Entering the Inner Circle

An ethnographic analysis of South Korean Winner fans and their relationship with their Japanese counterparts

Thea Bakke

Master’s Thesis in East Asian Culture and History
At the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

Since the rise of the Korean Wave (Hallyu) in the late 1990s there has been plentiful research focusing on how it has been received in anywhere from China to Latin America. What is very little researched about when it comes to Hallyu is how the Korean fans perceive fans from other countries and what affects their relationship with them. This paper takes a deeper look at this, delving into the relationship of Japanese and Korean fans of the 5-member idol group Winner and what influences this. It especially tries to describe how victimhood nationalism might have affected the views of the Korean fans and how they see their Japanese counterparts. Research was conducted through an ethnographic analysis of surveys, and fieldwork in the form of online and on-location observations, and further supported by a brief history of the Korean-Japanese relationship from pre-modern to modern times. Through this research I discovered the difficulties of discovering the real opinions and feelings of the fans I observed and questioned, but in return I was in the end able to conclude with having found what the fans see as the “correct answer” when asked how they view Japan. Future research of this topic might unravel what the actual answer to this question is, which again could be used to look at what the relationship between the further generations of South Korea and Japan might be.
Preface

Ever since I went on my first trip to Seoul in January 2009 I was fascinated by the overwhelming world of K-pop. Not only the sharp dance moves and catchy tunes, but also the history behind it was so fascinating and removed from the music I was used to here in Norway. Further trips, exchanges and an internship in South Korea only fed this interest and want to learn more about it, and it brought me to where I am today.

The topic of this thesis took many tops and turns before it was narrowed down and decided upon. My first and initial decision was to focus on the Korean Wave, the Hallyu, and the relationship between fans of the same group from different countries. This was a narrow topic and even more so when you limit it to the fans one single group. Originally Winner was not my first choice, but after seeing and hearing so much about the fandom and the complaints and struggles of the fans in their fan club Inner Circle, it peaked my interest. Especially interesting was the way Korean and Japanese fans interacted, something I watched with great interest as I have background both in Japanese and Korean studies. This was also when it hit me that regardless of how much I had been reading up and studying the Korean Wave, there was minimal research done in English on the relationship between Korean and Japanese fans, despite the complicated past of these two countries. It made me more and more curious, and after conducting research in Korea, Japan and Norway, here I am with a thesis written out on the subject.

Finally I must extend a big thank you to Professor Vladimir Tikhonov for all his help, advice and support. Names cannot be mentioned here, but I also must thank all Korean Inner Circle members who helped and supported me through my research and for actually taking time to answer my survey. Without you this would have been absolutely impossible. The same goes to my family, my roommates and my travel buddies in all three countries who supported me through the time and headaches it took finishing this.

Last, but not least, I hope that what I have discovered through my research can be of interest not only to academics researching fandom, the Korean Wave or the Korean-Japanese relationship, but to fans that want to learn more about the history behind the sparkly, styled and synchronized dancing image we see (mostly) through our computer screens.

Thea Bakke
Oslo, 2014
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1 Introduction

“Fandom is a portmanteau of ‘fan’ and ‘kingdom’, and evokes an expansive yet playful approach to the ‘territory’ of fannish involvement.”

In other words, fandom is a territory for fans where they make up the rules and create an identity both as an individual and as a group. However much being a fan can be seen as a very personal thing, it is also a great place to build up a strong sense of community as you are surrounded by people with the same interests and also possibly the same views as you have. This is certainly the case for the fandoms of South Korean (later Korea) idol groups, singers and actors. Through personal experience I have observed the complicated organization of a fan club, how important it is to follow the given rules and also how important it becomes never to stray from this one fan club. There is also a sense of hierarchy inside these fan clubs based on how long you have been a fan, what you have contributed with to the group, and what you are willing to do for it in the future. As Hallyu becomes more and more international, new conflicts has started to arise, as the fandom becomes transnational and introduced Korean fans to overseas fans who had their own set of views and ideas.

One of the first groups to be introduced in the Korean “fan kingdom” was the Japanese. Talk of the Korean Wave and evidence of its growing popularity started there in the mid 2000s with the booming popularity of the TV drama Winter Sonata. Continued further as Korean artists like BoA, DBSK and SS501 started to promote in Japan and slowly creating a little niche for themselves in the Japanese media industry. That being said, the target group at the time was mainly middle-aged, Japanese housewives, a much older target group than in Korea. Not until the so-called K-pop Boom in 2011 did K-pop start to reach out further to the younger generation in Japan. With that started the real advent of Japanese fans into Korean fandoms, as well as an influx of Korean pop groups and singers debuting in Japan. Some groups even failed to do well in Korea, but were lucky enough to be backed by bigger companies in Japan, like the group Cross Gene who is signed under the Japanese company Amuse Entertainment, and as a result spends most of their time on what some Korean fans might view as “on the wrong side of the sea”. The transition only naturally brought on a few problems, or a rediscovery of old problems, as one might put it.

The growth of Korean groups spending more and more time in Japan (FNC Entertainment’s FTISLAND spend about a year in Japan after their debut, and H2 Media’s MYNAME signed with a Japanese company even before their official Korean debut),

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1 The Janissary Collective, “Fandom as Survival in Media Life”, p. 77
naturally gave them less time in Korea and created a buzz of complaints among the local fans. Why did Korean artists have to go to Japan to promote? Why did Japanese fans get exclusive fan clubs and footage the original Korean fan club did not? One can ask oneself what will happen in the future with the growing globalization of K-pop and if Korean fans will change their attitudes there as well. But with the lack of the same background as Korea and Japan has, will it be discontent on the same level?

The current relationship between Japanese and Korean fans is exactly what I want to look at through this thesis. As the next generation is heading to lead their countries, it is important to look at their relationship and how it might be different from that of their peers. I also believe that looking at Hallyu from a different perspective is also important to understand it and its development better. Through a common past and a sense of victimhood nationalism and the guilt felt by some Japanese for wartime crimes, the nations have reached where they are today. Unsolved problems from colonial times are still discussed today, such as the issue of the sexual slavery forced onto many Korean women by Japanese soldiers during World War II\(^2\). There are also more recent issues, such as the nationalistic, anti-Korean comic, Kenkanryu\(^3\) and its followers. These are both issues in quite a big scope. What I wish to look at is of much smaller importance and much less discussed, namely a fandom and the relationships within this fandom. How are the smaller communities affected, and what are they affected by?

### 1.1 Behaviour Influenced by the Past

Why exactly are these small groups so interesting? In some global online fan communities there have been certain discussions regarding Korean and international fans. There are also rather visible evidence of Korean artists spending more time in Japan, learning Japanese language and promoting for longer periods of time there than in any other country. So how does that reflect back at the fans? What do they think, and what do they see when they look at the current development the fandom is going in?

This is where one of the main issues arise, is there a connection between the relationships of Korean and Japanese fans and their common past? Can you say that it directly affects it, or do they understand it as something different? If the past is the main

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\(^2\) Sakamoto & Allen, "Hating ‘The Korean Wave’ Comic Books: A sign of New Nationalism in Japan?"

\(^3\) Sakamoto & Allen, "Hating ‘The Korean Wave’ Comic Books: A sign of New Nationalism in Japan?"
problem that occurs in this relationship, then why does the Korean company behind the artist(s) promote them in Japan and spend so much time and effort in creating a name for them there? If the past does not have anything to do with how they relate to each other, then can it just be seen as simple jealousy caused by a disturbed para-social relationship between fan and artist? If the past is indeed involved, then does the feeling of victimization from past wrongs create an “ideal” of what should be thought and how things should be viewed?

In this thesis I want to focus on the relationship between fans of the same group within the same fandom, only from two different countries. Of course this will only show one side of the case, and it will only reflect the situation in one fandom, but this might still be enough to create a general theory if, or how being in the same fandom can positively or negatively affect the relationship between individuals from one victimized and one victimizer nation. What is at the base of the way Korean fans look at the activities a certain K-pop group does in Korea contra activities at home?

How are fandoms affected by past events? What does the past mean to the relationship and views Korean fans have with Japanese fans in the same fandom? And how does the socialization as citizens of respectively South Korea or Japan affect their mutual attitudes?

In other words, are Korean fans still strongly influenced by the colonial past of Korea and Japan, and does this somehow affect the way they view Japanese fans? If this is the case, where does this show and what are factors in play that creates this situation? How to do this and what theories to really build this up around I will explain in the following section.

1.2 Design and Method

For the research method and design of this thesis, I decided on a quite early stage that I would aim to collect qualitative data over quantitative data. This because quantitative data gives more numbers and statistics rather than more in depth answers from the informants you choose and the agents that help you look for your answers. What I want to know is also much more specific than numbers in a graph, because I want to actually hear what Korean fans in a certain fandom, a certain fan club, thinks about their Japanese counterparts. Then take what I find there and see if it can be tied up to this idea of victimhood nationalism that I so briefly touched upon earlier.

The method I use to perform my research was ethnographic research and analysis. Through this I will aim to use the data I collect, compare and analyse it, followed by an attempt at a description of the current situation within the fandom and how that might fit into
a theoretical framework. Are Japanese fans considered as “fellow fans” or is the notion of being “Japanese” still too strong to ignore? Hopefully hearing the answers of Korean fans will help flesh out an idea of this, since you hear very little about that part of the Korean-Japanese relationship.

Ever since starting to look into the history of the Korean Wave, the Hallyu, I came across several writings on the reception of Korean dramas and music in Japan, and on a smaller scale writing about how Korean media received this and wrote about it. A few academics have tried to picture it in a different way, like Ingyu Oh and Choong-Mook Lee who wrote quite thoroughly on how Hallyu has influenced Japanese fans and created a “new league” of fans in their essay A League of Their Own\(^4\). In some ways inspired by this, I too wanted to look at a smaller target group and how they have received the changes Japanese fans and the group or artists growing number of activities and promotions in Japan might have brought.

**1.2.1 What is Ethnographic Analysis?**

In the book *Introduksjon til Samfunnsvitenskapelig Metode* (*Introduction to Social Scientific Method*), ethnographic analysis is described as:

“A description of the culture or group being studied followed by an analysis of themes or perspectives developed. Following this is an interpretation of the culture where the researcher creates a picture of how cooperation and opinions are created within the culture. The final product is a complete cultural portrait [...] that contains both the views of the informants and the researcher’s interpretations\(^5\).”

As Mark Duffett points out, ethnography has been the most frequent way of approaching fan culture\(^6\). This is an important reason why I chose this methodology, and I am positive that analysis of the data collected will help me at least create an outsider’s view on the situation within the fandom. Naturally, testimonies from informants will play a very important role, but observations will be equally important in this research. Questions can easily be interpreted as biased, or people can be hesitant to answer questions they see as sensitive, or they might just offer the stereotypical “right answer”. So by combining these two methods, one should ideally be able to get both verbal testimonies and observations that create (or distort) the normal pattern and idea I as a researcher made as I started this research.

\(^4\) Oh & Lee, *A League of Their Own: Female Supporters and Korea-Japan Relations*
\(^5\) Johannessen, Tuft & Christoffersen, *Introduksjon til Samfunnsvitenskapelig Metode*, pp. 395-396
\(^6\) Duffett, *Understanding Fandom*, pp. 260
Further on in Duffett’s text he separates between the insider and outsider researcher, pointing out the distinct differences between being a researcher looking in on the observation and already being a part of the fandom one observes and then going on to analyse it\(^7\). In my case I would like to argue that I am in fact both. In the sense that I am indeed a fan of Winner, I know the group’s history, fellow fans and interact with them on a weekly basis. But at the same time I am also an outsider, neither a Korean nor a Japanese fan, thus I do not have the same background or historical framework to truly call myself an insider of what I am researching. It is exactly because of this that I hope I can get fuller overview of the actual situation, as a researcher able to have one foot in each camp.

Through the way ethnography use the surroundings and cultural frames around the fans to create a wider understanding about my informants, I hope to see a pattern in how the relationship between Korean and Japanese fans actually work. How do surroundings influence their fandom and/or relationship with other fans? Surroundings like historical backgrounds and current, more nationalistic trends and ideas in the different countries.

Henry F. Wolcott suggests that\(^8\) the data gathered through ethnographic analyses should be separated into three phases: description, analysis and interpretation. This is also how I intend to conduct my research. By conducting my observations and interviews, describing them and then moving on to the actual analysis and the interpretation part.

My ethnographic analysis for this thesis will be based mostly on fieldwork, both in the form of observation on location and spending time with fans in person, and online through observation and communication of social media, in particular Twitter. I also conducted a survey for Korean fans regarding their views on Japan and Japanese fans. I did reach out to Japanese fans as well with a similar survey as that given to Korean fans. But seeing as I only received two replies, it was not sufficient for use as data.

### 1.2.2 Why fans?

Out of all the smaller communities I could have chosen to research, why fans? Why a fandom? This is connected to personal preference, but also because fans, or at least active fans in Korea, tend to be under 25 and are members of a generation who never strongly felt the aftermath of Japanese colonial period, the Korean War or the military dictatorship. Duffet, whom I have mentioned above, further argued,

\(^7\) Duffett, pp. 262

\(^8\) Wolcott, *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation.*
“Fandom is always partly private and partly social – partly felt and partly performed.”

If you apply this to Korean fans you will quickly see that for them, fandom is a very private thing, since they tend to want to remain anonymous, but also a social thing because it creates a feeling of belonging and gives you a group identity. In many ways, it is also very much felt, but then also performed upon. These fans invest much time, effort and in some cases also money, into their favourite groups and artists. They feel with them when things go askew and try their best to protect them.

What makes the frame around a certain fandom and why is the belonging and feeling of group identity so important? Through my research, and through many years in observing the entertainment industry, the trend of putting apart Korean fans, Japanese fan and Global fans tend to be very strong. Ideally, Japanese fans would belong in the global group, but this tends not to be the case. What can this tell us about the relationship and social norm that applies to Korean and Japanese fans? Cannot this tendency be traced back through history? There is of course the fact that the West jumped the Korean Wave much later than Japan, but then what about Chinese fans, fans from other Asian countries? Why are they not mentioned as a whole when Japan is? I hope to maybe throw some more light on this through my research, as I doubt that the huge and well-function market for pop-music in Japan is the only reason.

