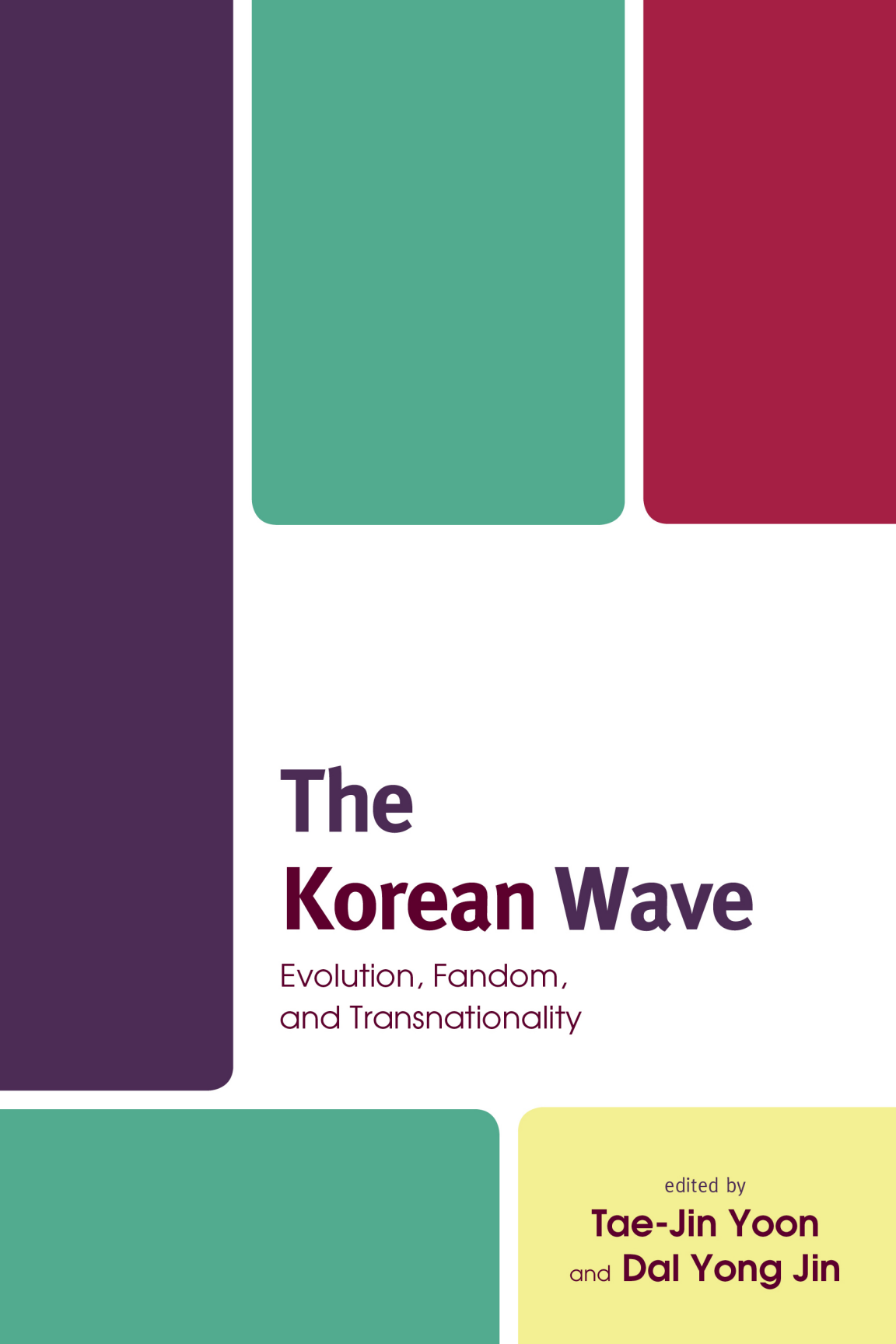




The Korean Wave

Evolution, Fandom,
and Transnationality

edited by

Tae-Jin Yoon
and **Dal Yong Jin**

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Preface

Tae-Jin Yoon and Dal Yong Jin

In the history of the global flow of popular culture, “the Korean Wave,” a.k.a. *Hallyu*, has been nothing but a unique phenomenon. It was a surprising and even a strange one to many critics and scholars who observed the popularity of television dramas and songs made in a small country that was neither a traditional cultural power nor an economically superior nation. Just as a Japanese media scholar in the early 2000s referred to the Korean Wave in Japan as “fad,” some media scholars and people did not believe the continuation of the *Hallyu* phenomenon. Due to the nature of its weakness and temporality as a local-based transnational culture in its initial stage, it was not unreasonable that they expected it to be short-lived trends, which would not expand beyond the East Asian area. But twenty years later, the Korean Wave is much stronger and boasts broader popularity than the early stage of the phenomenon in the world. To name a few, while East and Southeast Asia is still the largest market for the Korean cultural industries, other parts of the world, including North and South Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and even some part of Africa have gradually admitted Korean popular culture. The components of the Korean Wave have also greatly expanded. It originally implied the exports of television dramas and films, but Korea has recently developed and exported K-pop, digital games, beauty products, and Korean cuisine.

These changes in the nature of the Korean Wave, conceptual and theoretical shifts in *Hallyu* studies, and the influences of the development of media technologies on the Korean Wave are all very significant to many media scholars and policy makers. In other words, theoreticians and practitioners are highly interested in the evolution of *Hallyu*, and therefore, it is not surprising to see that lots of communication and cultural studies scholars have paid attention to several major issues relevant to the Korean Wave, including how this interesting cultural phenomenon was possible, what its impact was, and

what it meant. This book aims to provide a better understanding of *Hallyu's* theoretical and institutional history, on the one hand, and new features of the Korean Wave, on the other hand. It explores the histories of the Korean Wave as a catalyst of regional and global changes in the realm of popular culture and provides new perspectives by developing a non-Western driven contra flow in the global cultural markets.

All of the contributors to this book are well aware that the Korean Wave tradition continues to evolve in relation to developments in their objects of analysis—media history, policy, culture, and society—and to changes in *Hallyu* scholarship. They also keenly acknowledge the significance of advancing new theoretical and methodological frameworks. We as the editors of this book have especially been interested in the Korean Wave for a long period of time from different perspectives. Tae-Jin Yoon has approached the Korean popular culture from cultural studies point of view, while Dal Yong Jin is more inclined toward the political economy perspective. However, both of us have believed in a publication project that not only reflects two different approaches but also where two areas converge collectively and collegially, which would be very interesting and valuable.

Under this circumstance, this book was materialized when Yoon came to Simon Fraser University as a visiting scholar in September, 2015. We met on a daily basis and naturally discussed a few interesting topics, such as what the Korean Wave really means and what its importance is. We finally planned to develop this theme as the twentieth anniversary of the inception of the Korean Wave approached, and consequently we invited scholars from all over the world who were interested in the Korean Wave to proceed with two academic events. With the support of Simon Fraser University of Canada and Yonsei University of Korea, these academic venues were held in Vancouver in June 2016 and also in Seoul in August 2016. Participants in the workshops were scholars from the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Chile, as well as Korea and Canada, and more than twenty excellent research results were presented.

More specifically, this book is a product of the project that started with two workshops in a sense. Seven of the thirteen chapters were developed by completing the workshop presentations, while three were newly written for publication. The other three have already been published elsewhere, but they have been greatly revised and supplemented. As a result, this book has a balance, not only between theoretical discussions and the analysis of the phenomena, but also between attentions to the past, present, and future. We hope that this book will be a good guide to comprehend what the Korean Wave is and what its cultural meanings are. Furthermore, we hope that it would be a good textbook to study transnational culture developed from a non-Western

country, global cultural exchange, cultural hybridity, cultural industries, and policies in the digital media age.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to those who provided assistance as we edited this book. Each chapter of the book was reviewed by two anonymous reviewers, and we would like to thank them as they gave insightful critiques and advices. Dr. Hyeri Jung, who is one of the chapter contributors as well, handled many miscellaneous works during the publishing process. We give special thanks to Dr. Jung. We also owe our gratitude to Ji Hoon Park of Korea University and Kwangho Lee of Keio University, who were colleagues and friends in Vancouver, as they input valuable comments when we prepared the workshops and the publication. For this book to have finally been published, Simon Fraser University and Yonsei University played a major role. In particular, we would like to express our gratitude to CPROST (Center for Policy Research on Science and Technology) of Simon Fraser University and KOVIC (Center for Korean Visual Culture) of Yonsei University. They provided handsome amount of financial support for the workshops. It would have been impossible to publish this book without all these supports by our friends and the institutions. We finally want to mention that this work was supported (in part) by the Yonsei University Future-leading Research Initiative of 2015 (2016-22-0118).

Introduction

The Korean Wave: Twenty Years, Retrospect and Prospect

Tae-Jin Yoon and Dal Yong Jin

It was 1997 when Korean¹ pop culture attracted people's attentions from outside the Korean peninsula for the first time. At that time, Korean television dramas especially gained unexpected popularity in China. Although the term “the Korean Wave” was coined in 1999 by Chinese newspapers, which used the expression to represent the success of Korean singers in China as “*Hallyu* (韓流; the Korean Wave),” it would be fair to say the term symbolizes the rapid growth of Korea’s cultural industries and their exports of cultural products, including television shows, popular music (K-pop), animation, and digital games, since 1997. The Korean Wave now marks a historical point, its twentieth anniversary in 2017.

For the last 20 years, the Korean Wave has undergone many changes. Geographically, the Korean Wave has expanded from only a few East Asian countries to many parts of the world. While Asia has been the largest cultural market for the Korean cultural industries, other areas, including North America, Western Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America have gradually admitted Korean popular culture. The components of the Korean Wave have also greatly expanded. Originally, *Hallyu* implied the exports of a few cultural products, such as television dramas, popular music, and films; however, Korea has recently developed and exported K-pop, digital games, and smartphone technologies as well as relevant youth culture. Among these, K-pop has become one of the most popular cultures for global youth in their teens and twenties (Jin, 2016). As Choi (2015) also points out, the Korean Wave has been diversified as the current *Hallyu* ranges from essential content (e.g., television dramas and K-pop) to semi-essential content (e.g., video-games and food), para-*Hallyu* products and services (e.g., tourism, cosmetic products, plastic surgery, fashion items, and language services), distribution channels (various platform technologies), and effects (sales of commodities

and national image and so on). These recent definitions of *Hallyu* may be too broad, but we are certain that many people have witnessed the geographical expansion and genre diversification of the Korean Wave over the last 20 years.

It is not surprising that the global popularity of the Korean Wave has attracted the attention of scholars, who considered it as an interesting example of counterevidence of media imperialism at first, but soon realized it was to be a signal of the shift in the transnational cultural flow. In fact, the Korean Wave is distinguishable from other local-based transnational popular cultures like in Mexico and Brazil, because it has developed several forms of popular culture and digital technologies at the same time and exported them to both Asian countries and Western countries. Korea is arguably the only country to actualize both the growth of domestic cultural industries and the export of several cultural products (Jin and Yoon, 2017). In order to explain this unprecedented cultural phenomenon, many scholars (Kim, Long and Robinson, 2009; Siriyuvasak and Shin, 2007) employed the concept of cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991) and/or “Asianization” in the early stage of the Korean Wave. This was understandable, as Chinese audiences in the late 1990s were believed to welcome Korean television dramas mainly because of the Confucian value found in them. However, it turned out that the concept of cultural proximity was no longer suitable for explaining the Korean Wave concerning its geographical expansion. Since Korean popular cultures have been enjoyed by many global fans, not only in East Asia but also in many other regions, regardless of the differences of language, ethnicity, and culture, more scholars began to take on other concepts as major tools for explaining the Korean Wave, such as globalization (Kuotsu, 2013; Hogarth, 2013), glocalization (Jin, 2011; Peichi, 2013), transculturality (Huang, 2011; Jin, 2016), and cultural hybridity (Ryoo, 2009; Jin and Ryoo, 2014).

Meanwhile, industrial and technological contexts of the Korean Wave have changed significantly during the last 20 years. In particular, the role of social media in the Korean Wave’s transnationalization in recent years is intriguing because fans around the world can easily access social media to enjoy K-pop, digital games, and films. As in the case of Psy’s “*Gangnam Style*,” which was a globally popular K-pop song primarily due to its YouTube success, social media have shifted the notion of global cultural flows of local popular culture. Social media are not equally important to different Korean media sectors, however. K-pop, with its visual presentation, dynamic dances, and memorable lyrics, benefits most from social media for its global spread. In recent years, Korean television dramas have also shifted their promotion and circulation to social media (Huang, 2017).

As such, the changes in the nature and appearance of the Korean Wave, conceptual and theoretical shifts in the studies of the Korean Wave, and the

influences of the development of media technologies on the Korean Wave are all very significant themes of this book. Indeed, this book is not the first one to extensively discuss the Korean Wave in any sense. As the major characteristics of the Korean Wave have changed, academic discourses on *Hallyu* have been proliferating in recent years (Kim, 2013; Kim and Choe, 2014; Lee and Nornes, 201; Jin, 2016). Kim (2013) provides a good overview of the Korean Wave in tandem with soft power. This is a strong book in that the contributors clearly focus on the growth of Korean Wave from cultural studies' perspectives. However, as a reflection of the recent growth of K-pop, this book includes too many chapters on K-pop, and as the title of the book itself indicates, it mainly focuses on the penetration of Korean popular culture in the global markets, including Europe and the United States, instead of Asia.

Kim and Choe's work (2014) is also a valuable contribution toward understanding the Korean Wave, mainly because it relates the contemporary cultural landscape to its historical roots. It aptly traces and documents the historical evolution of Korean popular culture, focusing on transnationalism and cultural politics. However, the range of the coverage is too broad, as this book includes diverse areas, both in traditional cultural areas, such as films and music, and in nontraditional cultural areas, including sports, literature, and food. Lee and Nornes (2015), another collection of work on the Korean Wave, does not seem to be well-balanced in terms of cultural forms and local foci, although the book discusses several key elements of the recent Korean Wave tradition by addressing the major characteristics of *Hallyu* 2.0. Meanwhile, Jin (2016) historicizes the transnationalization of the Korean Wave, including both popular culture and digital technologies, through the convergence of political economy and cultural studies.

Unlike previous works, this book aims to provide a better understanding of *Hallyu's* theoretical and institutional history, on the one hand, and new features of the Korean Wave, on the other hand. It will do so by bringing together several important topics within transnational cultural flows. We believe that it is crucial to perform a retrospective on the growth of *Hallyu*, and consequently develop new perspectives. An accumulation of the fragmentary research results of case studies does not contribute to either an understanding of the real world or to the development of the academic field. Regarding the Korean Wave, therefore, we need to ask how the various case studies can be related to each other, what the theoretical implications of these studies are, and what direction all the research and discussions are headed toward. Historical and theoretical reviews of the Korean Wave and diverse cases studies of the Wave introduced in this book are expected to show the complexity of transculturality. They demonstrate that the model of one-way cultural flow is no longer valid, that the concept of cultural proximity cannot fully explain cultural encounters between different nations these days,

and that we have to pay attention to the roles of social media in new global cultural phenomena, including the Korean Wave. The study of *Hallyu* should not simply be a study of cultural products made in and distributed by Korea. Rather, what we attempt to develop in this book is that it has to have potential to develop a theoretical framework and to explain everyday lives of people in the contemporary world.

The authors contributing to this book thus stress the industrialization of cultural industries as well as the limits placed on those forces by the unique qualities of popular culture, cultural work, and the reception of cultural texts. The chapters also discuss the distinctive features of different cultural forms, highlighting the specificity of cultural institutions, cultural products, fan culture, and the nature of work in these fields. Throughout the discussions, we hope to shed light on current developments and place them in a perspective that has relevance for future transnational cultural flows and productions. In other words, we believe that this book will put new ideas on the agenda, and it will be global in terms of readership. The following chapters will go over theoretical, discursive, and policy and institutional transitions of the Korean Wave. Throughout the reading, the readers will be able to ponder the possibility of the advancement of either non-Western theories or new theoretical perspectives in the transnationalization of popular culture in the midst of the continuation of the Korean Wave phenomenon.

It may be impossible to put all the important events and debates regarding the Korean Wave in the last 20 years into one book. At the same time, it is a challenging task to find a systematic way to synthesize research on the phenomena still happening in various parts of the world. This book contains a variety of topics and examples, but we hope they can collectively be converged into one destination, which, again, combines: a better understanding of the history of the Korean Wave that has taken place over the last 20 years; a theoretical structure of the Korean Wave explaining various phenomena that are taking place nowadays; and an expansion of the concepts and theories of the Korean Wave into a broad perspective on glocalization, cultural hybridity, and transculturality in the era of digital media. For instance, the examples of the eight countries introduced in this book (the United States, Canada, China and/or Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Chile and other Latin American countries, and Tunisia) were not intended to show the diversity of the phenomena, but to illustrate a way of explaining today's global cultural landscape. We hope that this book will help readers understand the dynamics of global culture in the contemporary world, as well as those of the Korean Wave.

More specifically, this book consists of four parts and thirteen chapters, counting the Introduction out. The chapters emphasize either theoretical challenges in "*Hallyu* studies" or empirical cases of *Hallyu* in various areas

of the world. These chapters, therefore, explore the histories of the Korean Wave as a catalyst of regional and global changes in the realm of popular culture. First of all, we open the book with historical reviews of the Korean Wave. It is not just history “of” *Hallyu*, but histories “about” *Hallyu*, or that of various aspects of *Hallyu* in other words. The first chapter is about the history of the Korean Wave in academic fields. In their historical review of “*Hallyu* studies,” Yoon and Kang articulate the limitations and shortcomings of the field, which in turn can be the first step toward the development of new perspectives for understanding the Korean Wave. By quantitatively and critically reviewing the subjects, conceptual keywords, and research methods of “*Hallyu* studies,” the authors find out how the academic field has adopted the emergence and evolution of *Hallyu*. They claim that the accumulation of *Hallyu* studies will contribute to transcultural studies, and also to cultural studies in general.

Won examines the historical factors that have constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed the discourses on *Hallyu*. Pushing aside the perspective of “Asianism,” he argues that the perspective of cultural nationalism has been held by the successive Korean governments since the mid-1990s, mobilizing different political and social subjects to dedicate themselves to the political and economic projects of “nation branding” and “culture industry promotion.” Focused only on utilizing *Hallyu* as a means of enhancing the national image and prestige of Korea and achieving economic benefits, their discussions have deeply permeated all the spheres of the society, exerting effects on every aspect of life for Koreans.

While Yoon and Kang and Won reviewed the histories of *Hallyu* studies and *Hallyu* discourses, respectively, Jin focuses on *Hallyu* policies. He maps out the vital role of the nation-state in the Korean Wave in tandem with confrontations between neoliberal globalization and developmentalism. More specifically, he investigates the major characteristics of each administration in cultural policy, leading to the theorization of the nation-state in the context of the Korean Wave. As a result, through an analysis of the cultural industries, it aims to discuss the crucial role of the cultural industries in the midst of neoliberal globalization. In particular, it discusses whether or not the cultural industries and cultural policies have developed cultural diversity in the new Korean Wave era.

