從韓國演歌到文化科技：
韓國流行音樂生產網絡的歷史發展

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摘 要

將社群網路分析應用在紀錄與成功開創韓流有關的個人與組織，不僅呈現韓國一世紀以來的流行樂發展史，對於韓國流行樂的音樂類別，跟歷史文化脈絡之間的關係也提供豐富的見解。這個分析也揭露了東亞的音樂圈在歷史根源上的相似與相異處，特別是日本流行音樂，以及不同地區的華語流行樂。本研究聚焦於1930年代至今的韓國主流流行音樂，利用連結資料（linked data）技術取得網際網路上數位化以及數位原生的資料，建構分析社會網絡。

本研究旨在探究韓流(K-pop)如何在不同微小階段增生繁衍，從現在韓國流行樂的團體導向、經紀公司主導的社會網絡，與早年的各種流行音樂，特別是韓國演歌(Trot; 트로트; t'eurot'eu)的結構相較，同時對照當代日本流行音樂圈的現況與網絡結構。將這些網絡的特徵與歸納統計數值，利用許不同時間點的「快照（snapshots）」，以及量化指標如網絡密度、節間距（inter-node distance）、同值性、中介性（betweenness）、核心性（centrality）等來進行分析。本研究就希望可以藉此了解一些韓流現象的巨大影響，例如傑出的獨秀（solo）跟跨界歌手（crossover artist）、影/視/音緊密結合的製作公司、超大團體的崛起、外國文化影響的雙向作用、以及韓國流行文化的輸出等。

關鍵字：社會網絡分析、韓流、東亞流行樂、流行文化、流行音樂史

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1. Introduction

The 2014 Korean prime-time drama Trot Lovers, which followed the struggles of a talented but untrained singer to attain success in the contemporary Korean entertainment industry by specializing in the incorrigibly old-fashioned genre of trot received at best a lukewarm reception from audiences and critics, but the drama was, nonetheless, a noteworthy exponent of a recent wave of nostalgia in East Asian popular culture for its own earlier products. Indeed, the program’s lead actress, Jung Eun-ji, previously had starred in the television series that contributed to the nascence of this retrospective moment in Korea, 2012’s throwback comedy-drama Answer Me/Reply 1997. Although the earlier program and its prequels focused on the experiences (musical and otherwise) of young Koreans in the 1990s and late 1980s, Trot Lovers concerned a genre that had originated considerably earlier, and retains a singularly polarizing effect on young people — so naturally, the heroine’s requisite “opposites attract” romantic interest is a trot-hater. Yet the series was not an anomaly within its cultural moment; in fact, it participated in the flourishing of “neo-trot” — a subgenre that has enabled crossover singers such as Jang Yoon-jeong and Hong Jin-young to pursue successful careers outside the typical trajectory of a K-pop idol (their experiences bear more than a passing resemblance to the narrative of Trot Lovers) and produced occasional dabbling in the genre by K-pop idol groups such as Super Junior, complete with the requisite sequined outfits and slightly updated versions of trot’s characteristic double rhythms and fluttering vocal style.
The commercial viability of “throwback” genres like neo-trot suggests that it may be worthwhile to examine the economic interests that underlie a cultural product such as *Trot Lovers*. In this case, only a small amount of online sleuthing via Wikipedia and similar sites is necessary to discover that *Trot Lovers*, which aired on the Korean national broadcaster KBS, was in fact produced by JS Pictures, an affiliated production company of the entertainment conglomerate CJ E&M. The web grows wider when one considers that Jung Eun-ji is also the main singer of the K-pop girl group Apink, managed by talent agency Cube Entertainment (actually the A-Cube sub-label), whose recordings are distributed by CJ E&M (among others); Cube is also controlled via a 50.1% majority stake by SidusHQ, one of the largest talent agencies in Korea. It is feasible, then, to view *Trot Lovers* as a manifestation of these companies’ impressively ambidextrous ability to boost mainstream K-pop’s dominance while also profiting from modern listeners’ desires to seek out earlier, alternative genres, often as part of a retro “backlash” against the hegemony of K-pop.

The availability of large quantities of such information in hyperlinked format via public online repositories raises the intriguing possibility that one might “mine” these linkages to construct a representation of the meta-network of cultural production that underlies a milieu such as Korean popular music. If sufficient historical data is available from the same or related online sources, it may also be possible to incorporate a temporal dimension into the model. Analyses of such networks, conducted at the aggregate, “distant” level, perhaps involving comparisons to other related meta-networks, e.g., the national music scenes of other East Asian countries, or via detailed consideration of smaller sub-domains, may contribute to a deeper understanding of the development and organization of specific genres, and even the growth of entire cultural paradigms.

The present study describes our highly experimental efforts to build and explore a dynamic meta-network related to the history of Korean popular music by mining large-scale linked open data repositories and also smaller, more specialized online digital archives containing records of solo artists and groups, media companies, recordings, and performances. In the process, we learned a significant but not entirely unexpected lesson, which is that the representation of musical genres such as Korean trot and even recent corporate-idol K-pop in online data archives is not immune to the convoluted interactions between social groups — both domestic and international —
and their conflicted attitudes towards their own past and present cultural situations. The influences of governments and industry further complicate these situations. In fact, our experiences and findings serve to highlight the degree to which online data archives themselves cannot help but be manifestations of such contextual conflicts and relationships.