Korean fans living in present Korea are, without doubt, recipients of both state and public discourse on colonialism. What they hear and learn first and foremost come from family retelling their stories from the time, thus creating a living memory from an individual who actually witnessed this. The government then use this to further articulate nationalism through a public discourse by using the collective memory and promoting it as anti-colonialism. This can for example be seen through the number of national holidays in Korea with a rather nationalistic connotation such as Liberation Day on August 15. Paul DiMaggio describes collective memory as

“[...] the outcome of processes affecting, respectively, the information to which individuals have access, the schema by which people understand the past, and the external symbols or messages that prime these schemata.”

Applying this to Korean history and the position of the fans, what they receive as information will first be processed through the eyes of Korean reporters, politicians or others,

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9 Duffett, viii
10 DiMaggio, 1997, pp. 275
and then shared to them. What they get is what the information channels of the country wants them to see, so when nationalism is underlying and a past with Japanese colonization, is it not more likely that information shared will be biased? The bureaucracy in Korea, and in Japan as well, creates borders not only between people by the choices and opinions they promote, but they also create borders all the way to the smaller groups such as fandom.

The original target group for K-pop is teens, but there are also a lot of fans in their 20s that still follow their favourite artist’s activities\(^\text{11}\). This puts a good frame for the age group I want to focus on, since my main interest lies in the current views the younger generation in Korea has towards Japan. These individuals have no first-hand experience of the turmoil of the past, but live with the collective memory of it and what was done to, or by, their ancestors. By looking at fans inside a specific fandom this also helps to naturally limit the research group and go more in depth. Since the people here will have the common trait of liking the same group, of having followed this group more or less since debut and experienced the way their activities have been divided between Japan and Korea, it might not be quite enough to draw a full conclusion of exactly how the present situation is, but it should be enough to create a theory that can later be applied to other fandoms of K-pop idols or groups.

What really is a fan? What is the definition of it and how do I want to define it in my thesis? One way is of seeing it as a way of forging a personal identity through collective belonging in one fandom. Another way of doing it that I have found through my research is to explain ‘fan’ as “a way to outwardly expressing identity through public declarations of affinity.\(^\text{12}\)” In this lies a sense of “public display” that you do see a lot within fandom of Korean groups, but public in a very particular way. Most Korean fans tend to hide that they are a fan, and also their real identity when in contact with other fans. Instead they put on what Hong\(^\text{13}\) calls a “daily costume (일반코스)”. Meaning that they pretend not to be a fan most of the time, and when they do fan activities they take on a different role, a different name.

Another thing that might strongly influence the choice most Korean fans make is their sense of filial piety. Because of the competitive society in Korea today that puts extra pressure on teens and their education, parents pour money into getting their kids the best tutors and to getting them into the best schools. For someone to instead indulge in fan activities than

\(^{11}\) Hong, 韓寒文化(Fandom Culture)

\(^{12}\) The Janissary Collective, Janissary pp. 78

\(^{13}\) Hong
studying means that they are going against their parents’ wishes and instead of focusing on “proper culture”, they are investing time and effort in the “wrong culture”. Being a fan will not get them into the best universities and it takes time away from their studying. Only in 2013 Korean parents invested about $18 billion in private education for their children in the form of cram schools and tutors, showing only how eager they are for their kids to perform well in the college entrance exams. In 2014 6.7% of Korea’s gross domestic product was spent on educational institutions for all levels of education, most of this being private, not state spending. The world OECD and partner countries averaged on 5.3%.

A way of describing the term fan is through Duffett’s words: ‘fan’ is said to “cover a wide range of ordinary people whom positive emotional engagement with popular culture.” This seems a much better description to Korean fans, at least, who are less public than their Japanese counterparts when it comes to expressing their feelings. So yes, a fan does express identity through public display of affection towards a group or an artist, but then it is the identity of a fan, the identity of “the fan” that they become.

There is also quite a distinct difference between what I have chosen to call an “active fan” and just a regular fan. Anyone can say they are a fan and enjoy an artist or a group. An active fan on the other hand will in most cases be a member of an official fan club, will purchase goods and partake in promotional activities. The latter in particular, since most promotional activities idols have in Korea are free of charge and can be attended in most cases only by fulfilling certain demands put down by the fan club. A lot of the same things can be said about Japanese fans in the Korean idol fandom, but there are certain differences that also need to be taken into consideration when doing research. One of them is that the original Japanese fan of Hallyu were middle-aged housewives, and the second is that the pressure to only be in one fandom does not seem to apply as strongly in Japan. A fan of Winner is also very likely to be a fan of Big Bang and possibly 2NE1 as well.

1.2.3 Why Winner?

There are now almost countless K-pop groups active in Korea, from both big and small companies. Most of said groups also do promotions in Japan as well, so how to choose only one to focus on? After carefully considering this for quite some time I ended up with the rather new five-member group Winner (위너) from the company YG Entertainment (later

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14 Kwaak, “South Korea’s $18 Billion Education Problem”.
15 OCED, “Korea”
16 Duffett, pp. 17
YG). The group was formed after the intense, ten-week long reality show “WIN: Who is next” that aired on the cable TV channel MNET. It was produced by YG and focused on 11 trainees split into two teams that competed in becoming the next boy group to debut from the company. The winner could be able to debut under the name “WINNER”, and the loser would return to trainee status. Unlike other groups, the decision on who became the final winner rested on fans’ votes, thus fans are very likely to also feel a much closer bond to the group that won. Team A, consisting of Kang Seungyoon, Kim Jinwoo, Lee Seunghoon, Song Minho and Nam Taehyun came out on top and became the group Winner.

YG is today considered one of the “Big Two” in the Korean entertainment business, only surpassed by powerhouse company SM Entertainment (market value estimated to have been 744,3 billion KRW in February 2015). It houses a long list of big names, such as international sensation Psy, Big Bang, hip hop trio Epik High and 2NE1, and had in February 2015 an estimated market value of 700,4 billion KRW. The company was founded in 1996 by former member of the group Seo Taeji and Boys (서태지와 아이들) Yang Hyunseok together with his brother, Yang Minseok, and has since then gradually come to be a household name in Korea. In 2007 YG launched a Japanese branch of their company, YGEX, to further promote artists in Japan and in 2011 they started working together with Japanese entertainment company AVEX. Kato Koichi and Moriyasu Ken mention that promoting artists in Japan plays quite a big role for the company’s finances, as in their article on YG’s recent collaboration with Chinese company Tencent Holdings. They write here that the biggest bulk of profit from overseas promotions come from holding concerts in Japan.

YG has also, in collaboration with Samsung, established the fashion brand NONAGON under the newly created company NATURAL 9, showing that it also works close with domestic business giants outside the entertainment business as well.

Winner debuted on August 12, 2014 in Korea and in September 2014 in Japan. They never had official debuts in other countries, as their albums are released in their Korean or

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17 Son, YG is Different, pp. 191
18 Kato & Moriyasu, ”South Korean pop culture taking Asia by storm”.
19 Ibid., pp. 8
20 Ibid., pp. 8
21 YG ENTERTAINMENT, ”Witness the Change”
22 Ibid.
23 Kato & Moriyasu, ”South Korean pop culture taking Asia by storm”.
24 Samsung C&T, ”Global Fashion Brand NONAGON Unveiled”.
25 YG ENTERTAINMENT, ”WINNER Profile”.
26 WINNER Official Website Japan, ”WINNER Profile”.

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Japanese version, but they did some promotions in China. In addition to this, they have to this date also had two Japanese concert tours, official fan meetings in both Japan and Korea and they have opened their official fan club, INNER CIRCLE in both countries well. Since they are a fairly new group, their fan club is not of the largest, which makes it easier to research. At the same time they have, from the start, been very active in Japan, perhaps more so than in Korea, and so it should be able to provide wanted information on what the fans think of these activities, of Japanese fans and perhaps even Japan as well. Winner is also a conscious choice in the regards of the length of my paper. Taking an older group with longer history might have given different results, but could have ended up being too extensive for this thesis. A newer group has history that can easily be traced and more systematically sorted. Winner also promotes in Japan in a much more “Korean” fashion than some of the older idol groups did.

Like I have discussed earlier, the original “model” for promoting Korean artists in Japan was to fit them into a more Japanese “package” and sell them as J-pop artists. Ever since the second wave of the Hallyu however, there have been a much bigger trend to sell and promote Korean artists as K-pop artists. This meaning that instead of making original songs only sung in Japanese, they make Japanese remakes of their original Korean hits. This goes for other artists as well, such as Girls Generation\textsuperscript{27} and B1A4\textsuperscript{28}.

\subsection{1.2.4 Selecting informants and data}

Much thanks to how global, and least of all interconnected, the world has become, finding informants who could provide me with the data I wanted was much easier than it might have been earlier. Just to test the water, I started in December 2014 to reach out on social network services (SNS), especially Twitter. After looking into it further, newer K-pop groups tend to have a bigger fan network here than any other SNS platform, as it is easy to get in touch with each other and easy to share pictures, videos and other artist related media. I here posted a tweet introducing my thesis idea and asking if there would be anyone interested in helping me by answering a few questions. Already then I received around ten answers from Korean fans that said they would help me if needed and to contact them when I was ready with what I wanted to ask them.

\textsuperscript{27} http://www.smtown.jp/shoujojidai
\textsuperscript{28} http://b1a4.info/discography/
The next step was to try and get some observations done. To do this I was rather dependant on a promotional cycle of the group I had chosen as my target, but as they had just finished I instead aimed for different kind of events. Whole day observations were done in 2015 on January 28, before and during the 4th Gaon Chart K-pop Awards\(^{29}\) where Winner attended, January 31 at Winner’s first fan meeting in Seoul, WWIC. For a different side of it, observations were also done in Japan in October 2015 during Winner’s Japanese Hall Tour. I also did a lot of monitoring SNS, especially around the time when new activities in Japan or Korea were announced in order to see what sort of reactions fans might show.

In between these observations I also collected data through a questionnaire. Originally longer interviews would have been the ideal way to collect the right amount of data and to get a better understanding of what is going on within the fandom. But all my requests to conduct an interview with the agents who had said they would help with my research were denied with the plea to “send them the questions”. Eventually this is why this part of the research was reduced to a questionnaire with open answer questions. The full, translated questionnaire can be found in the Appendices of my paper, along with the full answer of the informants.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

In my second chapter of this thesis I will focus on the theoretical framework for my research. First and foremost that means looking on the idea of “victimhood nationalism” and how it might have influenced the fans I am researching. I will also touch upon the idea of para-social interaction and how this might be an actor in the dynamic relationship between Korean and Japanese fans. Lastly in this section I will look at Henry Jenkins’ theory regarding moral economy and how it might be further used to explain the identity of the fans I am researching and what makes up their relationships with other fans within one fandom. Chapter 3 will touch upon the background and history of the current situation, how Hallyu came to be and what it might have meant for the relationship between Japan and Korea. Can we already here see the first steps towards creating the situation in the present? In chapter 4 I will start by analysing my data within the given frames of both historical background and theory, and attempt to connect the loose ends so I can tie them together. Finally, in chapter 5 I will summarize what I have written about until now and try to come with a conclusion to my

\(^{29}\) The Gaon Chart is South Korea’s local music chart, similar to Billboard Charts in the United States. It was launched in 2010 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism together with the Korea Music Content Industry Association in hopes of a more systemized and reliable music industry. – Han Sang Hee
thesis. Wolcott suggests that research done in an ethnographic analysis is built up by description, analysis and interpretation and this is how I intend to build up my thesis as well. Chapter 2 and 3 will contain the description, chapter 4 will be the analysis and chapter 5 will be the interpretation.
2 Theoretical aspects

In research like I am conducting, there are several theoretical aspects you can look for or use to support your thesis. What I want to point at to support my claims are two aspects I think is important to define the complicated relationship between two nationalities in the same fandom. One is the idea of “Victimhood Nationalism”, one is “Para-Social Interactions” and the final one is “Moral Economy”. These are three very different theories, in some ways it might not even seem to have much connection, but within fandom, in this fandom, there might just be space for all of them. One might help strengthen the other and vice versa.

My theory is that the feeling of being close and actually having the chance to see and interact with idols in Korea give the fans a more possessive behaviour. This is because of the “ideal fandom” and how it is built up as a community where the idols interact with fans directly and give them personal affection. In a way, these fans have the right to have the idol’s attention since they were there from the start and the idol “knows them”. If this really is the case, what role does this para-social relationship play into victimhood nationalism? Can you separate the two from each other? If a Korean fan says “Why are they always in Japan?”, what is it that spurs them into saying it? Is it purely a dislike towards Korean artists focusing on Japanese activities?

2.1 Victimhood Nationalism

First of all, what is Victimhood Nationalism, and how is it defined? Professor of History at Sogang University and expert in Polish history, Jie-Hyun Lim defines it as “[…] a working hypothesis to explicate competing national memories over the historical position of victims in coming to terms with the past.30” He has also written about victimhood nationalism as a part of the relationship between Korea and Japan. This is a reason why I also want to bring it into my discussion. And if it can be put into the setting of the fandom as well, how strong is it felt and on what level does it influence the relationship between the fans? More than 60 years after the end of colonialism in Korea, is the sense of being a victim still strong?

For this victimhood nationalism to come into play, Lim says that there needs to be one victim and one victimizer. You cannot have one without the other, and thus it creates a transnational relationship built up of these two actors31. However, all victimizers do not have

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30 Lim, Victimhood Nationalism and History Reconciliation in East Asia, pp. 1
31 Ibid
to share the sense of victimhood, as can be seen in Japan where the country are more or less separated in opinions. Leftists generally share a sense of guilt, whereas Rightists stand by their ideas that they helped Korea with modernization\textsuperscript{32}. The victimhood shows quite easily here, but are there any traces of guilt in play too? As a victimizer, are there any remnants of this guilt in fans so that they question their position and what they get? Germany’s position after World War II might be the easiest one to compare with, or at least when it comes to show guilt. In the years after they worked hard to rebuild relationships with Europe, to create a common history that would create a proper picture of what had happened, without any bias.