The second part of the book includes a few new theoretical perspectives on the Korean Wave phenomena, including from a labor point of view and a postcolonial perspective. In this part, Hong, Leung, and Yoon offer interesting theoretical interpretations of the Korean Wave in their respective chapters. Hong, with her own experiences of studying the *Hallyu* phenomena in France, proposes four theoretical investigations necessary for understanding *Hallyu* consumption in the world beyond East Asia: liberating the East Asian identity discussion from the *Hallyu* discourse; reconsidering the Western standards on what is a good-quality television program; freeing the cultural

industries discussion from the North America-centered view; and questioning Bourdieusian theories on the cultural practices and social change. She argues the necessity of position changes in considering cultural identity of the East Asia, from the discussions on the cultural “sameness” developed from observations on the transnational cultural consumption within the East Asia into the discourses of identity in relation to the “otherness” based on the global contents flow.

Leung gives more attention to the labor point of view in her case study of K-pop fan clubs in Hong Kong. She focuses on fan clubs as cultural intermediaries in the globalized operation of the K-pop celebrity industry, and on how they capitalize on the algorithmic settings of social media to organize, mobilize, and manage transnational fandom. One of her main tasks is to answer to the question of how K-pop fan-club organizers in Hong Kong see their labor being rewarded, by adopting Christian Fuchs’ (2014) critique on social media production from the labor point of view.

In contrast, Yoon adopts postcolonial concepts in his study of the recent global dissemination of K-pop. By examining the narratives of young diasporic fans of K-pop in the Canadian context, he finds out the postcolonial implications of the global K-pop phenomenon. In conclusion, he discusses how a cultural form emerging from a postcolonial context can be resignified and reappropriated as a means of cultural negotiation for subaltern groups. He analyzes global K-pop as a cultural practice that implies postcolonial legacies and struggles in media production and consumption.

In Part III, the roles of social media in global fandom in various parts of the world are discussed, as social and digital media have become significant parts of the Korean Wave. The authors in this section are interested in the role of digital media in the popularity of the Korean Wave in various areas of the world: Zhang and Fung in China, Min in Latin American countries, and E. Lee in Tunisia. Zhang and Fung document and analyze the fan economy in relation to Korean idolatry and consumption in China, and find out that a few “big fans” dominate the transactions in relation to consumption of idols’ cultural and material products (e.g., CDs and sponsored products) between ordinary fans and the entertainment companies which brand and market their idols. They elucidate how a new Korean Wave in China is being formed by fandom economy online, and conclude that this fandom economy is characterized by the presence of some major online platforms (e.g. Baidu, Tudou, etc.) as cultural nexuses that connect ordinary fans via some key opinion leaders called big fans in this study.

Min offers an interesting case study of Latin America. She begins the discussion with a question, that being whether the popularity of Korean pop culture in Latin America is a substantial transnational cross-cultural reception of Korean culture, or merely a short-term fad of fan culture. She suggests

we must consider the socioeconomic gap as well as the generational gap in order to understand the Korean Wave, and concludes that the reception of the Korean Wave, especially K-pop and participatory fan culture in Latin America continues to be somewhat sporadic, unstable, and entirely based on cultural interpretations by each individual fan.

E. Lee's study examines the spread of *Hallyu* so as to better understand how Korean culture is accepted into other cultural areas, specifically Tunisia, a part of the Islamic world, in this case. By employing qualitative methods, she portrays three dimensions of Tunisian fans: the personal, cultural, and national. At the personal level, she finds that social media takes a significant role in the *Hallyu* boom. Tunisian fans of the Korean Wave tend to actively take advantage of digital media to follow real-time information on Korean popular culture. At the cultural level, Tunisians are found to identify with Korean culture, seeking out the features that are shared with Islamic culture such as family-friendly values and respect for the elders. At the national level, they consider Korea as a role model of development where a modern society can be rapidly achieved, and identify with Koreans, in whom they recognize a people who have endured a period of colonization.

The last part is about transnationality of the Korean Wave with four case studies in different areas of the world. H. Lee reviewed the history of the Korean Wave in Japan without losing sight of the emerging anti-Korean sentiments in recent years. She examines cultural negotiations between different social groups that have been involved in the evolution of the Korean Wave in Japan for the last 15 years. In conclusion, she claims the Korean Wave in Japan has an inclination toward the resistance of minority culture located in the periphery, while it imitates Western hegemonic soft power. The Korean Wave in Japan shows, she argues, how the global and transnational cultures, where the recipient country's power groups often have the initiative or cope with the cultural advance of the producing country, exert their dynamism in the acceptance process.

Kim and Huang deal with a more specific case, the Chinese remaking of a Korean reality television show. Recently, Korean reality shows were adopted and remade by Chinese television networks and have created huge sensations in China. The exportation of the format of Korean reality shows to China shifted issues to explore cross-border television production and consumption. Based on their comparative analysis of the reality show, *Daddy, Where Are You Going?* in both nations, they argue that the notion of cultural proximity can be employed to understand the Chinese remaking of Korean reality television formats. This chapter also addresses the rise of inter-Asian connections in the frame of enhancing cultural democratization in the region.

Jung looks inside of the Korean Wave in the United States and names it a transnational media culture and soft power. She participated and interacted

with American audiences and fans of the Korean Wave for more than 12 months to explore beyond what has already been studied and below the surfaces of their expressed interpretations. She suggests that the purpose of studying the Korean Wave among American fans should be directed at reconfiguring globalization theories, which recognize the dynamic formations of identity and hybridity at the local level while not dismissing the power inequalities in international settings. We can better understand the complex webs of transnational media culture, she concludes, only when we start to take audiences'/fans' reception of transnational popular culture more rigorously.

Finally, Park looks at transnational cultural flows in Asia through the case of *Hallyu* in Vietnam. She points out the shortcomings of traditional textual analyses, and then emphasizes the role of political economy perspectives in the studies of the Korean Wave. As a result, she analyses the relationship between the government-led development plan and the rise of transnational cultural flows according to the case of *Hallyu* in Vietnam. Her research unveils how the government-led economic development plans have affected the inflow of Korean cultural products in Vietnam from the mid-1990s to the present.

NOTE

1. "Korea" refers to South Korea (Republic of Korea) throughout the book unless otherwise noted.

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Part I

**THE HISTORIES OF THE
KOREAN WAVE**

Chapter 1

Emergence, Evolution, and Extension of “*Hallyu* Studies”

What Have Scholars Found from Korean Pop Culture in the Last Twenty Years?

Tae-Jin Yoon and Bora Kang

INTRODUCTION

Two decades ago, the Korean Wave, a.k.a. *Hallyu*, made an unexpected and surprising debut. Although few thought its popularity would persist, we have observed Korean television serials, Korean pop songs, Korean films, Korean online games, and even Korean food and fashion gaining global popularity over the last two decades. When it became evident that the Korean Wave was not just a one-and-done phenomenon, a number of scholars in the field of media and cultural studies began to give their attention to this unprecedented sequence of cultural happenings.

It was 2006 when Keith Howard edited a volume on Korean pop music. The book focused on music, but he made it clear that it was about the Korean Wave in general by inserting the word “wave” in the title. In 2010, probably the first critical book, in which authors analyzed various aspects of the Korean Wave, was edited and published by Chua and Iwabuchi. Since then, more than ten books and dozens of academic articles about the Korean Wave have been published in English, while hundreds of works written in Korean, Japanese, or Chinese have been published. In recent years, the Korean Wave has been hailed as a conspicuous cross-border cultural phenomenon as well as an intriguing test case of cultural globalization by many, including scholars, journalists, critics, and even policy makers. There have already been numerous scholarly works on situating the myriad receptions and implications of the Korean Wave through various modes of analysis and methodological tools.

However, partly because of its short history, “*Hallyu* studies” has exposed many limitations and shortcomings. For example, there have been few insightful discussions on transculturality in the global setting, although many

case studies have been conducted. Industrial analyses have often been done without contemplative theoretical and methodological consideration. Korean popular music (K-pop) has recently been a hot subject among scholars, but such discussions have the predilection of lacking historical contexts. This is why we need to review the short but intense history of “*Hallyu* studies,” let alone that of *Hallyu*. Articulating the limitations and shortcomings of the field will be the first step to inviting new perspectives on understanding this unique transcultural phenomenon.

The objective of this chapter is threefold: first, by reviewing the trends of “*Hallyu* studies” in last two decades, we hope to find out how the academic field has adopted the emergence and evolution of the Korean Wave. Second, by particularly focusing on conceptual and methodological foundations of the studies, we strenuously strive to observe the development of *Hallyu* studies in theoretical senses, if any. Third and finally, we hope to examine how cultural and historical environments affect academic landscapes by comparing two different histories of “*Hallyu* studies,” that is, those of academic fields in America-Europe and in Korea. Making a comparison per se is not a main objective of this chapter; instead, we hope to answer the last question to shed light on the path to future transcultural studies.

WHAT IS HALLYU, ANYWAY?

The term “*Hallyu*” was first used by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Korea when it planned, produced, and distributed a music CD in order to publicize K-pop to neighboring countries in 1999. Its title in English was *Korean Pop Music*, while its Chinese version was *Hallyu—Song from Korea*. The term has gained wide popularity since the Chinese newspapers represented the success of Korean singers in China as *Hallyu*. Although the term did not denote anything more than the popularity of K-pop in China at its beginning stage, the term soon began to be applied to other genres, notably television serials, and to other countries beyond China. In fact, it was the television dramas, not K-pop, which became a huge sensation in China for the first time, with or without the title of *Hallyu*. A Korean television drama, *What Is Love All About* was televised by the Chinese channel CCTV in 1997. In the following year, CCTV rebroadcast the series in prime time due to an enormous number of phone calls and letters from audiences requesting reruns of the show.

The success of Korean television dramas has continued since, and their popularity has extended to other Asian countries. From the mid-1990s Korean television dramas began to be aired in Taiwan, and the biggest hit was *The Autumn Story*, aired in 2001. This drama recorded the highest rating

among cable television programs. *Winter Sonata* was a mega hit in Japan. NHK rebroadcasted two episodes of the series a day, Monday through Friday, in December 2003. *Hallyu* widened its scale even further into Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia in the late 1990s and early 2000s. After *Winter Sonata*, *Dae Jang Geum* (a.k.a. *Jewel in the Palace*) enjoyed even more popularity in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and then Southeast Asia in the mid-2000s and in the Middle East in the late 2000s. It was reported that *Dae Jang Geum* was sold to over 120 countries, from Asia, Europe, and to the Middle East and South America. Meanwhile, actor and singer Rain held sold-out performances at Madison Square Garden in 2006 and at Tokyo Dome in 2007. In 2012, Korean singer Psy’s *Gangnam Style* became the most viewed video on YouTube. It was followed by another television drama, *My Love from the Star*, which became one of the most popular television dramas that aired in China in 2014 and in East Asian countries.

As Cho (2011) aptly asserts, *Hallyu* discourse in Korea continues to trap “East Asia” between the national and the global. While conceptualizing it as either an empty signifier or a profitable market, the term is still subsumed within the rubric of globalism which is predicated on the idea of national interest (388). It is interesting to see how the Korean mass media keeps expanding the meanings of *Hallyu*. The success of Korean restaurants in China, popularity of Korean automobiles in Southeast Asia, and the growth in the number of Mongolian students of the Korean language were all mentioned as examples of the Korean Wave by Korean mass media (Yoon, 2002). Media discourse or not, it can be said that the term *Hallyu* has gained a nationalistic connotation and underpinned development of an ideology in some senses. Also, one could notice that a number of these journalistic treatments on *Hallyu* were often provided through a less than clearly analytical lens while carrying predominantly nationalistic sentiments and overt celebratory tones. The prevalent storytelling by the mainstream media on the increased exposure and gaining popularity of Korean cultural texts and commodities across the East Asian region emphasized that popular cultural items made in Korea were more than competitive and demonstrated solid commercial appeal as well as significant emotional power to overseas consumers. This has also influenced *Hallyu* studies in the academic field, as will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

RESEARCH METHOD: ON META-ANALYSIS

In order to investigate closely into the historical and spatial tendencies of *Hallyu* studies, we adopted meta-analysis as the main analytical tool. We can call our study an analysis of analyses, considering that we had to review

hundreds of academic writings on *Hallyu* published over the last twenty years. It can thus be called a “comprehensive meta-analysis,” in the sense that we reviewed how *Hallyu* studies have developed and what direction they have been moving toward. At the same time, it can also be an “analytic meta-analysis” in that we focused on how the concept/theme of “*Hallyu*” has been considered and/or viewed by the researchers.

In order to review the history of *Hallyu* studies and conduct a comprehensive and analytic meta-analysis, we collected as many academic works as possible. By searching the keywords like the Korean Wave, *Hallyu*, Korean pop culture, and K-pop, and by excluding some non-academic writings and book reviews, we found seventy-six research papers in peer-reviewed academic journals and eighteen volumes written in English. Although this year is the twentieth anniversary of *Hallyu*, we could not find an academic work on *Hallyu* published prior to 2004. Thus, it is fair to say that we analyzed academic works published from 2004 to summer of 2016. Moreover, 161 research papers written in Korean were found.¹

As Table 1.1 shows, the number of research publications has rapidly increased in the last four or five years. This seems reasonable, since it was only recently that the Korean Wave became a noticeable phenomenon in North America and Europe. Although Korean pop culture was very popular in East Asian countries as early as the late twentieth century, few could expect scholars to produce a massive number of research papers in English then.

Papers and books on Korean movies were deliberately excluded from the analysis though, because of a couple of reasons. Even before the turn of the century, dozens of academic works on Korean films were already published in North America and Europe. Authors were mostly film critics who were interested in “Korean new wave films,” instead of Korean pop culture in general. It was only a few years ago when Korean films began to be linked with the Korean Wave. In this digitalized era, *Hallyu* fans all over the world barely distinguish Korean films from television mini-series, as the film and television industries are not disparate. Therefore, movies must be regarded as a significant factor in the Korean Wave these days. Nevertheless, in the academic field, most scholars in the film studies tradition tend to focus on text only, whether on its narrative or aesthetic aspects. As we consider the Korean Wave as a transcultural phenomenon and a cultural hybridity itself,

Table 1.1 Number of Research Papers by Publication Year (in English)

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	4	2	5	2	7	1
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
7	9	16	9	9	4	76

textual analyses not concerning people’s encounters with a foreign culture could not be included in *Hallyu* studies. For example, Kim’s book titled *Virtual hallyu* (2011) is obviously a work on the film texts rather than the cultural encounters.

The results of the meta-analysis will be offered in two distinct parts of this chapter. First, we will provide descriptive information about the history of *Hallyu* studies, mostly based on frequencies such as the number of papers published. Second, we will suggest a certain predilection of *Hallyu* studies, based on our critical reading of those works.

REVIEWING TWENTY YEARS OF HALLYU STUDIES: DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Table 1.2 shows the main topics of the research papers analyzed. K-pop has recently become one of the most embraced and contested topics of research in *Hallyu* studies, as we can find from the table. If a paper deals with two topics, a television drama and film, for instance, while containing balanced significance, each topic was counted as half. “Others” in Table 1.2 include online games, literature, films, tourism, etc.

More than half of the research papers targeted a certain country or region. Studying fans of K-pop “in Singapore” may be a typical example. Considering the origin of *Hallyu* was East Asia, it is understandable that most research targeted Japan and China in the early stage of *Hallyu* studies. As expected, however, the number of target regions that the papers discuss about the Korean Wave had increased by a considerable amount. When we

Table 1.2 Research Topics of the Papers by Publication Year

<i>year</i>	<i>TV drama</i>	<i>K-pop</i>	<i>KW in general</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
2004	–	1	–	–	1
2005	2	–	2	–	4
2006	0.5	–	–	1.5	2
2007	3	1	1	–	5
2008	1	–	–	1	2
2009	4	–	2	1	7
2010	–	–	1	–	1
2011	1	–	5	1	7
2012	3.5	2.5	1	2	9
2013	2.5	7.5	4	2	16
2014	4	3	2	–	9
2015	–	7	1	1	9
2016	–	3	1	–	4
TOTAL	21.5	25	20	9.5	76

categorize the history into three arbitrary periods, the trend becomes more lucid. In the first phase (2004–2010), the target regions of the studies were mostly East Asia, led by Taiwan and Japan. Only a single study dealt with the United States. During the second phase (2011–2013), *Hallyu* in India, Turkey, Austria, and Australia, as well as the United States, was explored and examined. Since then, the regions became much more diversified as Canada and Peru became part of the studies. Still, there are not many case studies covering beyond Northeast/Southeast Asia, considering we could find only ten research papers that cover those areas.

More important than the topics or regions may be what objects those scholars have actually analyzed. The results are summarized in Table.

Audiences of Korean drama and/or K-pop have been the most frequently analyzed subjects. The number could rise up to thirty-nine, if we add those viewed “people” (or their everyday lives) as the main subject of observation. We can tell that the most popular research questions regarding the Korean Wave in last two decades included “Why do middle-aged Japanese women like Korea dramas?” or “What is the significance of K-pop to French teenagers, and its meaning to their everyday lives?” Meanwhile, it is interesting to see more researchers began to give their attention to industry and policy. For example, only one out of ten overall papers analyzing the cultural industry was published before 2011.

Table 1.3 Objects of Analyses of the Papers

<i>Objects of Analyses</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Audiences (as fans/consumers/tourists)	34
Texts (videos, lyrics, blog/websites, etc.)	11
Industry (import/export, consumer behaviors, etc.)	10
People/culture/history	5
Government policy	3
Others/unknown	13
Total	76

Table 1.4 Research Method of the Papers

<i>(Main) Research method</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Survey and quantitative analysis	12
Hybrid of quantitative/qualitative methods	5
Ethnography (in-depth interview, participant observation)	12
Textual analysis (audio-visual analysis, CDA, etc.)	11
Literature analysis (of existing/accessible literatures/information)	28
Theoretical discussions without empirical research	5
Others/unknown	3
Total	76

Quantitative research methods have gained popularity in *Hallyu* studies. Only three papers, out of twenty-two, employed any kind of quantitative research method until 2010, but the number increased to five (out of thirty-two) in the second phase (2011 through 2013) and to nine (out of twenty-two; or 41% of all papers) in the third phase (2014 and after). Meanwhile, the number of research papers employing ethnography (in-depth interview, group interview, participant observation, etc.) is seemingly consistent throughout the years, as are those applying textual analysis. The interesting part is so-called “literature analysis,” the term we assign to the studies without any single concrete method. Many research papers relied on the (secondary) analysis of existing literatures, such as news reports, government documents, industrial reports, statistical data, and fellow scholars’ writings. Some of them are thus considered as essays sketching the history (and/or current state) of the Korean Wave. The number of papers employing this research method seems to have decreased, as only four adopted it as a main tool of research since 2014. Only five (or 6.5%) papers concentrated on theoretical discussions on *Hallyu*, with little empirical data. Cultural geography, globalization, and/or cultural flow were heavily discussed in these papers.

Just as with research papers, it was only a few years ago volumes on *Hallyu* began to gain some attention in North America. As mentioned, Howard’s edited volume was published in 2006. But he, an English ethnomusicologist, focused on K-pop only. The first comprehensive volume on *Hallyu* might be Chua and Iwabuchi (2008), which was edited by Singaporean and Japanese scholars and written by Asian authors, including many Koreans, and published in Hong Kong. Indeed, this book primarily targeted scholars and students in East Asian nations rather than North Americans who were interested in popular culture and/or transcultural phenomena.

