

Governing the 24-Hour City: The Multi-Scalar Regulation of Seoul's Night-Time Economy

Kai McGovern

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Planning

University of Washington
2026

Committee:
Christine Bae
Joaquín Herranz

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
Urban Design and Planning

©Copyright 2026
Kai McGovern

University of Washington

Abstract

Governing the 24-Hour City: The Multi-Scalar Regulation of Seoul's Night-Time Economy

Kai McGovern

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Christine Bae
Department of Urban Design and Planning

This thesis examines how Seoul governs the night-time economy (NTE) through a multi-scalar system of regulation comprising national, metropolitan, and district governmental actors.

Previous research regarding the 24-hour city has largely been focused on the European and North American context, with limited exploration of NTE governance within Asian cities, particularly from a regulatory and institutional perspective. Using a qualitative content analysis with Seoul as a case study, this research analyzes legislation, policy documents, and government publications as primary indicators of regulatory themes in NTE governance. Four key variables of NTE governance are examined: the provision of overnight transportation, night-time commercial activation, the regulation of the alcohol and music industries, and nuisance control. Findings indicate that Seoul's NTE is governed through a decentralized system, featuring frameworks of delegated authority established by the national government, while the Seoul Metropolitan Government provides key infrastructure and city-wide initiatives with localized district support in implementation and enforcement. Across all levels of government, temporal regulation is generally permissive, with intervention occurring primarily in response to standards violations or excessive nuisance impacts. This study argues that Seoul represents a distinct model of 24-hour governance characterized by infrastructural enablement, delegated flexibility, and responsive enforcement rather than centralized temporal restriction.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisory committee chair, Professor Christine Bae, for her continuous support for this project since its inception in the Fall of 2025. Without her expertise, encouragement, communication, and leadership this research would be utterly incomplete. Her mega-city planning course and the research inspired from it have left a permanent imprint on my professional and academic career, and I am eternally grateful.

I would also like to sincerely thank Professor Joaquín Herranz Jr. for his instrumental guidance, transforming young and wild ambitions into pointed, targeted, and actionable research that I am deeply proud of. Professor Herranz took on the role of supervisory committee member before we had ever even had a class together, and I greatly appreciate his willingness to undertake this research with me.

Additionally, I would like to extend my sincere thankfulness to the Department of Urban Design and Planning within the College of Built Environments at the University of Washington. Without the impactful instruction from both faculty and staff, I would not have become the student I am today or the practitioner that I will be in the future.

I would be remiss in not mentioning my long-time collaborators and dear friends throughout my duration within the program: Wesley Ahumada Newhart, Iona Cich, Duncan Fields, Noal Leonetti, and Oliver Qian.

Lastly, none of this would be possible without the constant and unconditional support of Tate Sterling and my family. This research, let alone this degree, would not have been possible without you.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Acronyms and Agencies.....	viii
List of Korean Laws.....	ix
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	5
Defining the 24-Hour City and the Night-Time Economy.....	5
Key Variables for Regulating the Night-Time Economy.....	8
Overnight Transportation.....	8
Night-Time Commercial Activation.....	9
Alcohol and Music Regulation.....	10
Nuisance Control.....	12
Nightlife within Asia: Night Markets.....	13
Nightlife in Seoul.....	16
A Gap in the Literature.....	19
Methodology.....	19
Research Design and Case Selection.....	19
Analytical Framework.....	20
Data Collection.....	21
Analytical Method.....	23
Results.....	25
National Government.....	25
Overnight Transportation.....	25
Commercial Activation.....	26
Alcohol and Music Regulation.....	29
Nuisance Control.....	32
The Local Autonomy Act.....	35
Seoul Metropolitan Government.....	36
Overnight Transportation.....	37
Commercial Activation.....	40
Alcohol and Music Regulation.....	42
Nuisance Control.....	43
Gu-Level Administration.....	46
Overnight Transportation.....	46

Commercial Activation.....	47
Alcohol and Music Regulation.....	48
Nuisance Control.....	49
The Korean Federation of Micro Enterprises.....	50
Discussion.....	56
Themes of Multi-Scalar Governance of the Night-Time Economy.....	57
Regulatory Themes of Overnight Transportation.....	58
Regulatory Themes of Night-Time Commercial Activation.....	60
Regulatory Themes of Alcohol and Music Regulation.....	63
Regulatory Themes of Nuisance Control.....	66
Potential Best Practices in Temporal Governance.....	69
Limitations of Research.....	71
Conclusion.....	73
Further Research.....	78
References.....	80

List of Figures

Figure 1. Attractiveness Score by Dong Unit.....	17
Figure 2. Seoul Metro Map.....	38
Figure 3. The Regulatory Framework of Seoul's Night-Time Economy.....	55

List of Acronyms and Agencies

DIDA: Distribution Industry Development Act.....	27
FSA: Food Sanitation Act.....	27
Gen MZ: Millennials and Generation Z.....	16
KFME: Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises.....	50
KLRI: Korea Legislation Research Institute.....	21
KORAIL: Korea Railroad Corporation.....	37
Korea Law Translation Center: Government-affiliated legal translation organization.....	21
Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism: National ministry referenced in music-industry regulation.....	31
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport: National ministry responsible for transportation infrastructure.....	26
MoGL: Ministry of Government Legislation.....	21
National Assembly: Legislative body of the Republic of Korea.....	20
NTE: Night-Time Economy.....	2
NVCA: Noise and Vibration Control Act.....	32
Owl Bus: Seoul Metropolitan Government overnight bus service.....	39
Seoul Metro: Seoul subway operating authority.....	37
Seoul Metropolitan Government: Metropolitan government of Seoul.....	4
Seoul Metropolitan Rapid Transit Corporation: Former subway operating agency that has since merged into Seoul Metro.....	37
Seoul Metropolitan Subway Corporation: Former subway operating agency that has since merged into Seoul Metro.....	37
SMG: Seoul Metropolitan Government.....	4

List of Korean Laws

English Title	Korean Title	Romanization
Road Act	도로법	Doro beop
Road Traffic Act	도로교통법	Dorogyotong beop
Passenger Transportation Service Act	여객자동차 운수사업법	Yeogaekjadongcha Unsusaep beop
Food Sanitation Act	식품위생법	Sikpum Wisaeng beop
Distribution Industry Development Act	유통산업발전법	Yutongsaneop Baljeon beop
Noise and Vibration Control Act	소음·진동관리법	Soeum·Jindong Gwanri beop
Music Industry Promotion Act	음악산업진흥에 관한 법률	Eumaksan-eop Jinheung-e Gwanhan Beomnyul
Public Performance Act	공연법	Gongyeonbeop
Liquor Tax Act	주세법	Jusebeop

Governing the 24-Hour City: The Multi-Scalar Regulation of Seoul's Night-Time Economy

Introduction

Municipal governments and the urban planners therein serve a crucial role in the experiences provided by the built environment for populations of every size. Whether it be through grand features of the city such as comprehensive or transit plans, or the minute details like form requirements and permitted uses within municipal code, municipalities across the globe exert substantial control over the spatial aspect of a city. However, the spatial elements often take precedence over another dimension of every city that is routinely overlooked but ever-present, the temporal aspect.

The temporal dimension of governmental regulation can often be overlooked due to the functionally implicit nature of time in policies. Temporal governance regulations such as hours of permitted use in zoning, commercial hour restrictions, and transportation schedules are often long-since established, and form the foundation in which other regulations are produced. This relationship between time and direct regulation then informs the temporal experience of users in the built environment. For example, a state may have a universal “last call” hour in which no sale of alcohol may take place after 2am. Alternatively, a city may alter nuisance laws to

discourage activity at night to promote order or silence. Both of these policies would directly impact the value or liberties placed upon nightly cultural or economic activities. Critically, these types of foundational policies can be implemented at any level of government depending on the structure, with many temporal environments being impacted at every level of government whether it be national, metropolitan, or district authority.

Many municipalities focus design and regulatory efforts between the busiest hours of the day, surrounding the working hours of 9am-5pm. However, in America, authors Hugh Kelly and Emil Malizia note that “...18-hour cities were emerging as the top markets to watch,” largely in part due to a lower cost of living despite not being a “low-cost [city],” (Kelly & Malizia, 2017, p. 88). Relevant examples of the 18-hour city include Seattle, Austin, Denver, and Portland, covering a broad spectrum of city archetypes. These 18-hour cities expand upon the 9-5 city by extending activity into the night, with venues, restaurants, and bars continuing service later towards midnight. However, a key component of the 18-hour city is the fact that at some point during the night, major entities must close shop, whether it be vital transportation networks like subways and niche bus routes, or grocery stores and locations that can serve a hot meal. For many 18-hour cities across the globe, the built environment from the hours of 12am to 6am is often altered and lessened in terms of opportunity, vibrancy, and service afforded to residents.

While the 18-hour city may be on the rise for many parts of America, a city model that expands even further into the night has been in circulation as a formalized practice for decades: the 24-hour city. The 24-hour city functions as a model in which municipal governments view the night as an equal extension of the day, with both essential and cultural services receiving focus during the night. This concept of these city functions during the night can often be referred to as the “Night-Time Economy (NTE),” with some noting an early practice of government

efforts in bolstering NTE to 1970s-1980s Rome during the period of “L’Estate Romana.” This time frame was marked by considerable effort shown by politicians and officials alike to empower the night through festivals and activities, led by politician Renato Nicolini (Shaw, 2013, p. 89). While the sale and consumption of alcohol and other leisure services play a pivotal role within the NTE, essential employment services surrounding these economic sectors and other crucial night-time sectors like construction and healthcare are also considered.

Following this period within Rome, the 24-hour city model became a more prevalent research topic and sought after model, especially within London and the United Kingdom (Smeds et al., 2020; Hadfield et al., 2009; Tiesdell & Slater, 2006). However, the 24-hour city as a real world phenomenon is not regionally bound to Europe and North America, and examples of “24/7 environments” can be found all over the world, identified by authors Wendy Tan and Ina Klaasen as areas with core emergency services, civil emergency services, basic services, support services, and consumer services provided, whether through necessity or demand (Tan & Klaasen, 2007). Yet, despite the amount of literature pertaining to the 24-hour city, most of the cities referenced are found in Europe or North America, marking a significant gap in knowledge within other continents’ relationships with the 24-hour city, particularly from a document-based legislative and regulatory perspective.

With the nature of temporal governance and the history of temporal models of cities in mind, it becomes critical to emphasize the role of government regulations in establishing how a city functions through an entire day. The presence or lack thereof of services or liberties is a direct result of how regulatory regimes are applied throughout the entire structure of government organizations. Additionally, as temporal governance is influenced at every level of government from national to city district level policy, the entire governmental regime must be analyzed as a

core. Whether a city is a 9-5, 18-, or 24-hour city is a direct reflection of the policies in place that encourage or discourage usage of the city through the day and night, and the ability for a city to transition from one temporal framework to another rests largely on the government's ability to reflect the will of the city in policy. Rather than just viewing the temporal governance of a municipality at the city-level, this thesis asserts the need to expand analysis through multiple scales of government to identify key policies and the distribution of regulatory power.

To explore this gap in research of the 24-hour city, particularly in Asia, a document-based case study of Seoul will be conducted. As the capital of South Korea with a country-leading population of nearly 10 million, Seoul presents itself as a 24-hour city in both marketing and function while functioning as the seat of power and keystone city for the entire country. With tourist guides published by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) advertising Seoul as a “city that never sleeps,” SMG emphasizes effective transportation and eateries operating through the night (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2014). Additionally, author Seo Young Park notes that the tourism and recreational industries are joined by industry through the night, with Dongdaemun market serving as an environment filled with night-time entertainment, service industry, and a bustling garment wholesale market taking place simultaneously (Park, 2021). With both stated governmental intention and real-world evidence, Seoul provides an appropriate setting to analyze the regulatory conditions allowing for a modern 24-hour city within Asia.

Due to Seoul’s status as a prominent 24-hour city within Asia, this research seeks to address the question of how the night-time economy is regulated across all governance levels within Seoul, and how this distribution shapes the NTE. To accomplish this, national, municipal, and quasi-governmental regulatory frameworks and influences will be evaluated in terms of their

impact on four key NTE variables identified in the literature: overnight transportation, night-time commercial activity, alcohol and music regulation, and the structure of nuisance control.

Literature Review

Defining the 24-Hour City and the Night-Time Economy

When defining what a 24-hour city may look like, it depends on what perspective is being engaged. For example, in the field of real estate, Hugh Kelly and Emil Malizia utilized five criteria of quantifiable statistics to distinguish 24-hour cities for property performance analysis. The criteria chosen were as follows: “(1) full-service drug stores open 24 hours a day within 10 miles of the city center; (2) city population density; (3) regional distinctiveness score on the Markusen-Schrock (2006) scale; (4) FBI “index crimes” per 100,000 of city population; and (5) percentage of workers using non-auto transportation for their journey to work,” (Kelly & Malizia, 2017, p. 88). Within the planning perspective, several of these criteria are particularly indicative, with the 24-hour drug stores and transportation metrics being directly impacted by municipal regulations through permitted hours of operation and levels of service, respectively.

In contrast, authors Wendy Tan and Ina Klaasen view the 24-hour city through the perspective of consumer/resident experience. To define the 24-hour city temporally, Tan and Klaasen outline 24-hour cities as those with businesses and activities available that span four key time-spans: Conventional (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday), Extended (9am-10pm, Monday-Friday, weekends, and public holidays), Extended Plus (8am-2am, Monday-Friday, weekends, and public holidays), and Unusual (12am-6am, Monday-Friday, weekends, and public holidays) (Tan & Klaasen, 2007, p. 703). These time-spans of service are then bolstered by the introduction of

the functions previously mentioned, including those that are necessary or required through demand. These functions include core emergency services (such as police and fire), civil emergency services (public utility and infrastructure), basic services (train stations and healthcare), support services (financial and business services, security), and consumer services (retail, hotels, food and beverage, leisure, and recreational services). It is the recognition of both time-spans and the functions found therein that the working definition of a 24-hour city can be reached. When considering regulation, it will be strategies that directly affect these factors that will be considered variables within this proposal. This definition guides how this proposal will conceptualize the 24-hour city.

With a working definition of the 24-hour city established, early NTE literature explains how the night became a planning object subject to regulation. Manchester, UK-based Andy Lovatt and Justin O'Connor explore the rise of the NTE within "Cities and the Night-time Economy," in which the rise of the cultural focus on night-time activation and city centers re-emerged in the 1980s. When evaluating this rising emphasis on the NTE, four aspects were particularly interesting. The first aspect describes the emergence of "city-to-city competitiveness at a national and supranational level where the management of the local image was deemed to be crucial in an increasingly globalised market-place," (Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995, p. 128). With this shift, city image became closer aligned with vibrancy and cultural opportunity, and cultural sectors that originally existed within the periphery of city planning were now placed in a focal point, with rising policies to show for it. This leads to the second aspect, in which city centers began to see a physical reorganization away from production and industry, and towards consumption. With this shift, city centers were pressured to loosen regulations to allow for more market driven businesses to take hold within areas once dominated by industrial production.

New businesses related to both the distribution and marketing sides of the consumption economy emerged, and the NTE began to appear in the cores of cities (Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995, p. 128).

This then spurred on the third aspect of interest: a shift in what it meant to experience urbanity. Originally, cities offered business through places of reliable employment and production, yet with a rising economy of consumption, cities began to take form of pillars of socialization and culture. Planners and regulators were then pressured to place heavier emphasis on leisure and “play.” Simultaneously, not only were these markets gaining traction and favor in existence within the city, but their centrality became a heavier prioritization to further facilitate the “strolling and idle socializing,” (Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995, p. 128).

Finally, this brings about the final shift and aspect, which saw local planners and designers grappling with the new culture of city life, and as a result, grappling with the new form of cultural policy and local economy. Thus, the NTE emerged as one such lever that planners, designers, and regulators alike were now forced to consider heavily (Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995, p. 129).

For the purposes of this research and evaluating municipal regulations, a 24-hour city will be defined closer to how Tan and Klaasen approach the topic, with operationalization of this city being influenced directly by Lovatt and O'Connor's contributions. A 24-hour city is a city that maintains the provision of both cultural and essential services throughout all time-spans of the day, including the “unusual” span of 12am-6am. Additionally, the sector in which planners and regulators shall impact the status of being a 24-hour city most directly shall be through the night-time economy.