Where does this feeling of victimhood come from in the case of Korea? The country was supposedly a free country now, liberated and suddenly free to move forward and create the foundations of the new Korea. 35 years of Japanese occupation, of laws and a state built up very much around Japanese values and traditions. Especially in the last few years of Japanese rule, Koreans had a hard time with forced military service, name and surname changes and often forced migration of workers to areas with factories to help production of war necessities. If you look closer at this, the basis of this feeling of victimhood might come from the continuation of colonial patterns even after Korea was liberated. There was no great leader who had taken responsibility to free South Korea, no one person to stand up as the obvious choice when it came to picking the new leader of the new country. What Korea gained instead was almost 35 years of being dominated by an entity that kept trying to “make them more equal”, and yet never offered them equal rights\textsuperscript{33}. Koreans were never given the same rights as Japanese in Korea, and this span from the right to vote to how they would be punished for certain crimes. Another important factor to create this collective memory of victimhood nationalism is the strong idea of collectivism in Korea. This was stressed already in the 1930s by Yi Kwangsu who, together with many of his followers at the time, pointed at the importance of focusing on national interest over individual interest\textsuperscript{34}. In other words, if the state is offended, whoever or whatever did the offense offends us all. Altogether, this is in many ways a hint to the very Confucian mind-set that can still be found in Korea today. The group is more important than the one, social solidarity based on familism is of great value\textsuperscript{35}.

Another idea can also be used to explain why, even today, Koreans still harbour certain feelings of dislike and victimhood towards Japan and Japanese people. The memory of victimhood

\textsuperscript{32} Berger, War, Guilt, and Politics after World War II
\textsuperscript{33} Shin, Ethnic Nationalism in Korea, pp. 43
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, pp. 56
\textsuperscript{35} Kim, The Development of South Korea, pp. 47
has later been articulated and incorporated into society in Korea through schools, media, and even national holidays. What especially weighs heavily on the many Koreans are the lack of compensation for forced labour drafts and the Japanese failure to acknowledge the illegality of Korean colonization. This could also be seen as sources of victimhood, even more so with still living witnesses who can share their stories about what they had to do and what was done to them.

If victimhood nationalism plays a big part between the two parties, is it also used to justify the dislike Korean fans show towards Korean groups in Japan? Or is this just a sense of ownership and the right to see their favourite artists because of their nationality? If this was the case, then it would be Japan’s fault that fans get to see less of the group or singer they follow and so they blame the country. It would also be likely to be a sense of “Why does Japan get X when we do not get X?”. This as opposite to seeing Japanese activities as more of a given, a step in a career and a way of broadening both the fandom and the reach of the artist. In this case the fans might rather blame the company behind the artist, and you might be able to connect this further to a sense of para-social interactions that I will discuss next.

### 2.2 Para-Social Interaction

First of all, what is a para-social interaction? Horton and Wohl made back in 1956 the definition I have chosen to use where they said that para-social interaction “refer to a kind of psychological relationship experienced by members of an audience in their mediated encounters with certain performers in the mass media”. It is, in other words, the feeling artists or people in the media create in us that make it feel like we know each other. This can be seen quite a lot in Korea and the K-pop fandom, but on a much more personal scale. Here the industry is built up around at least five live music shows a week. Here fans can go see their artists for free and also get much closer to them than they would if they lived overseas. In most promotional cycles, artists have also included so-called “fan signings”, record signings where fans can come meet the idol up close, and smaller fan meetings to give the artist and fans a chance to interact. The para-social bond is therefore likely to be felt on a much stronger level because some fans will get actual recognition from their favourite singer, he or she might even remember their name and acknowledge them in a crowd. This is then most likely to bring a much stronger feeling of familiarity, even a kind of ownership to the fans. Since fandoms are a more or less face-to-face community, there are certain expectations

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36 Chandler and Munday, A Dictionary of Media and Communication
to be met, especially by the idol that stands as the head or leader. So that when their favourite artists are gone from their country of origin for longer periods of time it might bring disharmony to the community, and makes it easy to direct dislike and anger to the fans of the country where the idol spends much time in.

2.3 Moral Economy

Henry Jenkins’ book Textual Poachers from 1992 remains one of the more important texts on fandom and how to approach it as a researcher. Rather than to draw in on what he wrote then, I would like to draw theory from more Jenkins’ more recent work. That is his work on moral economy\(^{37}\) and the growing importance of fans in all of this. In an article published on his personal blog, Jenkins describes moral economy as “the social expectations, emotional investments, and culture transactions that create a shared understanding between all participants within an economic exchange.”\(^{38}\) Henry Jenkins however stresses that his focus is on the moral economy between fans and producers, which is the way I will use this term as well.

The reason why I want to use this in my research is because looking at how the expectations, the choices of the company behind a group and the way the fans receive it might play a part in the way Korean fans look upon Japanese fans. In the early days of the Korean Wave, when dramas were more influential than music, Korean artists in Japan were groomed to seem more like Japanese artists. Original songs sung in Japanese, made up in a Japanese style was the norm.\(^{39}\) I would like to argue that this made it easier for the fans to separate between activities in Korea and Japan, as they were made up to be different from the very start. The picture created by K-pop in Japan is very different today. Original Korean songs are remade into Japanese rather than producing new songs, artists are sold and promoted as K-pop artists rather than just “artists performing J-pop from Korea”. This might challenge the moral economy between fans of the two countries and the company behind the artist because it blurs the lines. There is less of “ours” and “yours”, and if one side receives

\(^{37}\) The term “Moral Economy” can also be used it to describe a social-evolutionary stage of economy and society, and to discuss the cultural and ideological aspects of economic institutions, as done by James Scott. John D. Kelly also use it to describe the moral compass intrinsic to an institution, and use it for discussing economy, the state and even war.

\(^{38}\) Jenkins, The Moral Economy of Web 2.0 (Part One)

\(^{39}\) Jung, “Hallyu and the K-pop boom in Japan”, pp. 119
more the other might feel a sense of betrayal or loss that can fire up under already underlying problems and conflicts.

While a moral economy between artist and fan is good to further develop the economic exchange that goes on between them, the priority setting of companies can play a big role in fan-to-fan relationships. This goes especially for Winner and their activities in Japan and Korea. As a Korean group there is a certain social expectation that they should of course promote first and foremost in Korea, an emotional investment from the Korean fans that show support and calls for them to promote in Korea, and finally there is the cultural transaction between Korean and Japanese fans created by conflicting schedules. I have briefly touched upon the promotional cycle of Winner, but would like to point out here that the group debuted in Korea and released a Japanese version of the same album in Japan almost simultaneously. Then, for almost a year they did not promote in Korea apart from one fan meeting, whereas they had several fan meetings in Japan, as well as two concert tours. The reactions of the Korean fans upon the announcement of the second tour in Japan in 2015 are something I will later comment upon. But I would like to argue that their reactions were so very different from when a Japan tour was announced in 2016 just after the group had released their second album and had a national tour in Korea. Because of this I do believe moral economy also does play an important part adding into the feelings of the Korean fans and is notable to reflect upon in my coming analysis.

Fans have their expectations that they will be able to meet their idols face-to-face and interact with them, whereas the idol still remains a source of income for the music industry that focuses more on making money. There is a disturbance in the moral expectations between fan and the company here that can easily lead to discontent among fans.

2.4 Limitations of the Research

Something very important to take note of while doing this kind of research, especially in Korea (or Japan for that matter) is that there might be some differences in the answers I get and the real thoughts of the fans I question and observe. What me, as an outsider, an academic fan, aca-fan, and foreigner is most likely to hear is what is expected of the Korean fans by society. The importance of always giving “the right answer” is imbued into these individuals from they are young by a highly competitive society that pressures you to work your very hardest to be able to climb the social ladders. Even language is more or less taught with every question having only one answer. Korean students learn in English class that the
only answer to “Hello. How are you?” is “I am fine, thank you. And you?”, not that there are a variety of replies to this question that might be equally right to use.

In Japan they have a strong sense of distinction between the public facade where you act out what is to be expected of you and follow the norms of society, the *tatemae*, and what you really feel inside that might also clash with this, the *honne*40. There is a same sense in Korea, 겉 and 속, meaning I will have to be careful in my research and keep this in mind for the result. If anything, my research might not give me what the Korean fans feel deep inside, but I might be able to discover what has become the “correct answer” to my questions.

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40 Trinidad, *Honne and Tatemae*, pp. 6
3 Background

For a better understanding of what has brought on the current relationship between Korea and Japan, you need to not only take a look at past events, but also the present situation between the two countries. The past events are still at the very core of the relationship, but with time there has been a development of new conflicts and problems that remains unsolved to this day. What is more, it also reflects past generations and has become deeply embedded in both the Korean and the Japanese collective memory.

3.1 Pre-colonial Times

Colonialism and Japanese rule in Korea seems to many the most obvious start of the ambivalent relationship between the two countries. However, there is one part of history that has not been discussed by as many, and that might be just as important. That is, the interactions between Chosun Korea and pre-Tokugawa and Tokugawa Japan that took place from late 15th to 19th century. This period started with Imjin Waeran, the Hideyoshi invasions from 1592 to 1598, a war that destroyed much of Chosun Korea and greatly weakened it. James B. Lewis describes it as a period before nationalism, imperialism and capitalism created bigger barriers between the two nations. Despite this, John Duncan argues that in Korea’s case you can find traces of proto-nationalism. He points out that you can see traces of a sense of collective belonging among the Korean people even from the 14th Century. E. J. Hobsbawn describes proto-nationalism as various feelings of collective belonging which already existed and which could provide the foundations for modern nation-states. Using this theory Duncan shows through studies on the said criteria for proto-nationalism: language, ethnicity, religion and membership in a lasting political entity that Korea already in the 14th Century could have been “proto-nationalistic”. This is theory is easy to fit into Lewis’ research as well, as he devotes a much space in his book to look at the conflicts created by Japanese and Korean intermingling. Even if this is a fact, it is important to note that trade was in focus and one nation did not move towards taking over the other. So why is this period not

41 Lewis, Frontier Contact, pp. 17
42 Cumings, Korea’s Place in the Sun, pp. 77
43 Ibid, pp. 2
44 Duncan, "Proto-nationalism in Premodern Korea", pp. 198–221
45 Ibid, pp. 201
46 Ibid
brought forward more when it shows display of a much better relationship (in certain ways) than what has resulted from Korea’s colonization.

Looking at this particular part of history does not support Japan’s former claim to being a superior to Korea and thus it being their duty to “modernize” the country and making its people into “imperial subjects”. Quite far from it, if the views that Lewis brings out are correct. He states that: “from the Korean point of view, early modern contacts served to remind Japanese of the good civilization of Chosun Korea and of its “civilizing” missions towards the Japanese Islands.” Just from these words, it seems more like Korea has the upper hand culturally, albeit not economically. Japanese traders, most from Tsushima, brought goods to designated ports on the southeast coast of Korea, traded and returned. The areas Japanese traders and sailors could go to here were very limited, even more so after new rules of movement were decided upon in 1678.

There is much that can be said about the Japanese settlement, the *waegwan*, the Japanese House in Korea, how it influenced the surrounding settlements and what it did for the economy in the region. But as this is not my main focus, I will mainly here discuss what the relationships between Chosun and Tokugawa was like in the 17th and 18th century, and what we might learn from it. One of the most important things to remember from this period is that the Japanese were at this times more or less limited to the areas designated to the Japanese House. It was also a period where Japan was still a strictly closed country where only a selected few nations were granted access to the Japanese Isles. In Lewis’ book he speaks of how the Koreans, already in the 17th century kept records regarding “problematic Japanese” and what these problems were. He also hints to certain changes in the relationship between Koreans and Japanese, much with help from texts written by the Confucian advisor to the lord of Tsushima, Amenomori Hoshu, in the late 1720s. Hoshu wrote quite specifically about how Korean attitudes towards the Japanese had developed since the Hideyoshi invasions, from “fear” (*ojikeru*) to “avoidance” (*sakeru*) and finally to an “inured” (*nareru*) feeling. More than being scared of the Japanese as a whole, the Koreans focus on keeping an eye on the Japanese in their country and works hard to keep them under control. The focus seems to be on keeping Koreans Korean in a sense that they remain unmixed with the Japanese to maintain their undivided loyalty. If Japanese mingled with the locals, and even more specifically, if there were any sexual activity and children resulting from it, it

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47 Lewis, pp. 2
48 *Ibid*
49 *Ibid*, pp. 177
would weaken the loyalty to the King and could later cause trouble in a similar fashion to how disloyal subjects had helped in the Hideyoshi invasion in the past. It must also be mentioned here that unauthorized Koreans were not allowed to enter Japanese territory in the ports either, as the punishment for this could be death, creating as little interaction between the two as possible.

At this time in history the idea of nationalism, a nation, was still quite far off in the future. Still, the way the segregated one “nation” from another at this time shows hints of what proto-nationalism as I have discussed earlier in this chapter.\(^{50}\) The history, and more importantly, the region people lived, worked and earned their living was a big part of creating a specific identity. Koreans, living in Korea, with Korean goods were of course one group with their laws and tradition, and the arrival of the Japanese in the Waegwan port introduced a “stranger”. This stranger also brought with them a legacy of a past of trouble, and so what better way to deal with them than to contain them? It was a period where controlling people and their movement became more important than the actual control of land.