With no apparent reason, there were few academic books that seriously reflected the Korean Wave between 2008 and 2013. Volumes on Korean films (Kim, K., 2011) and on Korean digital games (Jin, 2010) may be notable exceptions. Still, both exceptions were the introductions of certain aspects of Korean culture, rather than in-depth discussions on encounters of different cultures or cultural hybridity. Since 2013, more than half a dozen books on *Hallyu* have been published in North America. Kim’s *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* (2013), Kim and Choe’s *The Korean Popular Culture Reader* (2014), Lee and Nornes’s *hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media* (2015) and Jin’s *New Korean Wave: Transnational Cultural Power in the age of Social Media* (2016) are good examples of comprehensive *Hallyu* studies. It may be a cliché, but we can regard these works after 2013 as “*Hallyu* studies 2.0” on the analogy of *hallyu* 2.0. These books are edited volumes, or anthologies, contributed to by ten or more scholars each, with the exception of Jin (2016).

Recent publications—Kim and Choe (2014), Choi and Maliangkay (2015), Lee and Nornes (2015), and Jin (2016)—are all extensively focused on the changes in media environment, represented by social media in particular. Choi and Maliangkay's book elaborates on K-pop's influence on the entertainment industry in Korea's neoliberal economic regime and its effects on global fandom, political economy, and gender. Movies and television dramas are excluded from the discussion to solely focus on K-pop, but it raises critical theoretical questions such as whether "Asian culture" can become a "global" phenomenon. Key concepts in answering those questions are post-colonial modernization, post-Cold War politics in East Asia, and diaspora, among others. Kim and Choe's work (2014) may be the most extensive study on Korean Wave research, in the sense that it covers not only movies and music but also sports, food, and tourism. It emphasizes the historical context of Korea, and as a result, modernity, post-/colonial history, military dictatorship, and neoliberalism become significant words in the book. Media technology and the online culture of Korea are highlighted as well. The academic backgrounds of chapter contributors are also very diverse, including that from literature, film, media studies, musicology, and art history.

Lee and Nornes (2015) set out "*hallyu 2.0*" as the title of their book. The most integral variable here is the change in media environment due to the development of communication technology. They claim that social media has played an important role in the global popularity of the Korean Wave. The authors point out that the popularity of K-pop and Korean television dramas could not have maintained its levels without social media and constant interactions in it. Jin (2016) also focuses on the technological side of the Korean Wave. He accentuates the emergence of smartphones and social media in last eight years and concludes that it transformed the Korean Wave into "*hallyu 2.0*." In this political economic analysis, Jin also shows deep interest in cultural policies by Korean government, creative industries, and intellectual property rights.

REVIEWING TWENTY YEARS OF *HALLYU* STUDIES: CRITICAL READING

It is essential to see further than a mere description of *Hallyu* studies' history. From now on, we will focus on the conceptual and theoretical bases of the existing research on the Korean Wave. For the purpose of convenience, the seventy-six research articles are divided into three time periods, according to the year of publication: the first period from 2004 to 2010, the second from 2011 to 2013, and the third from 2014 to 2016. The results of the meta-analysis can be encapsulated as the "key concepts" in each phase.

The three periods are not disparate from each other in any sense, but we can find certain patterns trending in authors’ theoretical positions by comparing these arbitrarily divided phases. During the first phase, for example, “Globalization” and “Asia” may be the most frequently mentioned concepts/words. The cultural imperialism thesis of the late twentieth century was replaced by the concept of globalization partly due to Korea’s “in-between” position in power relations worldwide. Meanwhile “global” here could not extend beyond the territory of Asia, due to *Hallyu*’s (spatially) limited popularity. Early works, such as Cho (2005) and Kim (2005), viewed the Korean Wave as evidence of globalization, while emphasizing that it was not a West-to-East flow but East-to-East. Similarly, Ryu (2009) argued that the Korean Wave was an indication of the new global transformations in the cultural and the economic arenas. This phenomenon in particular signified a regionalization of transnational cultural flows. It entails Asian countries’ increasing acceptance of cultural production and consumption from neighboring countries that share similar historical and cultural backgrounds, rather than from the politically and economically influential countries.

Most researchers of this period heavily focused on Asianness, albeit what it really meant, since the Korean Wave was to be evidence of Asian sentiment independent of Western culture, as argued by Jeon and Yoon (2005). Lin and Tong (2007) added gravity to the Asiatic value in Korean television dramas aired in Hong Kong and its influences on Hong Kong male audiences. Siri-yivasak and Shin (2007) investigated the popularity of K-pop in Thailand, and found the elements of success from K-pop’s Asiatic nature. Moreover, during this period the cultural proximity thesis, national image, and neoliberalism were discussed frequently. From this perspective, cultural proximity in particular seems an ad hoc concept in explaining the Korean Wave during the first phase. The concept of cultural proximity facilitates the comprehension of the *Hallyu* phenomenon revolved around the East Asia region. Akin to how the cultural contents from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan were able to gain popular appeal in Korea in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of cultural proximity regards that *Hallyu* gained popularity in other East Asian countries for its cultural proximity. Since this explanation is very attractive and persuasive, there have been many attempts, even until now, to explain the Korean Wave through this perspective of cultural proximity; however, this concept comes up short in recognizing individual cases of the Korean Wave. There is not only ambiguity in cultural proximity, but also the risk of inability to successfully understand the intricacy of the Korean Wave by endeavoring to analyze these phenomena from different backgrounds with a single concept. As Iwabuchi (2001) has pointed out, instead of applying cultural proximity to countries under the *Hallyu* influence, discerning the forms of entertainment

that consumers feel through the contents of *Hallyu* may provide more details and nuances in the *Hallyu* consumption context.

During the second phase, “cultural hybridity” encompasses the main concepts of the *Hallyu* studies. One-directional “globalization” was again replaced by glocalization and hybridity. Cultural appropriation by local audiences was especially emphasized by some. However, hybridity was not a new concept in this period. Shim (2006) employs “hybridity” as a key theoretical term to delineate the Korean Wave as early as 2006. But it is fair to say that “hybridity” became a main concept in understanding Korean Wave 2.0, represented by K-drama’s popularity all over the world and the establishment of the global fandom of K-pop. In the cultural perspective, hybridity is often used to explain the interaction of disparate cultures and the phenomenon resulting from the interaction. Cultural hybridity especially occurs when transnational media or companies create the unique characteristics of each country and culture region, whether those are ambiguous or peripheral. From this perspective, studying the Korean Wave with cultural hybridity as a theoretical measure seems valid. In his study of Korean online games, Jin (2011) used hybridization and glocalization as the conceptual foundation, as did Jang and Kim (2013) in their study of K-pop.

In fact, hybridity can be used to explain the fervor that female viewers show toward Korean television dramas in many Asian countries, especially in China and Japan, where Confucian codes are socially influential. The storylines of Korean television dramas that were major hits in East Asian countries usually unfold around the heroine. Most stories are about romance or stories involving family, told in the perspective of a female protagonist. Korean television drama exhibits a culturally hybrid aspect, as it appropriates existing values in East Asian culture as its main theme. For example, family-centered values that uphold family formation and relationships and heterosexual romance are the cornerstones of story development. Such display of social and cultural values in the drama instills and upholds the values amid an urban and modern background.

However, we notice that many attempts to find hybridity factors in the Korean Wave during this period have remained at a superficial level of analysis. In other words, although hybridity seems to have had an effect as a conceptual tool, these studies did not expand further than analyzing specific cases, instead simply describing a phenomenon. Moreover, those studies did not view hybridity as a part of the cultural strategy and overlooked that the blurring of cultural boundaries is a strategic move that has been thoroughly calculated in the production of Korean Wave contents. It was still very valuable to depart from the approach of simply following existing cultural blocks, where the East and the West were in contrast, and explained the blurring of the Eastern and the Western dichotomy as hybridity. However, based on

accumulated data and research, there needs to be an active discussion on the specifics of the globalization occurring within the Asian countries and the modern Asian identity. Only then can one find the point where cultural hybridity occurs and unveils complexity.

Hybridity was not the only keyword during the second phase of *Hallyu* studies. As the business aspect of the Korean Wave gained attention, “consumption” became another word often used in the research. Localization did not only signify itself as a cultural force. It was also widely discussed in the context of market strategies and the industry. Consumption, branding, and creative industry became notable terms in *Hallyu* studies since 2010. Huang (2011) focused on “transnational consumption,” and Y. Kim (2011) raised the issue of “commercialization of girl bodies.” Although her interests lay in the cultural aspects of K-pop idols, instead of in the business aspects, she deploys the concepts of global commercialism and neoliberal nationalism to delineate the whole process. There were also attempts to adopt concepts/models/theories from other disciplines during this period, especially from economics and marketing: for example, double diamond model, disposition theory, etc. Economic/industrial perspectives had begun to take over the cultural ones as the dominant view toward the Korean Wave.

Finally, “social media” and “multiculturalism” sum up the third period. Glocalization, hybridity, and transnational consumption still remained as fundamental concepts to view the Korean Wave, such as Jin and Ryoo’s (2014) observation of the hybridization of K-pop. Nevertheless, rapid changes in the media technology had many researchers turn their attention to digital/social media and their role in the development of the Korean Wave since the early 2010s. Kim et.al. (2014) attempted to find the evidences of expansion of Korean Wave from YouTube and Twitter, while Song, Jeong, and Kim (2015) gathered data from K-pop video fan communities on YouTube. Xu, Park, and Park (2015), who studied cultural diffusion and cultural globalization, also considered web 2.0 as a key component to understand the new form of Korean Wave. Mostly due to Psy’s worldwide mega hit, YouTube (and online fan communities) became a popular object of analyses. In this (renewed) global-village era, cultural domination/resistance was replaced by multiculturalism and diaspora in explaining the popularity of the Korean Wave. Digital fandom was also one of the more significant terms in this period, while gender and race have continued to be indispensable concepts to view it. The third phase of *Hallyu* studies is still in flux as this chapter is being written. Technology will continue to be an integral factor in explaining transcultural phenomena, let alone the Korean Wave. The smartphone is a dominant medium for enjoying music and television dramas while Facebook is the main platform to access foreign pop culture. Therefore, mobility is,

and will continue to be, an important concept in order to understand the new version of the Korean Wave.

In order to make meaningful comparison, we also reviewed 161 research papers on the Korean Wave written in Korean. Although there were obscure differences in main concepts and theories between Korean-written and English-written journal articles, we could still list a few interesting findings. First, Korean scholars, especially in the beginning phase of their analyses of the Korean Wave, often adopted the interpretive frames centered on the thesis of “cultural proximity” and “cultural discount.” Here, to sketch it bluntly, the main theoretical premise for them would be something like this: East Asia and some other Asian regions would share certain Confucian cultural heritages and the collective experiences of rapid and compressed modernization. Korean dramas would represent complex lived realities such that would give them some advantages and edges when they migrate into various Asian sites. It appeared that cultural proximity was a “convenient” theoretical construct to analyze this unexpected boom of Korean pop culture in late 1990s and early 2000s.

Although there are still some scholars who continue to utilize this concept, and we do not claim it as a useless concept, “cultural proximity” turned out to be weak and less appropriate to be a convincing theoretical construct in dealing with the Korean Wave. It was soon challenged by others, especially those scholars who belong to the cultural studies camp in Korea. They pointed out that the main ingredients of the Korean Wave included rather diverse forms of genre formats and imported grammar from the “outside” and specific production values that could not be categorized under a shared, unified, or overarching cultural logic that was centered around something like Confucian values. For instance, the Korean Wave would usually include some historical dramas and “factions,”² television melodramas that embodied various snapshots from urban living, as well as the heavily choreographed and dynamic style pop and dance music performed by boy and girl idols. Not many of these cultural forms are produced under the strong influence of traditional cultural values in Korea. More Korean scholars these days tend to consider hybridity, diaspora, transculturality, and so on, as core concepts after acknowledging the limitations that cultural proximity had, just like what we found from the review of English-written journal articles.

Second, in terms of topics of research, the general trends are very similar in Korean-written and English-written journal articles. For instance, after Psy’s *Gangnam Style*, the interests of Korean scholars tended to lean toward K-pop, more than movies or television drama series. Also, a majority of the existing research in Korea is case studies about a specific text in a specific region. “Hong Kong viewers of the Korean drama, *Stairway to Heaven*” or “Young Japanese who love K-pop” are examples of such studies. Yet it is

obvious that cases became more diverse as the target regions of the Korean Wave expanded. It is not rare to find case studies in South America or the Middle East written in recent years. We can also see that “digital/online” has become important to Korean researchers. As web and mobile media emerged as the main carriers disseminating the Korean Wave, the number of studies that analyze or premise the correlation between the media technological environment and the Korean Wave has been increasing. The Korean Wave now has become a phenomenon that is mediated by the internet and digital culture to scholars both inside and outside Korea.

Finally, policy-oriented and/or business-focused studies have been published more frequently in Korea than in other areas of the world. Scholars in public administration began to pay attention to the Korean Wave in the early 2000s, as did those in international marketing. The Korean Wave is an economic phenomenon, instead of cultural, to some researchers. This led them to find the best strategy to maximize profits by using the Korean Wave as a hook. This is related to the issue of the sources of funding for research, because Korean government and major corporations have also encouraged researchers to work on examining the business side of the Korean Wave. The economic effects of the Korean Wave on the entertainment, tourism, and food and fashion industries were popular topics of *Hallyu* studies in Korea, especially compared to the published research outside Korea. The increase in policy- and/or industry-oriented studies in Korea might have called for the reconsideration of an outdated concept, cultural imperialism. Can we say that the Korean Wave is merely another face of quasi-cultural imperialism? It is interesting that more Korean scholars began to talk about the economic side of the Korean Wave without mentioning cultural imperialism, as if the export of Korean cultural products is a proof of national development, instead of a cultural domination over less-developed countries.

In other words, while most authors of English-written articles have an (active) audience’s viewpoint, relatively more Korean scholars share a producer/exporter’s perspective. For those who have published Korean Wave-related research in English-speaking academia, there is no reason to be policy- and/or industry-oriented because their academia does not require the consideration of Korean government or its cultural policies. Moreover, they do not need to think hard for making effective marketing strategies for exporting Korean cultural products, either. Simultaneously, when compared to those who published papers in Korea, they seem to be more actively focused on political economic studies. However, the problem lies in that even “political economic studies” lingers on the state of just interpreting the present conditions of the industry. In many cases that use “neoliberalism” (on which many *Hallyu* studies is premised), the term is limited to a concept that appears rhetorically in the explanation of “globalization” and normally

does not extend to a political analysis. If globalization and neoliberalism became the replacements of explaining the Korean Wave with the anachronistic concept of cultural imperialism, it necessitated a persistent growth in analytical studies that can fully incorporate and engage these concepts. There is a lack of published studies from within and outside of Korea that examine the problem of capital, the problem of government intervention/nonintervention, operation methods of power, and the relationship between the industry structure and active audiences/consumers.

Unlike studies conducted in Korea, studying *Hallyu* in English-speaking countries is studying “Others” (other culture, other people); therefore, *Hallyu* studies tends to conjure a macroscopic image from a certain distance. This might be one of the reasons why recently published volumes on the Korean Wave deal with a variety of topics in diverse academic fields from various perspectives under the name of the Korean Wave (e.g., Kim and Choe, 2014; Choi and Maliangkay, 2015; Lee and Nornes, 2015). It is safe to conclude that most research (published in English) on the Korean Wave is the results of observation of an interesting and alien culture, rather than those of a total commitment to economic development or cultural domination.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter’s *Hallyu* studies history review for the last decade showed us a number of clear tendencies. First, as people from various countries around the world enjoy Korean pop culture, the research subjects of *Hallyu* studies have also become very wide in a regional sense. Most research was about East Asia, notably Japan, China, and Hong Kong in the early stage of *Hallyu* studies, but we are observing many case studies of the Korean Wave in Turkey, Canada, and Peru, to name a few, these days. In terms of object of analysis, K-pop has become more popular than the others, such as television drama and films, in recent years. Scholars all over the world analyze K-pop fandom, Korean girl groups’ dances, lyrics, fans’ reaction videos, and so on. It is understandable considering K-pop’s sudden but steady popularity in the 2010s. *Hallyu* studies is not a study of Asianness, or of Confucianism, any more.

Second, in terms of research methods, the number of quantitative studies has increased, while ethnography continued to be adopted by many researchers. The more interesting finding was, however, that the most popular research method in *Hallyu* studies has been “literature analysis,” which we named as the research method that collects and analyzes all the possible materials such as government and corporation reports, statistical data, and press articles, as well as other scholars’ research findings. It is hardly a systematic method, but

very effective in drawing a big picture of the Korean Wave in a certain area by referring to all the accessible information.

Third, more scholars began to pay attention to the carriers which move the Korean Wave over the borders. In other words, they realize that “media” such as smartphones and “platforms” such as Facebook are taking a primary role in the ever-expanding Korean Wave. Media technologies have changed the peculiarities of the Korean Wave. Due to advanced digital technology, *Hallyu* fans in distant areas can now enjoy Korean television dramas or K-pop without much difficulty. As many recently published papers have already discussed, digital/social media is playing a decisive role in the expansion, maintenance, and reproduction of the Korean Wave. Online technology has enabled the creation of a worldwide fandom, and the recent dissemination of K-pop cannot be explained without reference to reaction videos. It is crucial to recognize that this is no longer a period in which Korean television dramas are being loved through cable channels of Chinese-speaking countries. It is not surprising to find that most *Hallyu* studies, published in recent years, both in Korean and English, consider digital/social media as the key to understanding the Korean Wave.

Fourth, cultural proximity and cultural discount, the theoretical keywords of *Hallyu* studies which challenged the idea of cultural imperialism in the early days of the Korean Wave, have been replaced by cultural hybridity. By doing so, people came to not believe in one-directional cultural flow; instead, the Korean Wave has become a transcultural phenomenon in which two or more different cultures encounter each other. It is rather arbitrary, but we could summarize the changes of the key concepts in *Hallyu* studies as focusing on cultural imperialism to cultural proximity at first, and then to globalization, and then to glocalization and cultural hybridity, and then to multiculturalism. However, we would like to point out that there is ambiguity in what is identified as “hybridity.” Bhabha (1995) argued that Western cultural values are twisted and actively received by the colonized group depending on the context rather than being unilaterally indoctrinated into the colonized group, and he explained this process as hybridity. This concept connotes the possibility of a third culture that overcomes the colonizer and the colonized as well as the possibility of resistance through mimicry and monopolization; however, it is reduced to a phenomenon of the meeting and mixing of two or more cultures when it is applied to specific case studies (Yoon and Cheon, 2014). If the Korean Wave is not an inherently traditional cultural product of Korea but already a hybridized culture, there needs to be an examination into how this cultural peculiarity is once again received as hybridity in various cultural areas of the world.

Finally, policy- and/or industry-oriented research became more popular than in the past, especially in Korea. Even outside Korea, many scholars have

become more interested in the industrial aspects of the Korean Wave. In fact, the Korean Wave should not be minimized as a cultural phenomenon. As seen in the recent anti-Korean sentiments in Japan and China, the Korean Wave has a political nature, too. In addition, it is also closely related to economic issues, so that it often causes trade friction between countries. However, this does not necessarily mean that the economic aspect of the Korean Wave should be considered as the most significant theme of *Hallyu* studies. If there is a theoretical contribution of *Hallyu* studies to related fields like cultural studies, it should be the way of explaining the encounters of distinct cultures, rather than a way of designing effective marketing strategies for maximizing profit.

This chapter was intended to give a glimpse into the history of *Hallyu* studies and to examine its peculiar characteristics. Although the Korean Wave has twenty years of history, full-scale *Hallyu* studies has a history of just over ten years. It is evident, however, that *Hallyu* studies has had quite a development quantitatively and qualitatively during this brief period. We also find the theme and conceptual bases of *Hallyu* studies have dramatically changed.

