon Ahn (Alley Bunker)	5/4/17
Kirk Kwon (Thunderhorse)	5/5/17
Trash Yang Moses	5/5/17
Annie Ko	5/8/17
Airy	5/11/17; 5/15/17
Andrew Blad	5/11/17
Stephen Hazel	5/12/17
Hyun Jung Oh	5/13/17
Jon Dunbar (bROKe in Korea)	6/1/17, 6/13/19
Michael McGrath	6/9/17

Scott Hildebrand	6/12/17
Jee Hye Ham	6/12/17
Toby Hwang	6/13/17
Lee Suk ho (Badabie)	6/17/17
Eddie Hwang (Club FF)	6/21/17
Maggie Devlin	7/7/17
Skyler Jeong (Freebird)	7/13/17
Yuying Lee (GBN)	7/15/17
Won Jonghee (Club Skunk)	7/16/17
Han Joo Lee (Yogiga)	7/19/17
Chung Park	7/20/17
Kim Youngdueng (Club Bbang)	7/20/17
Rosemary Kim Duncan	7/21/17
Jiyeon Lee	7/25/17
Roger Peacock	7/26/17
Yu Jihwan (Club Sharp)	7/31/17
Ponamu Joyce Rangihuna	8/1/17
Sato Yuki	8/2/17
Hyun woo Kang	8/2/17
Michael Travers	8/3/17
Paul Johnson	8/3/17
Megan Kim	8/3/17
Insoo Kim	8/4/17
Dabda (Seunghyun Lee, Jiae Kim, Joseph Lee, Bae Sangeon)	8/6/17
Jeon Sangkyu (Club Ta)	8/7/17
Myoungshik Shin	8/8/17
Douglas Vautour	8/9/17
Bridget Martin	8/10/17