One interesting fact that came out of the information offered by Lewis is the fact that in Korean historical memory going back as far as to the 15\(^{\text{th}}\) century viewed the Japanese in Korea as a source of crisis\(^{51}\). A lot of this had to do with the infamous Japanese pirates (the *Waegu*) that in the 13\(^{\text{th}}\) and 14\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries ravaged the coastlines of Korea and China\(^{52}\). Even more so because the main way the Japanese caught the attention of the Korean government or protested on laws passed was by rioting in the sense of exiting the Waegwan. Intermingling with Koreans was of course forbidden, but the main problem of it remains that as soon as these Japanese returned to the compound then the Koreans no longer had any authority over them. Laws inside the Waegwan and authority there was defined by the Japanese house masters, and this made it difficult for the Korean side to properly punish those who had broken the law and “disorderly exited”\(^{53}\). If this can be viewed as a fact, then the following history and what happened in the beginning of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) Century with Japan’s colonization only proves that the Koreans were right in their thinking. The idea of Japan being a “threat” to them would only be strengthened and could have been a foundation of what today is a rather bad relationship between the two countries. To look further on this problem I will next explain more about Korea’s colonial past with Japan.

\(^{50}\) Lewis, pp. 4
\(^{51}\) *Ibid*, pp. 197
\(^{52}\) *Ibid*, pp. 17
\(^{53}\) *Ibid*, pp. 183
3.2 Colonial Past

The core of the problem, if that is what you can call it, starts in the late 1900s. Modern Japan is on the rise, Korea, or Chosun as it is still called, has started to open their eyes to the West and are taking steps away from China whom they up until now has had strong ties with. In 1876 they are forced to sign the Treaty of Kanghwa\(^{54}\) and opened the ports to the “outside world”, movements working for enlighte[\textit{ment and modernity started stirring, but so did the Japanese. Different forces were in play when it came to the annexation of the peninsula, but the finalizing moment was on August 16, 1910 when the Annexation Treaty was forced upon them and Korea was officialised as a colony under Japanese rule\(^{55}\).]

Thus follows 35 years of colonial rule in Korea. Unlike most colonized countries that were oceans apart from the country ruling them, Korea and Japan were so close that there was an almost natural flow of people from the peninsula to Japan and also the other way around. Objectively speaking, Korea did develop quite a lot under Japan, but it is impossible to say if this was something spurred by the Japanese or if it was something that would have happened regardless. Developing railways, electricity, roads and other smaller benefits of modernity poured into the colony, at least in capital, that to this day holds the biggest percentage of the Korean population. It must be mentioned that the ones who benefited the most from these developments were the Japanese Zaibatsu with their investment and production facilities in Korea, and it helped Japan increase their power on the continent.

What remains a fact is that the Japanese differed and discriminated against the Koreans. They gave them fewer rights, less possibilities and always branded them as “the lesser race”. One way this was done was by putting more focus on Japanese and Korean’s family registers (Kouseki/Hojok). A family registered to Korea would get fewer rights than a Japanese, even if he lived in Korea and was married to a Korean wife. Making themselves into the “superior”, the Japanese thus justified using harsher methods against the Koreans by saying they were just not cultivated enough to understand other methods. Still, it is the last years of the colonial period with forced assimilation coupled with discrimination that weight hardest on Koreans, and the years that created the most problems. Problems that not only were considered wrong to the Korean people, but also got stamped later as War Crimes.

Increasing clashes between the nations on the Asian continent, more and more Koreans were forced into labour, and even worse, women were forced into working as what

\(^{54}\) Robinson, Korea’s Twentieth-Century Odyssey, pp. 14

\(^{55}\) Ibid, pp. 34
is known as “comfort women”, pretty much meaning that they were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military. This is also one of the issues that remain in present time and has been widely discussed since the 1990s. As one of the victims, Ms Kim Bok-Dong, stated at a lunch seminar at Oslo University, September 9 2015:

“Our country was liberated, but we were never liberated.”

And yet, behind these tragedies and much discussed issues are truths that are rarely brought into focus. Like how Korean singers were popular in Japan already in the colonial period. In the 1930s there was a growing demand for Korean singers in Japan, even a want for them to go on tours\(^56\). As Robinson discusses in short history of twentieth century Korea, the popular music created a link between popular culture and Japan, although it has later been debated whether or not these songs and singers was a source of anti-Japanese resistance or if it was a style merely adapted from the Empire\(^57\). It can in some ways also be viewed as a way of assimilating Koreans into Japan’s market of cultural consumers. Whatever the reason behind it was intended, this popularity in a way can remind us of the growing popularity of Korean TV dramas and music in the 2000s, the so-called Korean Wave or Hallyu as it has also been called. I will not discuss what effect this popularity of Korean music might have had in Japan in the 1930s and how it might have affected people’s views on each other. But it does show that despite their differences, the two nations could share certain views when it came to music and performers. Perhaps it was also the memory of this that helped Hallyu get as big as it has become in the Japanese Isles.

### 3.3 Rise of the Hallyu

Up until the late 1990s the Korean government had had a closed-door policy towards cultural products coming from Japan. They were worried it would create too big a competition to the local market, as well as remaining negative feelings towards Japan. Not until 1998 did the new, liberal president Kim Dae Jung gradually start to open the doors to Japanese culture products, hoping that increased competitiveness on the local markets would further the national cultural industry\(^58\). President Kim also suggested a Free-Trade Agreement with

\(^56\) Robinson, pp. 89
\(^57\) Ibid, pp. 89–90
\(^58\) Yim, pp. 46
Japan in 2003\textsuperscript{59} to further the economic exchange and to further Japanese investments in Korea. An agreement is still in discussion as is Korea’s entry to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This is a partnership originally made to promote economic liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region\textsuperscript{60}. As of 2013 Japan was also a member of TPP, meaning that if Korea goes through with their talks of joining they will also have an FTA with Japan. However, it is difficult to determine the outcome of this, as the general opinion of the Korean State might change after the presidential election in 2017.

As I have mentioned before, it was the rise of the Korean Wave, the Hallyu that really set off the popularity of Korean popular culture in Japan. It was also originally the Korean TV dramas, like Winter Sonata (aired first time in 2003\textsuperscript{61}), that truly got it started up. At the time the target group became middle-aged Japanese women, \textit{obasan fans}, and an initially very different group from the fandom of K-pop stars today. One of the main reasons for this was that at that time Korean soap operas, TV dramas, aired mainly as matinees in Japan. With a recent strong tradition of women being housewives, they were the ones at home at the time, and thus became an easier target group. But why did they grow so fond of the Korean dramas in a country where more than 95\% of television was made and produced by Japanese in Japan\textsuperscript{62}? Do Kyun Lee and Min-Sun Kim did a rather thorough survey regarding this\textsuperscript{63}, and concluded the reasons to originate in two important keywords: Asianness and Nostalgia. Note how the influence of dramas and the growing popularity mainly goes one way, Korea to Japan, and how it was the stories told in Korean dramas strongly influenced by rather traditional Confucian values that became a magnet for Japanese fans. The dramas were also viewed as if depicting “Japan’s Past”, both the negative and positive, gave them an image of orientalisation.

Albeit the difference in current and past fans of Korean popular culture in Japan, there is no doubt they helped to open up the country to popular culture from Korea, and that they built a foundation for what would later become a rather large and steady fan base built up of fans in all ages. Ingyu Oh and Choong-Mook Lee argues that it is these "Hallyu moms" that has helped instigate a much more positive view on Korea among the younger generation in Japan\textsuperscript{64}. It was also these fans that started creating a space for less known Korean singers

\textsuperscript{59} Asian Regional Integration Center, "Japan-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement”\textsuperscript{10}
\textsuperscript{60} Lee. "The truth about South Korea’s TPP shift”\textsuperscript{10}
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 274
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 273–299
\textsuperscript{64} Oh & Lee, pp. 284
who sang songs on drama soundtracks, or even for Korean actors as singers. Artists like for example Park Yong Ha, who was one of the main actors in Winter Sonata, had a much bigger following in Japan than he had in Korea at the time\textsuperscript{65}.

Something else that had a great importance to the actual growth of Korean popular culture, and the exchange that happened between Japan and Korea in the beginning of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century was the opening of Korea’s borders for Japanese popular culture in 1998\textsuperscript{66}. But with the aim of bringing culture more into focus, the president at the time, Kim Dae Jung opened the borders for import of Japanese mass media. Although it was media that now gained a much more free exchange between the countries, I do not doubt it did both countries well. As the idea of a country’s “soft power” was gradually becoming an issue, it seems indeed very likely that it could be of some use to change former views and opinions, even if only a little. The growing popularity of Korean TV dramas in Japan is only one example of this.

Another thing that should be taken into account is that, even though there were Korean artists in Japan in the early 2000s, they were promoted in a very different manner than they are today. Eun-Young Jung discusses this in her chapter in Maliangkay and Choi’s book K-Pop – The International Rise of the Korean Music Industry with focus on how the artists who debuted at the time debuted as J-pop artists and did music closer in sound and appearance to Japanese artists. Artists like female singer BoA and five-member group TVXQ(동방신기) started out with a Japanese outlook, fluency in Japanese language and an image to appeal to Japanese fans\textsuperscript{67}. When taking this into consideration, it becomes quite complicated to put K-pop into the first Korean Wave that hit Japan. Was there even really such a thing as K-pop? In the early 2000s I will argue that Korean artists were not typical “K-pop”, but Korean artists doing J-pop in Japan. As Jung puts it, the artists went through a de-Koreanisation and a Japanisation to manage in the Japanese music scene. The artists were not idolized for their Korean-ness, as they in a way come to be today.\textsuperscript{68} This is very likely to be connected to the popularity J-pop held in Korea and the world at the same time. Even before President Kim Dae Jung opened up the Korean borders to Japanese popular culture in the late 1990s\textsuperscript{69}, it was being smuggled into the country, imitated and reproduced.

\textsuperscript{65} Jung, pp. 119
\textsuperscript{66} Shin, \textit{Behind the Korean Broadcasting Boom}, pp. 1
\textsuperscript{67} Lie, \textit{K-Pop – Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea}, pp. 102
\textsuperscript{68} Jung, pp. 119
\textsuperscript{69} Yim, ”Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea”, pp. 42
The biggest change in some ways, or at least the change I find very interesting is what Eun-Young Jung describes as the second round of Hallyu in Japan\(^{70}\). 2011 proved to be the year K-pop really started reaching out to the global market, just as well to Japanese fans that already had a strong interest in Korean culture from watching TV dramas. Girl groups like Kara and Girls Generation(소녀시대) followed TVXQ and started to climb the music charts in Japan, and through the help of new social media (like YouTube in particular), the Korean Wave really started to push K-pop ahead. K-pop now also became a term referring more to the idea of a "Korean pop singer" than the actual music, as it is a real fusion of many different genres of music.

### 3.4 Present Situation

Currently there are several Korean groups and artists that go to Japan to promote every year and who hold concerts and fan meetings rather exclusive for Japanese fans. I have mentioned it briefly before, but most K-pop artists have their own fan clubs in Japan, exclusive for Japanese fans. Other countries do not normally get this kind of special treatment with one fan club only for them, and if they do it is not in the same extent as their Japanese counterparts and not deemed as “official”. Mobile sites, special content, fan club magazines, and tickets to private events only for fans are only some of the benefits given to members\(^{71}\). The requirements for membership is in most cases a Japanese address and preferably a Japanese bank account, which is similar to what is required by many Korean fan clubs too. However, in recent years, these fan clubs have been opened to residents outside of Korea. Concert tickets, even tickets to special fan events, have also been made available for purchase to residents overseas through ticketing sites like Yes24\(^{72}\) and Interpark\(^{73}\). These sites also have the option of viewing the site and booking in English, something rarely found on Japanese websites. In Japan, however, tickets are much more difficult to buy unless you actually live in Japan, since most concerts and events are decided by lottery, where you deposit money to join and get a refund if you do not win. This makes it much more complicated for Korean fans to obtain tickets in Japan than it is for Japanese fans to obtain tickets for Korean events.

\(^{70}\) Jung, pp. 122

\(^{71}\) INNER CIRCLE Japan Official Website http://fc.avex.jp/winner/

\(^{72}\) http://ticket.yes24.com/Pages/English/Perf/FnPerfList.aspx

\(^{73}\) http://ticket.interpark.com/Global/
Because technically, a Japanese fan can be a member of the fan club in both countries and receive twice the benefits.

What is more than the general differences between fans; there is the difference in reception of Hallyu. Through my research I have seen very little said about Japanese fans of Hallyu in Korea apart from perhaps a news report or two regarding a Korean artist’s achievement on the Isles. In Japan, however, the situation is very different. Starting already in the mid 2000s\(^74\) as a ring effect of the Dokdo/Takeshima Island disputes and a general rise of neo-nationalism, Japanese right-wing, ultra-nationalists spoke out about the growing popularity of Korean pop culture. It was also in this period that the controversial comic book *Hating on the Korean Wave* (Kenkanryu) became a hot topic in Japan, as well as in the international scene. Where Japanese popular culture had been feared in Korea, the borders were now open for a free flow of Japanese popular culture, Korean media in Japan was quickly starting to become a two-faced matter. On one side you had the Hallyu fans, the Japanese housewives with a growing love for anything Korean, including a preference and idealization of Korean men. And on the other side you had the anti-Hallyu movement, criticism and also a tendency to ridicule the Japanese fans for their love of this country across the sea that for so many years had been “beneath and inferior” to Japan.

As I have mentioned above, Hallyu gained new popularity in 2011, just when the craze for it seemed to have waned out in Japan. Backed by a growing international fan base and the use and easy access brought on by social media\(^75\), the Korean Wave was back and seemingly as strong as ever. Another thing that gained new strength from this was the anti-Korean Wave movement in Japan. This was nothing new, as this kind of nationalism already existed in Japan. It was also brought into a closer focus in 2005 when author Yamano Sharin published the to-be bestseller cartoon in Japan, Kenkanryu (Hating ‘the Korean Wave’)\(^76\).