If *Hallyu* studies are merely an accumulation of fragmentary research results on the popular culture of a particular country, it will not have much meaning. The Korean Wave is a very unique transcultural phenomenon, and its research can make important scholarly contributions, from media studies to cultural studies, and from business administration to anthropology. For example, *Hallyu* studies may show the complexity of transculturality by demonstrating that the Korean Wave is not fully explained by the concept of cultural proximity or Asiatic value. The history of *Hallyu* studies shows that the model of one-way cultural flows is no longer valid, too. It also provides a basis for contemplating how the development of new media technologies affects the flow of transnational cultures. As *Hallyu* studies continues to develop and its results accumulate, we expect it to help us understand other phenomena, such as how Western countries accept Indian movies, or how America appropriates Mexican television dramas.

Then, what is the next step in *Hallyu* studies? As the world's major nations become increasingly conservative, their attitudes toward other cultures seem to be getting more hostile. Terrorism for religious reasons becomes a clear and present danger, and the ethno-centric tendencies of the United States and some European countries are more vivid than just a few years back. All these changes in international relations may result in conflicts and antagonisms between different cultures. It is also in the same context that China recently launched a tough containment policy on Korean popular culture, although the country has never officially declared a new cultural policy. The future *Hallyu* studies may have to pay attention to this situation. Transculturality may be hit by political and economic changes, but at the same time, cultural encounters

can contribute to the common prosperity of the world. *Hallyu* studies has the potential to contribute to the various academic fields and also to make meaningful differences in real world, such as in international politics, in the near future.

NOTES

1. Research papers written in Korean were reviewed only for the purpose of comparison. We are making clear that they were not systematically and seriously analyzed; instead, we tried to find a general trend, if any, in thematic and methodological senses in the last ten years. The following table shows the number of papers we reviewed by publication year:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15	18	10	8	7	11
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
25	27	19	10	11	161

2. “Faction” is a compound word denoting “fact” and “fiction.” It is a form of cultural product (television dramas in this case) in which the storyline is based on, or triggered by, real people or events, while its details are created by the author’s imagination. Most “faction” dramas deal with history without heavily relying on the history.

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Chapter 2

Hallyu

*Numerous Discourses, One Perspective**

Yong-jin Won

THE NUMEROUS DISCOURSES ON HALLYU

On March 19, 2014, Chinese fans of the Korean TV drama *My Love from the Star* (SBS, December 2013–February 2014) placed an advertisement in the most widely circulated newspaper in Korea to express their disapproval of the work of Professor Kang Myungkoo's research team at Seoul National University. Kang and his colleagues reported that, compared with the fans of American television programs, the enthusiastic consumer group of Korean dramas in China is composed of individuals with low income and education levels (Kang, Shin, Wu, Yang, & Bai, 2013, 187–205). Contending that the research disparaged Chinese fans of Korean dramas, the group demanded that Professor Kang issue a formal apology to Chinese fans and Do Min-joon, the protagonist of *My Love from the Star* (Digital News Team, 2014).

This incident was featured in majority of the media outlets in Korea, with newspapers competing to cover the international popularity of K-pop culture, a phenomenon called the “Korean Wave” (hereafter, *Hallyu*). However, rather than investigate the rationality of the Chinese fans' demands for an apology from Professor Kang, the media concentrated on reporting the success of the drama in China and of Chinese fans' dedication to Korean dramas. Although the fans' grievances were beyond the focus of the study, which was to map the diversified taste profiles of Chinese viewers of Korean dramas according to differing social, economic, and cultural capital (Kang, Shin, Wu, Yang, & Bai, 2013, 187–205), one online newspaper asked Professor Kang in an interview if his team would apologize to the Chinese fans, treating the

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research conclusion as an afterthought (Kim, 2014). In a way, the Chinese fans' protest made a substantial contribution to reawakening the discourse on *Hallyu*, which had died down for a time.

The term *Hallyu*, which was coined by a Chinese journalist in the late 1990s, has often fallen from the lips of various social subjects such as research teams and media in Korea, despite its cryptic meaning and lack of an etymological definition. For the last 15 years, the mass media have detailed the surprising and unexpected success of K-pop at gaining popularity in other countries. They also noted that a number of countries in Asia fear a loss of their nation's cultural identity owing to the invasion of K-pop. Further, successive studies have examined the aspects of K-pop that have contributed to its rising popularity in other countries and in the ways foreign audiences have accepted K-pop culture (Joo, 2014, 45–6; Shim, 2006). They also have elaborated on the infrastructural system of the production and distribution of *Hallyu* content and fandom activities in various geographical areas. In such a way, divergent discourses on *Hallyu* have been fervently circulated.

Interestingly, the quantity of such works has increased as *Hallyu* resonated across the Asian region. For instance, Korean media have expanded the discourse to reflect the discourses put forth by the Chinese mass media, government officials, and academic circles. Top-ranking Chinese officials, including Wang Qishan, head of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, have held intense discussions over why China has not been able to produce soap operas of similar quality to those from Korea (Wan, 2014). Such discussion could possibly spark a chain reaction by urging Chinese academic circles to discover why phenomena such as *Hallyu* occur in their country. Their findings would then serve as a foundation for the Korean media to be enthusiastic about the “Korean drama fever” sweeping across China.

Similar regional resonance originated from another series of events involving the advertisement placed by the Chinese fans of *My Love from the Star*. In a speech delivered to the members of the cabinet on March 20, 2014, former Korean president Park Geun-hye urged for the immediate elimination of regulations on Korean Internet shopping malls, in reference to complaints from fans concerning the regulations they had faced when attempting to purchase clothing items similar to those of the female protagonist in *My Love from the Star* (Wan, 2014). President Park wished to demonstrate her concern for the national economic benefits accrued from Chinese fans of *Hallyu* as possible consumers of Korean products. This episode displays another example of regional resonances regarding *Hallyu*: Chinese viewers of Korean drama created a discourse, which was then transmitted by the Korean president to government officials. These officials were to reorganize the online shopping system through which Chinese consumers purchase goods, which would then serve as a research topic for Korean or Chinese scholars. Such cross-reference

at home and abroad illustrates the principles of the discursive formation of *Hallyu*.

This chapter aims to critically and meticulously examine how discourses on *Hallyu* have flourished in academic settings and mass media, both inside and outside Korea over long periods. First, this work explores the requisite conditions for *Hallyu* to attract considerable attention, and maps the typological positions of the different discourses conducted by the parties. Second, this study examines how these discourses have cooperated and conflicted with one another, and identifies the outstanding factors in the historical contexts of *Hallyu* that caused such cooperation and conflict. Finally, this research investigates which political and social subjects in Korea have endeavored to establish the mainstream Korean discourse on *Hallyu*, and how they have appropriated the discourses produced in other countries for their purposes. All of these aspects are then combined to form the argument that the general understanding or knowledge of *Hallyu* is a discursive construct produced by social actors in connivance, rather than an objective understanding of the substance of the cultural phenomenon, *Hallyu*. In brief, this project aims to investigate how the current forms of discourses came to surround *Hallyu*.

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Hallyu is not the first “Made-in-Asia” pop-culture trend to gain great popularity across the Asian region. From the 1970s to the 1990s, Hong Kong pop culture swept through the region, represented by key genres, such as *Kung Fu* movies, film noir, and Cantopop (exemplified by the Four Heavenly Kings) (Chow, 2007). Hong Kong movies and Cantopop, although falling in popularity since the repatriation of Hong Kong to China, continue to attract attention from a wide range of Asian populations, providing them with sources of youth subculture and nostalgic enjoyment (Chow, 2007). Japan is also a notable case as regards the dissemination of its pop culture to East and Southeast Asia, as it created productions ranging from animation, manga, pop music (known as J-pop), and cartoon characters (e.g., Hello Kitty, Pokémon) to television (trendy) dramas, such as *Tokyo Love Story* and *Long Vacation* (Otmazgin, 2013). A visitor to any of the major cities of the Asian region is likely to observe the pervasive presence of Japanese pop culture. Compared with the long history and great popularity of the previous “Made-in-Asia” popular cultures, *Hallyu* is in its infancy.

As new works and stars appeared, Hong Kong and Japanese popular culture also attracted journalistic and scholarly attention. Many journalists and scholars often recall and refer to the past success of these pop cultures while observing the current popularity of *Hallyu* (Otmazgin, 2013). However,

discussions on Hong Kong and Japanese culture were confined mainly to the process and extent of their diffusion in Asia, unlike the case of *Hallyu*, which has driven journalists and scholars to track each route and phase of its diffusion and acceptance (Lee, 2005, 5–22).

Apparently, the most active discussions surrounding *Hallyu* are based in Korea, albeit not exclusively. Korean discussions on *Hallyu* are the result of comprehensive absorption and (convenient) appropriation of the disquisitions produced inside and outside the country (Kim, 2009, 48–67; Dirlik, 2002, 209–34). As demonstrated by the example of the Chinese fans of the previously referenced drama, *My Love from the Star*, Korea has absorbed the body of discourses created outside the country and then transformed it into a collection of stories that establish the country's excellence in this regard. The disquisitions traveling abroad from Korea have also been modified in each area that received them. Accordingly, the emergence of the great number of discourses on *Hallyu* should be understood as an inter-Asian phenomenon.

Academic focus on *Hallyu* has been fostered by Asian intellectuals' ideals to solidify the individual countries of the East Asian region as a community, a strategy intended to decentralize American-centered globalization. Korean scholars (known as *Chang-bi*) once argued that the reunification of the Korean peninsula should be achieved via the cooperation of East Asian countries, claiming that self-settling the matter of reunification with the assistance of the other East Asian countries would lead to a stable "independence" of the region from the geopolitical interventions of the West (Chung, Choi, Paik, & Jun, 1995, 84–86). Raising a question concerning the worldwide spread of Western—particularly American—pop culture, cultural studies scholars in Korea have also argued for the formation of a cultural community (through cultural exchanges) in East Asia (Paik, 2005). This idea of cultural community formation is shared by a number of authorities in other parts of Asia, including the Japanese cultural studies scholar Koichi Iwabuchi, who acknowledged the cultural imperialism of world powers (Iwabuchi, 2002, 447–69).

In constructing a power block in Asia to resist Western rules, these intellectuals have sought theoretical and methodological concepts to realize their ideals. They once considered concepts such as "Confucian capitalism" (Yao, 2002, 1–20) and "Asian coalitionism" (Chung, Choi, Paik, & Jun, 1995). Confucian capitalism explains Asian capitalism in terms of Confucian cultures and values, whereas Asian coalitionism, which originated during the East Asian economic crisis in the late 1990s, is a variant of Pan-Americanism (introduced by the United States, which sought to create, encourage, and organize relationships, associations, and cooperation between the states through diplomatic, political, economic, and social means). However, the former concept was criticized for its ahistorical and essentialist aspects, and

the latter was disapproved for its lack of consideration of power inequalities between countries to be integrated.

Meanwhile, a considerably pedantic concept entitled “Asianism” (Takeuchi, 2005, 103) served as a theoretical background for a movement against cultural, philosophical, and political invasions from the West in the mid-1990s. Asianism is a theoretical and methodological perspective on the identity of the Asian region in terms of cooperation, stability, and peace. It underlines the historicity of culture and individuality, and repudiates the principle of interiority; in doing so, it overcomes the shortcomings of the two previously considered concepts, Confucian capitalism and Asian coalitionism. Asianism was originally theorized in the 1940s by the Japanese scholar Takeuchi Yoshimi (who had critically reflected on Japanese modernity, and referred to Chinese modernity),¹ and was further developed by the Chinese scholar Sun-ge, along with several other Asian scholars who recognized Takeuchi’s academic legacy (Takeuchi, 2005, 103).

Those intellectuals who had been concerned with Asianism were enthralled when *Hallyu* first appeared in the late 1990s. They attempted to utilize *Hallyu* as a source to construct an imaginary community in the Asian continent. The advent of *Hallyu* was well-timed, unlike Hong Kong pop culture, which had appeared too early to be the focus of scholarly attention. Japanese popular culture could not be the core source of their discussions either, given that the country had not directly acknowledged its past misdeeds. As Appadurai (1996) indicated, one’s imagined community might become another’s political prison. Further, Japan’s attitude toward its pop culture, which had circulated throughout Asia, was recognized as a form of being “in but above” or “similar but superior to,” summarized by the term, “soft nationalism” (Iwabuchi, 2002, 447–69). However, *Hallyu* attracted those seeking empirical data to portray the imaginary Asian community. Despite its American qualities, *Hallyu* was seen only as incorporating modernization experiences unique to Asia (Paik, 2005).

Cultural studies researchers in Korea also displayed special interest in *Hallyu*, in line with the perspective of Asianism that underscores the socio-cultural diversity and individuality of each area of the region. Korean cultural studies researchers, who had developed interest in audience studies, began to explore the variation in the circulation of K-pop in various geographical areas. They found that audiences consume *Hallyu* in a variety of ways, rather than homogeneously craving or pursuing Korea or Korean lifestyles, as is the typical misunderstanding in Korea (Kim, 2005, 183–205; Lin & Tong 2008, 91–126; Kim, 2009, 48–67). Korean cultural studies on *Hallyu* have also been energized by cultural studies research in other parts of Asia, as inter-Asian academic symposiums and journals that include *Hallyu* as the main topics demonstrate (Lee, 2005, 5–22). However, the perspectives of Asianism

and cultural studies have remained confined to scholars' intellectual discussions, whereas most discourses on *Hallyu* have originated from nonacademic discussions.

Indeed, interest in the culture industry in the Asian region served another factor that expanded discourse on *Hallyu*. In the mid-1990s, the number of mass media outlets grew tremendously in conjunction with Asian economic improvement (Shim, 2006, 25–44). Together with mass media, newly emerged media—such as cable television, satellite television, computers, and other digital media—required content. The rise in the number of young people in other Asian and Southeast Asian countries served as an additional incentive for the media's growth (Lee, 2003, 125–54; Otmazgin, 2005, 499–523). However, the media of Taiwan and a number of other Southeast Asian countries evinced a penchant for K-pop. This preference originated from their beliefs that its quality, especially that of Korean television drama, had been commercially proven, and that the price of Korean popular culture content was affordable. Major Korean corporations (e.g., Samsung, LG) facilitated the spread of *Hallyu* by distributing Korean dramas in these countries free of charge, capitalizing on these opportunities as advertising platforms for their products and brand names.

However, in observing the tremendous influx of *Hallyu*, intellectuals in other parts of Asia expressed concern that this foreign pop culture might disfigure their own cultural identities and weaken their media and cultural industries (Huat, 2010, 15–24). At the time, a number of Taiwanese television actors went so far as to protest against *Hallyu*, claiming that it infringed their occupational stability (Huang, 2011, 3–18). China also adopted an annual quota system regarding the number of Korean dramas aired by its broadcasters. Vietnamese commentators seriously condemned *Hallyu*, claiming that it was corrupting their youth and was nothing more than a subtype of cultural imperialism (Huong, 2009). In Japan, the middle-aged female fans of Korean dramas were abhorred, and a multitude of protests were held against the broadcasting of Korean dramas.

Meanwhile, other countries began to focus on plans to develop their own pop-culture industries. *Hallyu* provoked competition between the cultural industries in the Asian region. Culture industry workers in Japan urged their government to support their businesses in the same way that the Korean government was supporting its own industry (Moon, 2006). They also sought methods of employing *Hallyu* stars and creating Korean-Japanese joint ventures. While conducting research projects on the marketing practices of the *Hallyu* industry, culture industry professionals in Thailand also developed their own popular culture, targeting niche markets in China. Countries across Asia attempted to systematize and vitalize their cultural industries through research on *Hallyu* in cultural and media economics.

Thus, the upsurge of discourses on *Hallyu* was the outcome of far-reaching factors affecting other factors, ranging from Asianism, cultural studies research trends, the explosive growth of media and media industries in Asia, and the increasing population of young people craving pop culture, to the shift to a culture industry society. Rather than one factor exclusively dominating others, these factors became entangled, disentangled, and re-entangled with one another to produce the staggering number of discourses on *Hallyu*.

GENEALOGY AND TOPOLOGY OF DISCOURSES ON HALLYU IN KOREA

In the late 1990s, K-pop began to create sensations in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, and other locations in Asia (Won & Kim, 2011). Korean TV dramas suddenly gained popularity among the Asian youth, Korean pop music singers attracted the youth to their concerts, enthusiasts of K-pop organized fan clubs in their countries. K-pop also made progress in Europe and South America, stimulating strong responses as far as the Middle East. Such significant occurrences have been the foundations for the long-standing discourses on *Hallyu* conducted outside Korea. Of course, foreign and Korean *Hallyu* discourses differ: whereas the discourses in foreign countries consist of fragmented news reports, tersely hinting at the popularity of K-pop, those in Korea depict the multilayered and multidimensional landscapes of *Hallyu* as various social subjects are involved in the discourse production.

Accordingly, there are various forms of discourses in Korea, all of which simultaneously cooperate and conflict with one another. As mentioned in the previous section, one such discourse is based on the perspective of Asianism, the notion on which cultural studies researchers have focused to use *Hallyu* as an opportunity for bilateral cultural exchanges in the Asian region. However, this form has remained mainly among academic fields, and has never been an important element in public and media consideration. That is, there is a strictly defined hierarchy among *Hallyu* discourses; those based on Asianism have remained at the bottom of the hierarchy (Cho, 2003). Conversely, the perspectives of “cultural nationalism” and “cultural economism” (conflicting with the perspective of Asianism) have led a majority of discussions on *Hallyu* and aroused positive responses and public consent (Cho, 2003). They have been the bedrock for (re)producing, sustaining, and spreading *Hallyu* discourses.

Since the initial stage of *Hallyu*, “cultural nationalism” has been an overarching perspective for understanding and discussing the phenomenon in Korea. Prepossessed with the perspective, journalists, commentators, and

other members of the public were mainly concerned with the soaring prestige of the nation. Their comments on *Hallyu* belonged to one of the following types (Won & Kim, 2011): first, Korea had finally been recognized by the world; second, Korea had occupied the forefront of the world's attention; third, the economic success of K-pop in foreign countries was derived from the excellence of Korean culture and sensibility; and fourth, increased effort should be made to develop this phenomenon further. This form of discourse was fueled by the financial and economic crisis in 1997–1998, which drove Korea to search for a story of hope. In this context, *Hallyu* became a source of both hope and national pride.

Specifically, cultural nationalism promoted two different projects: one focused on “nation branding,” and the other on “culture industry promotion.” Nation branding aimed to inspire the public's sense of national pride by publicizing that *Hallyu* enhances the national image and prestige of Korea. The mass media, government ministries, academe, and culture industry sectors have intentionally or unintentionally participated in this project. For instance, Korean news media stirred the public by portraying *Hallyu* events as historically unprecedented (Kim, Lee & Lee, 2005). When K-pop recently became the main genre of *Hallyu*, national networks aggressively reported minute details on idol groups' K-pop concerts held in London, Paris, and Barcelona under such catchphrases as “Korean invasion of Europe,” or “the nation's pop culture has conquered most of the Asian region and is now moving across the world.” The networks also aired documentaries detailing success stories of the idol groups (Kim, 2013, 45–83).² Cable TV music channel MNet made a great fuss about airing the program “MNet Asian Music Awards” hosted in Macau, Hong Kong, and Singapore in 2010 via live satellite telecast.