Key Variables for Regulating the Night-Time Economy

With a definition of a 24-hour city and the area of regulation in which it is impacted, it becomes necessary to find which regulatory sectors specifically alter the NTE. A review of the literature reveals four common regulatory levers that have already been utilized within the NTE: the provision of transportation, commercial regulations, the licensing of alcohol and music, and the implementation of nuisance laws. The first regulatory lever examined within literature is the role of transportation during the night.

Overnight Transportation

Authors Emilia Smeds, Enora Robin, and Jenny McArthur first examine the need for effective public transportation at night through a justice lens in “Night-time mobilities and (in)justice in London: Constructing mobile subjects and the politics of difference in policy-making,” (Smeds et al., 2020). One of the key facets of this literature is the identification of “nocturnal mobile subjects,” including consumers (represented through domestic and international visitors, and residents enjoying city amenities) and workers (including hospitality, transport, NHS, technician/maintenance, cleaning, police, and administrative sectors of employment) (Smeds et al., 2020, p. 8). However, these groups also have differing identities and accessibility levels, with women, low income, LGBT, younger people (24 and younger), older people (65 and older), and the disabled all utilizing the same public transport system both in the day and night. However, while the authors do find evidence of London regulations taking these identities into account, “...night-time policy does not deliver actual transport investment to match this (limited) recognition of differentiated needs in policy discourse, and fails to deliver on distributive justice in practice,” (Smeds et al., 2020, p. 8). Thus, while the NTE is directly

impacted by transportation to distribute employees of the NTE-relevant businesses, it is also transportation that fosters inclusivity of the NTE to those with mobility concerns, whether they be safety or accessibility derived.

Bolstering this line of thinking are authors Anna Plyushteva and Kobe Boussauw, who evaluate a new night-oriented bus route being introduced in Sofia, Bulgaria. Important notes from this article state that “new transport service at night does not in itself promote transport equity. Instead the organisational, spatial, economic, and social specifics of the service... shape its uneven impact,” (Plyushteva & Boussauw, 2020). This conclusion was drawn from the assertions that distances and destinations impact women more so than men, as women are likely to travel shorter distances in part due to cost and safety. Therefore, the accessibility, spatial organization, and prevalence of night-time transportation suggest a lever within regulating the NTE worth studying.

Night-Time Commercial Activation

In addition to transportation, authors Steven Tiesdell and Anne-Michelle Slater introduce the importance of time strategies within regulating the NTE in their work, “Calling Time: Managing Activities in Space and Time in the Evening/Night-time Economy,” (Tiesdell & Slater, 2006). Time strategies are presented as reflections of regulators’ position towards the “disorder” that can come about as the night progresses within populated cities. These time strategies of regulation include imposing Common Closing Hour (typically 11pm), Common or Late Closing Hour (typically after midnight with expectation that premises will close prior to this), Staggered Closing Hours (where zoning designates differing closing hours by area), and Open Hours (where each business operator decides when to close) (Tiesdell & Slater, 2006, pp.150-151). Each of these strategies bears its own strengths and weaknesses, often circulating around the

mass-release of consumers after businesses are mandated to close and the consistency of regulating power. It is through the last time strategy of Open Hours that a 24-hour city is possible, as the NTE is regulated so that businesses who find viability to remain open during aforementioned unusual hours may do so. With this in mind, the temporal aspect of commercial activation and regulation must be considered when examining regulatory implementation regimes within this proposal.

When comparing the literature guiding the levers of both transportation and commercial activation, the key throughline is the provision of liberty and autonomy to both consumers and businesses across the NTE. Transportation acts as a direct means of accessibility to the NTE, both in terms of physical delivery to points of interest as well as the equity in which consumers may travel safely and dignified across all hours of the day or night. Similarly, commercial activation in a 24-hour city is heavily dependent on the permittance of self governance of businesses in regards to closing hours and night-time business practices. Any governing body regardless of scale that places restrictions on hours of operation is shaping and possibly diminishing both economic and cultural potential within the NTE, and the simple decision of what closing hour regime to employ as Tiesdell and Slater describe is crucial for establishing necessary liberties. However, while the two aforementioned levers are focused on the provision of freedoms within the NTE, the following levers are directly related to the restriction of activity within the NTE.

Alcohol and Music Regulation

With the leisure industry being a dominant commercial sector within the NTE, regulations pertaining to the licensing of certain elements like alcohol and music venues are likely to be considered by regulators. Marion Roberts details the expansion of the alcohol

industry within the UK during the 1990s as a time period of “relentless expansion of night-life,” with one example being a 243% increase in the capacity of licensed premises in Manchester city center in just three years. However, with this expansion came challenges of management, with the viability of cultural areas being threatened. In one case cited by Roberts, the Brick Lane neighborhood became subject to a dramatic increase in late night restaurants, which petitioned for licensing for alcohol sales later into the night. With fears of drunken patrons crowding the streets, the local residents petitioned for these licenses to be withheld, with the petition being honored (Roberts, 2006, p. 333). With alcohol sales and night-time activity on the rise in the UK, it became increasingly clear that licensing of these activities would become crucial to regulating the NTE.

Following this period of expansion, authors Phil Hadfield, Stuart Lister, and Peter Traynor detail a crucial period of alcohol legislation within the United Kingdom in “‘This Town’s a Different Town Today’: Policing and Regulating the Night-Time Economy,” (Hadfield et al. 2009). Between the years of 2004 and 2007, the UK enacted several campaigns with the intention of tightening regulations for the sale of alcoholic beverages, with highlights being those that seek to prevent the sales to underage and already-inebriated consumers. These campaigns were largely implemented with the rise of police power, but also introduced the Licensing Act of 2003. This act, along with additional sections within, granted the ability for licensing authorities to specify how premises will be run, conduct formal reviews of practices, and provides power for the police to close establishments for both actual and “anticipated” disorder or “noise-related nuisance,” (Hadfield et al., 2009, p. 469). With this act in place, NTE regulating officials were now able to directly factor the sale of alcohol into the regimes of implementation, with the

loosening or heightening of restrictions becoming a crucial lever for boosting economic activity or limiting nuisances.

Nuisance Control

One common thread throughout these levers is the general concept of limiting nuisances through deliberate regulations. Whether it is augmenting the transportation system to safely and efficiently accommodate more consumers and workers during the night, staggering closing hours to limit disorder, or restricting licenses of disruptive activities like alcohol sales and consumption, the externalities of nuisances are a common consideration in regulatory regimes. This facet has become such a key point that authors Andreina Seijas and Mirik Milan Gelders detail a newer trend within city governance, the inclusion of a new official titled the “night mayor.” While still an uncommon position only present in tens of cities at the time of publishing, the night mayor is described as “[an individual] selected by cities to act as a liaison between nightlife establishments, citizens, and local governments...[who are] often updating nocturnal ‘software’, or the laws and regulations that facilitate activity and minimize nuisance at night,” (Seijas & Gelders, 2021). Mitigating these nuisances are often addressed by night mayors through the usage of curfews or hours of operation, as previously discussed. One official in Amsterdam, the equivalent of a night mayor, implemented a policy within Rembrandtplein, described as a major night-life district, that saw 20 officials patrolling the streets on Friday and Saturday nights to increase ease and decrease both crime and nuisance. After only three years of this policy, nuisance reports had decreased by 40% while crime decreased by 20% (Seijas & Gelders, 2021). While it is already commonplace for nuisance laws to exist within municipal legislature, nuisances associated with the NTE have been prioritized to the point of the creation of new official positions, marking nuisance law enforcement as the final variable for study for

this research. In cities without a centralized night mayor, like Seoul, the application of these nuisance laws becomes an even larger consideration, as the enforcement of nuisance control may be distributed to a wider array of agencies and officials.

In summary, literature suggests a common set of variables in which municipalities have already begun regulating the NTE. As a result, this research will measure Seoul's regulation of the NTE through these four variables.

Nightlife within Asia: Night Markets

With the isolation and establishment of four key variables of study, the focus now shifts to examining a key element of nightlife within Asia, the night market. While previous literature examining the night-time economy within Europe places heavy emphasis on bars and nightclubs as predominant sources of nightlife, Asia presents another outlet of culture at night, the night market. These markets provide direct sources of cultural and economic opportunities at night, such as the Dongdaemun market within Seoul, which features food, entertainment, and a wholesale garment market, all occurring simultaneously through the night (Park, 2021). While Seoul hosts numerous night markets across the city, it is important to note that the prevalence of night markets is widespread throughout both Southeast and East Asia, with Bangkok's Talad Rod Fai markets in Thailand and the informal "hawkers" in Hong Kong serving as key examples.

While night markets present nightlife opportunities for consumers, small businesses and self-employed operators of shops and stalls gain the ability to market goods and services without maintaining permanent storefronts. In both Thailand and Hong Kong, night markets are crucial to the formation of the "informal economy," with approximately 300,000 street vendors represented in Bangkok alone while Hong Kong's "hawkers" operate in collectives

encompassing dozens of vendors scattered across the urban landscape (Chan, 2018, p. 439; Tan & Chan, 2024, p. 413). In addition to providing economic opportunities, night markets also serve as “...places for recreation and socialization,” which bolsters both the need and survivability of these community spaces (Tan & Chan, 2024, p. 414). When examined as a holistic business within the night-time economy, the night markets of Asia provide consumers with ample opportunity for consumption, business, socializing, and recreation all within a single location. Given the importance of these night markets to the night-time economy, how governments enable or restrict this nightlife activity directly contributes to NTE governance regimes broadly.

While the benefits of these night markets are numerous, governments must also contend with the potential negative externalities of such populated nightlife venues, bringing about night market-specific NTE governance. In the case of Bangkok’s Talad Rod Fai markets, government officials have attempted to control the night markets through charging individual vendors with the “illegal [occupation] of public spaces and [contribution] to traffic congestion, overcrowding, and safety issues along busy roads and their sidewalks,” (Tan & Chan, 2024, p. 413). Meanwhile, the Hong Kong government has implemented an individual “Hawker Control Team” tasked with the “...daily decisions regarding whether, when, and where unlicensed hawkers can hawk,” (Chan, 2018, p. 439). Both of these regulatory systems introduce NTE governance to their respective communities through different strategies, with Bangkok employing response code enforcement while Hong Kong has established a unique, proactive taskforce assigned specifically to the handling of informal street vendors.

While night markets inherently bring about the need to control negative externalities that arise from the economic and social activity within, it remains in the best interest of governments

to coexist with these night-time venues due to the creation of identity and cultural value. Within the Talad Rod Fai markets of Bangkok, “tourism and profitability” are directly cited as being priorities for both location and business decisions moving forward, marking a critical distinction between a simple night-time business like a bar or cafe that relies on local patronage and the marketable destinations that night markets have become (Tan & Chan, 2024, pp. 422-423). In fact, the Talad Rod Fai markets have specialized in tourist attraction to the point that “the market has increasingly diminished its focus on the sale of vintage goods and the flea-market concept that it was once known for, as such goods are simply not ‘tourist-friendly’,” marking an elevation of this night market franchise from night-time business to cultural and tourist phenomenon (Tan & Chan, 2024, p. 423).

The prevalence of night markets within Asia do not just denote a common business practice found in the NTE, but rather signals that Asian countries have been engaging with the night-time economy for as long as this business practice has endured. The prevalence of night markets holds significant potential for economic, social, cultural, and tourism opportunities, but necessitates government participation in the control over negative externalities associated with the increase in night-time activity. While the Asian night-time economy is not solely composed of night markets, the recognition of these landmarks is imperative for understanding existing relationships between Asian governments and respective NTEs. These broader patterns of economic activation, tourism promotion, and regulatory intervention provide useful context for understanding the governance of the night-time economy within Seoul.

Nightlife in Seoul

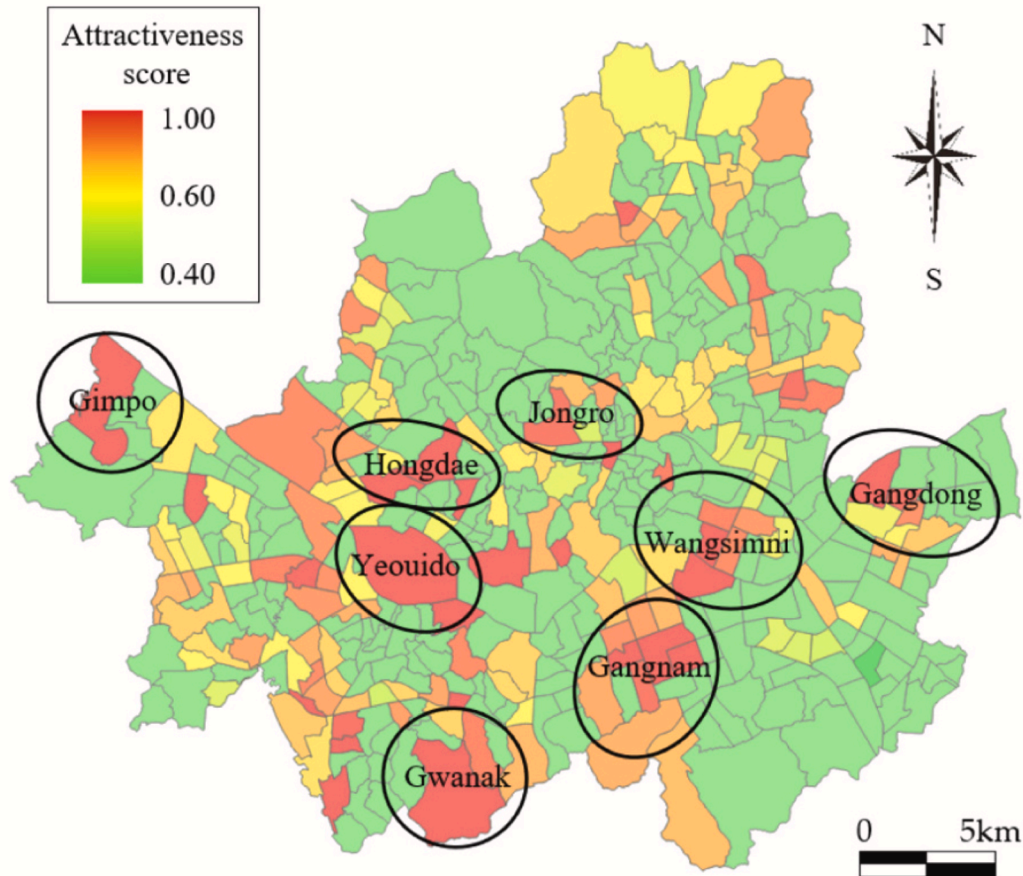
In Lee and Lee's "Evaluation of urban nightlife attractiveness for Millennials and Generation Z," the nightlife of Seoul is evaluated on a spatial and behavioral basis through the lens of a dominant consumer base: Millennials and Generation Z (jointly referred to as Gen MZ) (Lee & Lee, 2024, p. 1). Gen MZ acts as "primary leaders" of nightlife activities, largely due to a heightened expression of identity and value placed on experiences available at night. With these traits, Gen MZ have been found to spend more money on goods and services such as "...luxury fashion, five star hotels, fine dining, and clubbing all night," with a nightly average of money spent around 74,562 KRW (approximately \$57.40) (Lee & Lee, 2024, p. 1). With these younger generations acting as the primary users and supporters of the NTE, a clearer understanding of the current organization of Seoul's nightscape could be established.

Through the usage of publicly available government sourced data, 162 dongs (or neighborhoods) were evaluated for attractiveness based on the amount of floating population of Gen MZ and their duration of stay in comparison to the abundance of nightlife amenities and businesses present (Lee & Lee, 2024, pp. 3-5). This method would then produce an attractiveness score between 0.00 and 1.00, with the most attractive hotspots in Seoul receiving a 1.00, and dongs devoid of any nightlife at all would cluster closer to 0. From this study, 22 dongs received a maximum score of 1.00, including Gangnam, Gimpo, Hongdae, Jongro, Yeouido, Wangsimni, Gangdong, and Gwanak. An important point of note is that even this subset of top performing dongs cover a significant spatial distribution across Seoul, with no exceedingly obvious centralized nightlife in Seoul (Figure 1). Rather, it appears that Seoul's nightlife is polycentric in nature, demonstrating an abundance of choice in nightlife through

ground truthed data based on current usage in what the authors call an “optimal frontier” (Lee & Lee, 2024, pp. 5-7).