Before the release of this it was more extreme rightists that held onto their anti-Korean opinions and meanings and did not reach as easily to the younger generation. To them, culture and entertained was the main source of knowledge about each other and what they learned was a toned down version of history. That was until Kenkanryu managed to start a huge debate in online media, questioning history as taught by adults and in school to show the “real image of Korea” to those bold enough to look for it\(^77\). To have such views and

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\(^{74}\) Jung, pp. 124
\(^{75}\) Jung, pp. 126
\(^{76}\) Sakamoto & Allen, "Hating ’the Korean Wave’" Comic Books
\(^{77}\) Liscutin, "Surfing the Neo-Nationalistic Wave", pp. 173
nationalist sentiments represented in something like a comic book definitively created openings for a new audience and no doubt created a growing resentment towards Korea among Japanese youth. As what was reported in newspapers and online publications on this cartoon was also rather negative, and of its high sales, the feeling of resentment is very likely to have grown in Korea as well.

Sakamoto and Allen points out in their article on Kenkanryu that rather than being anti-Korean it seems more to be a reaction to the Korean Wave in Japan, and in large a revival of colonial era anti-Korean racism. A statement that in my opinion was only fuelled by statements like those Japanese actor Takaoka Sousuke posted on his twitter in July 2011. Clearly provoked by the influx of Korean dramas and artists, the actor posted his dismay especially towards the Japanese channel Fuji TV, and how he made sure to turn off the TV if anything Korean aired. The result of this was a big online fuss, Takaoka was fired from his current company and he later issued an apology online on his blog. The blog and the tweets were later deleted and now only remains as screen captions or translated format in online news outlets.

What is interesting to see is that in Japan, Hallyu is being brought into a nationalistic discourse. People wag their fingers at it and speak negatively of it, but what of Korea? More than being against the spread of K-pop, the government is very likely to be using it as a part of their national branding strategy, not only in Japan, but the whole world. What my research has gotten me as of now is a huge discussion regarding Japan’s past and past crimes, but Hallyu, or even J-pop and Japanese popular culture, is rarely brought into that discussion any longer. The outlook is very different, but it should also be said that Korea might have reacted more in a similar fashion to Japan if it was Koreans who idolized Japanese culture, language and idols. But if you look at it through Lim’s glasses and consider victimhood nationalism, it becomes somewhat easier to explain. The former victim now has something the former victimizer seems to fear, that it fights against and shows strong affection towards, both through love and hate.

3.4.1 Internationalising K-pop

What really is Hallyu, and why is it so popular and so discussed and criticised at the same time? To fully answer that question would take a whole different thesis to approach, but

[78] Sakamoto & Allen
[79] Ibid
I would like to discuss a few things regarding this in hopes that it will help support my theory that there is more than just a collective memory of former wrong doings that make Korean fans keep a certain distance to Japanese fans. Especially in more recent years, after the focus of the Korean Wave changed from TV dramas and movies to Korean pop music there has been growing discussion of what is behind this all. Cho Hae-Joang wrote in 2005 about how Korean music is not popular in China because it is made to fit the Chinese music market, but that it is music created for the Korean market and so reflects a Korean sensibility.\(^{81}\)

It is true that Korean music was originally made for a Korean audience, but with fans all over the world, there is a much more international aspect to the music as well. On one side there are those who criticise K-pop as nothing but a spin-off of Western media, something that is understandable as the production behind K-pop music and artists are no longer fully Korean. International producers, songwriters, directors and more come together to show the best of the best of K-pop to the world. Take for instance the recently aired program Produce 101. The whole idea of the show was that 101 trainees from various entertainment companies would come together and compete to be made into “Korea’s own girl group”.\(^{82}\) The decision on who would reach the top rested with the audience who could vote, but as the voting was online it was also open for Western fans.

As K-pop is today, I argue that you can no longer say that it is strictly Korean, as most globalized cultural industries. The packaging might still be, as the language remains (for most part) Korean, as does the idols that perform it and the companies that produce them. It has become what Crystal S. Anderson explains as “a hybridized Korean culture informed by global cultures.”\(^{84}\) Songs have more lines in English now than they used to, idols come from not only Korea, but also Japan, China, Thailand and other South East Asian countries. What remains important however are that their outer appearance still remains more or less Asian, the main language remains Korean. All one needs to do is look at the Americans who have managed to debut in Korea and note that they tend to be of Asian descent. Two Italian dancers I talked to back in 2013 kept pointing out that even if they took classes with Korea's top vocal and dance trainers, even when they got personal auditions with producers from some of the biggest companies in the business, the answer would always remain the same: “You are not quite what we are looking for”. Appearance matters. This could also be why

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\(^{81}\) Cho, ”Reading the ”Korean Wave” as a Sign of Global Shift, pp. 161
\(^{82}\) Choi & Maliangay, ”K-pop – the International Rise of the Korean Music Industry, pp. 3
\(^{83}\) Mnet: Produce 101
\(^{84}\) Anderson, ”That’s My Man!” pp. 119
most Korean groups now debuting in Japan do so by remaking a Korean hit into Japanese instead of making a new song more in tune with Japanese popular music.

Korean superstar and member of the world-renowned group Big Bang, T.O.P said in an interview with the Washington Post that “You don’t divide pop music by who is doing it. We don’t say, for instance, ‘white pop’ when white people make music.” A statement true in many ways, but when it comes to K-pop the K seems still important. It sets the music apart from regular pop, it brings along all the aspects that the Korean Wave now encompasses and it is the label that made it more known. In the recent years more and more academics has included race and the western racial imagery of orientalism and the idea that Asians are “exotic and mysterious.” The “K” in K-pop remains as the representation of the sexualized and glamourized image of Asians in the West and in South-East Asia.

Choi and Maliangkay also argue that K-pop and Hallyu has become an important tool in public/state affairs between Korea and other nations. It is difficult to measure exactly how important it is, but just by looking at the Korean/Japanese relations as of late you can see that K-pop has had some meaning. For some Japanese it has managed to open their eyes to Korea and further accept it, but to some it has also brought out more nationalistic tendencies as can be seen in among supporters and fans of the comic Kenkanryu.

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85 Fifield, “They are the biggest band in Asia, but Big Bang’s days may be numbered.”
86 Oh, ”The Politics of the Dancing Body”, pp. 55
87 Choi & Maliangkay, pp. 6
4 Analysis

My research for this thesis has been done in two parts, observation and interviews. The analysis part will be separated into two main sub-chapters. First I will discuss my findings found through observation, and then I will discuss the results of my interviews. I hope to discover some common features that can later be made into a theory regarding Korean fans and how they view and interact with Japanese fans, what backs up their relationship and what might affect it.

4.1 Observations

4.1.1 On Location Observations

The observations done for this thesis was executed as a combination of on location observations and monitoring of social media, as the chances of observing actual interactions between Japanese and Korean fans proved both difficult and expensive. I did, however, get full day observations, twice in Korea and once in Japan. Both days in Korea were actually at the same location, but with a very different backdrop to it.

Gaon Chart K-pop Awards

The first day was January 28 2015 for the 2014 Gaon Chart K-pop Awards. As this was an event for several different groups and artists, also meaning there were fans from a huge variety of fan clubs, it was more difficult to do too much observation here, but after 8 hours outside the venue, observing fans both waiting for the show to start, for the arrival of the artists and the red carpet event, there were a few noticeable things that are worth mentioning.

What is most visible and easy to spot is the tendency Japanese fans in Korea tend to show very strongly that they are fans by sporting as much goods from previous events as possible. Shirts, hats, bags and other goods from Winner’s first concert tour in Japan made them easily stand out from the crowd, and all the more so because they tend to gather in groups. The same goes for fans of different artists as well. Korean fans on the other hand are subtler in their way of expressing what fandom they belong to, even more so if the fans are a little bit older. This matches very well with a theory Jong-Yoon Hong talks about in his book *Fandom Culture*. Here he talks about how the average age of Korean K-pop fans is increasing, and also how hard these fans word to “seem ordinary”. Hong calls it “ordinary cosplay”.

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88 Hong, *Fandom Culture*
“일반코스”), where cosplay is a shortened word for "costume play". Being a Korean fan in Korea has somewhat become stigmatized, and as I have mentioned before, so has it in Japan. So why is it then that Japanese fans tend to show off their belonging to a fandom so much easier, especially in Korea? One thing this might come down to is the expectations and slight prejudice against fans, both Korean and Japanese. For the latter, it is easy to assume they are fans if they are in Seoul, and so why not play onto those expectations? Korean fans on the other hand, especially those who are not teenagers anymore, risk more criticism if they show fanciness behaviour. A reason for this, as explained by Jung Jae Min, is that idol stardom and this kind of fanciness behaviour is a source of teenage rebellion that distracts the student from his or her studies. Korea is also a country with a very age-based society, or ageism, meaning the determiners age creates for your social rank and social expectations. This means that it might be expected that a teenager is a fan (although not desired), but if you are in your 20s then you are too old for this behaviour and should rather act as befits one’s age.

At big events like the Gaon Awards the only ways you can really identify what group a Korean fan likes is to ask, to hear them say it or notice if they have a) balloons with the group or artist’s name, or b) a so-called light stick, a glow stick, preferably from the official fan club, that lights up in the group’s official colour.

Of course, you cannot base everything on these observations alone, especially since at this event the fans I was looking for was harder to spot because of the crowds. But every time I came across Winner fans, I noted specifically that I never saw Korean and Japanese fans mingling together.

**Winner’s First Official fan meeting WWIC 2015**

Day two of observation was much more rewarding, albeit also very different from day one. This was done on January 31 2015 at Winner’s first official fan meeting, WWIC 2015, in Seoul. The location was the same as Gaon Awards, but as this was a more exclusive event for Winner fans, observation could be focused more on how fans interact than to try and spot fans. Similar to day one, Japanese fans have a stronger tendency to stick out of the crowd, instantly wearing and using goods bought ahead of the fan meeting, or at previous events in

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89 Jung, 2010  
90 Jambor, "Sexism, Ageism and Racism Prevalent Throughout the South Korean System of Education.” pp. 1  
91 As soon as a K-pop group or artist gets an official fan club this involved a fan club name, an official colour and a member-only website to upload news and messages. In Winner’s case their fan club is, as mentioned, Inner Circle and their colour is blue.
Japan. Whereas the Korean fans are still more subtle, but easier to spot because they have purchased goods or are holding up their self-made posters with cheering messages for Winner. There were also fans from other South Asian countries, China and Western fans. It was almost interesting to see how little Korean fans seemed to interact with foreign fans unless they had to, and how they group together. When they interacted, the main language used for communication remained Korean, or halting English. Meaning that Korean fans 9 out of 10 times would speak only Korean, and the international fans would adjust to them. From just observing, there was no open hostility, but they did not actively work to befriend each other. The common language tended to be Korean at most part, at least among fans, since most actually in Korea for this event, and overseas fans able to be there and attend the event might speak some degree of Korean. Foreigners speaking broken Korean might also be less self-conscious about speaking it compared to how ashamed a Korean fan might be if their English is bad. The Korean fans likely do not feel that speaking Korean is an important cultural capital. But speaking English is one of the most important cultural capitals in Korea today.

All announcements and information given by staff was also given in Japanese. Another interesting thing about this, and that was discussed in some degree online, was that even if both China and Japan had more fan meetings (especially Japan, as they also got a concert tour), it was unfair to allow them tickets to the fan meeting in Seoul. When looking at this, one must ask oneself if this dismay towards Japanese fans is only based in feeling wronged as a fan, or if there is something more behind it. China also had more than one fan meeting, but it was less talked about online. Tickets were also priced very differently for these fan meetings, as you can see from Figure 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ticket price (Local currency)</th>
<th>Ticket Price (USD(^2))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>33 000 KRW</td>
<td>27 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>580~980 CNY</td>
<td>91~154 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>6480~7560 JPY</td>
<td>54~63 USD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: WWIC 2015 ticket prices in local currency and USD, ticket prices found on Winner’s official Korean, Chinese and Japanese homepage.

Now, as you can see from the figure, the tickets were much cheaper in Korea, and as I have mentioned before, was also available to be bought through the Website Interpark, which not only is available in Korean, but also offers services in English, Japanese and Korean. This

\(^2\) All currency was converted on September 29, 2015 at [http://www.xe.com/](http://www.xe.com/)
means that as long as you have a credit card, you can buy the tickets and pick them up at the
venue. To put it short: Korean fans only got one fan meeting that was available for any fan of
any nationality. I will come back to this, but this fact alone created a certain sense of hostility
in the Korean online fan community regarding foreigners “stealing” tickets.

**Winner’s 2nd Japan Tour**

My final day of observation took place in Osaka, Japan, October 12. Again, it is a
different setting from the previous two, but it still gave additional information in the research
of the relationships between fans. One of the first thing to note in this aspect is that despite
Osaka not being the capital of Japan, it is one of the most accessible cities in Japan for
Koreans with several airlines offering cheap fare flights from Seoul. Osaka also had two
concerts on the same day, so for those able to go and with the right funding (and connections,
but I will get to that later), the trip might be worth it. As I have earlier discussed, access to
tickets to concerts in Japan is a much more complicated process than in Korea, but for once
the prices of concert tickets when compared to the prices of the tickets to Winner’s concerts
in Korea 2016 were rather similar. In Japan the tickets were 7900 JPY, and in Korea the
tickets were 77000 KRW. The differences between the two are not significant to mention it
as a factor that would keep fans of either nationality from either of the events. Not in the
same way as the difference in prices for the fan meetings. What it does show however is
that most of the fans who attend these things, especially in Japan, are of middle class since
both goods and concert tickets are pricey.

Now, I would like to argue that the number of Korean fans at the Japanese concert
was much less than Japanese fans at the Korean concert. One important factor here might be
that Japanese fans tend to be a bit older, Korea is a country with lower costs in general, thus
making it an easier destination. The few fans that had come from Korea to join the concert in
Osaka were older and female, many of them there to promote and work as a fan site.