In accordance with the successive media reports on *Hallyu*, government ministries, such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Trade, established national support policies for *Hallyu* events; embassies and consulates assisted with planning and organizing K-pop concerts outside the country. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism even aimed at establishing dozens of Korean Cultural Centers worldwide in the name of Korean culture promotion and cultural exchange. Such actions of the national government affected the provincial governments; both the national and provincial governments appointed university and other research centers to lead research projects to design proper governmental support policies and plans for *Hallyu* (Choi, 2013, 252–85).

Available funds for research on *Hallyu* increased. Results accentuated the historical significances of *Hallyu*, which the government used to justify their support policies for *Hallyu*. The centers even pumped out variant terms for *Hallyu*, such as *New Hallyu*, *Hallyu 2.0*, *Hallyu 3.0*, *Hallyu 4.0*, and *Digital Hallyu*, to mark each stage in which a different genre (among the TV soap

opera, movie, K-pop, and game industries) was brought into the mainstream of *Hallyu*.

As the discourses (aiming to utilize *Hallyu* to raise a sense of national pride) swept the nation, workers in *Hallyu* industries began to see themselves as engaging in national events (Won & Kim, 2012, 319–61). *Hallyu* stars firstly emerged as national heroes; stars were invited to dinner meetings with the foreign prime ministers from Vietnam and Japan, and a few were awarded national medals (including Bae Yong-jun, who starred in *Winter Sonata*; Psy, the *Gangnam Style* performer; and Lee Soo-man, founder of S.M. Entertainment). The public considered these individuals as either national heroes or ardent patriots. These stars also often proudly identified themselves in public as heroes of patriotism;³ an example of this mindset can be seen in Psy's performance of the national anthem before an audience of 10,000 people in Seoul Square.⁴ Afterward, he spoke of the heartwarming feeling of strolling onto the world stage through his performance of the "horse dance."

Anything could easily garner public support once associated with the term *Hallyu* in such an atmosphere, and many global business projects dubbed themselves as being a part of *Hallyu*. The Korean public also tended to deem those related to Korea as *Hallyu*: when foreign teams recruited Korean coaches of sports such as *taekwondo* and archery, in which Korea has traditionally excelled, the public attributed it to *Hallyu*. Essentially, *Hallyu* began to be used as the equivalent of "Made in Korea." Koreans also used the term to initiate conversations and acquire attention on the global stage. For instance, foreign delegates are first asked "Do you know *Gangnam Style*?" upon visiting Korea. A video clip⁵ on YouTube shows a Korean journalist posing the question at a press conference held by the U.S. Department of State in October 2012: "Firstly, I am wondering if you know of the Korean singer Psy and his song *Gangnam Style*?" Cultural nationalism thus appears to have deeply permeated all the spheres of society, exerting effects (and effectivity) on every aspect of lives of Koreans.

Culture industry promotion has been carried out for the state-led industrialization of culture, which has long been reflected in Korean government policies. Traditionally in Korea, the government has taken a leading role in the culture industry. Until the 1990s, the government maintained the policy of protectionism over cultural domains: a legislated policy of screen quotas was introduced and maintained to protect the domestic film market from foreign markets, regardless of the frictions with the United States concerning trade (Yecies, 2007). Cultural imports from Japan were also banned until 1998. From the mid-1990s, however, the protectionism policy shifted into a promotion policy. Each new government considered the issue of state-led industrialization of culture and largely expanded its policies and plans especially at the emergence of *Hallyu*.

The government policy for state-led industrialization of culture could be justified on the basis of the belief that industrializing culture would contribute to the development of the nation's economy. As if to prove the belief, the national networks and research centers announced that *Hallyu* would greatly contribute to securing opportunities for the export of consumer goods and travel products.

A series of marketing strategies was also developed utilizing *Hallyu*: the shooting locations of TV dramas and movies were transformed into tourist destinations; local special products and props from TV dramas were transformed into merchandise; theme parks were opened to attract foreign tourists; clothes and foods featured in *Hallyu* dramas were exported to regions where the relevant dramas had gained popularity. Companies advertised their products in particular areas using *Hallyu* stars who were popular in those locations (e.g., Kim Nam-ju, who enjoyed special popularity in Vietnam, appeared in an advertisement for LG cosmetics in Vietnam).

Government agencies, such as the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), Korea Culture and Tourism Institute, Korea Communications Commission, and Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), founded research divisions to conduct studies on the economic effects of *Hallyu*. These divisions announced that they would systemize the data from research on *Hallyu* to sustain its development. They even created the Korean Wave Index, which serves to gauge current *Hallyu* conditions abroad (KOFICE, 2009).

In accordance with this fast-growing perspective of cultural economism, entertainment agencies (which have played a large role in transforming idol groups into *Hallyu* stars in Asian countries and the West) began to be considered as role models at a social level as "industrial warriors" (Won & Kim, 2011). These agencies are music production and management companies that discover aspiring performers and provide them with an extensive period of training to create idol groups. Currently, S.M. Entertainment⁶ (founded by CEO Lee Soo-man, a former singer), JYP Entertainment (founded by CEO Park Jin-Young, a former singer), and YG Entertainment (founded by CEO Yang Hyun-Seok, a former singer) are the "Big Three" among the agencies in Korea as they possess a significant portion of the music industry equity through extensive planning, funding, and tactical marketing (Jang, 2009, 217–38).

The CEOs of these agencies have often been asked to speak on their global business strategies at universities and enterprises; their speeches at Cambridge and Harvard have been broadcast to the public through television news and talk show programs and also through YouTube.⁷ They made seemingly well-informed comments on their contribution to developing the nation's pop culture, K-pop, which raised the national image and prestige of Korea and

would subsequently lead to derivative benefits for the country. In particular, the largest company, S.M. Entertainment, has boasted that it is the inventor of the “cultural technology”⁸ that has contributed to the spread of Korean pop music worldwide and will lead the world entertainment business.

As indicated earlier, cultural nationalism has dominated all other perspectives and substantiated the two projects of nation branding and culture industry promotion. This perspective encourages aggressive attitudes insisting on a one-way stream of *Hallyu* rather than attitudes taking *Hallyu* as an opportunity for bilateral cultural exchanges with other countries. Although Korean intellectuals once harshly criticized America and other culturally powerful Western countries with regard to their cultural imperialist practices, Koreans now tend to express interest only in *Hallyu*’s contributions to the improved national image, prestige, and economic accomplishments of the country. However, such a standpoint has provoked counterattacks from other countries. Is it not time, then, for Koreans to reflect on what they take for granted?

THE POWER CONTROLLER AND ITS NETWORK

The hierarchy of the *Hallyu* discourses has been maintained by a “power controller.” Although it is already known that the government has acted aggressively in supporting the culture industry in Korea (Huang, 2011), it is difficult to track how the government has been able to control the perspective of discourses on *Hallyu*, because it uses multichannels to promote certain discourses. It stands behind a complex network of different political and social subjects and orchestrates them to implement its agenda (Tung and Wan, 2010, 211–29). To maintain stability, each subject spreads the discourses with the perspective of cultural nationalism, marginalizing the other perspectives. The government assigns different roles to each subject and allocates financial resources (Choi, 2013, 252–85). As long as the hierarchy of the discourses is maintained, the government could perpetuate the hegemony.

Kim Young-sam’s government (1993–1998) initiated the construction of such a network. Interest in the culture industry originated from a report delivered to President Kim that noted the export revenue of Steven Spielberg’s blockbuster *Jurassic Park* was equal to the export sale of 1.5 million Hyundai cars. This government began to explore a new approach to cultural policy to create economic contributions through the cultural sector. It delegated the related tasks to the Bureau of Culture Industry under the Ministry of Culture, which had traditionally supported the preservation of traditional culture and promotion of fine arts. To invest in culture industries, such as films, pop music, and broadcasting, it also attracted corporate capital from top electronic goods manufacturers Samsung, Hyundai, and Daewoo (Shim, 2006, 25–44).

In 1995, cable broadcasters were launched and it immediately became another source of optimism in the government's plans to foster culture industries, as these broadcasts could serve as platforms for distributing pop culture. In accordance with the government's plans and endeavors, a small number of Korean soap operas and pop music singers began to gain popularity in China.

The following Kim Dae-jung government (1998–2003) was established during the economic crisis in 1998. Under these circumstances, the government found that the increasing popularity of K-pop would provide both an uplifting story and serve as an engine for economic recovery. Hence, the government began to consider culture industries as fundamental national business. It increased their allocated budget by up to 500 times compared with those allocated by the previous government, and enacted the Basic Law for Culture Industry to provide more systematic support. In 1998, the government lifted the ban imposed on the influx of Japanese pop culture in an aggressive attempt to encourage the Korean culture industry to cultivate its faculties through competition in the international market. The opening of this market also facilitated the export of K-pop to Japan.

In the meantime, the government transformed the state-led film industry into a management system. Film professionals created the Korean Film Council (KOFIC) both to protect the domestic film industry from Hollywood and increase Korea's export capacity by improving film diversity and expanding reach. Compared with the other state apparatuses, KOFIC operated in a completely new governance system (currently believed to have contributed to the global proliferation of Korean films in the 2000s as part of *Hallyu*). In 1999, for the other areas of the culture industry, two additional organizations, the Korea Game Industry Agency and Korea Broadcasting Visual Industry Agency (later integrated into KOCCA), were launched. These organizations invited related industries and civil society organizations as members who would implement the government policy (Lee, 2009, 128–30).

The subsequent Roh Moo-hyun government (2003–2008) was established during a time when certain Korean soap operas, such as *Winter Sonata* and *A Jewel in the Palace*, and Korean films, including *My Sassy Girl*, had made soft landing in other regions of Asia but *Hallyu* had not yet reached its prime. The government created strong incentives to encourage *Hallyu*-related culture industries and businesses. Its Ministry of Culture and Tourism established a new agency, KOFICE, and requested KOCCA (established in 2001 to promote *Hallyu*) to open new offices in other Asian countries to conduct studies on *Hallyu*. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning, and other government-affiliated organizations, such as the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, Korea Tourism Organization, and Korea Communications Commission, also cooperated with the support policies for the *Hallyu* industry.

Promising to revitalize the national economy, Lee Myung-bak's government (2008–2013) established the goal of developing Korea into a "content industry" powerhouse, and changed the name of the policy from "culture industry" to "cultural content industry." With the participation of eleven government ministries under the prime minister, Lee's government created the "Content Industry Promotion Committee," thereby fulfilling its promise to directly and meticulously construct promotional plans as well as provide support for the cultural content industry. This strong government action was reminiscent of the economic development experienced in the 1960s and 1970s, when Korea was under the control of an authoritarian military regime (Nam, 2013, 209–31).⁹

During the period of Lee's government, *Hallyu* entered a new phase. At the initial stage of *Hallyu*, TV dramas created sensations in Japan and other parts of Asia, but this genre had subsided after reaching a climax. From then on, K-pop music by idol groups began to create new sensations in Asia. The media stressed the importance of this change, putting forward such terms as *New Hallyu* and *Hallyu 2.0*. At the time, the government defined *Hallyu* as the chief Korean item of export and designed global plans to promote K-pop beyond Asia. The media industry, content industry, academic circles, and civic groups rallied behind the government; all of these groups fully committed to the goal of globalizing *Hallyu*. As a result of their efforts, K-pop entered Europe, South America, and other parts of the world, and also achieved popularity. However, the more widespread *Hallyu* grew, the narrower the viewpoint on *Hallyu* became. Even as *Hallyu* spread worldwide, it was discussed from the perspective of economic nationalism in Korea.

The Park Geun-hye administration was established in 2013 with its vision entitled "Creative Economy."¹⁰ The administration introduced this ambiguous concept as encompassing plans to create new business opportunities through the fusion of ICT, culture, and other realms, along with moving beyond the country's traditional manufacturing base. Despite the haziness of the concept, President Park spoke of her vision on each of her official trips abroad, asserting that the *Hallyu* industry and business are definitely the means for achieving her vision.¹¹ She made *Hallyu* an essential topic of discussion across all sectors of society, and pushed the boundary of *Hallyu* even further by including related fields, such as information technology.¹² Currently, businesses related to either pop culture or ICT can expect support from the government, along with public respect.

Each new government from 1993 to the present has shifted culture industry policy from "protection" to "promotion-oriented," extending the range of the government departments' involvement in culture industry.¹³ These actions were based on the perspective of cultural nationalism, which had led

the successive governments to become enthusiastically involved with *Hallyu* but to regard it only as a means of national branding and national economic promotion (rather than as a means for bilateral cultural exchanges).

In establishing promotion policies for *Hallyu*, each government included different social subjects in its network. The network system was constructed gradually, growing increasingly sophisticated over time, such that no one outside the country could easily comprehend it. Government-affiliated organizations (such as KOCCA and KOFICE) were created to implement the government policies. These organizations included culture industries and civic groups as their members, generating the impression that the Korean public had reached a social consensus on government policies. As mentioned in the previous section, public broadcasting networks and academic circles were mobilized to assist in the implementation of the government policies: newspapers and other media outlets became vehicles for delivering all the details of *Hallyu*-related events occurring in other countries, whereas academic research highlighted the economic contributions of *Hallyu*.

Entertainment agency companies have been another key figure contributing to the implementation of government policies by distributing the discourses based on cultural nationalism. The agencies provide the media with news sources by constantly creating events overseas and transforming idol groups into *Hallyu* stars, whereas TV networks have maintained a good relationship with the entertainment agencies to gain more sources of *Hallyu* news that cater to the government. The agencies have even used their international renown to recruit foreign performers and created “global” idol groups, which serve as sources of news for media of foreign countries. Every move by entertainment agencies serves as a source of news (Kim, 2013, 45–83). The CEOs of these agencies transformed themselves into stars through their media mobilization capacities, seeking opportunities to deliver speeches to the public that encourage the perspective of viewing *Hallyu* as a means of nation branding and achieving economic benefits. In turn, the Korean public has easily accepted these individuals’ far-reaching influence. All of these are tributes to the government’s support.

The media demonstration of *Hallyu*’s success and the entertainment agencies’ glossy performances have been the best means of advertising the government’s support policies for the culture industry. Public recognition of their accomplishments amplifies the government’s hegemony. Consequently, the government designs new policies to promote the culture and contents industries; government-affiliated organizations, civic groups, media companies, and entertainment agencies then implement the policies. Cultural nationalism and economism residing in this cycle have penetrated everyday public life, becoming common sense within Korean society.

CONCLUSION

To demonstrate that the general understanding or knowledge of *Hallyu* is a discursive construct, rather than an objective understanding of the substance of cultural phenomenon, this work first examined the historical factors that constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed the discourses on *Hallyu*. Through a critical and meticulous analysis of the historical conditions of *Hallyu*, this research revealed that discourses on *Hallyu* have flourished in academic settings and in mass media both inside and outside Korea over time because of Asian intellectuals' increasing interest in Asianism and cultural studies scholars' research trend focusing on media audiences in the mid-1990s. These Asian intellectuals and cultural studies attempted to utilize *Hallyu* as a means of forming a cultural (exchange) community in East Asia with sufficient means to resist Western rules. The increasing interest in the culture industry in other Asian countries was another requisite for *Hallyu* to attract considerable attention from various concerned parties.

Second, the perspective of cultural nationalism has pushed aside Asianism and dominated the other perspectives for understanding *Hallyu*. Cultural nationalism has led Korea to pursue the two political and economic projects of "nation branding" and "culture industry promotion," and to understand *Hallyu* as a means either of enhancing the national image and prestige of Korea or of achieving economic benefits.

Third, this research presented the long-standing view of cultural nationalism by successive Korean governments since the mid-1990s as regards *Hallyu*. Support policies for the culture industry to maintain the phenomenon were established, and a network was constructed by mobilizing different political and social subjects, including government departments and organizations, mass media, academic circles, civic groups, and entertainment agency companies, to join it. Dedicating themselves to their roles allocated by the governments, the subjects in the network reproduced discourses on *Hallyu* reflecting only the perspective of cultural nationalism, subsequently constraining the main focus of the discourses on *Hallyu* to this perspective.

In particular, entertainment agencies assumed the role of stabilizing the network. After discovering aspiring performers and then providing them with extensive training to create idol groups, the agencies transformed these groups into *Hallyu* stars through their commercial planning and media mobilization capacities. These stars then created stories of their firsthand experiences of *Hallyu* success in other countries. These success stories justified the government's *Hallyu* promotion policy and also emphasized cultural nationalism. By broadcasting these stories to the public, the agencies inflated their businesses into future-growth powers and sources of national pride. As the

stories have penetrated the everyday lives of Koreans, it has become almost impossible to ask difficult questions or raise criticisms regarding *Hallyu*.

Discourses based on cultural nationalism have deeply permeated all spheres of Korean society. Meanwhile, Koreans have not had sufficient opportunities to access the cultures of Japan, China, and Southeast Asia, as the media rarely display them. Literature and films from other parts of Asia have rarely been popular in Korea. Hence, Koreans see the rest of Asia through a narrowly framed and mono-colored window. Rather than imagining a united Asian community, Koreans tend to track the roads *Hallyu* has taken. For this reason, discourses on *Hallyu* that are at the forefront of the government-led network are problematic.

NOTES

1. Takeuchi criticized Japanese modernists and modernization theorists who recognized Japan as superior to Asia and concluded that Japan was not part of Asia (which was inferior to Japan in their interpretations). Takeuchi admitted that such a modern Japanese Asianism ended with the Japanese defeat in the Pacific War in 1945, and argued that “invasion” and “solidarity” in Japanese Asianism should be distinguished. Finally, he proposed a new notion of Asianism liberated from imperialism, which cut off the relationship between dominator and subject (Takeuchi, 2005, 103).

2. The programs present how *Hallyu* stars overcame dramatic hardship, and the challenges faced by the entertainment agency companies to which these stars belong. Their last scenes always portray *Hallyu* stars meeting with their fans in foreign countries.

3. S.M. Entertainment CEO Lee is also considered a hero or father of *Hallyu*, or a missionary of national pride. He cried “Hurrah Korea!” during the ceremony at which he was awarded his national medal.

4. Psy’s *Gangnam Style* marked the pinnacle of the *Hallyu* phenomenon (Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011).

5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ssS9UTimWk>

6. This representative record label and talent agency led the *Hallyu* phenomenon by successively catapulting a series of singers into stardom: H.O.T., who initiated the *Hallyu* boom in China; BoA, who are popular in Japan; and Girls’ Generation and TVXQ, both of whom enjoy popularity across the Asian region. Having broken into foreign music markets through these groups, the agency has become popular across the world (Kim, 2012).

7. Korean news channels rushed to report that S.M. Entertainment CEO Lee spoke at Stanford, and JYP Entertainment CEO Park at Harvard. <http://video.cnb.com/gallery/?video=3000562091>.

8. During his speech at a conference in Paris on June 11, 2011, to an audience of 70 music composers and TV producers from Europe, Lee introduced his theory of culture technology and its three-step process of exporting K-pop overseas as part of *Hallyu*

(Joong-Ang Daily, June 13, 2011). Step one involves scouting for trainees through global auditions. After screening a small number of selected applicants, the company creates a simulation of the change in trainees' voices and appearances in three to seven years. Then, the trainees are entered into the company's nurturing system, called the "in-housing system." Step two involves expanding the presence of K-pop musicians into overseas music markets by teaming up with local entertainment companies and organizing virtual concerts outside Korea. Step three involves forging joint ventures with local companies.

9. The military regime's selection and promotion of certain sectors was not highly regarded as it caused too many production units to be grouped into only a small number of industry sectors, while many worthwhile economic projects failed.