Figure 1

Attractiveness Score by Dong Unit



Note. Map of Seoul dongs featuring graduated color grading based on recorded Attractiveness Score, with the 8 highest scoring dongs featured (Lee & Lee, 2024, p. 5).

Interestingly, outside of these top performing dongs, the average attractiveness score across all studied dongs was 0.87, a relatively high performance for a sample size of 162 dongs. From this average, this study suggests that a 13% increase of nightlife output from an average dong would be enough to reach the maximum attractiveness score for the city. Conversely, the

bottom 22 dongs received an average score of 0.64, with the lowest performing dong receiving a score of 0.39 (Lee & Lee, 2024, pp. 5-6). These lower scoring areas were always located further away from the “optimal frontier,” but hold “potential for growth and development, increasing [the] attractiveness score,” (Lee & Lee, 2024, p. 6).

In the discussion and analysis of these findings, the authors make an important note that these hotspots are not created by chance, and that a recently established hotspot of “Gangnam Rodeo Street” is the product of deliberate efforts to increase nightlife capacity. These efforts include increased lighting fixtures and a cultivation of diverse night-time businesses including “...bars, clubs, karaoke, and cafes... providing Gen MZ with the opportunity to engage in diverse nightlife activities within a single location,” (Lee & Lee, 2024, p. 8).

Through this study, Lee and Lee demonstrate a clear perspective on the nightlife within Seoul through empirical analysis. From the attractiveness scores of studied dongs, Seoul appears to not only have a populated nightlife as of 2023, but also a rich spatial distribution of nightlife hotspots. When combined with the internal marketing of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul is presented as a nightlife-driven city in both ideals and results, offering a suitable case study when examining 24-hour cities within Asia.

While Lee and Lee portray Seoul as a socially nightlife-oriented city, there still persists limited discussion of the regulatory levers needed to foster this culture. The authors gesture to potential for further development of nightlife in the built environment, as well as a case study in Gangnam to show what recent efforts have produced, yet the roles of multi-scalar government are still ambiguous. While this empirical research is beneficial for understanding consumer behavior within Seoul, an equal richness of analysis of the regulatory regimes influencing this behavior is necessary.

A Gap in the Literature

Throughout the literature reviewed thus far, a key gap in understanding the role of temporal governance in Asian cities can be identified. In both the establishment of a definition for a 24-hour city and justification for researched variables, guiding literature is largely based in Europe, with little to no seminal text regarding the 24-hour city from the Asian perspective. Additionally, the relationship between governments across the hierarchy of regulation is underrepresented, omitting exploration into regulatory regimes as a multi-scalar effort. Moreso, the literature available concerning the nightlife of Seoul approaches the concept from an empirical and social perspective, with no distinct analysis on the effects of regulations on studied dongs. Thus, a clear contribution to existing literature that focuses on the multi-scalar effect of temporal governance in Asian cities is identified, which this research seeks to develop.

Methodology

Research Design and Case Selection

This research conducted a qualitative analysis of the relationship between multi-scalar governance and the NTE through a case study in Seoul. Seoul has been selected due to its status as a prominent 24-hour city through satisfaction of a literature-based definition, self identification via government advertising and publication, and empirical demonstration through consumer behavior and NTE distribution. As the capital and most populated city within South Korea, Seoul also acts as a leading city for the nation, housing the National Assembly and serving as the source of all national policy. Due to the political, social, and cultural prominence,

Seoul acts as a purposeful environment to evaluate regulatory regimes from the top of the governmental hierarchy to the lowest level of quasi-governmental representation.

Analytical Framework

This study utilizes a hybrid deductive-inductive qualitative content analysis as the core methodological framework. While qualitative content analysis guides how data is synthesized for findings, the hybrid deductive-inductive approach creates a predefined structure in which data will be categorized while still maintaining opportunities for unexpected or emerging concepts.

Given that the primary units of analysis presented within this case study are written legislation and policy, qualitative content analysis facilitates the interpretive coding of this data for themes and concepts. In addition to document-based qualitative analysis, informational interviews with credible governmental or quasi-governmental actors are employed where necessary to gain supplemental perspective on regulations and trends impacting the NTE.

Prior to data collection, four key variables of government influence have been established: the provision of transportation, presence of commercial activation, approach to alcohol and music licensing, and the application of nuisance control. These four categories have been derived from existing literature revolving around the NTE, and function as the core analytical framework in which this research has been conducted. In the event that an emergent or Seoul-specific variable is discovered through this process, it will be elevated to the same relevance as the predetermined variables of study.

It is important to note that within this research both the presence and absence of direct governmental influence on regulating the NTE are viewed as equally valid. In practice, a lack of

government mandated closing hours is inherently supporting “Open Hours” closing times in function. Thus, for all variables of study the direct governance or lack thereof on the NTE is incorporated into final results.

Data Collection

The primary data collected in this study are published legal documents in the form of policy or legislation, including acts, statutes, laws, and ordinances. These documents are prioritized due to written regulations demonstrating intention of governance. While the application of these regulations is considered and evaluated, discrepancies in enforcement of these regulations may vary across the nested jurisdictions of the studied city. Therefore, intention will be derived from written legislation while understanding the regulatory effect will be bolstered through supplemental content regarding application.

In the case study of Seoul, translated documents from Korean to English have only been sourced from government-sponsored outlets to ensure integrity of translation. These sources include the South Korean Ministry of Government Legislation (MoGL), Seoul Metropolitan Government, Korea Legislation Research Institute (KLRI), the Korea Law Translation Center (also affiliated with KLRI), and any directly gov-affiliated website that offers direct translation to English (Ministry of Government Legislation, n.d.; Korea Legislation Research Institute, n.d.; Korea Law Translation Center, n.d.). The necessity of using only government-sponsored outlets whenever possible is a reflection of inaccuracies and misinterpretations that may arise from manual translation. When regulations often rely on extremely specific or particular language, centering research on agreed upon translations by the government will limit false data collection due to mistranslations.

Policies studied will be selected on the basis of alignment with the predetermined variables of study: night-time transportation, commercial activation, leisure licensing, and nuisance control. For a written regulation to be considered, there must be direct influence on a specific NTE variable(s). This direct influence can be demonstrated through the presence of NTE relevant regulatory language, such as temporally-grounded regulations or policies that are enacted after a certain hour. In addition to direct regulatory language pertaining to NTE governance, written delegation of regulatory authority to a lower form of government is also collected. Document-based data collection is repeated until NTE regulations are found, delegation of authority is confirmed, or no evidence of written NTE legislation is present, with the process repeating at each level of government.

For supplemental analysis, representatives from NTE-related governmental or quasi-governmental organizations will be consulted. For this research, quasi-governmental organizations are qualified by their explicit interaction with the South Korean or Seoul Metropolitan governments through serving as a research institute or interest group. The working relationship between these organizations and multi-scalar governments demonstrate both familiarity and function within the NTE, and content received is used as added context to evaluate regulatory practices. Actors within these organizations are selected based on proximity to variables concerned with the NTE, such as night-time transportation networks, night-time business relations or advocacy, nuisance law enforcement, or liquor licensing and tax regulations. Additionally, quasi-governmental organizations are not beholden to the political election cycle of South Korea and Seoul. Thus, representatives from these organizations may be working in NTE related fields for extended periods of time, allowing for increased understanding of longer form trends in regulation.

Analytical Method

Each level of government will be isolated and analyzed for any regulatory relevance to NTE categories in the following order: national (South Korea), metropolitan (Seoul Metropolitan Government), district (the gus of Seoul), and finally quasi-governmental organizations. At each level, all regulatory documents pertaining to NTE governance are interpreted and coded according to the corresponding variable of study.

When examining regulatory documents, the first type of information coded for analysis is direct regulation on any variable of study, whether it is restrictive or permissive in nature. This text acts as the most direct form of temporal governance on the NTE with an explicitly written effect on the NTE. Second to direct regulation is the delegation of regulatory responsibility to a lower form of government. While second to direct regulation, delegation of authority acts as a deliberate and written acknowledgement of elements of NTE governance. Finally, if there is no clear presence of direct regulation or the delegation of regulating authority, a significant absence is coded. This procedure is repeated for all levels of government. If significant absence pertaining to a variable is present throughout all levels of government, loose or implicit regulation is considered as an interpretive possibility.

Once all written data has been collected, the data is coded for emerging themes pertaining to each variable of study. While variables of study have been determined prior to content analysis, the themes produced are driven by the data. While individual themes are established by data, notes regarding the restrictive, permissive, limiting, or bolstering effect on the NTE will be particularly relevant. A theme will be considered present if legislation and policies combine to form a coherent regulatory framework across multi-scalar governance. For example, if the provision of overnight transportation is significantly absent from national legislation, but is

present and enacted at the metropolitan level, and deferred to by district governments, the resulting theme would indicate that overnight transportation is a service primarily regulated at the city level. Once established, the quality of this implementation may be supplementally evaluated. Due to the nature of both presence and absence of data being coded, a theme of implicit regulation is considered as a possible outcome of interpretation.

For supplemental content analysis, interviews are conducted with questions structured around the variables of study. These interviews are conducted especially when regulatory regimes are unclear from the national to district level jurisdictions due to significant absence of direct regulation. It is important to note that these interviews act as a clarifying element to provide further understanding when written regulations present ambiguously, and themes arising from these interviews will supplement findings from primary analysis.

A key final product of this analysis will be a generated matrix featuring the variables of study and all applied governance distinguished by jurisdiction. This matrix will allow for clear conceptualization of the multi-scalar regulatory regime in effect, with distinct sources of governance or lack thereof at each level of government. When presented with governmental analysis, findings may be summarized by impact at each level of government or by variable of study.

Results

National Government

Overnight Transportation

Regarding transportation, there is a significant absence of temporal regulation at the national level within South Korea. Additionally, both Seoul and districts within are granted infrastructural management authority through direct delegation language for roads of lower classification than national expressways. However, direct provisions for overnight transportation remain absent at the national level from studied acts. With both the absence of direct legislation on overnight transportation at the national level and designated infrastructural authority to lower forms of government, the national level effectively grants Seoul and the districts within the autonomy to make overnight service decisions locally.

At the national level, legislation centered on transportation is represented through acts like the Passenger Transport Service Act and Road Traffic Act. It is important to note that the purpose of these acts is to “...promote public welfare by establishing order in... and the overall development of passenger transport service” and “...to ensure the safe and smooth flow of traffic by preventing and removing all dangers and obstacles to traffic on roads,” (Ministry of Government Legislation [MoGL], 2025a, 2025e). In each of these acts, a regulatory framework concerning the safety and infrastructure of transportation is directly addressed by the national government, while the application or levels of service of public transportation are unrepresented. In effect, national legislation concerns safety and infrastructure, while operating hours, service frequency, and the provision of overnight transportation is not directly addressed.

Responsibility of road maintenance and administration is also designated at the national level via the Road Act, in which all roadways are provided a classification and associated “Road Management Authority.” These authorities are directly responsible for the planning, construction, and management of roadways, with national expressways falling directly under the management of the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport (MoGL, 2025b). Lower road classifications are then delegated to lesser forms of Road Management Authority, including “the Special Metropolitan City Mayor, a Metropolitan City Mayor, a Special Self-Governing City Mayor, a Do Governor, a Special Self-Governing Province Governor, or the head of a Si/Gun/autonomous Gu,” (MoGL, 2025b).¹ It is through this Road Act that the national government of South Korea provides the authoritative framework for lower governments like Seoul and even districts within Seoul to manage and maintain lower classified roadways with direct infrastructural authority while the national government plans for national expressways.

Through existing national legislation, South Korea actively provides regulatory structure and infrastructural framework to transportation systems across the scales of government, but provides no temporal prescription. It is this significant absence that leaves transportation implementation to the lower forms of municipal government, such as the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Commercial Activation

At the national scale, the regulation of night-time commercial activity is delegated to lower municipal governments through a series of explicit articles within key acts. Rather than implementing this structural framework through focused acts, the national Food Sanitation Act

¹ The “head of a Si/Gun/Gu” phrasing is particularly common in regulatory delegation in South Korean legislation, and approximately translates to the head of a city/rural county/ and urban district respectively.

and Distribution Industry Development Act contain temporally relevant clauses that establish the conditions under which lower levels of government may enact their own regimes of night-time commercial activation. While these acts do not directly set goals or expectations of hours of operation, the national government does grant the ability to restrict hours of operation to both Seoul and district governments.

As the Food Sanitation Act (FSA) serves the purpose of “contributing to the improvement of public health by preventing sanitary risk caused by foods, promoting the qualitative improvement of food nutrition and giving accurate information on foods,” key frameworks are established regarding the temporal governance of food service-related businesses. This authority is afforded by Article 43 of the FSA, which states:

If necessary to maintain business order and good custom, the Special Self-Governing City Mayor, the Special Self-Governing Province Governor, or the heads of Sis/Guns/Gus may restrict business hours or activities of food service business operators and their employees. (MoGL, 2024a)

This provision does not indicate a temporal prescription imposed by the national government; rather, it firmly establishes a legal framework in which officials of either Seoul or the districts within may restrict hours of operation for food related businesses.

The Distribution Industry Development Act (DIDA) is concerned with the “...efficient promotion and balanced development of the distribution industry and [establishment of] sound trade practices in commercial transactions, thereby protecting consumers and contributing to the development of the national economy,” (MoGL, 2025d). While the DIDA regulates a large number of types of businesses, specifically superstores and quasi-superstores receive similar delegation of temporal governance as seen in the FSA, with these businesses being defined as:

The term "superstore" means a group of stores salesrooms of which meet the following requirements, which is prescribed in the Appendix:

- a. It shall be established in one unit or in group within one building or within at least two interlinked buildings that are prescribed by Presidential Decree;
- b. It shall be continuously run;
- c. It shall have the total area of at least three thousand square meters;

The term "quasi-superstore" means any of the following stores, which is prescribed by Presidential Decree:

- a. A store directly operated by a company managing a superstore or by its affiliated company (referring to an affiliated company provided for in the Monopoly Regulation and Fair Trade Act);
- b. A store directly operated by an affiliated company of an enterprise group subject to limitations on mutual investment under the Monopoly Regulation and Fair Trade Act;
- c. A store operated by a company or an affiliated company under item a or b in the form of chain business under the direct management of the headquarters pursuant to subparagraph 6a and franchise-type chain business pursuant to subparagraph 6b. (MoGL, 2025d).

These two store types are the only types of commercial businesses that are bound by Article 12-2 of the DIDA, which states that the head of Si/Gun/Gu may order superstores or quasi-superstores to "...restrict business hours or suspend business, designating a date for compulsory closedown..." and that the head of Si/Gun/Gu may "...place restriction on business hours from 0 a.m. to 10 a.m. ..." (MoGL, 2025d). Additionally, this article states that "matters necessary for imposing restrictions on business hours...shall be prescribed by ordinance of the local

government concerned,” providing further framework for the delegation of regulatory authority to lower forms of government from the national level. It is particularly relevant that no other commercial business types were mentioned in temporal governance frameworks within the DIDA, denoting a clear acknowledgement of temporally restricting superstores and quasi-superstores, while temporal frameworks remain significantly absent regarding other types of commercial activity.

Through the combination of both the FSA and DIDA, the national government has firmly established an assignment of regulatory authority to lower levels of government for both the food service and large-scale retail industries. This statutory structure indicates that regulations pertaining to night-time commercial activation will stem from either Seoul or district officials, as the national government continues to establish regulatory frameworks while leaving implementation to more localized governments.

Alcohol and Music Regulation

The national government largely implements regulatory frameworks surrounding safety and administration regarding performance halls and karaoke businesses, while a centralized tax administration system in the form of “competent tax offices” regulates the taxation and licensing of alcohol sale and manufacture. However, at the national scale of government, neither alcohol nor music licensing regimes feature direct temporal governance or prescription.