Winner does tend to have more female fans, but in general there are far less male fans that

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93 See Figure 1
94 A fan site is a term coined at individuals who take unofficial photographs of their idols,
normally focusing on just one member from an idol group, and upload them onto their own
website. Despite it not being allowed to take pictures during events like concerts and fan
meetings, these sites will do it, as well as organizing birthday events for the idol they
represent, they sell slogans for concerts and some even earn money by selling unofficial
merchandise like calendars and photo books. This gives these individual fans extra financial
support, and they also gain the support from other fans as they provide a preview into events
not accessible to everyone.
travel abroad for concerts. The main reason for this being that they cannot freely travel abroad before completing their military service.

4.1.2 Online Observations

Online observations were conducted on a daily basis by creating a List on Twitter, collecting the Twitter accounts of Korean fans, fan sites and also a few Japanese fans. Proving the power of the Korean netizens, these online fans posted between 20~50 tweets a day on average, more on days where Winner had schedules or when YG announced upcoming schedules and releases. Here too there is a minimal interaction between Japanese and Korean fans, the main source of this being between Japanese fans and Korean fan sites. Because the administrators of these fan sites, who always keep their identity undisclosed and tend to create separate SNS accounts for their “fan identity”, have a variety of projects going they need the language skills to communicate with fans from all around the world. There are two reasons for them hiding their identity, the most prominent likely being that these administrators are older, thus not behaving as is fit for their age, and not fulfilling the expectations to it. The other is that if they are caught doing any of this there is a chance they will be banned from events and removed from the fan club. Projects made by these sites is everything from birthday fundraisers to sales of fan made photo books or slogans for fans to have at concerts. In the case where ”regular” fans interact with Japanese, these are among the Korean fans that go to concerts in Japan as well and are also more likely to be fan sites.

However impossible to get an exact count and a total overview of all the tweets made to, about and between Inner Circle members, I noted a few trends in when there would be a higher percentage in complaints. Most tweets that really shows the conflicting emotions Korean fans harbour were posted on days like July 8th, 2015 and the few days after, as this was the day YG announced Winner’s second Japanese concert tour. This became an especially conflicting moment for Korean fans, as Winner had not really had official schedules in Korea since their fan meeting in January, they had never had concerts in Korea and now Japan got a second tour. Based on my thesis I predicted that the fans in Korea would put more blame on Japanese fans for ”stealing” their artist, showing the strong para-social relationship created between fan and artist, strengthened by this sense of victimhood nationalism that I have mentioned earlier. Based only on this my hypothesis expected fans to

95 Information disclosed by a personal friend who run a fan site for the Korean group BTS (방탄소년단)
complain about the fans, talk down on them and in a sense justify it even more because Winner was a Korean artist and that they should remain in Korea.

What I did discover through my observations, especially on the date YG announced Winner’s 2nd Japan tour compared to March 4th, 2016 when the company announced a 3rd Japanese tour, was rather different. For sure, there was a lot of complaints the first time, a lot of lashing out in regards of Winner not promoting in the country that "made them” and where their "original fans were. But instead of the lashing out at Japanese fans, the Korean Inner Circle members started lashing out at YG and CEO of YG, Yang Hyun Seok, for not being considerate enough towards Korean fans. Even a few Japanese fans spoke out on the matter regarding the first tour, as can be seen below. A collection of more tweets with translations can be found in Appendices 5.3.

"Japanese Inner Circles are really blessed;; I thought they would have a national tour next, but instead it is another Japanese one;; I can't even be thankful;; I have mixed feelings when I think of the Korean fans. They keep waiting and waiting... It's made me think "Why is it Japan again?";; I really don't think it is right for Japanese fans to be blessed with this."

A few other Japanese fans even chimed in on this, supporting the fan that originally posted the comment, agreeing with the above statement96. This is not enough to be representative of the Japanese fans, as they mainly tweeted about how happy they were to have a new tour. What it shows is that even in Japan there are fans that question the choices behind the group’s schedule and feels a bit put off by getting everything. Whether this is influenced by history or affinity towards fellow fans is difficult to say, but it shows a nuance in the relationship.

Korean fans, as have been mentioned, mostly make a point out of Winner being a Korean singer, and that YG is being unfair towards the fans. As the winner of the survival show WIN was based on fan votes, Winner owes their debut to their fans, and so the company should return something to these fans. This can be seen in the following tweet that was written on July 8th:

"Aren't Korean fans also fans???? To be honest, wasn't it the Korean fans that made Winner??? Wasn't it Koreans who were fans of Seunghoon and Seungyoon first...."

96 Translations and tweets can be found in Appendices 5.3
As can be seen, there is nothing really negative about the Japanese fans, but an undertone of dissatisfaction with the way the group is being managed. There are also those who puts all blame on YG and claims that even the members of Winner themselves feel bad for how things have turned out in their schedules: "[…] even the members seem really sorry towards us.." Here once more you can see the tendencies the fans have of maintaining a para-social relationship with the artist. Because the fan feels it, the artist must feel it too. We are all being done wrong to by YG so we should stay together. The many articles and the attention around the “slave contracts” written out by entertainment companies have also created a very critical attitude towards them. YG is not the company with most criticism regarding this, but fans especially criticise the company for how they promote, or the lack of promoting, their artists.

4.1.3 Observation results

On Location Observations

The trend I saw in my fieldwork observations was that Korean and Japanese tend to stay apart and make groups rather than mingling together. If so there is a case of interaction, the language is mostly Korean and it is more likely to just be one on one, simple conversations. On the few occasions I met groups that included Japanese and Korean fans together, there would be a bigger group of Korean fans and at most just a couple of Japanese. This does show a certain trend that there is a bigger willingness among Japanese to step out of their comfort zones to try and learn more about their idol and their fans. They seem less biased towards who they talk to and in my personal experience did not show any kind of hostility and dislike towards Korean fans. For sure, this is more or less a given as these are fans of Korean popular culture and a Korean artist. However, it is worth mentioning that if there are bigger groups of Japanese fans they tend to stick to themselves, and can be spotted very easily as a large percentage of them will wear official goods from concerts in Japan rather than Korean goods.

Korean fans on the other hand are more likely to stay away from Japanese fans and rarely speak to them unless approached first. As I have repeatedly noted before, they tend to stick to Korean as communication language, or some English rather than Japanese language. This being, as I have commented on before, because the lack of English skills, and also the lack of popularity of learning Japanese in Korea today. For instance, if you look at the

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97 Williamson, The dark side of South Korean pop music
university applicants in 2015, almost 57792 applied for English Language and Literature, compared to the 18216 that applied to Japanese Language and Literature\textsuperscript{98}. It is more likely Japanese fans will have studied Korean, especially if they actually are in Korea to attend events. In Korea the idea of a group is so important that sticking out from the normal can be too difficult for many. Submission to norms is more important than submission to reason\textsuperscript{99}. So could not this mean that even if they might even want to interact with Japanese fans, the belonging to the group created by the nation remains stronger than the idea of one-ness created among fans within the Winner fandom.

**Online Observations**

In quite a contrast to what I first predicted, the online activities especially on Twitter showed that instead of Korean fans expressing dislike and placing blame on Japanese fans when it came to Winner’s lack of promotions in Korea, they rather put the blame on YG Entertainment and its president. Dislike towards him, as well as emphasizing Winner’s nationality and the fact that fans played an important part of making them is also greatly stressed. The way they stress the importance of Winner’s actual nationality is interesting because not only does it have hints of a kind of ownership of their artists, but can it show traces of victimhood nationalism as well? More than showing a distinct dislike towards Japanese *people*, what can be seen from the tweets is that the Korean fans tend to oppose the idea of Japan the country and that they have to share with them, as is encouraged by the state and media tells them to do. This is all the more obvious if you compare the number of comments and tweets made when Japan got another concert tour compared when China got several fan meetings. Then again, China does not get their own fan club, their own album and their own promotions in the same way as Japan, making them less of a threat.

The conflicting information gathered through this part of my research is still not quite enough to add it all up. Even if online observations witness a less hostile attitude and less influence from historical discourse the heavy stress on Winner being a Korean artist and *not* a Japanese one is too obvious to ignore. The fans not only stress it, but also make sure to raise questions about it directed to YG Entertainment. If the company favours Japan so much, why do they not just go there? Why do they make Korean artists and just send them to Japan? A way to answer this question is simply because of the money. You earn more in Japan, and the audience is a more limited, yet still big audience. The group mentality of Korean fans makes

\textsuperscript{98} KESS, Status of Admission by major category

\textsuperscript{99} Kim, The Development of Modern South Korea, pp. 52
the market much more competitive compared to Japan where one fan will follow more than one group at the same time.

What this unrest among the fans also shows is a very unstable moral economy between producer and consumer. Promoting mainly in Japan could be a way to create even more discussion around the group, but as some fans have argued, as a rookie group they ought to have more comebacks in Korea or they will be less known. As was shown during Winner’s fan meeting in Seoul, having events and promoting in Korea also opens up for fans of other nationalities joining, thus should this not be something YG should aim for more than overseas promotions?

4.2 Questionnaires

For this part of my research I wrote up a simple survey aimed at Korean fans to see if I could manage to dig a bit deeper into their views on Japanese fans. My original goal was to get interviews with the fans, but after a lot of searching and a lot of rejections to meet in person I came to the conclusion that an open answer questionnaire would be the easiest. After talking to fans through Twitter I got 21 respondents willing to answer my questions, but I will focus mainly on 20 of these. The reason for this is that, as I have defined earlier, I want to look at active fans that actually participate in activities and Winner’s promotion activities. One of the respondents said she only cheered for the group online, so I will not put as much weight on her answers as the others. Interestingly enough, this respondent was also the oldest of the 21 participants at 25, fitting into the theory of older fans putting on this daily cosplay of not being a fan.

To best try and map out the group I was working with I asked for gender, age, religion and area where they lived. Area interested me because of the rather different political landscape in Korea, as well as differences in historical background as I have showed earlier in my thesis. Going back as far as the 14th century there were certain relations between Japan (mainly from Tsushima) and Korea, mainly through Japan Houses in the southern part of the country. The same was the case during colonialism, when Seoul as the centre of the country was more influenced and more heavily modernised by the Japanese than the rest.\textsuperscript{100}

The average age of the respondents was 18, with 10 out of 21 being between 16–20 years old, 16 out of 21 being under 20. This supports what I have written earlier about the ages of active fans, and even if my research here only shows a marginal amount of fans one is

\textsuperscript{100} Todd, Assimilating Seoul
left to wonder if there is in fact something in this average age that makes Koreans look down on these “fanatic fans” as they often do. Nor have these girls personally experienced the conflicts of colonialism or Korea just after Japanese rule ended. 17 of the respondents were located in Gyeongi-do, more specifically Seoul, 1 in Gangwon-do and 3 in Gyeongsang-do.

6 out of 21 of the girls answered that they had a religion, namely that they were Catholics. With enough data there might have been a bigger influence in this, but after comparing the answers of the ones that stated Catholicism as their religion, there is nothing that stands out in particular. Five out of six with a religion did attend university, but this could be a combination of age making them more secure of their own beliefs and them being students at Christian universities.

What is the most interesting, and perhaps the most complex thing to look at in the survey is the answers the girls have given when asked what they thought about Japan. I asked them to specifically explain a little bit further in their answers, and even if not all of them as done so, there is a slight trend among those who has. First of all, it must be mentioned that two answered blank, and four answered very short answers with two “not so good”, one “not too bad” and one just answering “Island country”. As it is a little bit of a sensitive subject to talk about, I did expect less answers to this questions than I got, and what is very helpful, and to me rather surprising, is the slight pattern you can see in the answers of those who has taken the time to explain a little bit further.

The first thing worthy of discussion is that 8 of 15 mentions history and politics in Japan as point they dislike, but counters this with saying that Japanese people in general are not too bad. This derives from my original belief that dislike towards Japan included the country and the people as a whole. One people, one nation, one blame and one fault. Despite the age of the respondents, some of the answers to this question are very reflected, showing that in fact they have given this a lot of thought. What was even more surprising is that those who gave answers like this spoke little Japanese, had never been to Japan, and did not have any Japanese friends or relatives. In fact, most of those who commented on history and politics also added that the people in Japan, the fans in Japan were nice and not too bad. It gives a sense of them trying to justify their positive view on Japan by first and foremost underlining that the actions of the government and of course the past still is important and makes it difficult to really like Japan. I see this as a trace of victimhood nationalism, making them constantly aware of their role as victim. Almost as if it has become a duty or a default belief that you must have to be accepted into the group society that makes up Korea. Like if you look closer at my questionnaire you can see that the only one person to answer truly
positive regarding her views on Japan has family there and thus a closer connection than most of the others. With this connection it is quite possible it is easier to also feel a pull towards Japan and a strong sense of society with the family there as well since the idea of “family” remains one of the most important institutions in Korean society.

If this is true, then you can also draw parallels between group society, para-social relations and moral economy. I already have discussed how Korea tend to be very group oriented, that acting in “individual interest” is almost considered being a bad thing compared to doing something for the greater good (the group and nation). By taking this to the fandom, then it is almost a given that it will become more complicated for a fan. Nation is of course one thing, and in the word “nation (민족)” in Korea there is also this sense of victimhood that you should also feel as a part of the group. If you do not feel it you stick out, and that would be bad. Then as a fan, how can you rise above this? The idol you like is also a part of Korea, your fellow fans are too, but now you also have a new group of fans and a new venue, Japan, where your idols are also welcomed and cheered for. In other words, there will be a conflicts between the groups you belong in because of the expectations that follows with it, and because of the close relation Korean fans also tend to have with not only artists, but their fellow fans as well. I argue that this is what you see especially in their tweets and in the way they answer what they think of Winner’s activities in Japan. Most are saying that activities are good, but Winner is a Korean artist after all and should perform and entertain their Korean fans.