10. For further information on "Creative Economy," see the Ministry of Science, ICT & Future Planning website at english.msip.go.kr.

11. President Park invited K-pop singer Psy to the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, and presented him as a champion of her idea of Creative Economy (Chang, 2014).

12. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, together with KOCCA, has also held open forums and symposiums named "Cultural Technology (CT) Forums." In a CT Forum on April 16, 2013, CT was referred to in connection with the creative economy, and K-pop was mentioned as an applied case of CT. In the forum, S.M. CEO Lee presented digital technology that can be used to create "virtual reality," claiming that this technology can be used for K-pop performances (*Policy News of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism*, April 4, 2013).

13. The government's promotion policy of culture industry was triggered by the vortex of neoliberal globalization. "Neoliberalism" is a politico-economic principle or ideology that operates with an emphasis on the reduction of state intervention and deregulation and liberation of markets. Korea first adopted neoliberal measures as part of its agreement with the International Monetary Fund during the 1997–1998 economic crisis. Since then, the successive Korean governments have pursued neoliberal policy. For the entirety of *Hallyu*, however, the governments have taken a step backward. As with the military regime in the past, which selected and promoted certain sectors of the economy at the initial stage of economic development, the latest governments especially have demonstrated that the state-centered economic systems are intended for *Hallyu* (Nam, 2013, 209–31).

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Chapter 3

A Critical Interpretation of the Cultural Industries in the Era of the New Korean Wave

Dal Yong Jin

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1990s, Korea has rapidly developed its own cultural industries to become one of the major centers for the production of local popular culture. Once a very small country in the realm of popular culture and digital technologies, Korea has suddenly developed several recognizable cultural products, and the local cultural industries have continued to export these products and services, which were originally exported almost exclusively to East Asia. Korean cultural products and digital technologies, including smartphones, consisting of non-Western cultural forms have recently also become global phenomena. In particular, since the latter part of the 2000s, Korea has substantially penetrated the global markets with the help of social media, such as YouTube and Facebook, mainly because the global fans of Korean popular culture heavily rely on social media platforms to enjoy several forms of local popular culture. They share Korean popular culture with their friends and acquaintances through social media, which is categorized as the New Korean Wave (Jin, 2016).

Admitting that there are several significant elements to the recent growth of the Korean Wave, including favorable cultural policies, cultural affinities among Asian countries in the initial stage of the development, economic growth in the Asian region, and advanced digital and social media, the most significant yet least discussed factor is the cultural industries, which have played a key role in the *Hallyu* phenomenon. Several key cultural industries, such as the broadcasting, film, music, gaming, and animation industries, have developed their own unique popular culture one after another. As the broadcasting and film industries initiated and led the growth of the Korean Wave until the mid-2000s, the digital game and music industries have markedly

grown to become the leaders in the new Korean Wave phenomenon starting in 2008. In the Korean context, the notion of the cultural industries has changed several times due to each administration's political priority. This implies that the local cultural industries have closely related to government policies. Regardless of the importance of local cultural industries for the growth of *Hallyu*, only a handful of works (Otmazgin and Eyal, 2011; Kwon and Kim, 2013; Ju, 2014; Jin and Otmazgin, 2014) focused on the shifting role of the Korean cultural industries, which asks us to carefully analyze the crucial dimensions of the cultural industries.

By employing a critical political economy approach, this chapter investigates the primary role of the cultural industries in the Korean Wave in the context of the broader social structure of society. It begins to historicize the Korean cultural industries according to major policy shifts over the last twenty years. It then analyzes the ways in which the Korean cultural industries have cultivated and developed local cultural products and digital technologies. It does not attempt to celebrate and cheerlead the increasing role of local cultural industries; instead, through an analysis of the cultural industries, it aims to discuss the crucial role of the cultural industries in the midst of neoliberal globalization. In particular, by analyzing the process of the commodification and marketization of popular culture and digital culture, it discusses whether or not the cultural industries and cultural policies have developed cultural diversity in the new Korean Wave era.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Since the onset of the rapid growth of popular culture, such as film, music, and television programs in the early twentieth century, the cultural industries have become one of the major discussion topics among both media scholars and practitioners. The cultural industries were very much bound up with the rise of mass culture—a phenomenon that troubled many twentieth-century intellectuals (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Reacting against what they saw as the misleadingly democratic connotations of the term mass culture, two German philosophers, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1972), developed the idea of the cultural industries “as part of their critique of the false legacies of the Enlightenment, where the term the culture industry back then was intended to draw critical attention to the commodification of art” (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005, 1).

The singular term cultural industry was used for the first time in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which Horkheimer and Adorno originally published in 1947. Since the Renaissance, “there has been a widespread tendency to think of art as being one of the highest forms of human creativity” to be

respected; however, the cultural industry is concerned with the management and selling of a particular kind of work instead of developing creativity (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, 4). Horkheimer and Adorno (1972, 120) argued, "Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part. Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the rhythm of the iron system." Their concerns were as much "to do with standardized reception as industrialized production" (Miller, 2009, 89–90). Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) saw the problems of mass culture and the relationship between ideology and capitalism in terms of either an elite/mass or a base/superstructure distinction. Therefore, the theory of the cultural industry took root within the political economy of communication (Miege, 2012, n.p., cited in George, 2014). Garnham (2005, 17) further argues

Adorno and Horkheimer saw the problem as one of commodification and alienation. The term culture referred to the German idealist notion of culture as the expression of the deepest shared values of a social group, as opposed to civilization, which was merely the meretricious and superficial taste and social practices of an elite, and of art as the realm of freedom and as the expression of utopian hope. The term industry, on the other hand, referred to . . . Marxist economic concepts of commodification, commodity exchange, capital concentration and worker alienation at the point of production.

Since the early twentieth century, "the cultural industries have moved closer to the center of the economic action in many countries. Cultural industry companies can no longer be seen as secondary to the real economy" (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, 1). As the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1980) defined, the cultural industry is held to exist when cultural goods and services are produced, reproduced, stored, or distributed on industrial and commercial lines; that is to say on a large scale and in accordance with a strategy based on economic considerations rather than any concerns for cultural development. In a similar vein, Herbert Schiller (1989) pointed out that the cultural industries are those which provide the conceptual and practical convergence of art and creativity into consumer-oriented commodities, and they serve as the sites for the creation, packaging, transmission, and placement of (corporate) cultural messages. As such, the cultural industries in terms of areas, magnitude, and concepts have continued to grow as popular culture and digital technologies become people's core activities. More importantly, serious changes concerning the nature of cultural industries have been undertaken since the term first became a subject of interest. The use of the expression in the plural (cultural industries instead of cultural industry) especially indicates a significant change from the original form criticized by Horkheimer and Adorno (George, 2014, 34).

The cultural industry discourse returned to academia in the 1980s due to the emergence of information communication technologies (ICTs) and relevant industries. Policies toward the cultural industries can no longer be separated from the ICTs. The convergence of traditional cultural industries, like film, broadcasting, and magazines with the ICT industries, including telecommunications, computer, and digital technologies, has greatly influenced the current debates on the cultural industries, because some need to distinguish industries from one another, while others focus on the cultural industries converged as a whole.

There has been another twist since the mid-1990s when the concept of cultural industries shifted with the growth of digital technologies and intellectual property (IP) rights toward creative industries. In 1994, Australia sought to chart a cultural policy combining the arts with new media technologies, and the notion of cultural industries has been transposed to the creative industries (Flew, 204; Jin, 2015). The notion of creative industries subsequently gained much wider acceptance following its adoption by the U.K. government in 1997, which defined the creative industries as those activities originating in individual creativity, skill, and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of IP (O'Conner and Gibson, 2014). As UNESCO (2010, 2) identifies, "The term creative industries encompasses a broader range of activities which include the cultural industries plus all cultural or artistic production, whether live or produced as an individual unit. The creative industries are those in which the product or service contains a substantial element of artistic or creative endeavor and include activities such as architecture and advertising." Unlike the term cultural industry, which has its origin in the ideological critique of art and culture under industrial capitalism associations, creative industries have furthermore developed in conjunction with the growth of digital technologies and convergence (Jin, 2015).

Of course, political economy to cultural industries research emphasizing the contextual approach has been criticized due to several reasons, and therefore, a number of new approaches emerged, which have fallen under various rubrics, including creative industries, convergence culture, productions studies, and cultural economy. These new approaches have often included a rejection of political economy as a viable framework for studying popular culture (Wasko and Meehan, 2013, 151). As some scholars (Grossberg, 1995; Garnham, 1995) have argued, political economy cannot adequately explain media content and audiences. As Havens et al. (2009, 237) point out, the limitation of political economy theory to the cultural industries mostly results from their emphasis on "the larger level operations of media institutions, general inattention to entertainment programming, and incomplete explanations of the role of human agents (other than those at the pinnacle of conglomerate

hierarchies) in interpreting, focusing, and redirecting economic forces that provide for complexity and contradiction within media industries.”

In the midst of the increasing criticism and the emergence of new approaches, the political economy of communication and culture has moved beyond studies of ownership, class struggle, and control to consider relationships between political economy and culture. In other words, while the major goal of political economy theory analyzes the structural transformation of the cultural industries, including ownership, institutional structure, and cultural industry policies, some understand that audiences and content are also significant. As the current study on the cultural industries in tandem with the Korean Wave critically utilizes political economy theory with these concerns in mind, it will shed light on the current debates on the role of political economy theory in the cultural industries and relevant cultural policies.

NEOLIBERAL SHIFTS OF THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN THE PRE-KOREAN WAVE ERA

The cultural industries have several subsectors: museum, gallery, publication, sound-recording, animation, broadcasting, music, game, and movie to name a few. Among these many forms of cultural industries, “different countries have developed different degrees of sensitivity to the certain form of foreign cultural product reflecting historical, religious, linguistic and geographical dimension” (Choi, B.I., 2002, 88). The Korean government before *Hallyu* starting in the late 1990s used the cultural industries to reinforce nation building or prevent the infiltration of foreign cultures regarded as morally harmful or politically dangerous, instead of creating commercial profits as commodities (Otmazgin and Eyal, 2011). Regardless of its potential as a commercial good, culture had not been for sale, but worked for promoting national identity or sovereignty. Due to Korea’s unusual historical experiences, including the influence of Japanese colonialism (1910–1945), the Korean War (1950–1953), involvement in the Vietnam War (1955–1975), the experience of the long-standing military regimes (1961–1993), and the division of the Korean peninsula (1945-present), cultural identity as Korean tradition and nationalism, as well as national culture, had been the primary object of cultural policy (Yim, 2002). During this period, the cultural industries were indeed expected to support the Korean government’s emphasis on export-led industrial development and the military regimes’ nation building (Kwon and Kim, 2013).

The situation surrounding local culture has changed since the mid-1990s when the Kim Young Sam government (1993–1998) started to develop culture, including films, to advance the national economy as part of its

globalization strategy. The Kim government as the first civilian government in decades created a new priority of approaching cultural industries from an economic perspective, instead of a cultural perspective, resulting in an intensification of the commodification and capitalization of cultural products (Jin, 2016). In other words, the issue of developing the cultural industries during the Kim government did not play any major role in advancing cultural values. The governance criteria of neoliberal administrations were based upon productivity and profitability, or in other words, on business norms (Brown, 2006). The Kim government consequently brought the concept of the cultural industries to cultural policy, shifted the focus of cultural policy from arts to commercial cultural industries, and intensified the commodification of local popular culture. The Korean government since the mid-1990s has deregulated the cultural industries based on its neoliberal tendencies. However, the government has also directly supported the cultural industries (Jin, 2016), and this new trend has greatly influenced the local cultural industries and succeeding administrations.

Against this backdrop, the Korean cultural industries have started to develop their local popular cultures and exported them to other countries. As Table 3.1 shows, until the latter part of the 1990s, Korea's cultural industries did not create any meaningful cultural products as commodities in the global cultural markets. Until 1996, there were no particular cultural products to be exported, and the exports of cultural products primarily started in 1997 in the initial stage of the Korean Wave. The nature of culture has consequently changed from emphasizing cultural identity to focusing on commercial imperatives through foreign trade as well as domestic consumption. In Korea as elsewhere, special attention has been recently given to the economic portfolio of the cultural industries (Jin and Nissism, 2014), while considering popular culture as a way to upgrade the economy and provide the country with resources of soft power, implying that nation-states utilize culture to attract other countries' people in global politics (Nye, 2004).

Among the cultural industries, it was the broadcasting industry that initiated the Korean Wave phenomenon. When Korea experienced the 1997 economic crisis, which was the worst in its modern history, the Korean cultural industries, such as the broadcasting and film industries, had to develop their own local cultural products because the country did not have the budget to import foreign programs. In other words, right after the 1997 economic crisis, as local broadcasters desperately needed to develop television programs, and in a timely manner, they paradoxically developed unique television dramas and started to export them to neighboring countries that needed to have relatively inexpensive but quality products, compared to American and/or Japanese cultural products.

Table 3.1 Exports of Cultural Products, 1998–2015 (Unit: Million US Dollars)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Broadcasting	6.96	10	12.7	13.1	18.9	28.8	42.1	70.3	122	134
Movies	0.49	3.1	5.9	7.1	11.2	15	31	58.3	76	24.5
Animation	100	85	81.6	85	121.3	89.2	75.7	61.8	78.4	66.8
Music	*	8.6	8.1	7.9	7.4	4.2	13.3	34.2	22.3	16.6
Games	*	82.2	107.6	101.5	130.4	140.7	182	388	585	672
Characters	*	0	65.7	69.2	76.9	86	116	117	164	189
Manga	*	0	2.9	3.7	6.8	8.2	4.1	1.9	3.3	3.9
Total	4400000	188.9	284.5	287.5	372.9	372.1	464	732	1051	1107
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Broadcasting	151	171	185	184.7	222.4	233.8	309.4	340	370	
Movies	24.4	21	14.1	13.6	15.8	20.1	37	26.3	29.3	
Animation	72.7	80.5	89.6	96.8	115.9	112.5	109.8	110	120	
Music	13.8	16.4	31.2	81.3	196.1	235.1	277.3	310	360	
Games	781	1094	1241	1606	2378	2638	2715	2720	3220	
Characters	203	228	237	276.3	392.3	416.4	446	490	550	
Manga	3.9	4.1	4.2	8.2	17.2	17.1	20.9	46	30	
Total	1250	1675	1786	2266	3237	3673	3915	4056	4679.3	

Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2006). Establishment of Film Development fund, December 22. Since 2008, broadcasting has included independent production firms; MCST (2014b), 4; Korea Creative Content Agency (2015), 2015 Contents Industry Perspective 6. Korean Creative Content Agency (2016), 2016 Contents Industry Perspective, 9.

Some countries like Taiwan and China started to enjoy Korean popular music through exposure to a handful of musicians, including H.O.T. (a boy band), and they also wanted to see more Korean cultural products. Therefore, the first stage of the Korean Wave in East Asia was made possible primarily because of the needs and demands from both areas—Korea’s need to develop domestic cultural products and East Asia’s demand to have more Korean popular culture. As China’s CCTV (2015) correctly reported, “The success [of Korean popular culture in East Asia] can be traced back to the shift of the country’s development policy after the Asian financial crisis in 1997.” The cultural industries were the major players in this stage, which made the term “wave” perfect in explaining the milieu surrounding the growth of *Hallyu* in the late 1990s. What is interesting is that it is not the government, but the cultural industries themselves that initiated the Korean Wave drive. This does not exclude the crucial role of the Korean government as one of the major players; however, it is critical to emphasize the fundamental role of the cultural industries from the onset of the Korean Wave phenomenon.

COMMODIFICATION OF THE LOCAL CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN THE NEW KOREAN WAVE ERA

With the increasing popularity of local culture, Korea has rapidly advanced its exports of cultural products in the past twenty years, from \$188.9 million in 1998 to \$4,679.3 million in 2015 (Korean Creative Content Agency, 2016). Among these, the game industry has always been the frontrunner as gaming has been the largest segment of this figure from the beginning. The game industry has been the largest because Korea has developed several famous online games, like Lineage I, Lineage II, and AION, and later mobile games. Korean digital games have consequently had a significant global presence as the local game industry has exponentially increased its exports from only \$82.2 million in 1998 to as much as \$3,220 million in 2015. The second largest industry in this drive is the character sector at \$550 million in 2015, followed by broadcasting (\$370 million) and music (\$360 million) (Table 3.1). The film industry has been the lowest in the Korean Wave phenomenon as it exported only \$29.3 million in 2015.

The nature of the exports of local popular culture has greatly changed since around 2008. Most of all, major export regions have shifted. Korea started to export local popular culture to neighboring countries, including Japan, China, Taiwan, and Singapore until the early 2000s. East Asia is the most important area for the growth of the Korean Wave. Korean films and pop music, as well as online gaming have recently become popular in the Western markets, including North America and Europe, as well as Asia. Although they are still

marginal, K-pop, digital games, and animation are popular in these Western markets. Some television programs, like “Running Men” and “Super Stark K” are also popular among global youth.

The leading cultural industries as driving forces have also changed. In the first stage, the broadcasting and film industries were the most significant industries. As the Korean Wave movement started with a few well-made television dramas, we could not disregard their contributions to the early stage of the growth. Korean cinema followed the trend as some filmmakers created several blockbuster movies, like “Shiri” (1999) and “Joint Security Area” (2001), which were popular in several Asian countries. However, since 2008, again, the major cultural industries have been music, gaming, and animation/character as they have consisted of the largest segments of the Korean Wave phenomenon in recent years.

The reasons for the changes in the role of Korea’s cultural industries are mainly that they have sought new growth engines to escape from the setback in the foreign exports of domestic cultural products. Two cultural industries—digital gaming and music—have intensified their efforts and reached as far as the United States, Mexico, and France. The Korean gaming industry has grown swiftly, and among several gaming platforms, including mobile, console, and PC games, online gaming has become the country’s most significant cultural product for cultural trade. Whereas audiovisual products, such as films and television programs, have primarily permeated Asian countries, digital games have expanded their presence in the Western cultural markets, including North America and Europe. In particular, mobile gaming, which has become a new growth engine for the Korean game industries, has rapidly penetrated the Western markets so that these regions, such as North America and Europe, are the major places for their games.

Most of all, K-pop has become the frontrunner of the Korean cultural industries in recent years. In terms of the magnitude of foreign exports, it is still behind some cultural industries, including gaming, broadcasting, and charter; however, its global presence and influence cannot be easily challenged. Unlike the first part of the Korean Wave until 2007 when K-pop did not play a key role in the cultural industries, K-pop has suddenly become a new growth engine driving *Hallyu* with well-designed music and talented singers, including Psy and idol group musicians since 2008. Korea exponentially increased its export of music, from only \$16.4 million in 2008 to \$360 million in 2015, a 22 times increase to become one of the most significant cultural forms (see Table 3.1).

Interestingly, the Korean music industry has not fully benefited from the recent boom of K-pop in the global market, because global fans enjoy K-pop through social media, like YouTube, instead of buying CDs and cassette tapes (Jin and Yoon, 2016). However, as K-pop musicians rapidly establish their

popularity in the global markets through social media, they are able to make profits through concerts and advertising as well. Social media, therefore, have changed the traditional norm of popular culture because social media “eliminate the need for physical copies” (Havens and Lots, 2012, 214), which demands change in the Korean Wave.