Guided by both the Liquor License² Act and Liquor Tax Act, the national government regulates the manufacturing and distribution of alcoholic beverages through a national system of “competent tax offices.” While not directly defined in either prominent act, the “head of the

² The Liquor License Act has been identified as both an enforcement decree and legislative act as of 2024, with certain regulations also covered within Article 8 of the Liquor Tax Act.

competent tax office” is repeatedly represented through responsibilities and articles, indicating locally-situated national authorities that are to be reported to as the primary regulator for the alcohol service industry. The head of the competent tax office is not only responsible for issuing initial licenses for the manufacture or the sale of alcoholic beverages, but is also empowered with the ability to determine conditions associated with this license, as stated in Article 6 of the Liquor License Act:

If it is deemed necessary for the preservation of liquor tax, the head of the competent tax office may determine the license period, the scope of manufacture or sale, and the matters for compliance in manufacture or sale as the conditions for the license when granting a manufacturing license or liquor sales business license (hereinafter referred to as "license, etc.") of liquor, Sulmit, or Suldeot. (Korea Legislation Research Institute [KLRI], 2024)

While the nature of these conditions for the license are not elaborated on, the national law as written still marks a significant absence of deliberate temporal regulation associated with both the manufacturing and sale of alcohol.

Additionally, the Liquor Tax Act, which the Liquor License Act operates alongside, features no temporal governance or restrictions, and only provides administrative frameworks for proper taxation of alcohol manufacturing and sales (MoGL, 2024c). With the direct legislation provided at the national level, the temporal regulation of the alcohol service industry is absent at the national level, as no direct delegation of authority is granted to the heads of Sis/Guns/Gus as distinctly seen in legislation of other sectors.

The national government introduces administrative frameworks through two prominent legislative acts, the Public Performance Act and the Music Industry Promotion Act. The former serves to “...prescribe matters concerning public performances in order to ensure the freedom of

art, create a safe creative environment for performers and performing arts workers, and promote sound public performance activities,” (MoGL, 2024b). While no temporal prescriptions or regulations exist within this legislation, the heads of sis/guns/gus are given ample responsibility in upholding standards of safety across all performance halls, which are defined as any “...[facilities] set up and operated for the main purpose of holding public performances,” or more commonly described as music venues broadly (MoGL, 2024b). In the event that a performance hall is found in violation of any of the numerous regulations pertaining to safety, the protection of youth, preparation of disaster plans, or more, the heads of sis/guns/gus are able to suspend the operation of a performance hall as granted in Article 33 (MoGL, 2024b). However, despite all the regulatory requirements for operation of a performance venue, no temporal restrictions are applied at the national level or delegated to lower forms of government.

Supplementing the Public Performance Act, the Music Industry Promotion Act applies additional provisions and delegated authority to the heads of sis/guns/gus in regards to karaoke and music-related businesses. These additional regulations follow similar motivations as the Public Performance Act, with extensive language requiring safety and legal sales of alcohol on karaoke or music-related premises, but center the heads of sis/guns/gus as the point of registration similar to the role of competent tax offices in regards to alcohol (MoGL, 2025c). For karaoke businesses, Article 18 outlines this relationship:

Any person who intends to run a karaoke business shall have facilities suitably equipped for a karaoke business prescribed by Decree of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and shall file a registration with the head of the competent Si/Gun/Gu. (MoGL, 2025c)

This marks a clear delegation of regulatory responsibilities to the lower levels of government as repeatedly seen. However, temporal regulations are still absent from both guiding music licensing acts.

When evaluating the regulatory regimes in place at the national level for both alcohol and music licensing, the national government defers to the implementation of lower forms of government or tax offices. While alcohol licensing is eligible for conditions administered by heads of competent tax offices as an extension of conditions for licensing, both alcohol and music are not temporally regulated at the national level.

Nuisance Control

Across the national level of government, only one critical piece of legislation pertaining to nuisance control was identified, the Noise and Vibration Control Act (NVCA). With the written purpose of “...[enabling] all citizens to live in a calm and tranquil environment by preventing any damage due to noise and vibration generated in factories, construction work fields, roads, railroads, etc. and by properly controlling such noise and vibration,” the significant focus of the act appears to be limiting the negative externalities associated with construction and industry (MoGL, 2022). Despite this focus, the NVCA provides key regulatory structure to the heads of Sis/Guns/Gus that acts as the basis for all nuisance control.

In Chapter III of the NVCA, titled “Control of Living Noise and Vibration”, Article 21 provides the heads of Sis/Guns/Gus the responsibility to maintain a reasonably quiet environment for residents through the following language:

A Special Self-Governing City Mayor, a Special Self-Governing Province Governor, or the head of a Si/Gun/Gu shall control noise and vibration emitted from a workplace, construction field, etc. (excluding noise and vibration emitted in an industrial complex or

other areas prescribed by Ordinance of the Ministry of Environment; hereinafter referred to as "living noise and vibration") to maintain a tranquil living environment of residents. (MoGL, 2022)

In this article, lower government officials are not only granted the ability to restrict noise and vibration, but are mandated by the national government through the phrasing “shall control noise and vibration.”

Through the inclusion of workplaces within regulated sources of unwanted noise and vibration, local authorities ranging from the Seoul Metropolitan Government to local district officials are granted a national framework that provides justification and authority to limit any operations deemed too disruptive for a “tranquil living environment.” While there is no direct temporal governing language that sets national standards for noise allowance during the day as opposed to the night, the current legislation allows for the creation and enforcement of localized nuisance standards. Thus, despite the lack of national closing hours, local authorities are granted the ability to restrict negative externalities of the NTE through the enforcement of nuisance control provided by the NVCA, acting as a form of indirect temporal governance.

In addition to granting local authorities with the legislative power to enforce nuisance control regulations, the national government also seeks to enforce nuisance control through the comprehensive plan detailed in article 2-3 of the NVCA:

The Minister of Environment shall formulate a comprehensive plan for controlling noise and vibration (hereinafter referred to as “comprehensive plan”), every five years, to prevent damage due to noise and vibration and appropriately control noise and vibration, after hearing opinions of each Special Metropolitan City Mayor, Metropolitan City Mayor, Special Self-Governing City Mayor, Do Governor, or Special Self-Governing

Province Governor (hereinafter referred to as “Mayor/Do Governor”) and consulting with the heads of relevant central administrative agencies.

A comprehensive plan shall contain the following:

1. Objectives and basic directions of the comprehensive plan;
2. Measures to appropriately control noise and vibration;
3. The implementation status of measures to reduce noise and vibration by area and by year;
4. Research and studies on the effects of noise and vibration on citizens’ health;
5. Education and publicity programs for implementing the measures to reduce noise and vibration;
6. Fund-raising plans for implementing the comprehensive plan;
7. Other matters necessary to reduce noise and vibration. (MoGL, 2022)

These comprehensive plans not only serve as consistent periodic national government action against nuisance, but also facilitates communication across the spectrum of government regarding how to best serve the population, especially between city and national authorities.

While the national government does not prescribe temporal restrictions on night-time commercial activity on the basis of noise and vibration, the NVCA acts as clear indication of lower forms of government maintaining the authority to enforce their own nuisance control regimes. These regimes are typically associated with tolerances for both day and night noise and vibration, and local authorities have been granted the broad national mandate to control workplace noise, effectively creating the necessary framework for the local NTE to be restricted where necessary.

The Local Autonomy Act

Throughout the studied governance at the national level, there is a consistent delegation of authority to Sis/Guns/Gus for the implementation or regulation of standards framed by national legislation. This delegation is legally grounded in the Local Autonomy Act, which is designed to:

...promote democracy and efficiency of local autonomous administration and to ensure balanced development of local areas and democratic development of the Republic of Korea, by prescribing the types, organization, and operation of local governments; matters relating to residents' participation in local autonomous administration; and basic relations between the State and local governments... Local governments shall be classified into the following two categories:

1. The Special Metropolitan City, a Metropolitan City, Special Self-Governing City, Do, or Special Self-Governing Province;
2. Si, Gun, and Gu. (MoGL, 2023)

While the Local Autonomy Act does not prescribe specific governance outcomes or temporal regulations, this legislation establishes legitimacy to govern at the metropolitan and district level.

In addition to providing national recognition of autonomous local governments, the Local Autonomy Act provides institutional autonomy to these subordinate governments. In Section 3, Functions and Affairs of Local Governments, Article 13 establishes “Scope of Affairs of Local Governments,” including:

1. Jurisdiction, organization, administrative management, etc. of the local government:
 - (a) Adjustment of the names, locations, and jurisdictions of administrative districts within its jurisdiction;

- (b) Enactment, amendment, repeal of municipal ordinances and rules, and operation and management thereof;
- (c) Management of the organization of subordinate administrative agencies;
- (d) Guidance on and supervision of subordinate administrative agencies and organizations; ... (MoGL, 2013)

In this article, both the Seoul Metropolitan Government and internal autonomous Gus are granted the authority to draft, implement, and manage individual municipal ordinances. To support this function, the Local Autonomy Act also provides the ability for local governments to establish internal structure, including the creation of subordinate offices, departments, and agencies.

With this structure in place, the national government of South Korea has created a system of multi-scalar governance, in which each level is both expected and empowered to implement localized administrative organizations and regulatory regimes. Through this legislation, the observed delegation of authority across sectors of government is not only legally grounded, but structurally embedded within the governance system itself.

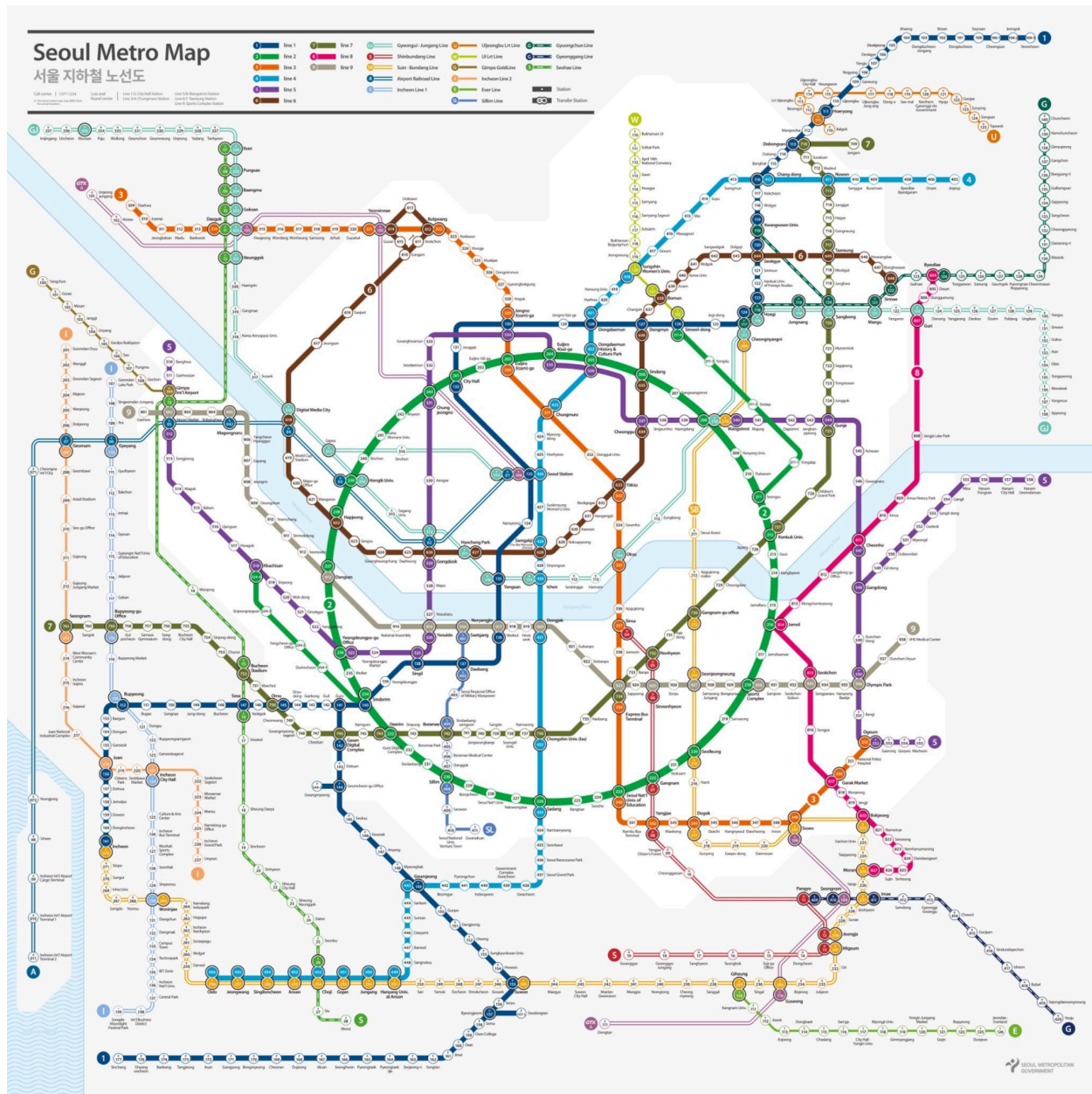
Seoul Metropolitan Government

Transitioning from the national level of government to the city scale, represented by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG), the mechanisms through which the NTE is governed alter significantly. Rather than the large legislative acts seen at the national level, SMG influences the NTE through administrative action, policy implementation, and enforcement. As a result, analysis at the metropolitan scale relies on evidence of policy programs, initiatives, and enforcement regimes or the absence thereof.

Overnight Transportation

The Seoul Metropolitan Government [SMG] addresses overnight transportation through the provision of city-wide public transportation networks, with the combination of the Seoul subway system and Owl Bus program forming a complementary system. The implementation of this transportation system is one of the most direct ways in which SMG bolsters the NTE, as night-time consumers are able to move with relative ease across a majority of the city while having several safety measures in place.

With nine standard lines and fourteen supplemental or specialized lines (Figure 2), the Seoul subway system is implemented and sustained by three distinct organizations: the Seoul Metropolitan Subway Corporation, Korean National Railroad, and Seoul Metropolitan Rapid Transit Corporation (Jung-gu Office, Seoul, 2017). It is an important nuance to identify the cooperation between the national government and SMG through operating the subway system within Seoul, as the Korean National Railroad (KORAIL) and Seoul Metropolitan Rapid Transit Corporation and Seoul Metropolitan Subway Corporation (which have since merged to form Seoul Metro in 2017) operate on the same rail system throughout Seoul (Seoul Metro, n.d.-a). While most intracity and NTE-relevant lines are operated and maintained by Seoul Metro, regional routes are operated at the national level by KORAIL and are not considered overnight service (KORAIL Pass, n.d.).

Figure 2**Seoul Metro Map**

Note. Map of subway lines within Seoul provided by Seoul Metro (Seoul Metro, n.d.-b).

The hours of operation for the Seoul subway system are 5:30am to around midnight, with travel times between stops ranging from two to three minutes on average. To promote safety along these routes, SMG has installed subway station offices to receive in person reports of

crime while 22 crime units and their officers routinely patrol through the subway network (Jung-gu Office, Seoul, 2017). The subway system implemented by SMG offers evening transportation options until midnight that are necessary for the NTE, while the Owl Bus service bolsters transportation through the entire night.

Originally implemented after feedback from Seoul citizens, the Seoul Metropolitan Government introduced an overnight bus service named the Owl Bus in April of 2013 (Seoul Metropolitan Government [SMG], 2016). Running from the hours of approximately 12-5am, the Owl Bus service not only supports night-time consumers, but also targets the NTE workforce through the following promotional statement:

In Seoul, people no longer have to rush to catch the last bus or subway late at night.

Workers or small business owners returning home after late shifts, drivers for hire who work night shifts, and people who leave for work very early in the morning, such as sanitation workers, have longed for a means of public transportation that operates outside standard business hours. (SMG, 2016b)

Even at the beginning of the Owl Bus service in 2013, the night-time transportation policy received a Presidential Award in “Informatization of Local Governments” and was voted the city’s “Best Policy” in 2013, signifying a satisfaction of existing overnight transportation demand (SMG, 2016b).

Since 2013, the Owl Bus service has not only remained consistently used, but has been expanded several times, with 14 routes and ~100 rides with intervals ranging from 15-40 minutes throughout the night (SMG, 2022). Fueling these expansions, a study conducted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government found that a late-night floating population of ~342,000 was observed

between the hours of 12-4am, further reinforcing the need for Seoul to provide ample transportation in major commercial and business areas (SMG, 2022).