So if we are to put it simply, the relationship between Japanese and Korean fans, as seen from the Korean side at least, is very complicated. More fans for the group they like is good, as it enables more activities and promotions. At the same time, it forces them to have to share their group, sometimes rather unevenly, with fans that are originally people from a country they grew up being taught to dislike. On top of this all you add unevenness in the moral economy between Winner’s company and the fans by how the company seems to put more focus on Japan activities. As one fan states it,

“That a Korean singer has so many, frequent activities in Japan is always regrettable, but since those activities are made by the Japanese branch of the company, the Korean side cannot really say anything.”

101 See Appendices 5.1.2, Miss S
One simple example of this is how since 2014 Winner has had over 30 concerts in Japan, while in Korea they have only had 5\textsuperscript{102}. Perhaps if YG (and AVEX, YG’s Japanese partner) had tried to even out the activities and focused on running the more standard schedule of a newly debuted group then there would be less negativity between fans and the company, and also between the fans themselves.

What remains perhaps the most interesting fact about all of this is that the trend of viewing Japan as “the public there not at fault, but a government problem” looks very much like a textbook answer. It is not overly offensive towards the Japanese, but allows the Korean fans to maintain this feeling of victimhood that is expected to remain even in their generation after what happened in the colonial period. They do not have to go further into detail beyond what they have learned from their family or at school, but can give the answer expected of them. Compared to this, the tweets I have gathered might show a little more honesty from the fans side, but also here they tend to focus mostly on the fact that Winner is Korean and should remain in Korea instead of Japan. They also put the blame on the company, rather than Japan for this.

Following this rather “textbook” answer, the Korean fans seem to struggle more when asked if going to Japan or meeting Japanese has changed their opinion on them. Here there is a majority of people who have either not answered or just said “no”, or just passed the question all together. Following the theory that the way they have responded to earlier questions goes in line with what is expected of them, this here might be a little bit more difficult for them because it is not one they have to answer often. Giving an opinion on Japan is easy because discourse all around the fans have created one for them already. However, in the case of the change of opinion after experiencing Japan or Japanese people might be a little bit more complicated because there is no “expected” answer. They are expected to have an idea of Japan and what they should think about the matter, not to have these ideas changed.

For those who have answered that there had been changes, even if this might not be the main trend, most of the answers focus on the fact that the Japanese “are not bad people”. This sound very similar to what some have already said, and goes by the book. The Japanese government and historical facts remain the main source of the differences, and for those who have met Japanese or gone to Japan, this idea has only been strengthened further. It might also have something to do with Japan’s consistent policy to give no state level compensations.

\textsuperscript{102} YG ENTERTAINMENT, Winner’s Schedule
to the victims of forced labour and former "comfort women", or that what they have given feels insufficient to the victims. As long as this policy remains, it is also likely that opinions of Japan will stay the same in Korea.
5 Summary and Conclusion

This thesis tried to go deeper into the relationship between Korean and Japanese fans of Winner and how the past and national discourse might influence this relationship. Through ethnographic analysis I have tried to understand what victimhood nationalism might have to do with how the fans view each other, and also what other factors might have influenced their relationship. Since there is a lack of English research conducted on the topic, the answers made might not be sufficient to give a full theory and answer to my questions, but the results still stand as an hypothesis that should be given more attention in the future. If anything, this research also enables us to get a glimpse of how the younger generation of Koreans view Japan and what the relationship between the two nations might look like in the future.

Through my research I have briefly touched upon the relationship between Korea and Japan from the pre-modern period until today. I have discussed how the two countries related to each other through history, and especially the importance of the Colonial Period in the shaping the way they view each other. What wrong Japan did in the 35 years they colonized Korea remains a common focus point through the surveys I did among Korean fans. Looking at the answers I have found to from my survey and the question on what history means to fandom and how it has affected the relationship between Korean and Japanese Winner fans, I have at least seen trends that make me believe I have found the “right answer” to my questions. By this, I mean the question the fans believe society expects them to give, as giving answers to a test. Instead of an open-ended question, it becomes a question with only one answer viewed as “correct” by society.

Through observations online and on location, I have seen the gap that still remains between Japanese and Korean fans despite how the fans in Korea always stress the importance of being one fandom and sticking together as one. Victimhood nationalism is still obvious in their relationship, at least from the Korean side, something that is further supported by how the fans keep putting emphasis on Winner’s lack of Korean promotions and YG Entertainment’s focus on Japan. The fans’ para-social relationship with Winner, strengthened by how the fans took special part in the creating of Winner through the reality show WIN, is fuelled even further the collective memory of colonialism and Japanese rule by the lack of activities in Korea. It also makes the moral economy between YG Entertainment and the fans uneven and shows how the fans tend to be influenced by impulses in their society. This is also a moral economy already somewhat uneven by the many controversies going around in Korea regarding entertainment companies and their treatment of their idols.
In YG’s case it is lack of Korean promotions, and many fans complain quite often and quite openly about how he only lets Winner promote in Japan. Fans can also be prone to blame the company of being too self-interested by sending their artist to Japan for the sake of money. From a Confucian viewpoint this is already seen as something negative, but perhaps even more so because it has to do with Japan.

As for the cases I have discussed, I believe that the moral economy between fans and entertainment companies, as well as the special para-social interactions Korean fans get with their idols work to strengthen the feelings of victimhood since they have to keep competing with Japanese fans. Socializing processes are also important in shaping the attitudes of these fans, as they are not only influenced by one thing. Books, direct memories, school, media and the government are all at play in the development of victimhood nationalism. The Korean fans might feel they are losing to a country they have already lost so much to. I use the word “might” here because the data collected in this survey might not be enough to find the actual answer to the many questions I have posed, and to encourage further research into the topic. Researching the past relationship between Korea and Japan is meaningful, but for both the current younger generation and their future it is also important to look at the current situation and what might influence it.
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Appendices

5.1 Questionnaire outline and answers

5.1.1 Outline

1. Age
2. Location
3. Religion
4. Education
5. Are you an official Inner Circle? (If so, Japanese or Korean fan club?)
6. Do you do activities as an Inner Circle? If so, what kind of activities?
7. Have you gone to participate in Winner’s activities in Korea?
8. What do you think about Winner’s activities in Korea VS Winner’s activities in Japan?
9. What do you think about Korea?
10. Where did you learn about Korea?
11. Do you have relatives or family in Korea?
12. Do you have Korean friends? If so, are they Inner Circles? What language do you use when you talk to them?
13. Can you speak Korean? If so, where/how did you learn it?
14. Have you been in Korea? If so, why?
15. Has meeting Koreans, going to Korea or learning about Korean culture changed your view of it?
16. Gender – all participants were female.

5.1.2 Answers

Miss A

1. 18 years

2. Seoul, Gangnam

3. No religion

4. High school
5. Official Inner Circle

6. Taking pictures, go to concert, buy mp3

7. No… I didn't have enough money to buy the airplane ticket.

8. Well… It will surely be useful for Winner. It also makes me happy. But I like KOREAN Winner who speak Korean, not foreign languages. I want more activities in Korea.

9. Jealous. Because they have high quality concert halls like the domes and Korea doesn't. And the domestic market is developed well, so that Winner can earn enough money for them to stay there for a long time. I'm jealous. They can hear them in Japanese, but why can't I hear them in Korean? Why?

10. Through animation I started to become more interested in Japan. When I was in middle school I studied a lot about it on my own using google etc.

11. No

12. I have old friends who are Korean-Japanese. One friend lives in Korea, and she is not online friend but offline friend. However, she isn't Inner Circle. We chat in Korean.

13. I can. I learned it by myself at home watching anime.

14. No

15. Has meeting Japanese or going there changed your opinion?

**Miss B**

1. 19 years

2. Gyeongi-do, Namyangju-si

3. Catholic
4. University

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Yes

7. No

8. It was okay. The problem is that YG is too neglecting

9. Thank you for liking Winner.

10. School

11. No

12. No

13. A little bit

14. No

15. No

Miss C

1. 18 years

2. Incheon

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. Twitter fan page
7. Since I am a student, I can't participate, can I? But I intend to participate when I can later.

8. Since Inner Circle Japan are also Winner fans, it is a good opportunity for them to communicate. To appear in Japanese TV shows is a good experience to have for Winner, and to have fan meetings in Japan gives them a chance to meet the Japanese fans. It is all good, but if they do too many activities there it isn't too good. The cosplay they did at WWIC Japan was really... shocking)... It was cute and all, but I hope they don't make them do it again.

9. Apart from the history with Korea, I think it is a good country. The festival culture is good, and it is nice to see how they protect their traditions by wearing kimono in everyday life. I have also heard that the streets are very clean and I think the citizens are okay.

10. School or by listening to grown ups talking.

11. No

12. I know some, but they are not Winner fans and we speak in Korean.

13. I can do simple greetings and self-introduction. I learned it at school.

14. No

15. I have never thought badly of Japan. As I said before, I think the unsolved historical problems are mainly the fault of the politicians. If I look at it personally there are many kind people and it is a country I really want to go to once.

Miss D

1. 21 years

2. Bucheon
3. No Religion

4. University

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. Try to be active

7. Even if I want to go, I can’t.

8. I really want and hope they will have more activities in Korea

9. People who see Winner more often than us, so they follow them to Korea and take away spots from Korean fans.

10. School

11. No

12. Right now I don't have Japanese friends.

13. I learned it at school. I know enough to ask a few questions.

14. No

15. No

**Miss E**

1. 14 years

2. Gyeonggi-do

3. No Religion

4. Middle School

5. Not Official Inner Circle
6. No

7. No

8. It was okay, but it isn't good for a Korean artist to only have activities outside of Korea.

9. Blank

10. School

11. No

12. No

13. No

14. No

15. Not sure

**Miss F**

1. 21 years

2. Incheon

3. Catholic

4. University

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Fan-fiction

7. It is really hard for Korean fans to participate.

8. I think they were in Japan much longer than they were in Korea.
9. Looking at it individually, Japan isn't that bad. There are also people who are very friendly towards Korea. However, I don't like the fact that the people who lead the country does not recognize historical mistakes and just override them and they tell other countries that they have not done anything bad.

10. School, news, books

11. No

12. No

13. I know how to speak it. I can speak it almost naturally from watching animations. I also learned a little from taking it as an elective in high school.

14. Yes

15. Individuals are not the problem. There are certainly friendly people there too. But if the Japanese government doesn't change, it will continue like this. Koreans and Chinese still can't help but look at Japan with hostility.

**Miss G**

1. 21 years

2. Gyeonggi-do

3. No religion

4. Office worker

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Yes

7. No.

8. It was sad that they didn't get to do more activities in Korea, but in order to let more people know about them and to get more Japanese fans it was good.
9. Japan is okay. Personally it is one of the best foreign countries, and if I get the chance I want to go there again.

10. A distant relative is Japanese, and I also learned a lot about Japan at school.

11. Yes

12. No

13. I don't know enough to properly communicate, but I learned simple words and greetings at school.

14. Yes

15. Yes, it changed a lot.

**Miss H**

1. 18 years

2. Ulsan

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Official Inner Circle

6. None

7. No.

8. It is good that they are popular in Japan, but please do some activities in Korea too…

9. I don't like everything about Japan, but most of the people are very nice.

10. School, books
11. No

12. I have Japanese friends, but they are not Winner fans. We speak in English.

13. No

14. No

15. Yes. In the past I thought the Japanese were unconditional and unscrupulous people who wanted to snatch away Dokdo, but after meeting Japanese people, I have come to understand that it is just what the government and a handful of people think.

**Miss I**

1. 18 years

2. Seoul-si, Nowon-gu

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. Yes! Participate in live shows, fan-meeting, online.

7. Since I am a student, even if I want to go I don't have a passport.

8. I think that they made them cosplay in Japan was a bit excessive.

9. Historically, there have been a lot of bad things happening with our country. Since when it comes to issues like that of the comfort women or unit 731, Japan was clearly at fault, I think they should properly apologize and compensate just like Germany did. Also, if you look historically at the problems around Dokdo, it is clearly Korean land. I think it is wrong of them to not admit that it is Korean land even if they know all this. I think that if Japan wants to establish an amicable relationship with our country they have to admit the things they should admit, and properly apologize and compensate for their wrongdoings.
10. I learned a lot about it in school. I also had the chance to go to Dokdo and attend the Dokdo academy where we learned a lot about Dokdo's history and through that also learned more about Japan.

11. No

12. No!

13. A little bit! I learned a little from school and a little from watching the animation Master Detective Conan.

14. No!

15. Blank

Miss J

1. 18 years

2. Gyeonggi-do, Jinju

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Since I am a 3rd year of high school, I cannot do much. But I went to the fan meeting.

7. No

8. I wish they wouldn't do activities in Japan. If you look at 10 of Winner's activities, Korea had one and Japan had 9. Winner is a Korean group.

9. I will forever think negatively about their government.

10. School, news
11. No

12. No

13. Since I had the interest, I know a little bit. I learned it at University camp and in high school.

14. No

15. If you meet, won't it change? But I don't hate Japanese people, I hate Japan and the Japanese government.

Miss K

1. 17 years

2. Pohang

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. Fan site and fan meeting

7. No

8. I wish they wouldn’t go so often.

9. Blank

10. News?

11. No

12. No

13. Learned a little bit in school.
14. Yes

15. Blank

Miss L

1. 15 years

2. Incheon

3. No religion

4. Middle School

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. Yes

7. No

8. It was regretful that they had more schedules in Japan, and I only liked that we got to see them often.

9. Japanese citizen aren't that bad, but the politicians are.

10. News and school

11. No

12. No

13. No

14. No

15. Yes. After meeting Japanese people my views changed a lot.

Miss M
1. 15 years

2. Kangwon-do, Chuncheon-si

3. Catholic

4. Middle School

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Since I am a student, I only go when I can.

7. No

8. I liked it

9. A place where our kids (Winner) go to do business

10. School

11. No

12. No


14. No

15. No.

**Miss N**

1. 15 years

2. Seoul-si

3. No religion
4. Middle School

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Yes

7. No


10. School and books

11. No

12. No

13. No

14. No

15. No.

Miss O

1. 23 years
   •

2. Seoul-si

3. Catholic

4. University

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. No

7. If I had the time I would be interested in going.
8. Since the Korean music market is small and there are few facilities to perform at, they couldn't help it.