Other than gaming and K-pop, the Korean cultural industries, including animation and characters, have continued to grow. In 1998 when the Korean Wave started, the animation and character industries exported only \$85 million worth of programs and products; however, in 2015, together they exported as much as \$670 million to become among the most significant parts of the new Korean Wave. As can be seen in Table 3.1, the film industry’s golden era in terms of export was 2005 when it exported \$76 million worth of films, but it was only at \$29.3 million in 2015, which means that the film industry is the only cultural sector which has had negative growth in recent years. The broadcasting industry has continued to grow; however, the nature has fundamentally changed, because the major programs have shifted greatly from dramas to reality shows.

Under this circumstance, it is not dicey to argue that the convergence between culture and economy in late global capitalism has emerged, which means the commodification of popular culture has taken place. As Power and Scott (2011, 170) argued, “An accelerating convergence between economy and culture is currently occurring in modern life, and is bringing in its train new kinds of urban and regional outcomes.” As Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) especially argued, the Korean cultural industries in general signified an attempt on the part of capitalism to commodify the cultural and social dimensions of people’s lives for the purpose of expanding the capitalist marketplace and subduing and nullifying the antagonistic qualities that this mode of production inherently entailed (Huna, 2009, 9). While it is not avoidable in twenty-first-century capitalism, the Korean cultural industries have, with no hesitation, pursued, rapidly and effectively, the commodification of local popular culture, which was once for nation building and cultural sovereignty.

MARKETIZATION OF THE CREATIVE CONTENTS INDUSTRIES IN THE NEW KOREAN WAVE ERA

There are several dimensions explaining *Hallyu* 2.0., such as the increasing role of social media as new platforms and hybridization of local popular culture between Korean mentalities and American structure and system, and an amended cultural industries policy since 2008 have also played a key role. The cultural industries since 2008 began to furthermore emphasize the significance of cultural content in conjunction with digital technologies.

President Lee Myung-bak (2008–2013) marketized the cultural industries, in particular cultural content, because of their importance to the national economy in the twenty-first century. Once popular culture became a valuable commodity, the next step for both the government and cultural industries and corporations was to marketize those commodities for the national economy. In his inaugural speech held in February 2008, Lee emphasized culture as a main part of industry:

The Korean Wave that is now well-placed around the globe testifies to the advantage of skillful replications of such a long tradition. Modernization of traditional culture is useful for facilitating arts and culture and such attempts surely dignify the country's economic prosperity. Now, culture has become an industry. We must develop our competitiveness in our contents industry, thereby laying the foundation to become a nation strong in cultural activities. An increase in income will lead to a rise in cultural standards, which in turn heightens our quality of life The new Administration will do its best to bring the power of our culture into a full blossom in this globalized setting of the 21st century.

As this speech indicates, President Lee focused on the nature of cultural content by identifying the cultural industries as “the contents industries.” For him, traditional culture, including arts and national tradition, should serve the national economy as commodities, which means that the Korean Wave is nothing but a tool to enhance the national economy. As Won Yong Jin (2012, 2–3) aptly puts it, the Lee government’s cultural contents policy is different from the previous administrations because the term contents emphasized the industrial aspect of culture rather than arts. This clearly indicates that cultural policies in the Lee government focused on economic benefits, which continued to the Park Geun-hye government in the name of “creative economy.”

More specifically, the Lee government enabled supportive measures to the cultural industries due to political and economic imperatives. The growing awareness that the cultural trade could be economically profitable has recreated a supportive attitude within the government toward promoting cultural exports, which meant that the Lee government massively pursued the marketization of popular culture. It also supported these areas partially because it planned to utilize them to advance related industries, including tourism, medical *Hallyu*, and character industries (Won, Y.J., 2012). As Hesmondhalgh (2007, 3) points out, “More than other types of production, the cultural industries are involved in the making and circulating of products—that is, texts—that have an influence on our understanding of the world.” Again, the Lee government did not seem to value the role of the cultural industries other than in terms of the economic value. Consequently, the major characteristics of the Lee government were to develop the industrialization of culture with the modernization of traditional culture and the advancement of the culture

and arts industries, along with developing creative contents industries, which were learned from other countries.

As is well-documented, several countries, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, indeed paid attention to the use of public policy to promote technological change by incubating the creative industries as new growth industries for the emergent global information economy (Flew, 2007, 21–24). The term creative industries, again, was originated in Australia at the beginning of the 1990s and has been institutionally recognized in the United Kingdom, where it has been current since 1998 as an aggregate denomination of the government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The creative industries include "those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property," and include "advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio" (Blythe, 2001, 145–146). Therefore, the notion of creative industries

not only encompasses the cultural products of mass reproduction, but also the arts field and the performing arts (frequently excluded from studies of culture industries for being non-reproducible by nature and, for that reason, not industrial). It also includes those industries which use culture as an input and have a cultural dimension, although their outputs are mainly functional (architecture and design), as well as subsectors such as graphic design, fashion design or advertising (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, 2014, 337).

However, the shift of the notion of the cultural industries to the cultural contents industries during the Lee government did not change any significant texts in that the Lee government supported cultural contents in relation to the Korean Wave in the name of economic imperatives (Choi, Y.H. 2013, 257). President Lee indeed put his emphasis on the corporate sphere. In other words, the Lee government placed cultural policy emphasis on the market, downplaying the importance of collective and citizen-based concerns (Clarkson 2002), thereby not developing the cultural industries due to the issues of national identity and sovereignty.

Another major focus of the Lee government, in tandem with the Korean Wave, is the utilization of popular culture as soft power. The Lee government used *Hallyu* and its growing popularity as a method of improving national image, in addition to the growth of the national economy (Kim and Jin, 2016). The Lee government established the Presidential Council on Nation Branding in 2009, a supervising organization devising plans for increasing brand value. This council developed the slogan Global Korea, a campaign orchestrated by

the government in close association with a number of business conglomerates including Samsung, LG, and Hyundai-Kia Motors and major entertainment companies, such as S.M., YG, JYP (Ih-Prost and Bondaz, 2014). As Joseph Nye (2004) argued, soft power means the ability to get what people want through attraction via culture, values, and foreign policies rather than coercion or payment. In this regard, Lee constantly emphasized the role of culture in building up national power with culture and putting emphases on globalizing Korean culture. During the first year of Lee's administration, the government highlighted culture as a criterion of national competitiveness and a *sine qua non* for improving the national brand, thereby strengthening the ability of public diplomacy and giving positive impressions to foreign people, and improving enterprises' images overseas (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2009).

Throughout his tenure, Lee stressed the importance of *Hallyu* as a core mechanism of soft power, and he related it to national brand power and national competitiveness that are linked to concepts of cultural diplomacy. This is why Lee was highly concerned about expanding *Hallyu*'s range to other cultural sectors such as fashion and food. Directly after his inauguration, his administration presented a task plan report about the globalization of Korean foods, and a taskforce for the mission was founded in May 2009 (Kim and Jin, 2016). Lee's perspective on *Hallyu* with cultural diplomacy underwent a slight variation with his successor, Park Geun-hye.

The Park Geun-hye government (2013–2017) continued to build its supporting mechanism in the cultural industries. Like several preceding presidents, Park also emphasized that the role of *Hallyu* in the context of economic profits, particularly with the notion of “the creative economy,” which means the convergence between traditional cultural industries, such as film and broadcasting industries, and information and communications technologies, thereby becoming a new growth engine of the national economy, was a key concern. As one of her major policy tasks, she promised to increase prosperity for Korean culture with new cultural policies such as increasing government spending on culture and tourism, up to 2% of the budget of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (Presidential Transition Team, 2013, 121).

She also established the Presidential Committee for Cultural Enrichment to consult with cultural artists about her cultural policies. Specifically, among ten tasks comprising cultural enrichment, at least two—promoting cultural diversity and cultivating creative cultural industries for “Korean Style”—were related to *Hallyu*. However, by this time, conjoining her emphasis with the notion of creative economy, her stance on *Hallyu* focused more on promoting industrial gains and soft power than on supporting cultural diversity (Kim and Jin, 2016). Although the recent conservative governments continued to emphasize the significance of cultural contents, “innovation and

creativity have not been invited to that party” (Miege, 2011, 58). Regardless of the introduction of new concepts to the cultural industries, these administrations’ approaches were not distinguishable as they focused on the standardization, marketization, and commodification of popular culture.

Of course, during the process, the Korean government has continued to intervene. As Mi Sook Park (2015, 115) puts it, “The Korean cultural industry has not managed to free itself from government intervention even though government control has gradually reduced as the country transitioned from military dictatorship to electoral democracy. In fact, the cultural policy has so far allowed the government to take the lead in its development.” The local cultural industries need strong governmental support for commercial profits for the national economy, which ensures that the close interconnectivity between the government and the cultural industries remains.

DECREASING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

In the global cultural markets, the cultural sector traditionally rests between political arguments justifying some protection to advance national culture and economic arguments supporting free trade (Maule, 1989). On the one hand, the cultural industries have taken a distinctive position by emphasizing their competitive edge in thinking of “art as being one of the highest forms of human creativity” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, 4). On the other hand, the cultural industries have pursued commercial imperatives. As the cultural industries generate massive added value, they attract intensive government promotion and investment. From the Kim Dae-jung government to the Moon Jae-in government, the administrations have quickly developed and adapted supportive measures because of their political priorities to advance the cultural sector for the growth of the national economy, instead of advancing creativity.

What is significant is that the rapid commodification and marketization of popular culture have caused some serious concerns. The cultural industries’ expansion has swelled its profits; however, “problems involving the quality and diversity of the cultural contents being produced and consumed have arisen,” mainly because a few dominant companies in different cultural industries vertically integrate the entire industry and produce highly commercial products (Lee, D.Y., 2011). Due to the high degree of commercialization of popular culture, government policies sometimes misled and negatively influenced not only the cultural industries but also Korean society. In particular, when the president Park Geun-hye government changed its notion of the cultural industries into the creative industries as part of the creative economy initiative, the cultural sector witnessed several negative aspects, which impeded the growth of the new Korean Wave.

President Park Geun-hye's cultural policy had been convoluted as she was impeached partially because of her mishandling of her responsibilities, guided by Choi Soon Sil in several policy measures, particularly in the realm of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.¹ As discussed above, President Park gave prominence to culture and its enrichment because she promoted the cultural sector as one of the most significant parts of the creative economy. For example, in addition to supporting the cultural sector through legal and financial arms, the Park government initiated the Presidential Committee for Cultural Enrichment and instituted a monthly Culture Day—a day when admissions to cultural events and museums were offered for free or at discounts. Yet, the Park administration that placed “such great emphasis on culture also wreaked havoc on the Culture Ministry, the government body that should have spearheaded cultural policies. The Park administration did not hesitate to pressure Culture Ministry officials to do its bidding, going so far as to remove officials who refused to toe its line” (Kim, H.R., 2016).

The Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), which has become one of the major cultural events for the Korean film industries—the major venue for foreign exports because many film traders come to the festival to make deals—also faced its greatest crisis. The film festival went ahead with the screening of a controversial documentary on the Sewol ferry disaster (“The Truth Shall Not Sink with Sewol”; *Daibingbel*) in 2014, despite the Busan mayor's very public wish to have it removed from the film roster. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism also strongly opposed the screening of the film and threatened the BIFF by cutting its budget,² which proves the regulatory nature of the Park government.

The government stifled creativity by cutting funding to those deemed to be in opposition. The president seemingly allowed her confidante to exercise power unchecked, especially in the cultural sector. It is suspected that Choi and her closest associates exploited culture-related events and organizations for personal gain. The lofty goal of cultural enrichment, it appears, was appropriated by the president's confidante and her cronies. It will be a long path to resuscitating culture and rehabilitating it back to health (Kim, H.R., 2016).

The recent scandal surrounding the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism occurred mainly because the government and the cultural industries have become too closely intertwined. For the government, popular culture has become a primary tool for the creative economy, while for the cultural industries, production of popular culture needs governmental supports; for both sides, popular culture has become one of the most significant commodities. They see popular culture as commodities, and therefore, they are most concerned with the ways in which they can capitalize popular culture. Their cultural and corporate policies have easily changed based on their short-term

plans and needs, which make some rooms to be spoiled. The emergence of the cultural industries' project and the push to foster the so-called creative economy should have propelled the extension of creativity and cultural diversity into "a wide array of activities and territories now covered under the rubric of the new creative industries" (Miege, 2011, 64); however, the reality is not there yet due to the lack of vision and philosophy in these governments in the realm of culture.

This kind of crisis has been made possible because culture has become commodified, which attracts too many people. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1972, 95–96) already argued:

Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together. Even the aesthetic manifestations of political opposites proclaim the same inflexible rhythm . . . Films and radio no longer need to present themselves as art. The truth that they are nothing but business is used as an ideology to legitimize the trash they intentionally produce.

The cultural industries are increasingly important components of modern economies; however, it is doubtful that they act as the vehicles of cultural identity that foster cultural diversity. We cannot deny that it is the global trend for nation-states to promote cultural industries, and for the Korean government, culture is indeed a valuable commodity. As *South China Morning Post* (2012) points out, "Marketing and branding are what transform creativity into cash, and that is what Korea excels in. The problem is the government tries only to develop the content itself [as a commodity]." In this regard, Terry Flew (2014, 12) clearly points out the significance of cultural diversity in conjunction with the cultural industries:

A focus on culture and creativity is seen as potentially enabling a more human centered development that achieves both economic goals of job creation, innovation and export growth while also contributing to social inclusion, cultural diversity and environmentally sustainable growth. One factor that makes creative economy strategies particularly appealing is that they can draw on human capacities and small-scale initiatives, rather than being reliant on large-scale capital investment, drawing on the stock of intangible cultural capital associated with people's identity and values. By drawing on local cultural practices rather than needing to bring in expertise from the outside, creative industries strategies can maintain cultural diversity and promote cultural sustainability.

Taking on the example of K-pop, the popularity of local music has been the outcome of the intensive commercialization and marketization by several entertainment houses, such as S.M. Entertainment, JPY Entertainment, and

YG Entertainment, that systematically train many idol groups and individual musicians who are playing key roles in the recent boom of K-pop in the global markets. The cultural industries and practitioners in the Korean Wave have been deeply involved in the standardization, as can be seen in K-pop idol groups³ and the commodification of popular culture for profits, resulting in de-politicization of the Korean Wave in terms of the lack of cultural diversity and sovereignty. While vehemently pursuing commercial profits, the cultural industries have attempted to build good relations with the government in order to secure governmental support, and therefore, they have lost their role as a social apparatus to secure diverse voices in the realm of culture, and overall in Korean society.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has critically analyzed the emergence of the Korean cultural industries in tandem with the Korean Wave. The cultural industries, such as broadcasting, gaming, music, and film, have greatly contributed to the development of local culture, and they have become some of the major players in the Korean Wave phenomenon. In the middle of the interplay with the Korean government, these cultural industries have certainly developed unique popular cultures and exported them to the global markets.

The cultural industries have grown since the Korean government adopted neoliberal globalization approaches, at least partially, if not entirely. Although neoliberal globalization implies a small government, Korea advanced its national economy based on developmentalism, and the country could not give up state-led development in the realm of culture. The cultural industries needed governmental intervention to grow as commodities, not as national arts, and therefore, the government has facilitated the marketization of culture, as much through its economic as its cultural policies (Jin, 2016). While implementing their commercial imperatives, the cultural industries have substantially expanded their global presence as well as regional penetration. In other words, the local cultural industries contribute to the Korean Wave “by increasing a commercial drive forced by globalization” (Ju, H.J., 2014, 4).

Whether conservative or liberal, the consecutive Korean governments have “shared the post-industrialist view of Korean society and advocated culture as the country’s new engine.” Although they have maintained the developmental approach, “the government has continued to pursue the neoliberal goal of commercializing and industrializing culture” (Lee, H.K., 2013, 190), which is very unique. The Korean government in general has been actively providing funding and support to the creative industries, “listing culture as a pillar industry since as far back as 1998. The push overseas has largely been

an initiative of Korean entertainment giants—profit-driven and calculated” (South China Morning Post, 2012).

The cultural industries, later referred to as the creative contents industries in Korea, are closely related to soft power as well, because two consecutive conservative administrations since 2008 have shifted their cultural policy priority. While expanding their supports to the creative contents industries, they utilize them in tandem with the Korean Wave to help cultural diplomacy. The Korean Wave has always been considered either for its cultural commodities for the national economy or soft power for national politics.

Admitting to the pivotal role of the cultural industries in the construction of the Korean Wave phenomenon, there are some increasing concerns because the cultural industries and the government have not developed cultural values in conjunction with *Hallyu* 2.0. In fact, as neoliberalism has strengthened since the 1990s, a greater concern for culture as a commodity has begun to take hold. Neoliberal approaches rampant in Korea have placed cultural policy emphasis on market-based aspects of the cultural industries (Jeannotte, 2010), while local cultural industries do not emphasize “the significance of collective and citizen-based concerns for cultural diversity and identity. This means that Korean cultural policies operate primarily in the service of corporate interests” (Jin, 2016, 39). The growth of local cultural industries is not framed by the notion of public interest, nor has the Korean government been involved in preserving cultural diversity. The Korean cultural industries since the late 1990s have scrupulously followed the path of commercialism and have shown more interest in making deals and formulaic products than in innovating and devoting themselves to the creation of art (Kim, K.H., 2004, x, cited in Rist, 2004). The recent governments’ emphases on the creative industry have nothing to do with the protection and/or expansion of cultural identity. As UNESCO (2010, 2) defines, “The creative industries are those in which the product or service contains a substantial element of artistic or creative endeavor and included activities”; however, the Korean governments’ practices have not actualized these significant purposes while intensifying the commodification of popular culture.

As Wasko and Meehan (2013, 153) put it, the cultural industries “produce commodities that convey narratives, arguments, visions, symbolic worlds, and imagined possibilities.” In other words, cultural products are “simultaneously artifacts and commodities that are both created by artists and manufactured by workers, and present a vision for interpretation and an ideology for consumption to an active public of interpreters who may also be consumers targeted by advertisers.” In the twenty-first century, as culture and economy are already closely interconnected, it is not possible to expect culture to purely reflect national arts as symbols of national tradition and history instead of as commodities. However, the central feature of local culture today should

be based on its own local tradition and people's cultural identity, which means that the cultural industries in the Korean Wave need to develop local popular culture to advance local mentalities.

NOTES

1. Choi is an old friend of Park with no official position in the government, and apparently without any qualifications that could have given her the sort of power she apparently wielded; she was involved in several issues in the realm of culture. For example, Choi allegedly replaced anyone who opposed her decisions in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism with cronies who did as they were told.

2. In fact, BIFF's funding in 2015 was cut by \$587,000 compared to 2014. For the independent film specialty cinemas, the number of cinemas to be supported by KOFIC was cut from four in 2014 to three in 2015 (Noh, J., 2015).

3. For example, S.M. Entertainment, the largest entertainment house in the country, kicked off the K-pop phenomenon in the 1990s. "With its boot-camp-style training for the performers and production-line approach to the music, it perfected the model for churning out acts that storm Top 40 charts and pack concert halls across Asia and beyond" (Forbes, 2013).