In addition to the aforementioned traditional public transportation options, the city has also seen experimentation with late-night transportation through the implementation of autonomous vehicles. In 2024, the Seoul Metropolitan Government unveiled a pioneer service of late-night autonomous taxis operating within the Gangnam district pilot zone between the hours of 11pm-5am, providing further options for NTE consumers and employees after the subway closes (SMG, 2024). After a successful pilot program, the Seoul Metropolitan Government expanded service to all of Gangnam with over 4,200 accident-free rides delivered (SMG, 2025). In further advancement, the city government has also introduced and expanded “Early-Morning Autonomous Bus Service,” deploying a 31-seat autonomous bus beginning at 3:30am, further bolstering overnight transportation (SMG, 2026). This bus provides express service between 41 key stops, acting as the first bus for many high demand locations with a destination arrival time 15 minutes faster than the typical Route 148 bus (SMG, 2026).

Through SMG’s combination of subway infrastructure, Owl Bus service, and new autonomous vehicles, the city has implemented a reliable network of overnight transportation that serves both NTE employees and consumers at growing levels of service. Not only has the city government provided transportation opportunities during the early evening, but has also provided several key options through the unusual hours of operation from 12-6am as necessary for modern 24-hour cities. Through responsiveness to citizen needs, technological advancement, and provision of transportation options, the Seoul Metropolitan Government acts as the primary source of overnight transportation for the NTE.

Commercial Activation

Where the Seoul Metropolitan Government was directly involved in the provision of overnight transportation, the city level of government exhibits a significant absence of temporal regulation of commercial activity at night. While no direct ordinances or policies could be found that applied temporal restrictions on business across the city, the publication of promotional content centered on night-time economic activity and the existence of late-night and 24-hour businesses indicate a functionally inferred permissive regulatory framework implemented by the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

As referenced in prior literature, Seoul Metropolitan Government presents Seoul as a “city that never sleeps,” while utilizing 24-hour businesses like the karaoke bar Su Noraebang in Hongdae in nightlife brochures distributed by SMG (SMG, 2014). While this content doesn’t reveal temporal restrictions or regulations that would permit or otherwise restrict these kinds of businesses, it does imply that the Seoul Metropolitan Government views night-time economic activity as desirable and legitimized by the city government. This support from the metropolitan government indicates a non-restrictive environment in which night-time businesses have been able to sustain and grow.

In addition to released promotional literature, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has also directly hosted night markets through the following implementation:

The Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) has announced it will host Night Traditional Markets & Food Festivals at 72 traditional markets across the city until November. This initiative aims to create attractive nighttime spots for citizens and tourists, showcasing the unique charm of Seoul and K-Food. (SMG, 2024)

While the hours of operation are unspecified in this document, the direct participation in the NTE by the Seoul Metropolitan Government indicates direct support for commercial activation at night. Additionally, these night markets are hosted by SMG throughout 24 of the 25 gus of Seoul, suggesting a potential alignment with the “optimal frontier” of nightlife outlined in Lee & Lee’s Evaluation of urban nightlife attractiveness for Millennials and Generation Z (2024) as the Seoul Metropolitan Government embeds night-time attractions at nearly every district (SMG, 2024).

When the significant absence of direct temporal restrictions in SMG published policies is combined with active city-wide promotion and direct hosting of night-time economic activity, a permissive regulatory framework emerges. With the indication of a non-restrictive regulatory structure, temporal control of NTE businesses is not centralized at the city level of government, and may delegate restrictive authority to the district level.

Alcohol and Music Regulation

As previously stated, alcohol licensing is primarily conducted by centralized competent tax offices as established by both the Liquor Tax Act and Liquor License Act. In regards to music venues however, the heads of both city and district governments are held responsible for upholding safety standards in performance halls and music-oriented businesses according to the Public Performance Act and Music Industry Promotion Act.

While no temporal governance or restrictions on music venues were found at the city level of government, explicit evidence of enforcing safety standards was demonstrated in a 2019 press release from SMG regarding “...an all-out investigation into nightclubs and similar entertainment facilities,” (SMG, 2019). Outlined in the publication by SMG:

The Seoul Metropolitan Government announced its plan to conduct an all-out investigation into night clubs and similar entertainment facilities for their safety...The inspection team will look into overall risk factors, such as illegal buildings; poor conditions of safety management, food sanitation and fire facilities; and appropriateness of the business area reported...Minor violations will be asked to correct at the site, however if the team detects serious ones that might have an impact on the safety of the building, it will exercise strong administration actions, such as restriction of business. (SMG, 2019)

This initiative by the Seoul Metropolitan Government indicates execution of the delegated responsibility for ensuring safety standards as written by the national government. Through the city's enforcement of a national regulatory framework, a multi-scalar approach to regulating elements of the NTE forms. When concerning the regulation of music-related businesses in Seoul, the Seoul Metropolitan Government functions as a reactive and enforcing government body rather than providing temporal or NTE prescriptions of their own.

Nuisance Control

At the city-wide level of government, little evidence is seen to expand beyond the national Noise and Vibration Control Act (NVCA), with almost no NTE-specific nuisance control policies published by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. However, the SMG has implemented several programs seeking to address noise as a whole, with construction related noise being a common target for improvement, following trends seen in the NVCA language. Additionally, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has also implemented restricted hours of tourist activity in certain key neighborhoods on the basis of nuisance control, demonstrating use of authority to eliminate night-time activity altogether under certain conditions.

In 2012, Seoul announced reductions in noise disturbances from construction related sources through the following developments:

The city was able to achieve this improvement by implementing various solutions, including the provision of a minimum standard for noise-cancellation material for pre-reported constructions, the compulsory utilization of low-noise construction machinery, the strengthened measurement of noise on construction sites, and so on. The city and the self-governing boroughs also assessed the noise-generation status of each borough, analyzed variation factors, created a noise complaint processing panel and resident monitoring groups for residents of the city, and self-governing boroughs to participate, monitor, and process. (SMG, 2012)

While the primary target of noise reduction is still centered on construction, the NVCA requires excess noise stemming from workplaces to be addressed and controlled by both city and district officials. Thus, the noise complaint processing panel offers potential applicability to address NTE-related noise complaints as mandated by the NVCA at both the city and district levels.

Following the development and implementation of these panels, in 2014 SMG enacted a program that eventually saw up to 622 “village lawyers” interested in providing public services allocated to nearly 424 dongs (or neighborhoods). While in the neighborhood, these lawyers consult with citizens on matters including “claim and obligation relationships, lease, real estate and noise complaints between floors,” free of charge (SMG, 2016a). While these consultations range in topics, the prevalence of noise complaints offers supplemental avenues of indirect nuisance control. While this program is not related to temporal governance, it further establishes SMG’s role of providing frameworks in which nuisance control may be addressed.

However, the aforementioned initiatives have not been temporally grounded or prescriptive despite their relation to nuisance control. While examples of direct city temporal restriction of activity on the basis of nuisance are limited, one key instance demonstrates usage of Seoul's authority. The historic village of Bukchon Hanok has simultaneously served as a heavily trafficked tourist destination and functioning neighborhood with full time residents. Given the nature that this area is simply a neighborhood, tourists have been free to travel and frequent the area at any time of day for any length of time as they would be able to in any public space within Seoul. With this unrestricted tourism, residents of Bukchon Hanok have issued complaints regarding "loud noise, garbage dumping, and illegal parking," (SMG, 2018). In response, the Seoul Metropolitan Government implemented the following policy:

[SMG] will implement the "visiting hours" for tourists at the Bukchon Hanok Village...According to the new scheme announced, the tourists are only allowed to enter the Village from 10 am to 5 pm on weekdays and Saturdays. On Sundays, they are completely banned from visiting there. It came to reduce inconveniences experienced by local residents and to protect their rights...Through the new rule, the city government [intends] to discourage the tourists from visiting the Village early in the morning and late at night so to minimize the damages caused by tourists...The Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Jongno-gu Office, the district office that takes administrative responsible for the Village, revealed this new measure, and they will hold town meetings with the residents to finalize the rule," (SMG, 2018)

This policy demonstrates a comparatively rare act of direct temporal governance by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, as restrictions placed are explicitly proposed to eliminate tourist activity and nuisance through the night and into the early morning.

While the published instances of temporally-motivated nuisance control by the Seoul Metropolitan Government are limited, the city has demonstrated the use of authority granted by the NVCA through acting as a responsive enforcement body. Where the city has otherwise provided transportation, enabled night-time commercial activity, and enforced safety standards for music licensing, SMG addresses nuisance control through the implementation of responsive frameworks with occasional direct temporal governance. Additionally, nuisance control features consistent reliance on communication between the city and district level officials in the execution of city policy, as the noise complaint processing panels, village lawyer program, and temporal restriction of the Bukchon Hanok village feature district participation.

Gu-Level Administration

As opposed to the translated legislative acts at the national level and published city-wide policies and initiatives, the data presented at the Gu (or district) level is highly decentralized. Each district maintains a locally differentiated governmental structure as established by the Local Autonomy Act at the national level. With this act, each autonomous Gu is granted the authority to enact district-specific ordinances, including ordinances relevant to NTE regulation where applicable.

With 25 autonomous districts each enacting district-specific regimes of organization and regulation, existing evidence is fragmented, with significantly less standardization of documentation as previously seen at the national and metropolitan level. As a result, evidence at the district level is largely characterized by trends and patterns in NTE regulation across districts.

Overnight Transportation

At the district level of government, the provision of overnight transportation is primarily implemented by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Official resources provided by Gus feature guidance or details of how to navigate the existing transportation network or even directly link to Seoul Metro or SMG materials, with a significant absence of any evidence implying district-implemented overnight transportation options (Gwanak-gu Office, n.d.; Eunpyeong-gu Office, n.d.-a; Jung-gu Office, Seoul, 2017).

While district governments within Seoul largely defer to the provisions and programs of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, communication and participation in pilot program initiatives by SMG is evident. The Gangnam-specific SMG pilot program of autonomous vehicles suggests a participatory partnership between Gangnam-gu and the City of Seoul, with SMG acting as the direct operator of the program while Gangnam-gu serves as a spatial testing environment for implementation (SMG, 2025).

Despite the granted authority by the Local Autonomy Act, the lack of district-specific transportation options is expected given the delegated structure of transportation provision at the metropolitan level. In overnight transportation, the metropolitan government acts as the primary lever of governance through centralized implementation.

Commercial Activation

District level governance of night-time commercial activation is predominantly targeted towards promotion and cultivation of events and spaces rather than limitation or regulatory restriction. Although the Local Autonomy Act, Food Sanitation Act, and Distribution Industry Development Act grant the heads of Gus the ability to restrict hours of operation, no evidence of

policies pertaining to standard closing hours or curfews are found. Rather, district authorities function through case-dependent responses to nuisance or code violations, often in cooperation with SMG, as seen through the suspension of tourist activity in Bukchon Hanok Village or the investigations of nightclubs found in safety violations (SMG, 2018, 2019). While the aforementioned examples were SMG initiated and led, both featured direct Gu-level contribution with the Jongno-gu office being recognized as the administrative office overseeing Bukchon Hanok Village while the nightclub joint inspection team directly included “autonomous district offices,” indicating multi-level enforcement featuring district officials (SMG, 2018, 2019).

Additionally, Gus often engage in the active promotion of night-time commercial areas or festivals. In both introductory and tourism-generating materials developed by Gangnam-gu, the MICE Special Tourism Zone is distinctly highlighted as a popular point of interest and attraction by the district government. The VisitGangnam program accentuates the MICE as an ideal hub of dining, culture, entertainment, and shopping, with opportunities extending into the night as an intentional promotion strategy (Gangnam-gu Office, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Similarly, Eunpyeong-gu features the local Yeonsinnae Rodeo Street, with direct advertisement stating that “Yeonsinnae Rodeo Street is busy until late at night and brings back the memories of friends’ gatherings and dates,” (Eunpyeong-gu Office, n.d.-b). Additionally, Gangdong-gu has been shown to use news bulletins to deliver timely location details of the district’s Godeok Traditional Market, a night market specifically hosted by the Gangdong-gu government (Gangdong-gu Office, n.d.). Although widespread temporal governance through restriction is largely absent, clear evidence exists of district governments not only allowing NTE commercial activity, but actively supporting and promoting these opportunities.

Alcohol and Music Regulation

Due to the implementation of the competent tax office system responsible for the distribution and regulation of alcohol licensing by the Liquor Tax Act and Liquor License Act, district officials are not primarily responsible for alcohol licensing. While district administrations do not control licensing standards, officials at the district level may still regulate alcohol-serving businesses through the Food Sanitation Act or Noise and Vibration Control Act. The application of this authority is reactive and case-dependent with less public visibility in enforcement records.

In contrast to the centralized nature of alcohol licensing, the Music Industry Promotion Act charges district level governments with the registration of music-related businesses, establishing a decentralized framework regarding the music industry. Additionally, through this registration process, heads of Gus verify compliance with proper facility standards for karaoke businesses in terms of both safety and proper sale of alcoholic beverages. Should businesses fail to meet these standards, both district and metropolitan governments maintain the authority to restrict or suspend business until offenses are mediated, as seen in the large-scale nightclub inspection jointly conducted by SMG and district offices (SMG, 2019).

While evidence of widespread proactive or prescriptive temporal regulation was significantly absent at the district level of government, national delegation of authority has empowered district officials to enforce safety regulations and registration for music-related businesses. Rather than drafting original licensing regulations, districts appear to function in enforcement and implementation roles for frameworks implemented by higher levels of government.

Nuisance Control

Nuisance control at the district level is primarily reactive to community complaints rather than proactive in regulation. While evidence of joint efforts between the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Gu authorities indicates direct implementation of temporally based nuisance control, this area of district regulation is largely invisible in documentation. Some institutional structures are in place, such as noise complaint processing panels, but nuisance control of the NTE is grounded in responses to direct complaints (SMG, 2012).

In a combined response to nuisance complaints between the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Jongno-gu, tourist activity was temporally restricted to between the hours of 10am-5pm on weekdays and Saturdays (SMG, 2018). The power to restrict this activity on the basis of noise complaints is directly delegated by the national government through both the Local Autonomy Act and the Noise and Vibration Control Act. By applying these temporal regulations, SMG and Jongno-gu provide a clear example of district authority implementing enforcement policies based on the framework established at higher levels of government. Although nuisance control is a minimally visible regulatory practice at the district level, multi-scalar coordination by both the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Gu authorities provides implementation of delegated responsibilities from the national government.

The Korean Federation of Micro Enterprises

To supplement findings at the district level with contextual information surrounding NTE governance, the Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises (KFME) was contacted for telephone interviews. KFME acts as a governmentally recognized interest group under the legal basis

provided by Article 24 of the Act on the Protection and Support of Small Business Owners with the following vision statement:³

비전

소상공인의 권익을 대변함으로써 소상공인의 경제적 지위 향상과 국민경제의 균형 발전을 도모

Vision

To promote the improvement of the economic status of small business owners and the balanced development of the national economy by representing their rights and interests.

(Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises (KFME), n.d.-d)

KFME further characterizes the responsibilities of the organization through the following “major projects (주요사업)”:

소상공인 규제·애로사항을 전문가 및 지원을 통해 발굴하고

해소를 통한 소상공인 자생력 확보

Identify regulatory hurdles and operational difficulties faced by small business owners through expert consultation and support initiatives;

Foster the self-reliance of small businesses by resolving these identified issues.

연합회 추진과제 및 정부정책과제, 정책이슈 개발 소상공인

경쟁력 제고를 위한 정책연구 & 실태조사 수행

Develop key initiatives for the Federation, propose government policy agendas, and identify emerging policy issues relevant to small businesses;

³ KFME material is presented exclusively in Korean. Accordingly, original Hangul excerpts are provided alongside English translations sourced using Google Translate. These translations have been reviewed for contextual accuracy and are intended for interpretive purposes within this study.

Conduct policy research and situational analyses aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of small business owners.