9. They are an orderly and kind people, but because there are a lot of historical problems and have a lot of conflicts, it would be good if they properly reflected and apologized for the past.

10. School

11. No

12. No

13. No

14. I changed flights in Japan on my way to the US. (so not really)

15. Since China, Japan and Korea's history has been entangled for a long time, you know some Japanese history even without having studied it, but it surprised me how ignorant the Japanese are towards Korean history. It surprised me that they didn't know anything, there are also a lot of misunderstandings. But after meeting nice Japanese people and been given a proper explanation and seeing their interest I realized that I should rethink how I look at them. I really felt that there are a lot of nice and warm people.

**Miss P**

1. 25 years

2. Daegu

3. No religion

4. University Graduate

5. Official Inner Circle
6. I only cheer for them online

7. No, I only hear about them online.

8. I think it will help Winner in becoming an even bigger group.

9. I have bad feelings about the fact that they don't apologize properly for what was done in the past. But I think well of Japanese people who think kindly of Korea and Korean artists.

10. History education at school and news

11. No

12. No

13. I can do simple greetings. I learned it from watching Japanese dramas.

14. No

15. Blank

**Miss Q**

1. 18 years

2. Incheon

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Live shows, and I take a few pictures every time I go.

7. No

8. It was good, but I wish they wouldn't go so often.

10. I learn a lot from school, my family and the news.

11. No

12. No

13. I learned a little bit from watching Winner's Japanese videos.

14. No

15. Blank

**Miss R**

1. 15 years

2. Gyeonggi-do, Ansan

3. No religion

4. Middle School

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. Fan Meeting

7. No

8. It couldn’t be helped.


10. School

11. No

12. No
13. I can’t really speak it.

14. No

15. Blank

Miss S

1. 17 years

2. Incheon

3. No religion

4. High School

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Yes, often.

7. I don’t have the money for it.

8. That a Korean singer has so many, frequent activities in Japan is always regrettable, but since those activities are made by the Japanese branch of the company, the Korean side cannot really say anything.

9. I don't know what to talk about. If I am to talk about fans then I don't like them too much. The fans always have concerts, so why did they have to take up front row seats at the one fan meeting we got (in Korea) and bring fan signs and goods they were told not to bring? When I try to communicate with Japanese fans they are not bad people, truthfully.

10. I learned it all from school, news and family

11. No

12. No
13. Even if I don't know the meaning, I can read words in Hiragana. I learned it at school.

14. No

15. Blank

Miss T

1. 14 years

2. Gyeonggi-do, Namyangju-si

3. No religion

4. Middle School

5. Not Official Inner Circle

6. I can't go to life shows since I am too young, and I can't go to fan signings because of my hakwon. But I went to the fan meeting, and I go to what I can.

7. I am a student, so I can’t do it.

8. I think it was rather discriminating, since they are by nature Koreans and Winner is a Korean artist, so I really wish they would do more activities in Korea. It also annoys me that YG seems to mostly get them Japanese activities.

9. I think the tourist attractions and culture is good, but because of the occupation there are a lot of people who look badly at Japan.

10. Learn about Japan: I learned about Japan from school, news and my family. But more than learning, I learned their views on Japan.

11. A Korean relative of mine lives in Japan

12. No
13. I just know very little. I learned it in school.

14. Yes

15. No

**Miss U**

1. 20 years

2. Gyeonggi-do

3. Catholic

4. University

5. Official Inner Circle

6. Yes

7. Nope

8. Please come to Korea

9. Island country

10. School

11. No

12. No

13. Some words I learned at school

14. No

*15. Blank*
5.2 Inner Circle tweets

Tweets from 08.06.2015 – News released regarding Winner’s 2nd Japan Tour

1. No matter how I think of it I don't understand how he sees us Korean fans..... It makes me mad that in the year since they debuted Winner has had more performances in Japan than Korea, but that they will spend two such important dates in Japan hahaha I don't even have words for this.......

• R: It really puts you off ...it makes me mad in so many ways
• Answer1: Aren’t our boys still rookies? Why is it more difficult to see them in Korea?
• Reply1: They’re rookies, alright…… Hah….. It’s the first time I’m jealous of the overseas fandom

• Reply2: For sure… it really puts you off…. On such important dates, why…? Why not even in our country…? Ah… why….
• Answer2: That’s what I’m saying…. Korean fans aren’t even considered it seems hahaha
2. 한국에서 위너 인지도 올릴 생각은 않고 투어 돌릴 생각만 하고있네 -_-
   • He doesn’t even have thoughts of promoting Winner in Korea, just of sending them on tours

3. 솔직히 위너들도 데뷔할 때 국내팬들이 그렇게 개고생해가면서 팬투표로 이기게 해준거 알렌데 시발 멤버생활에 데뷔기념일까지 섬국에서 한다는거에 미안해 할게 뻔한데 이시발 와이지야 존나 아이들을 키우지마라 시벌것야
   • To be honest even Winner knows that when they debuted it was thanks to the votes and hard word of the fans. F*uck. Even saying sorry about celebrating a member's birthday, even their debut anniversary on the island feels fake. This f*cking YG d*mn it, don't raise idols you a**hole.

4. 위너는 우리가 만든 거 아니에요? 위너 일본 사람들이 만들었어요? @yginncircle
   • Weren't we the ones who made Winner? Did the Japanese make them? @yginncircle

5. 위너는 ☞LocalStorage 국가수입이니만네..,.@앙싸 죄herits 시러
   • But Winner is a Korean artist,.,.@presidencyang hate you

6. 고영 위너 섬국가수 아니라고오..보고싶다..π-π
   • Ugh Winner isn't an island country artist.. I miss them..

7. ㅅㅂ 위너 올해 설날 추석 다 일본에서 보냄ㅋㅋ칸고쿠 냅니다 냅니다 닌جن 닌젠 데쓰 ㅅㅂㅅㅂ
   • F*ck it Winner spent both New Years and Chuseok in Japan haha Korean people no no Japanese people f*ck f*ck

8. 네ㅠㅠ 섬국투어만 하네요ㅠㅠㅠ 위너 한국인서들이 만들어준건데 섬국만 활동시키네요
   • R: 그러게요 왜그런거죠 와이지 일본이좋은가보내여 그렇게 일본이좋으면 자기가가지 위너를해 ㅂㄷㅂㄷ
• A: 마자여 위너는 한국에 좀....
• R: 헤벌한국활동 좀 헤벌
• A: 제발........
• Yeah u_u they'll only do an island tour ;; ;; ;; Even if Winner was made by Korean Inner Circles they are only made to promote in the island country

Reply: Right? Why are they like this I wonder? It seems YG loves Japan. If he loves Japan so much he should just og himself, why send Winner? So so jealous
• Answer: That’s right. Can’t Winner be in Korea…?
• Reply: u_u Please give us Korean promotions
• Answer: Please……..

9. 아니 어떻게 신인이 공백기가 일년을 넘어 위너 아직 신인이라고요양싸야. 섬국은 두번씩이나 하는 콘서트 왜 우리는 못하는데. 우리도 얼굴보고 싶고, 노래불러주는거 듣고싶고, 생일날 생일축하불러주고싶고, 위너되서 고맙다고 하고싶다고
• No, but how can a rookie group be inactive for over a year? President Yang, Winner is still a rookie group. Why does the island country get two concerts and we get none? We also want to see their faces, hear the songs they sing for us, sing birthday songs for them on their birthday and thank them for becoming Winner.

10. 항상 그곳에서 먼저 하니까 의미 있는 날도 우리는 한국에서 함께하지 못하니까 의미있는 날들을 우리 매번 다른곳에 있는 위너를 보게되는것 같아요 헤벌 한국인서는 대체 뭐가요?? 우리뭐냐구요
• Since you always do it first over there it feels like we can never be with them and always see Winner in other places on important days. What does that make Korean Inner Circles?? What exactly are we?

11. 위너 끼부리지마보러갔을때 강승윤이 "내한공연에 오신 여러분 환영합니다" 라고 한거 생각난다 진짜 애들도 우리한테 엄청 미안해하겠지 헤벌 헤벌 헤벌 헤벌
It makes me think of when I went to see Winner's Don't Flirt performance and Kang Seungyoon said that "We're so thankful for those of you who came to this cold performance." Even the members seem really sorry towards us..

12. 한국팬은 팬이 아닌가????? 솔직히 위너를 만들어준건 한국팬들 아니야??? 송훈이랑 승윤이 가장먼저 팬 해준 사람들도 한국사람들 아니나고....

Aren't Korean fans fans as well????? To be honest, wasn't it the Korean fans that made Winner??? Wasn't it Koreans who were fans of Seunghoon and Seungyoon first....

13. 내nown 우리꺼야 위너

• Let go, Winner is ours

14. 해외 팬들은 한국에 있는 우리가 위너 자주 볼 수 있다 생각하겠지 일 수를 다

더해보니 일본이 더많아 할말이 담loggedIn

• It seems international fans always think the fans in Korea can see Winner often, but when you look at it you can see them more often in Japan hahaha ;;;;;;

15. 위너는 한국가수 입니다만 ......... ????????

• Isn’t Winner a Korean artist........ ?????????

16. 위너 좀 한국에 낼둬라

• Let Winner be in Korea

17. 내 생각으로 앨범은 나오는데 일본앨범일수도 있을 듯. 한국컴백은 안할것같아 시기상..

• The way I see it they will release a new album, but it might just be a Japanese album.

It doesn’t seem like they will have a Korean comeback at this time

18. 위너 여권 빼럼 가실 분 구합니다

• I’m gathering people who want to go and steal Winner’s passports
19. 한국에 없어ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ가수들이 박뱅도 그렇고 위너도 그렇고 일본가수를
 좋아하는건지 한국가수를 좋아하는건지ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ
• They’re not in Korea hahahaha It’s the same with artists like Big Bang and Winner. I
don’t know if I like Korean or Japanese artists anymore hahahaha

20. 위너 일본가수를 알겠어 양싸야 훗 훗 훗 훗 헷 헷 내가 헷 안하니까 1025 는 제발..
• You’d think Winner was a Japanese artist, President Yang ;;;;;;; I’m ;; sorry so with
25th of October, please..

21. 아니 근데 위너 일본 투어가 9 월이면 그 전에 신곡을 내주긴 하는 거냐... 설마
신곡도 없이 투어를 할 리는 없잖아! 사사가 콘코쿠는 뒷건은 양싸...
• Wait, so if Winner’s Japan tour starts in September, are they going to give out a new
album first…? There wouldn’t be a point of having a tour if they didn’t give out a
new song! As expected from President Yang: you overlook us…

22. 그래서 위너 한국 컴백은 언제냐?? ㅅㅂ 여튼 노래 활동이 있어서 좋은데 그게 왜
타국인지냐고
So when will Winner have a Korean comeback?? F*ck it. It’s good that they have
singing schedules, but exactly why is it overseas

23. 아 ㄹㅇ 욕 나오네 꼼 금 내가 들은 위너 뉴 스케줄이 리얼이니?
• Ah I really want to curse. Is Winner’s new schedule real?

24. 훗 훗 훗 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 훗 위너 컴백이
나하지 훗 훗 일본 투어 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가 캐릭터가
• ;;;; this d*ckhead ;;;;;;; I really can’t believe him ;;;;; Make Winner have a Korean
comeback ;;;;; s*rew Japan tours ;;;;;;

25. 위너 일본 투어라니 무슨 이런..??..아니야 내가 잡이 덜 깨서 잘못 본 걸 꺼야..양싸가
사람이면 그럴 수 없어..암 그럼그럼..
• Winner Japan tour they say..??.. If I just sleep again it will turn out I read wrong.. If
President Yang is human he wouldn’t do this. Yeah. That’s right..
26. ???????????????????누구....???????? 위너??일본..어?????????무슨
투어요...????????

• ???????????????????Who....???????? Winner??Japan..Oh?????????What
Tour...????????

27. 일본의 인클루는 본에 따른 투어요가 죄송하지도 못한가요. 다음 투쇼도 투쇼 등 일본의 인클루를 생각해두고 다시 투쇼를 해주려고 했어요. 또 일본의 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼를...계속할까요? 또 일본의 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼로 투쇼를...계속할까요? 또 일본의 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼로 투쇼를...계속할까요? 또 일본의 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼를 투쇼로 투쇼로 투쇼를...계속할까요?

• R: ですね共感

• A: もう胸が痛いです. この男に考えてるの

• R: やばいですよね？ほんとよくわかりませんねこの人。なんでアルバムは出るんでしょうかね？

• R: マジでほんとそう思います（:_;）（:_;）（:_;）

• A: ずっと嬉しいけど…彼らはやっぱり韓国のアーティストだから…ずっと嬉しいですね；_；；_；

• R: 本に感謝だよね

• うぃのツアー決まった時何だか、「ななちゃん良かったね♥」って思ったw

やっと5人ってうぃの見れるね

• Japanese Inner Circles are really blessed ;; I thought they would have a national tour next, but instead it is another Japanese one ;; I can't even be thankful ;; I have mixed feelings when I think of the Korean fans. They keep waiting and waiting... It's made me think "Why is it Japan again?" ;; I really don't think it is right for Japanese fans to be blessed with this.

Reply1: For sure. Sympathy.
**Answer1:** My chest hurts. What is this man thinking?

**Reply1:** Right? I really don't understand him. Makes you wonder if there will be an album released, no?

**Tweets from 09.06.2015**

28. 극한 직업=이너서클(위너 우리도 보고싶다)

   Extreme job=Inner Circle (We want to see Winner too)

**Tweets from 2016**

   - They won’t sing in Japanese this time? D*mn great

30. 왜 D구역은 많은데 C구역 양도는 하나도 없니 일본에 던졌니
   - Why are there so many who are giving up their tickets in the D-section but not in the C-section? Did they all go to Japan? – 11.02.2016 (Tickets for Winner's first Korean tickets are released)