법정기념일인 소상공인의 날 및 소상공인 주간을 기념하고
소상공인에 대한 국민인식 제고와 사회·경제적 지위 향상 및 지역주민과의
관계증진

Commemorate "Small Business Owners' Day"—a statutory observance—and "Small Business Owners' Week";

Enhance public awareness regarding small business owners, elevate their socio-economic standing, and foster stronger relationships with local communities. (KFME, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c)

In particular, the first two major projects designate KFME as an organization that both identifies barriers and “operational difficulties” for small businesses while also providing Federation-sponsored policy suggestions to relevant governments. In practice, through these initiatives, KFME serves as a viable avenue for NTE-related businesses to communicate struggles in business that may then be directly communicated with relevant government officials by the federation. When compared to the cross-governmental framework implemented from the national level to district, KFME is guided by internal motivations to represent the interests of small businesses through advocating for favored regulatory implementation. Through this direct advocacy for preferred regulatory implementation, KFME becomes integrated in a larger governance pattern, establishing a recognized outlet in which concerns of the business community may be directly communicated to governmental authorities. Through this function within the multi-scalar governance structure applied to the NTE within Seoul, KFME serves as a

quasi-governmental body capable of providing supplemental information rather than primary findings.

To gain further insight on district level governance of the NTE, a KFME representative from the Gangnam-gu division was interviewed over the phone by committee chairperson, Professor Christine Bae. Primary findings derived from the conversation indicate permissive and non-restrictive enforcement of delegated authority at the Gangnam-gu level (J. Y. Choi, and S. J. Chae, personal communication, March 2026).

Within the interview, the respondent suggests no direct regulations on business hours or further regulation of alcohol-serving businesses are implemented by the district government. The KFME official also shared that Gangnam-gu businesses within the NTE suffer from barriers consistent with other KFME constituents within Seoul, including labor law implementation and a rising minimum wage of 10,320 KRW (approximately \$7.09). However, NTE businesses are facing unique challenges in consumer behavioral shifts regarding night culture since the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020, with nightly traditions of Seoul workers frequenting night-time businesses dwindling in favor of lunch services. As consumer bases shift habits, declines in consistency of night-time demand force small businesses to adjust to new circumstances. Additionally, the KFME respondent indicated rising night-specific taxi fees as actively discouraging extended nightly outings (J. Y. Choi, and S. J. Chae, personal communication, March 2026).

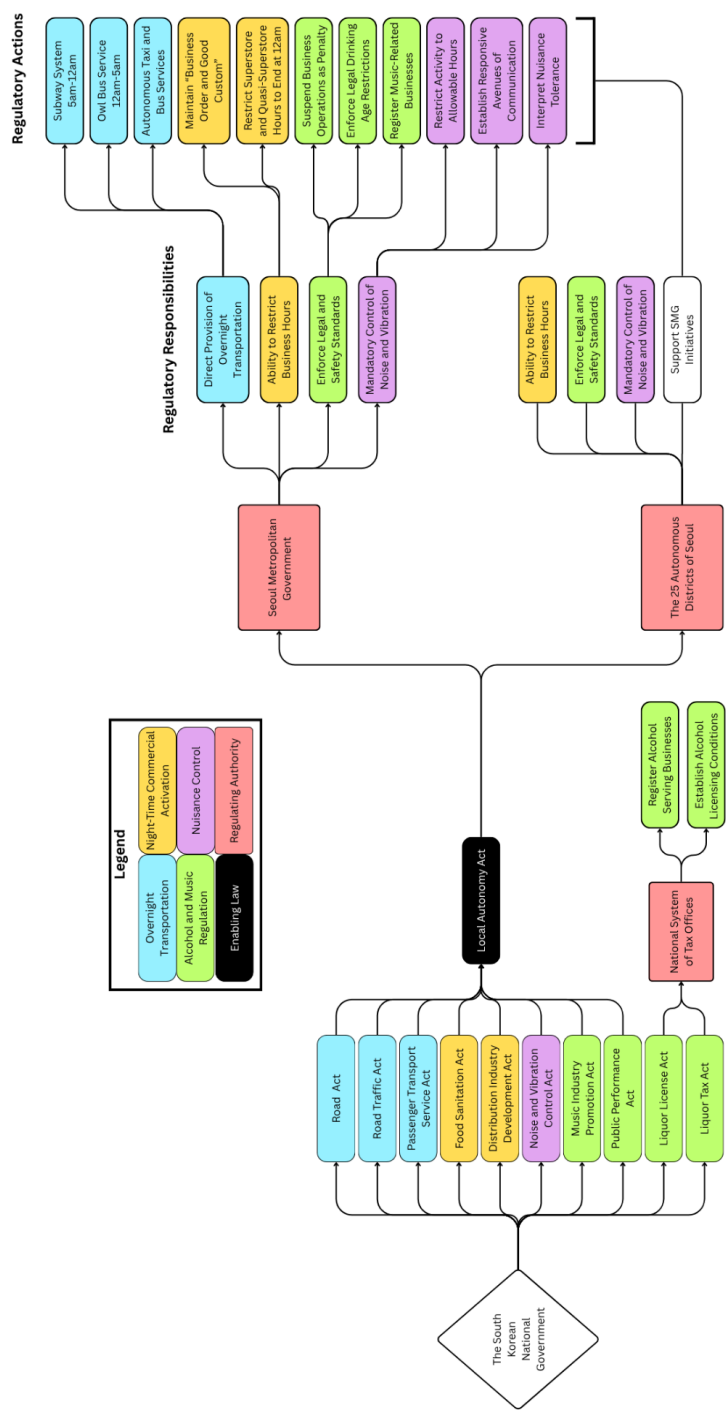
However, the respondent also indicates that the NTE in Gangnam-gu is benefiting from cultural activities, events, and neighborhoods that are active at night. The respondent specifically highlighted Gangnam Station, the Yeongdong traditional market in Nonhyun-dong,

and Apgujeong-dong as particularly thriving examples of night-time activity within the district (J. Y. Choi, and S. J. Chae, personal communication, March 2026).

While the information provided serves as supplemental information regarding district level implementation of temporal governance, the KFME representative serves as potential confirmation of themes presented through direct government documentation. The lack of regulated operating hours is expected at the district level, as evidence indicates a responsive regulatory framework regarding the suspension of business predominantly on the basis of code violations or nuisance control. The reported lack of district regulation on alcohol-serving businesses is further supported by the centralized framework of competent tax offices that bear primary regulatory authority rather than district officials. However, the KFME official also introduces insight into potential trends regarding night-life within Seoul not supported by existing literature, prompting further investigation.

Through the addition of supplementary data acquired from this interview, key findings regarding delegated authority and a lenient implementation of temporal ordinances have been corroborated within the Gangnam district. While the overall volume of consumer activity at night has been called into question, the KFME respondent reinforces themes of permissive application of delegated authority pertaining to the NTE granted through the multi-scalar regim

Figure 3
The Regulatory Framework of Seoul's Night-Time Economy



Note. Author's illustration.

Discussion

This research was conducted on the basis of discovering trends in multi-scalar governance of the night-time economy (NTE) within Seoul. To actualize this research goal, four key variables of the NTE were identified through prior literature, including the provision of overnight transportation, night-time commercial activation, the regulation and licensing of alcohol and music related businesses, and nuisance control regimes. Each variable was then examined through the lens of the government hierarchy, with primary findings characterized by national, metropolitan, and district government influence, supplemented by input at the quasi-governmental level.

Through these methods, a highly decentralized regime of governance regarding the NTE was discovered, with each level of authority serving distinct, yet important functions within this structure. At the national level, primary governance of the NTE took the form of framework setting through legislative acts, establishing a broad system of delegated authority to localized administrations with select retention of centralized, nationally-implemented regulations on alcohol taxation and licensing. Under the national government, both the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and Gu administrations engaged in coordinated implementation and enforcement of nationally established frameworks, with SMG-led initiatives maintaining higher visibility.

The NTE of Seoul is deliberately managed at multiple levels of government, with a highly dynamic system of delegated authority spanning the entire governmental hierarchy. At the highest level of analysis, the NTE is subject to numerous regulatory levers that establish substantial regulatory capacity, yet the execution of these levers remains temporally permissive

yet responsive when needed. At the core of Seoul's NTE, a bottom-up regulatory framework is implemented as opposed to a top-down approach. Temporal restrictions are largely implemented on a case-by-case basis, with immense liberties granted to the businesses and venues that populate the NTE. Further strengthening the NTE is the provision of a robust transportation network, providing consistent support to both consumers and employees overnight. However, when violations of standards or nuisance become intolerable, both the metropolitan government and district authorities have coordinated to address these issues directly as authorized by the national government.

South Korea, Seoul, and the autonomous Gus within construct an effective multi-scalar regime of temporal governance through the establishment of key infrastructure, a coordinated system of delegated authority, and the application of flexible and selective policy enforcement. As a result, Seoul's night-time economy has been able to grow dynamically, yet with controlled negative externalities through responsive governmental intervention where needed. Perhaps the strongest element of Seoul's management of the NTE is a consistent implementation of enabling night-time activity over suppression, where officials reflect support of the NTE rather than strictly controlling it.

Themes of Multi-Scalar Governance of the Night-Time Economy

While each variable of study is interacted with and shaped by every level of government, distinct themes of governance for each variable have been identified. Themes of NTE governance are established through cross-scalar interactions between levels of authority, forming coherent frameworks of regulation. The major components of these frameworks are direct regulation, provision of service, delegated authority, and significant absence. Through the

combination of these elements implemented at each level of government for each variable studied, a complete regulatory regime of the NTE is formed.

Regulatory Themes of Overnight Transportation

The variable of overnight transportation is largely operationalized by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, with infrastructural frameworks established at the national level while district authorities defer to SMG implementation. The Seoul Metropolitan Government is granted the authority to implement service through the Road Act legislated by the national government, which establishes the infrastructural framework that designates SMG as a “Road Management Authority” (MoGL, 2025b). While this act maintains direct control of national roadways at the national level, roads classified as metropolitan or district level roadways are delegated to the authority of SMG in conjunction with a significant absence of temporal transit mandates at the national level. This combination of delegated authority and lack of national initiatives for temporal governance has granted SMG the ability to establish city-level transportation at self-determined levels of service.

With this authority, SMG has constructed a robust network of night-time transportation options, with multiple systems specifically providing overnight transportation during the crucial “unusual hours” of 12am-6am as outlined by Tan and Klaasen (2007). Overnight options implemented by Seoul cater to a large spectrum of modal, coverage, and temporal needs. Broad services like the Owl Bus provide wide spatial coverage from the hours of 12am-5am after traditional subway services are suspended, while individualized overnight autonomous taxis piloted by SMG offer personalized transportation (SMG, 2016b, 2025). While services like the initial Owl Bus have been operating since 2013, SMG has continued to bolster overnight transportation options, with the Owl Bus service expanding as recently as 2022, while novel

autonomous technologies have been piloted and expanded in 2025 and 2026 (SMG, 2022, 2025, 2026). Through both the provision and deliberate evolution of transportation services overnight, SMG has created an extensive transportation network that district authorities support and direct residents to utilize, rather than bolstering this network at the district level.

While the Road Act delegates autonomous bus as valid authorities over district-level roadways, minimal indication of this authority being implemented has been identified. Rather than utilizing this legal mandate to implement district-level transportation options, Gu administrations have been seen to coordinate with SMG. This coordination is evident in as simple methods as providing supplemental guidance of how to use city-provided transportation options within the district to as participatory methods of providing district boundaries as spatial testing grounds for city initiatives like the autonomous taxi service within Gangnam-gu (Jung-gu Office, Seoul, 2017; SMG, 2025). The lack of district-led initiatives in planning is not indicative of passive governance, but further evidence of a metropolitan-centered network of transportation in which district administrations support and coordinate to evolve with the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Through the framework-setting and delegation of authority established at the national level, provision of a diverse and advancing transportation network at the city level, and support and deferment to this network at the district level, a sophisticated yet comprehensive regulatory regime of overnight transportation is established within Seoul. This regime not only spans the necessary hours of service for a 24-hour city as demonstrated by Tan and Klaasen, but also offers diverse options and opportunities that individuals may opt to use depending on their own needs or identity, promoting concepts of mobility justice established by authors Smeds et al (Tan and Klaasen, 2007; Smeds et al., 2020). Through the offering of multiple modes of transportation

overnight, vulnerable populations, NTE employees, and consumers alike experience increased autonomy in night-time travel, while the transportation system as a whole reduces exclusion and barriers of entry to the NTE.

When examined as a complete and multi-scalar regime of temporal governance, overnight transportation has been largely centralized at the metropolitan level with a primary objective of enabling activity at night. The Seoul Metropolitan Government has effectively expanded the mobility capacity of the night rather than suppressing economic opportunities through diminished public transportation overnight. Through the bolstering of overnight transportation, Seoul has elevated an often neglected program of city government to a strong continuity of metropolitan infrastructure with a high level of service through all 24 hours of the day.

Regulatory Themes of Night-Time Commercial Activation

While the provision of overnight transportation is empirically grounded through implementation of services by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, the temporal governance of night-time commercial activity is characterized through a permissive and enabling relationship between authorities and NTE businesses. This relationship is reinforced by significant absence of temporal restrictions, provisions for selective regulation on a case-by-case basis, and a history of supportive initiatives enacted by officials.

At the national level, legislation by the South Korean government establishes a selective ability to reduce or suspend hours of operation through legislative acts like the Food Sanitation Act (FSA) and Distribution Industry Development Act (DIDA). Spanning both food service and a wide array of commercial industries, the national government empowers lower level authorities to restrict business activity on the basis of loosely binding language, including reasons such as

maintaining “business order and good custom” or generally “matters necessary for imposing restrictions on business hours” (MoGL, 2024a, 2025d). The wording of this legislation is highly interpretable by officials, and grants the ability to restrict business activities so long as the justification is reasonable, rather than implementing a rigid framework that must be enforced. However, another key effect of this national legislation as-written is the ability to remain tolerant and implement a non-restrictive regime on local night-time businesses. Even in regulatory language that explicitly establishes restrictions on hours of operation on superstores and quasi-superstores in the DIDA, the restrictions are at the discretion of local governments for implementation, meaning particularly lenient jurisdictions would be nationally compliant if 24-hour superstores were allowed.

With a selectively implementable national structure for night-time regulations, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has maintained a tolerant and supportive management strategy for the NTE. Despite the ability to enforce wide sweeping metropolitan policies that restrict night-time activity, a significant absence of prohibitive temporal governance has been identified. Rather, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has actively promoted and supported the NTE through measures including identifying Seoul as a “city that never sleeps” and directly hosting night markets within 24 of 25 districts of Seoul (SMG, 2014, 2024). When combined with active overnight transportation infrastructure, SMG has adopted the NTE as a valued continuation of economic growth and infrastructure through the supply of transportation and temporal liberties afforded to night-time businesses. In this framework, Seoul has effectively decentralized broad temporal governance, with further opportunity to regulate commercial activity nationally delegated to Gu administrations.

Although district level regulatory regimes are less visible than metropolitan policies, no evidence of district-wide restriction of hours of operation has been identified. Similarly to the SMG regulatory strategy, multiple districts have actively participated in the support of night-time commercial activation. Gangnam-gu, Eunpyeong-gu, and Gangdong-gu have all been seen to utilize district resources and published materials to direct public attention to night-time economic opportunities found in attractions like special tourism zones, commercial streets, and district-hosted night markets, respectively (Gangnam-gu Office, n.d.-a, n.d.-b; Eunpyeong-gu Office, n.d.-b; Gangdong-gu Office, n.d.). These efforts have continued the trend of not only permissive regulation from government authorities, but actively supportive influence from government actors towards the NTE from the metropolitan level down.

While both SMG and district governments maintain a generally supportive attitude towards night-time commercial activation, coordination between these governments has been seen during times of responsive regulation of business hours. The targeted restriction of night-time commercial activity has historically resulted from violations of business standards or egregious nuisance externalities, as evidenced by the potential suspension of business of unsafe nightclubs or the restriction of tourist activity in the Bukchon Hanok Village (SMG, 2018, 2019). These responses are commonly led through city-led initiatives that feature direct participation from the administrations of affected districts, establishing a trend of SMG launching regulatory efforts while districts assist in the enforcement or implementation of restrictions. In addition to the coordination of authority between levels of government, the causes of government temporal regulation stem from provocation rather than prevention. Government intervention in night-time commercial activity has repeatedly been seen to stem from controlling externalities or regulatory

violations when they present themselves evidently, rather than risking over-governance or constriction of economic activity through top-down regulations.

While not explicitly stated within national, city, or district level policy, the regulatory regime as observed within Seoul implicitly affirms “open hours” as described by Tiesdell and Slater in function, with businesses structuring hours of operation of their own volition (2006, pp. 150-151). While not to be evaluated as a primary finding, conversation with the quasi-governmental Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises supports this framework, as an official from KFME within Gangnam-gu firmly states that businesses within Gangnam do not operate under government-mandated closing hours at any level of government (J. Y. Choi, and S. J. Chae, personal communication, March 2026). With functionally open hours of operation across the NTE of Seoul, a 24-hour economy is permitted, with a governmentally recognized normalization of night-time commercial activity through permissiveness rather than suppression.

Regulatory Themes of Alcohol and Music Regulation

When examining the relationship between temporal governance and the leisure industry involving alcohol and music related businesses, two distinct regulatory systems have been created with highly distinct implementation strategies. For both the registration and licensing of alcohol-serving businesses, a nationally centralized organization of “competent tax offices” has been implemented, while music-related businesses are regulated through a decentralized distribution of authority at lower levels of government.

Established by the Liquor License and Liquor Tax Acts, national tax offices act as the source of direct regulation upon the alcohol industry, regarding both the sale and manufacturing sectors. More specifically, the heads of competent tax offices are charged with the authority to determine both the scope and conditions of alcohol-serving businesses through licensing (Korea

Legislation Research Institute (KLRI), 2024). However, both the Liquor Licence and Liquor Tax Acts provide no guidance regarding temporal restriction or governance, and when paired with a lack of visibility of implementation in practice, ambiguity as to whether tax offices are concerned with hours of operation or temporal restrictions altogether is introduced (KLRI, 2024, MoGL 2024c). Given the centralization of alcohol licensing at the national level and consistent lack of temporal clauses within guiding legislation, the national government has functionally not grounded temporal restriction of alcohol sales as a governance priority. However, the temporal restriction of alcohol-serving businesses may be viable through alternative legal pathways.

Given the temporal regulatory authority granted to city and district administrations by the Food Sanitation Act, officials may potentially restrict alcohol-serving businesses through the FSA rather than on the basis of liquor licensing if food is also sold on premises. Additionally, city and district officials have been seen to hold responsibility over the enforcement of legal sales of alcohol, most often surrounding the prohibition of selling alcohol to underage consumers, with penalties for failed compliance including suspension of business (MoGL, 2025c). Due to a significant absence of temporal regulations found within the centralized tax office system, interactions between nationally implemented licensing requirements and city and district ordinances may provide further insight into the permissive nature of alcohol sales suggested in conversation with a KFME-Gangnam respondent (KFME representative, interview conducted by Professor Christine Bae, personal communication, March 20, 2026).

In contrast to the nationally-bounded regulatory regime of alcohol licensing, the Public Performance Act and Music Industry Promotion Act return implementation authority to the city and district level. This regulatory responsibility is largely grounded in the enforcement of safety standards and registration requirements for performance halls and music-related businesses like

Karaoke bars (MoGL, 2024b, 2025c). Both acts establish national expectations of business standards, yet do not explicitly ground these expectations in temporal governance. While these standards do not directly impose temporal restrictions, local execution of this enforcement has been seen to impact NTE businesses, evidenced through joint efforts between SMG and district officials conducting compliance inspections of nightclubs across Seoul (SMG, 2019). The prioritization of safety and standards of business conduct over the temporal restriction of music-related business indicates a clear framing of how these venues are characterized: as viable economic opportunities rather than sources of nuisance and disorder that must be proactively addressed.

Although the alcohol and music industries within Seoul vary in centralized and decentralized application, respectively, the regulatory approach to the leisure sector of the NTE is consistently focused on administrative responsibility, safety, and conditional intervention. Similar to that of night-time commercial activation, multi-scalar governance within Seoul is centered on the compliance of NTE businesses within registration and standards of business practices rather than the temporal governance of activity. This theme presents a key contrast to western-based regulatory regimes presented in literature. Where cities like London enact anticipatory disorder control and utilize alcohol licensing as a means of controlling the volume of alcohol-serving businesses, Seoul maintains a permissive regulatory framework for the leisure industry with legal pathways to correct transgressions where and when they occur (Roberts, 2006, p. 333; Hadfield et al., 2009, p. 469).

Complementing the temporally-lenient structure of governance of night-time commercial activity, Seoul regulates nightlife industries like alcohol and music through administrative frameworks and safety standards rather than direct temporal restriction. The Seoul governance

structure normalizes the leisure industry as ordinary regulated businesses, rather than a source of disorder that must be contained proactively. While risk factors including safety hazards and malpractice are managed through responsive efforts of city and district officials, the opportunities of both alcohol and music industries have not been suppressed, and key elements of the NTE have been sustained.

Regulatory Themes of Nuisance Control

Nuisance control within Seoul is largely grounded in one key legislative act at the national level: the Noise and Vibration Control Act (NVCA). Although the primary nuisance this act seeks to limit stems from construction and other industrial sources, the addition of workplace and inter-floor noise broadens the scope of the NVCA to become applicable to NTE activity. Unlike previous legislation like the FSA and DIDA that permits lower government authorities to place restrictions at their discretion, the NVCA explicitly states that the heads of city and district level government “shall control noise and vibration” with the goal of maintaining a “tranquil living environment,” (MoGL, 2022). Additionally, a significant absence of temporally-binding restrictions within the NVCA avoids placing the time of day or night as a key nuisance control consideration.

The wording of this legislation is impactful on two fronts. The first of which is the explicit responsibility of local officials to enact nuisance control through the deliberate use of “shall” when delegating authority within the NVCA. Where previous legislation has explicitly introduced variability of enforcement with provisions to even elect not to enforce governance entirely, the NVCA offers no ability to abstain from regulation. This mandate placed upon lower levels of government acts as a lesser-seen display of a centralized expectation upon lower levels of government. For contrast, where the DIDA created a national framework in which superstores

may have restrictions of hours of operation placed upon them by city and district officials, the potential for regulation was established as a tool at the discretion of local government (MoGL, 2025d). However, by the text of the NVCA, the delegated authority to manage noise and vibration is a national expectation that cannot be ignored.

The second relevant implication from the wording of the NVCA is the potential for interpretation of a “tranquil living environment,” as the chapter for “Control of Living Noise and Vibration” does not prescribe allowable levels of noise. The NVCA applies more explicit standards and expectations of nuisance control on industry, construction, motor vehicles, and aircraft, but offers comparatively little information providing boundaries of nuisance from workplaces despite explicitly including them within the definition of “living noise,” (MoGL, 2022). As a result of this lack of national guidance on noise control stemming from sources related to the NTE, local governments are left to interpret the severity of nuisance reported, and when this constitutes a necessary response or restriction.

While the national government applies pressure to manage noise and vibration, ambiguity of restrictions regarding workplace noise and the standards of a “tranquil living environment” and a lack of explicit temporal restrictions have introduced discretion of enforcement regarding NTE nuisance control. From visible public evidence, Seoul has enacted nuisance control measures only when the magnitude of nuisance grows intolerable, or the governmental reaction to the nuisance is politically salient. To better understand and record nuisance complaints and violations, SMG and participating district officials have implemented “noise complaint processing panels and resident monitoring groups” along with specialized noise monitoring equipment since 2012. These modernization efforts were designed to transition Seoul from utilizing “human-dependent noise management to scientific noise management” with an explicit

purpose of “reducing the burden on self-governing boroughs while decreasing the number of noise-related complaints,” (SMG, 2012). Rather than implementing tolerable noise limits outright, the Seoul Metropolitan Government increased the ability for officials to respond to complaints, reinforcing Seoul’s responsive strategy with nuisance control rather than strictly preventative.

While nuisance control efforts within Seoul have often taken the form of construction of responsive institutions, SMG and cooperating district officials have also applied direct temporal regulations when necessary. In the most apparent example of nuisance control within the NTE, tourist activity was directly prohibited from the hours of 5pm-10am within the historic Bukchon Hanok Village (SMG, 2018). This coordinated effort between SMG and Jongno-gu was initiated only after residents “made many complaints about loud noise, garbage dumping, and illegal parking made by the tourists,” signaling a threshold of tolerable nuisance was crossed. In response, the Seoul Metropolitan Government enacted these temporal restrictions with district support and community input, honoring the requirement for government intervention as outlined by the NVCA.

While Seoul maintains permissive temporal regulations regarding night-time commercial activation and the leisure industries featured within, direct limitation of excess noise and nuisance is not only demonstrated through Seoul-led initiatives with district-aided enforcement, but mandated through national legislation. However, the application of nuisance control has been seen to be conditional and primarily responsive to resident complaints rather than outright preventative of nuisance in totality. When combined with the other variables of NTE governance, nuisance control acts as tension management between NTE businesses and consumers and neighboring communities. Where multi-scalar governance of the NTE elects to

remain permissive and enabling of night-time activity, nuisance control acts as a centralized mandate for the mitigation of negative externalities, but operationalized at the city and district levels.

Potential Best Practices in Temporal Governance

The multi-scalar governance of the night-time economy within Seoul offers several key administrative practices that offer potential alternatives to the regulation-heavy and anticipatory governance strategies seen within western 24-hour cities. Where cities like London and Amsterdam have employed “Night Mayors,” established increased nuisance control, and limited nightlife industries through licensing restrictions, Seoul has addressed the same governance variables through permissiveness and enabling policies for night-time activity. Additionally, Seoul has not only allowed organic NTE activity to evolve, but has instituted structural support systems through transportation and regulatory frameworks to actively bolster nightlife capacity.

One of the most direct and transferable governance mechanisms utilized by the Seoul Metropolitan Government is the provision of a rigorous and diverse assortment of transportation options overnight. While the robust subway system provides service until 12am, Seoul has implemented multi-modal transportation options ranging from overnight bus services to individualized autonomous taxi programs to extend the availability of public transportation across all 24 hours of the day. This bolstering of infrastructure not only provides key services for night-time consumers and employees alike, but establishes a continuous theme of normalizing NTE activity as a continuation of ordinary city function in the eyes of government administrations.

The trend of administrative normalization is consistently demonstrated through legislation and policies throughout national and metropolitan levels as explicitly temporal regulations are seldom implemented. Rather, a regulatory framework that establishes permissive governance as a default is established. Regulations on hours of operation, music-venues, and even nationally mandated nuisance control offer interpretation and discretion of enforcement to lower levels of government. This structure offers necessary flexibility of regulatory implementation at the city and district level, while national standards are still upheld.

However, while permissiveness of regulatory enforcement is fostered as a default condition, control over negative externalities is applied through responsive intervention techniques rather than anticipatory methods. Although no curfews are widely applied during the night, both city and district authorities maintain the ability to temporally restrict consumer activity of entire neighborhoods when certain nuisance thresholds are crossed. This ability to respond to and contain detriments of the NTE enacts active management of tension between communities that utilize the NTE and those who abstain, reducing the need for Seoul to overcommit regulatory stances in one direction over another. The balance of permissiveness and responsiveness within governance of the NTE has promoted sustainability through conditional flexibility. The NTE of Seoul as a city is fundamentally strengthened by localized implementation of governance that suits the needs of the specific district or community.

With this governmental structure in place within Seoul, potential best practices emerge. Seoul has demonstrated that a vibrant NTE is possible through multi-scalar flexibility that implements decentralized enforcement of nationally established practices. This decentralization has allowed for locally optimized regulations to be placed, with a system that allows for highly permissive enforcement of temporal regulations within one district while strict enforcement of

nuisance control is applied to another. Perhaps the largest practice utilized by the governments of both South Korea and Seoul is the normalization and support for the NTE as an equally prioritized service of the city, rather than a source of disorder that must be controlled.

Limitations of Research

The most prevalent limitation of research stems from the availability of data that satisfies methodological constraints. Given the reliance on both translated and visible data provided directly by government or government-sponsored sources, quality of data utilized was prioritized over the quantity of data available. While the validated data according to methodological strategies was sufficient in portraying trends of multi-scalar governance over the NTE within Seoul, valuable insight may still be available from sources that did not satisfy the requirements for consideration. This limitation impacts district level governance especially, as directly published materials in English translation varies significantly from district to district. However, both national and metropolitan level policy and legislation was widely available in English translation with high levels of searchability for qualitative content analysis.

A second limitation arises from the nature of using translated documents in that the nuance of original Korean text may be lost through the conversion to English. Without the services of a direct translator proficient in conveying meaning in both Korean and English equally, this limitation is unavoidable. In anticipation of this inherent limitation, only English documents that were directly provided by government institutions or government-sponsored institutions were utilized, with examples being policies from SMG and legislation from KLRI, respectively. While some nuance of Korean text may still be lost from the original to English

iterations, the direct approval of these documents from governmental authorities ensures accurate interpretation of regulatory intent.

Another limitation of this research stems from the use of a singular city as a case study. While Seoul fulfills the requirements to qualify as a viable 24-hour city within Asia, there will always be intrinsic aspects of South Korea and Seoul that may not be able to compare to other cities around the world, whether it be through governance or characteristics of the city itself. This limitation is difficult to mitigate as the methodology stands, but alternative city perspectives of governing the NTE were both researched and incorporated into literature review. By establishing experiences of other 24-hour cities as background information, the trends and discussion material of this research are able to be grounded further in global context, with western management of the NTE offering distinct contrast specifically.

Finally, the role of absence of data within this research is a complex factor. The comparative absence of consumer and business experiences under the multi-scalar governance of the NTE is methodologically founded due to the constraints placed upon usable data. With no governmentally published documentation of NTE consumer, employee, or business owner perspectives in English, this research exclusively specializes in the perspective of officials and regulators as a result. However, this research set out to define the multi-scalar regulatory regime of Seoul through key variables of study rather than evaluate the reception of this temporal governance by the NTE population.

Secondarily, the concept of significant absence of variable-specific governance as valid findings may introduce absence-based interpretation into analysis. The direct absence of visible temporal restrictions at any level of government does not necessitate the existence or lack thereof of informal governance. Additionally, internal practices of temporal governance may exist

beyond what is visible within the bounds of this research, just as actual enforcement of policy may differ from what has been documented thus far. However, each variable was examined across national, metropolitan, and district levels of government in terms of regulation, implementation, and enforcement. Only from establishing a coherent regulatory framework that spans all levels of government and regulatory application were themes identified and produced as findings. Given the unequal visibility of 25 distinct, autonomous local governments at the district level, variance of NTE regulation is to be expected, but broader themes of governance from the national level down have been established through a comprehensive qualitative content analysis.

Conclusion

While the spatial impact of regulations and governance within a city is highly focused on within the field of urban planning, a key dimension of the built environment is often understated and overlooked despite being an ever-present factor, the temporal aspect of governance. Operationalized through temporal governance or regulations, the framework of temporal governance is the dividing characteristic between 9-5, 18-hour, and 24-hour cities, with the latter governing the night as an extension of the day. To establish a 24-hour city, both essential and cultural services must be enabled overnight, with these services often being jointly referred to as the “night-time economy,” or NTE.

To better understand temporal governance of the NTE, four key variables of governing the night-time economy were identified through previous literature: the provision of overnight transportation, night-time commercial activation, the regulation of alcohol and music industries, and the implementation of nuisance control. The prevalence of NTE activity within a city or

municipality is largely determined through the regulatory strategies implemented through these four levers. While all 24-hour cities support activity overnight, the methods in which these variables are delivered can vary widely.

While the 24-hour city model has been studied in the past, cities highlighted in literature are often bound to Europe and North America, with little representation from other continents. This gap is especially prevalent when concerning research into the regulatory intent of cities through document-based and legislative perspectives. To address this gap in the literature of the 24-hour city, particularly in the Asian continent, a document-based qualitative content analysis of Seoul's governance of the NTE has been conducted.

Due to Seoul's prominence as the capital and most populous city within South Korea with a self prescribed identity as a "city that never sleeps," Seoul presents itself as an ideal case study as a 24-hour city within Asia (SMG, 2014). The prevalence of Seoul's nightlife has also been quantified and described as an "optimal frontier," with a significant diversity and spatial distribution of night-time hotspots featuring NTE businesses trafficked by thousands of consumers (Lee & Lee, 2024, pp. 5-7). With Seoul identified as a 24-hour city in both intent and function, this research sought to discover trends in multi-scalar governance of the NTE within Seoul, operationalized by the regulatory frameworks across the four key variables identified within previous literature.

Through a qualitative content analysis using only government provided or sponsored legislative or policy documents provided in English at national, metropolitan, and district levels of government, a highly flexible multi-scalar network of temporal governance was discovered. At the national level, South Korean legislation functioned through framework setting rather than directly imposing specific regulations. Within key acts like the Food Sanitation Act,

Development Industry Development Act, Music Industry Promotion Act, Public Performance Act, and more, the national government establishes standards while delegating implementation and enforcement authority to lower forms of government, including both the metropolitan and district administrations. The specific text of these national laws were often devoid of explicit temporal regulation, with implementation of restrictions deferred to the discretion of lower government officials. The only sector of NTE regulation that remained centralized to the national level was the construction of the competent tax office system as direct regulators of alcohol licensing and registration for businesses, as established in the Liquor Licensing and Liquor Tax Acts.

At the metropolitan level of government, represented through the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG), administrations served as the leading source of implementation and enforcement of nationally delegated responsibilities. Evidence of NTE regulation through the variables of night-time commercial activation, regulation of music-related businesses, and key instances of nuisance control commonly featured SMG-led initiatives, with further support from district authorities. The Seoul Metropolitan government also was the primary provider of overnight transportation, with key services like the Owl Bus service, autonomous taxi services, and new autonomous bus routes being SMG initiatives to support night-time transportation after the Seoul subway suspends operations at midnight. This infrastructural responsibility is individual to the metropolitan level of government, as the national government only directly regulates national expressways while district governments support and defer to city-provided transportation options.

Although the district level of government provides the least amount of visibility in policy implementation and data, evidence indicates that gu administrations function as localized

implementation and enforcement authority that often supplements city initiatives. In prominent examples of city-led efforts to enforce safety standards for nightclubs, the suspension of tourist activity at night due to nuisance, and the establishment of nuisance complaint panels, participation and coordination with district officials was distinctly featured. In addition to this supplemental role in NTE governance, district administrations have been seen to actively promote NTE activity and events, with Gangnam-gu, Eunpyeong-gu, and Gangdong-gu highlighting district-specific nightlife opportunities, directly supporting night-time commercial activation in function.

When examined as a multi-scalar regulatory regime, several themes of NTE governance appear. The most apparent theme within the management of Seoul's NTE is the prevalence of permissiveness and enablement of night-time activity. Direct temporal regulations are scarcely found in text, and of the few examples discovered, high levels of regulatory discretion and interpretation are provided for lower levels of government. This allowance for variance of temporal regulation stems directly from the system of delegated authority implemented largely by the national government, as trust in regulatory authority is granted to both metropolitan and district governments equally. This decentralized governmental system then allows for locally optimized regulatory implementation that tailors the NTE experience to the goals of communities as large as the city of Seoul to as small as Bukchon Hanok Village.

While the permissiveness and enabling implementation of regulatory policies is critical, the establishment of infrastructural capacity through SMG's overnight transportation system has directly contributed to the capacity of night-time activity while further developing equity in night transportation. The diversity of transportation options, both in terms of hours of operation and

mode of travel, and high level of spatial service overnight have provided a strong foundation for NTE consumers to engage with nightlife venues across Seoul regardless of individual needs.

Importantly, this regime of NTE governance is not strictly permissive, as the Noise and Vibration Control Act establishes a national mandate compelling lower levels of authority to control nuisance from sources including workplaces. However, this mandate still incorporates flexibility in enforcement and interpretation, which has been directly reflected through both city and district nuisance control. Rather than implementing strictly and broadly applied standards, Seoul governments have established a responsive relationship with night-time nuisance. This has been seen to be proactively established with the construction of further avenues for communication between residents and officials, while also being reactively addressed through coordinated efforts that have been seen to restrict temporal activity altogether in specific areas.

Most notably, the regulatory regime over Seoul's night-time economy normalizes night-time activity as an extension of ordinary city functions. Transportation has been implemented in ways that do not carry a decrease in level of service as the night progresses, commercial activity is supported to develop organically through open closing hours, leisure industries are subject to standard regulations, and nuisance control has not been evidenced to grow more punitive or anticipatory as the day transitions to night. Conversely, Seoul has not elected to leave the night unregulated, as key regulatory frameworks still uphold standards and manage potential conflicts that may arise from the NTE. Rather, Seoul is governed through a multi-scalar system that promotes flexibility in governance through decentralized implementation and enforcement.

It is this regulatory strategy that has emerged from research within the gap in Asian 24-hour city literature. While Seoul represents a single city as a contribution to this gap, this

methodology and research invites further investigation within both Asian and global urban planning and governance over the night. Prior to this research, western 24-hour city governance has highlighted anticipatory control over externalities arising from the NTE. Regulatory practices like the enforcement of business hours, withholding alcohol licensing, or implementing proactive nuisance suppression at the risk of stifling economic opportunity have been offered as potential best practices when managing a 24-hour city. However, Seoul addresses the same externalities through responsive, enabling, and infrastructure-supported regulatory initiatives while maintaining control over nuisance when a threshold of tolerance is crossed.

While this research does not assert one management practice as superior to another, Seoul offers a deeply contrasting example of managing the night through bottom-up implementation over top-down governance. The night-time economy of Seoul has not grown to establish an “optimal frontier” through deregulation nor exclusively density or culture, but has been carefully cultivated through a discretionary system of governmental support and control when needed. In many ways, Seoul has appeared to manage the night with the same level of service and attention to detail that one would expect from daytime governance, normalizing night-time economic activity as an ordinary responsibility of city governance and establishing Seoul as a prime example of a 24-hour city within Asia.

Further Research

Looking ahead from this research, several questions for further research arise. The first of which concerns deepened analysis into the governance of the NTE within Seoul, particularly at the district level of all 25 autonomous *gus*. While this research identified general themes of

temporal governance at the district level through a broader multi-scalar regime, diversity in temporal regulations between these districts requires subsequent study.

More specifically, a document-based approach to qualitative content analysis at the district level will not be sufficient under the data constraints applied within this research. Due to a lack of both visibility and provision of English policy documentation, future methods for evaluating individual district NTE governance would likely require extensive interviewing of local government officials or an ability to directly interpret Korean sources. With NTE-based research at a closer scale within Seoul, potential diversity in permissive or restrictive NTE regulatory enforcement can be not only identified, but spatially mapped. Additionally, a closer inspection of district level governance would provide expanded analysis into temporal regulation where significant absence was identified at higher levels of government. Within this study, significant absence of direct temporal regulation was interpreted as providing regulatory leeway at the enforcement level of government, whether it be city or district officials. Future inquiry into how local officials fill in gaps of regulation within national legislation may offer more potential best practices within Seoul, advancing conversation around the balance between regulatory flexibility and consistency.

Beyond heightened district level analysis, this research distinctly prioritized understanding of the regulatory intentions and implementation of NTE governance from the perspective of multi-scalar government administrations. With emerging themes of temporal governance within Seoul discovered, further research into the public reception of these policies and enforcement from the perspective of both NTE consumers and business stakeholders is warranted. Qualitative analysis of personal accounts from residents, night-time consumers, NTE employees, and business owners may illuminate public perception of the NTE and the

governance thereof, including potential tension that may arise between participants and abstaining communities.

Additionally, the study of both public perception of NTE governance and closer district level implementation may provide insight on post-COVID trends suggested by a KFME official in supplemental findings. This research was largely founded on modern legislation as of May 2026, with referenced policies dating from the present to the early 2010s. As time progresses, the themes presented within this research will be subject to change as the needs of Seoul evolve over time, and current government data may not reflect this evolution accurately. As a result, additional investigation into potential shifts of NTE-demand are encouraged.

Finally, the methodology presented within this research lends itself to further application on both 24-hour and non-24-hour cities alike. The variables of study identified in literature and utilized within this analysis hold potential for both enabling and suppressing night-time activity in municipalities of any size, in any country or continent. Through introducing new cities as case studies within the same general methodology, global themes of temporal governance regimes may emerge, and continental gaps in understanding may be addressed over time. Due to the sample size of one within this case study, the prevalence of permissiveness or governing through significant absence within global 24-hour city temporal governance is critical for comparative analysis.

References

Chan, N. K. (2018). Place-making and communication practice: Everyday precarity in a night market in Hong Kong. *Space and Culture*, 21(4), 439–454.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331217741085>

Eunpyeong-gu Office. (n.d.-a). *Introduction to Eunpyeong-gu*. Retrieved May 4, 2026 from <https://www.ep.go.kr/eng/contents.do?key=1748>

Eunpyeong-gu Office. (n.d.-b). *Yeonsinnae Rodeo Street*. Retrieved May 4, 2026 from <https://www.ep.go.kr/eng/contents.do?key=1745>

Gangdong-gu Office. (n.d.). *The Exciting Night of Godeok Traditional Market! \$Gangdong-gu plans to move the venue of the night market from Amsa Market to Godeok Traditional Market from the 2nd of next month*. Retrieved May 4, 2026 from https://www.gangdong.go.kr/web/eng/bbs/news/2083?cp=2&sv=night&pageSize=10&sortOrder=BA_REGDATE&sortDirection=DESC&bcId=news&baNotice=false&baCommSelec=false&baOpenDay=false&baUse=true

Gangnam-gu Office. (n.d.-a). *About Gangnam MICE*. Retrieved May 4, 2026 from <https://visitgangnam.net/en/about/mice>

Gangnam-gu Office. (n.d.-b). *COEX: Tourists' favorite one-stop attraction*. <https://visitgangnam.net/en/places/coex-tourists-favorite-one-stop-attraction>

Gwanak-gu Office. (n.d.). *Official website*. Retrieved May 4, 2026 from <https://www.gwanak.go.kr/site/eng/main.do>

Hadfield, P., Lister, S., & Traynor, P. (2009). "This town's a different town today": Policing and regulating the night-time economy. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 9(4), 465–485. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895809343409>

Jung-gu Office, Seoul. (2017). *Subway | Transportation*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from

<https://www.junggu.seoul.kr/english/content.do?cmsid=14848>

Kelly, H. F., & Malizia, E. E. (2017). Defining 24-hour and 18-hour cities, assessing their vibrancy, and evaluating their property performance. *Journal of Real Estate Portfolio Management*, 23(1), 87–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10835547.2017.12090000>

KORAIL Pass. (n.d.). *KTX routes*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from

<https://korail-pass.com/ktx-routes/>

Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises. (n.d.-a). *Activation* [활성화]. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from <https://www.kfme.or.kr/kr/business/activation.php>

Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises. (n.d.-b). *Excavation* [발굴]. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from <https://www.kfme.or.kr/kr/business/excavation.php>

Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises. (n.d.-c). *Research* [연구]. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from <https://www.kfme.or.kr/kr/business/research.php?ckattempt=1>

Korea Federation of Micro Enterprises. (n.d.-d). *Vision* [비전]. Retrieved May 5, 2026, from <https://www.kfme.or.kr/kr/company/vision.php>

Korea Law Translation Center. (n.d.). Statutes of the Republic of Korea: About this service.

Retrieved December 11, 2025, from https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_mobile/introduction.do

Korea Legislation Research Institute. (2024, February 13). 주류 면허 등에 관한 법률 [*Liquor License Act*] (Act No. 20249). Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=67683&lang=KOR

Korea Legislation Research Institute. (n.d.). *Introduction*. Retrieved December 11, 2025, from https://www.klri.re.kr/eng/sub01_02.do

Lee, C., & Lee, E. H. (2024). *Evaluation of urban nightlife attractiveness for Millennials and Generation Z*. *Cities*, 149, 104934. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104934>

Lovatt, A., & O'Connor, J. (1995). Cities and the night-time economy. *Planning Practice & Research*, 10(2), 127–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459550036676>

Ministry of Government Legislation. (n.d.). About MOLEG. Retrieved December 11, 2025, from <https://www.moleg.go.kr/menu.es?mid=a30105000000>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2022, December 30). *Noise and Vibration Control Act (Act No. 19150, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2023, March 21). *Local Autonomy Act (Act No. 19241, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2024a, January 2). *Food Sanitation Act (Act No. 19917, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2024b, October 22). *Public Performance Act (Act No. 20487, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2024c, December 31). *Liquor Tax Act (Act No. 20618, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2025a, January 21). *Road Traffic Act (Act No. 20677, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2025b, January 31). *Road Act (Act No. 20758, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2025c, March 25). *Music Industry Promotion Act (Act No. 20839, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2025d, November 21). *Distribution Industry Development Act (Act No. 21145, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Ministry of Government Legislation (Korea). (2025e, December 2). *Passenger Transport Service Act (Act No. 21180, as amended)*. Korean Law Information Center. Retrieved May 1, 2026, from <https://law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do>

Park, S. Y. (2021). *Stitching the 24-hour city: Life, labor, and the problem of speed in Seoul*. Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9781501754265.001.0001>

- Plyushteva, A., & Boussauw, K. (2020). Does night-time public transport contribute to inclusive night mobility? Exploring Sofia's night bus network from a gender perspective. *Transport Policy*, 87, 41–50.
- Roberts, M. (2006). From “creative city” to “no-go areas”: The expansion of the night-time economy in British town and city centres. *Cities*, 23(5), 331–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2005.08.006>
- Seijas, A., & Gelders, M. (2021). Governing the night-time city: The rise of night mayors as a new form of urban governance after dark. *Urban Studies*, 58(2), 316–334.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098019895224>
- Seoul Metro. (n.d.-a). *Overview of Seoul Metro*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from
<http://www.seoulmetro.co.kr/en/page.do?menuIdx=653>
- Seoul Metro. (n.d.-b). *Seoul subway map (English version)* [Map]. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from
https://www.seoulmetro.co.kr/download/map_english.jpg
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2012, February 29). *One Year of Noise Reduction, Seoul Goes Quiet*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from
<https://english.seoul.go.kr/one-year-of-noise-reduction-seoul-goes-quiet/>
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2014). *Seoul: The city that never sleeps: Seoul nightlife official tourist guide*. Tourism Policy Division. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from
<https://english.seoul.go.kr/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/The-City-That-Never-Sleeps.pdf>

- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2016a, December 22). *Seoul village lawyers solved 10,000 legal cases helping citizens' agony*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-village-lawyers-solved-10000-legal-cases-helping-citizens-agony/>
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2016b, December 22). *Travel safely around the city even at night with Seoul's "Owl Bus"*. Retrieved December 11, 2025, from <https://english.seoul.go.kr/travel-safely-around-city-even-night-seouls-owl-bus/>
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2018, June 19). *Seoul implements the visiting hours for tourists at the Bukchon Hanok Village*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-implements-the-visiting-hours-for-tourists-at-the-bukchon-hanok-village/>
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2019, August 1). *Seoul conducts an all-out investigation into night clubs and similar entertainment facilities*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-conduct-an-all-out-investigation-into-night-clubs-and-similar-entertainment-facilities/>
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2022, April 13). *Seoul expands citywide night bus service*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-expands-citywide-night-bus-service/>
- Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2024, June 3). *Night traditional markets attract Generation Z and tourists with K-food and entertainment until November*. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from

<https://english.seoul.go.kr/night-traditional-markets-attract-generation-z-and-tourists-with-k-food-and-entertainment-until-november/>

Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2025, June 20). *Seoul expands Korea's first late-night autonomous taxi service to all of Gangnam after verification of safety and convenience.*

Retrieved May 2, 2026, from

<https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-expands-koreas-first-late-night-autonomous-taxi-service-to-all-of-gangnam-after-verification-of-safety-and-convenience/>

Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2026, April 21). *Seoul to expand early-morning autonomous bus service as A148 route launches April 16.* Retrieved May 2, 2026, from

<https://english.seoul.go.kr/seoul-to-expand-early-morning-autonomous-bus-service-as-a148-route-launches-april-16/>

Shaw, R. (2013). Beyond night-time economy: Affective atmospheres of the urban night.

Geoforum, 51, 87–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.10.005>

Smeds, E., Robin, E., & McArthur, J. (2020). Night-time mobilities and (in)justice in London:

Constructing mobile subjects and the politics of difference in policy-making. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 82, Article 102569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2019.102569>

Tan, K. S. Y., & Chan, S. K. L. (2024). From train station to night market: Bangkok's Talad Rod Fai as urban liminoid space. *Space and Culture*, 27(4), 413–427.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/12063312211046801>

Tan, W., & Klaasen, I. (2007). Exploring 24/7 environments. *Town Planning Review*, 78(6), 699–723. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23803566>

Tiesdell, S., & Slater, A.-M. (2006). Calling time: Managing activities in space and time in the evening/night-time economy. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 7(2), 137–157.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649350600673047>