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Part II

**NEW PERSPECTIVE
OF *HALLYU* STUDIES**

Chapter 4

Hallyu beyond East Asia *Theoretical Investigations on Global Consumption of Hallyu**

Seok-Kyeong Hong

INTRODUCTION

It has been more than a decade since *Hallyu* became one of the important topics in East Asian cultural studies. Although Hong Kong's and Japan's mass cultures have been broadly shared in East Asia, there are several reasons why the later-born *Hallyu* captivates scholars and researchers in cultural studies. First, Hong Kong's case was special: its territory was subordinated to England in the heyday of Hong Kong's pop culture in the 1980s, but its actual market was China and its huge diasporas. In the case of Japan, its sturdy domestic economy and markets supported "Japan mania." *Hallyu*, compared to these two cases, is produced by a small country, in a local language. Moreover, Korea is not an epitome of the exercise of hard power that can easily influence other countries. Despite this, by the time the syndrome of *Hallyu* had begun in its East Asian neighbors, Korean dramas, which had never been considered to sell overseas, became great hits in foreign countries. These phenomena appear bizarre because they cannot be explained by preexisting economic logics and regional or language politics. These seemed to entail more complicated cultural logics. This curiosity has led multiple reception studies to take various directions, but many researchers at least agree that the Asian audiences reaffirm their identity by watching Korean dramas (Lin, 2004), and there formed a positive voice where, as a result, the consumption of the *Hallyu* contents not only encouraged the Asian audiences to become more interested in Korea but also made it possible to interact with each other in Asia (Chua, 2004).

* An earlier version of this chapter was published as "Hallyu as a Digital Culture Phenomenon in the Process of Globalization," *Journal of Communication Research* 50:1 (2013).

Second, it is worth paying attention to the fact that *Hallyu* was propagated very quickly and explosively in the beginning of the 2000s, and moreover, it occurred simultaneously across the countries in East Asia. Thus, the early *Hallyu* studies focused on what mediation process could enable Korean media to be circulated in the Asian countries by looking into each country's media economy, translation, and the route of reception. However, as the great transnational success of *Winter Sonata* (Gyeoul Yeonga) and *Jewel in the Palace* (Dae Jang Geum) made *Hallyu* appear to be at its peak in the mid-2000s, it was said that *Hallyu* had already passed its prime and studies on that had run out of relevant topics or had lost their direction in cultural studies. And yet, since about 2010, *Hallyu* has created new fandoms out of East Asia. S.M. Entertainment held a big concert showing the idols belonging to its company on a huge stage in Paris in June 2011. The Korean news revealed that the tickets sold out in a minute and that the fans, who failed to buy a ticket, had flash mobs in the streets in demonstration for the extended shows. Originally, Europe was considered to be the most difficult area to hold the event for various reasons. Either no Korean singer had released a single record or no Korean drama had been on the air before then. Hence, the S.M. concert in Paris generated media frenzy in South Korea, which acclaimed *Hallyu* to be finally working in Western Europe. The media coverage interpreted this event as the crucial turning point for *Hallyu* to become more broadly expansive in the world beyond East Asia. But there were also some criticisms that this interpretation was too much nationalistic exaggeration.

In the following year, joint or solo concerts of Korean singers took place in Europe very successfully.¹ Most of all, Psy's *Gangnam Style* was uploaded onto YouTube in early July 2012, which went viral in a short period of time, and became the most-viewed music video on YouTube within several months.² *Gangnam Style* became the most vivid evidence of a success story in the current *Hallyu*.³

In Korean academia, studies on *Hallyu* tended to see that *Hallyu* had provided East Asian audiences with an opportunity to evoke "homogeneity" as Asians. However, clearly, the fact that *Hallyu* was also actually circulated in the West by being considered as "Other" would not be a result corresponding with the former findings. Regardless of whether this assessment is an expression of nationalism or an attitude to create a critical distance from nationalism, there are two assessments from different positions. And yet, the more important truth is that both positions would agree that this phenomenon is unexpectedly peculiar and significant. So, what has to be done is to try to explain the phenomenon in an objective way, paying attention to its complexity. Truly, the Korean media coverage distinguishes it by labeling it *New Hallyu* when introduced to the world beyond East Asia, or "*Hallyu 2.0*," which indicates the importance of the Web 2.0 in the propagation of *Hallyu* out of East Asia, as if

Hallyu's intrinsic characteristics changed. However, this phenomenon should be understood in continuity of the *Hallyu* phenomenon observed in East Asia as well as a consequence of the cultural logic in the era of digital culture and globalization. Migration is increasing in the globalized world and the number of immigrants is 3.3% of the world population in 2015 according to U.N's World Population Data in 2016. It states that immigration has increased at a rate of 41 percent from 2000 to 2015 and Asian descendants occupied almost half of all international migrants worldwide.⁴ People living abroad often feel the need to consume contents from their homelands, searching for materials with which they can continuously negotiate their identity. Equipped with more advanced technological means, people now have greater accessibility to diverse cultures in the international context. Korea is one of the most digitalized countries, and its connectivity contributes to transforming cultural contents into digital files and to circulating them expansively. In other words, in the new media environment resulting from digital culture and globalization, all the media contents produced in a country are able to reach and are circulated anywhere in the world without systematized mediations, which eventually create their own audiences. Materials for nostalgia for some and objects of curious consumption for others, the available contents online create a vivid space of identity politics for all.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider *Hallyu* as a monolithic cultural phenomenon in globalized digital cultures. In this chapter, I distinguish between *Hallyu* within East Asia, through established media systems, and the "global" *Hallyu* that resulted from the new digital culture. I regard the current *Hallyu* as a case of cultural change motivated by new digital platforms. I finally argue that the new comprehensive frame should be required to understand this change appropriately. I think *Hallyu* needs this new academic frame because, first, *Hallyu* appears to be the prototype of this new type of cultural circulation. I expect that this case would render proper accounts to explain other similar cases that are impending. Second, even though *Hallyu* was one of the countless cultural trends, it has become a more visible trend among others. I believe that *Hallyu* would be a relevant case study that may entail theoretical investigations on new cultural contents as well as new communication models within different cultures in globalization.

This chapter heavily relies on observations from the perspective of a scholar who has been out of East Asia since 1999. Apparently, having both pitfalls and advantages through an outsider's position, I seek to reinterpret former theories on *Hallyu* to suggest a new research frame in that *Hallyu* is a unique phenomenon in the process of globalization and the accelerating digital culture. In other words, I attempt to illustrate *Hallyu* in a more generalized academic frame. I expect there will be more discussions and criticisms over the three investigations I am about to elucidate through reliable counterarguments and new hypotheses.

TRANSFORMATION OF *MEDIASCAPE*: MASS CULTURE IN THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL ERA

In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), Appadurai offered influential insight into analyzing the cultural outcomes of globalization (Appadurai, 1996). This piece is important in that it elucidates an essential cultural reality and proposes a new paradigm, thus stepping further from the hierarchical relationship between the “center” and “periphery” of cultural imperialism. Appadurai argues, “Today’s global culture has to be understood in terms of a complex, overlapping, and disjunctive order” (Appadurai, 1990: 296). From what he proposes, this chapter draws on concepts of “ethnoscape,” which refers to the migration of people across cultures and borders, and “mediascape,” which is the realm of media contents and their representation.

Globalization resulted in numerous migrations of people across borders. While more voluntary movements appear in the relatively developed society for economic (by job location) or cultural (by cultural preference) reasons, more involuntary movements are seen in the less developed countries because of, for example, war, natural calamity, economic crisis, and so on. Mass immigration has been underway in Asia in the Pacific Rim since the twentieth century. Most of the East Asian immigrants went through a journey of colonial history, which resulted in contradictory significance of reinforcing their own Asian cultural identity and of enabling them to get used to foreign cultures. Thus, the Asian diasporas acquired foreign language skills and became sensitive about their identity issues. The populations in this region are well-versed in one or two Asian languages as well as English, which allows them to be cultural elites and primary mediators, translating and subtitling the Korean media and distributing them among the English-speaking world and the rest of the world.

That is, the convergence, where ethnoscape and mediascape intersect, irrevocably poses questions about immigrants’ cultural identities and the role of media. For instance, possible questions include how the second or third generations of Indians or Pakistanis form their cultural identities through the consumption of the audio-visual media or how the mass media in England represent these ethnic groups, and, furthermore, how the immigrants’ cultures influence the culture of England (Mattelart, 2007). These media environments have changed after the invention of the Internet and the development of digital cultures. The current media environment in which all media content can be digitalized and communicated through the Internet across borders could possibly add another insight on Appadurai’s observation. In effect, the ethnic groups identified with “-,” such as Korean-American, British-Indian, and German-Turkish, used to allegedly consume transnational cultural commodities,

in addition to the commodities from where they actually inhabit. However, as long as the Internet is connected, every group is able to access all the cultural materials that are digitalized and distributed online in the current mediascape.

We take this situation for granted in Korea, which is the world leader in Internet connectivity and speed. Yet we should note that Korea established this system in the late 1990s and high-speed Internet was generalized in Europe in the mid-2000s, which means this situation has not been that long-lasting and the world is not homogeneously networked in terms of speed and connectivity. Yet, it seems that “connectivity” is more important than “speed,” because low-speed Internet can be inconvenient, but as long as it is connected and mediated to the enormous online media contents, the possibility of cultural communication is infinite. Nowadays, countless video clips float around the prosumer-oriented websites like YouTube or Dailymotion. Out of the indistinguishable contents uploaded, Korean contents have stood out by having more colorfully visible, diverse qualities and succeeded to spread worldwide better than others. I do not mean to explain the quality change through the quantitative expansion, but from the observations on the actual digital environment in Korea. The quantitative expansion is surely a necessary condition for the *Hallyu* contents’ expansion into the world. Around the mid-2000s, the consumption of *Hallyu* contents and the formation of fandoms accelerated, based on the availability of high-speed Internet and advanced digital culture in South Korea. The Korean television shows are immediately uploaded and shared with fans across the world. As the speed of the Internet increased, the friendly environment for *Hallyu* content to readily circulate the world was being prepared.

Digitalized contents are something malleable like clay. The audience can play with these contents in the same way that one plays with clay. You can watch them when you want and adjust the watching time by fast-forwarding, jumping, repeating, capturing, and restoring the scenes if you like. You can alter the scenes with Photoshop as well as insert subtitles and edit dialogues and music. The products were reborn from these “*remixes*,” which become possible by the digitalization of media contents. They are re-released as secondary contents and then live on in their own ways. This shows the transformative type of audiences, from a passive audience, which obediently accepts the original contents, to an active audience, which not only questions the original contents but also develops and reproduces new meaning from the original ones. The extreme level of the active audience, the so-called *prosumers*, produces secondary contents.

Likewise, the synergy effects from this *remix* phenomenon and the significance of the Internet enable you to identify yourself either to a specific group, whereby the closed idea of identity is formed, or to unspecific anonymous others outside of the group. The term “*ex-timacy*” originated from the two

terms of “exteriority” and “intimacy” illustrates the new phenomenon born in this new communication logic (Allard, 2005). The disclosure of the self online, whether through an avatar or one’s real identity, becomes involved with displaying and manipulating the self in an ideal way. This self-grooming used to occur in a private diary or was embodied through personal activities, like reading and consuming of a variety of cultural contents in the past. However, the Internet, regardless of being a blog or Facebook or Twitter, and regardless of being open to specific or unspecific groups, is a public space today. Selected photos, episodes of daily life, thoughts, political standpoints, and aesthetic tastes are meant for others, and all these processes engage in “*culture de soi*” (Foucault, 1984).

The worldwide communicability resulted from the digital cultures and use of the Internet, and a crucial discipline of “*ex-timacy*” evolved the original “Mediasphere” to the new level.⁶ This era has entered the “Hypersphere,” which some may call the “post-television era.” In the previous “Videosphere,” television was placed at the center of the whole structure, but the Internet and digital cultures have replaced television in the new era. In Korea, television still plays a role as a major production agent of cultural contents, but the Internet is in charge of adjusting the worldwide circulation, thus producing the second consumption and creating cultural events. Since each television program entails a long process of production, distribution, and organization until it is finally on the air, the speed cannot compete with the fast process that *prosumers* produce with *remixes* and their viral contagiousness.

Current television shows sometimes use the cultural products reproduced online as references and authorize them through broad expansion and distribution. Psy’s case would be a relevant case study for the logic of cultural communication in the “Hypersphere.” Soon after the video was uploaded onto YouTube in early July 2012, it caught the Korean audiences’ attention and ranked high in the domestic market. Before long, the “tweeting” of an American celebrity enhanced diverse *mixes*, including flash mobs, parodies, covers, and reaction videos throughout the world. This unique phenomenon spread throughout SNS, and finally, major American broadcasts rushed to broadcast the music video as well as invite Psy in person. Although there are already many precedents where television shows draw hot items and contents from online spaces and authorize them, Psy’s case is remarkable by attracting different levels of discourse because of its speed, scale, and localness.⁶

This chapter deals with the propagation of *Hallyu* beyond East Asia, which I argue occurs mainly in the realm of the “Hypersphere.” In fact, the previous success in many countries of *Winter Sonata* and *Jewel in the Palace*, which ignited *Hallyu* to become popular cultural content around the world, is because of the function of the broadcast networks as major cultural agents.

Nonetheless, beyond East Asia, *Hallyu* should be understood as a result of digital cultures. Digital cultures and globalization led to the ability to form fan clubs anywhere in the world; thus *Hallyu 2.0* is not an unexpected surprise. Therefore, what we must do next is no longer trying to understand how it could happen but why it could happen. From this question, I will examine epistemological issues to gain deeper understandings of *Hallyu 2.0* as a cultural phenomenon caused by globalization, not as a case study in East Asia in particular.

OVERCOMING THE OBSESSION WITH EAST ASIAN IDENTITY IN THE DISCUSSIONS ON *HALLYU*

As transnational cultural exchanges within East Asia have become recognizable since the early 1990s, related studies on the media industry and transnational cultural exchange in East Asian countries have followed (Iwabuchi, 2002; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Keane, 2006). Apparently, compared to the cases of Hong Kong and Japan, *Hallyu* seemed to be a captivating phenomenon for various cultural and geopolitical reasons as well as the scale and speed of its extent. Scholars in the fields of political economy tried to comprehend the phenomenon as a significant case in the cultural dynamics in East Asia within the context of global capital influx. According to these studies, the recent achievements and trends of the cultural industry in East Asia are a result of the differentiation in the international labor market in the culture industry. Namely, the media contents are reflected on the consuming desires of the urban middle class and upper class. Meanwhile, the Asian scholars assessed these transnational cultural exchanges in a positive and promising vision but they were criticized in that they simply repeat traditional media studies or reinforce reception studies and meta-theories stemming from the Western academia (Keane, 2006). For instance, the transnational reception studies encompassed a wide range of fields, including distribution, adaptation, compromised spectatorship, and dubs (Iwabuchi, 2004; Kim, 2005); reception trends in different genders, countries, classes, and immigrations (Lin, 2004; Shim, 2006; Kwon, 2006); and the narrative structure of contents and the comparative approach to different groups of reception (You & Lee, 2001; Lee, 2004).

In sum, the preexisting studies are inclined to rely on the reports about the spectatorships of *Hallyu* targeting the audiences in East Asia. Based on these reports, the studies analyzed these receptions and the *Hallyu* phenomenon has often been concluded in the context of genuine East Asian identity. That is, cultural studies on *Hallyu* so far can be summarized as follows: (1) the audiences, who are eagerly fond of Korean mass culture, are observed in many

countries in East Asia, and the data of importation of Korean media contents prove this fact; (2) researchers conduct their research on why “A” country loves contents of “B” by seeking cultural reasons or analyzing the contents, and pursuing the qualitative reception studies; (3) researchers disclose cultural elements that are attractive to the East Asian audiences after content analysis and reception studies, and then discover that even transnational audiences identify themselves with East Asians while watching Korean contents. It is said that identifying the self with East Asians is possible because they “recognize” similarities, and “realize” things they want or lost in the Korean contents.

The intensive discussions in the various fields with various approaches led to the question about East Asian identity. A majority of reception studies argue that the spectatorship of Korean dramas is associated with sentimentality called *Jeong*, which includes feelings of bondage, affection, and attachment. This sentimentality is not newly produced in Korean dramas; rather, the dramas offer a chance to “recognize” and “regain” these feelings. Studies conducted by Hong Kong scholars say that women with higher education, who have gone beyond the marriageable age, watch Korean dramas together. They are moved by the handsome and modern male characters who sincerely care about the female characters and other people with a warm heart. These women share the feeling of *Jeong* through this collective spectatorship (Lin, 2004). The unprecedented success of *Winter Sonata* in Japan is projected by the desire of women over forty to regain “purity” that has been lost in the postmodern Japan as well as to find a “nostalgia” toward classic romanticism that was never provided by their husbands during the rapid national economic development (Yang, 2006; Hayashi, 2006; Kim, 2006). *Jewel in the Palace* was able to become successful in Chinese cultures because it is filled with cultural elements that are “recognizable” throughout East Asia. From this perspective, these two cases correspond with the reaffirmation of an East Asian identity through media contents (Hong, 2008).

The concept of “cultural discount” is an important concept that originated from cultural economics in order to make a connection between *Hallyu* in internal East Asia and discussion of East Asian identity (Yoo & Lee, 2001; Lee, 2002). It basically explains that *Hallyu* has a low cultural discount in East Asia, which explains the success of *Hallyu* in this region. Namely, Yong-Joon Bae is popular in Japan because his cultural discountability is comparably lower than Caucasians or African-Americans (Yang, 2006). This rough expression seems effective to account for *Hallyu* in East Asia, based on a simple syllogism: (1) the lower the cultural discount, the more effective the cultural exchange that is possible; (2) we can observe the *Hallyu* syndrome within East Asia; and (3) therefore, East Asian countries and Korea have a low cultural discount. That is, they are culturally accessible.

However, the major theories, which account for the impetus of *Hallyu* to root into “recognition” and “reaffirmation” in close cultures, have a limitation because they can never explain transnational spectatorship outside East Asia. If cultural proximity can explain transnational spectatorship, it could also explain the success of Hong Kong films and Japanese popular cultures expressed by Japan mania. Ironically, however, it is known that the appearance of Japan mania became possible because its contents are “odorless” (Iwabuchi, 2002).

And yet the relationship between cultural proximity and homogeneity is not always inadequate. Use of the same language is the case. Cultural contents made in Quebec circulate in France; Australian programs are successful in English-speaking societies. However, use of the same language is only one of the aspects determining a cultural identity. The language used to be a powerful factor back in the days when broadcast networks monopolized transnational cultural contents,⁷ but now in the era of the *Hypersphere*, when the dominant usurped by the Internet, the same use of language is only an influential condition, but neither a sufficient nor necessary condition.

Therefore, the discourses on the cultural identity of East Asians’ homogeneity due to low cultural discount within the East Asian countries are not only not helpful to understand *Hallyu* outside East Asia but also have a theoretical incompleteness. The rumors that *Hallyu* contents were selling and consumed beyond East Asia and, unbelievably, that fandoms were formed, turned out to be real after the K-pop concert in June 2011 in Paris. Then, a question popped up as to how the European teenagers and the young generation could possibly be so fanatical about K-pop in spite of its low cultural accessibility.

This discussion should not be limited to *Hallyu* only. *Hallyu* is a phenomenon that emerged when “Ethnosphere” and “Hypersphere,” newly created by globalization, converged, and the worldwide cultural consumers are potential cultural omnivores under this circumstance. The Westerners, who are interested in Asian cultures, are apt to broadly consume Korean contents as well as Japanese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and Chinese contents. They create and share the conditions to be able to master Indian and South American contents beyond East Asia too. The fans at the K-pop concerts in Paris are also fans of Japanese manga and animation. In most cases, they started with Japanese manga and then gradually expanded their range into Japanese dramas, mostly adapted from Japanese mangas, and dramas from other East Asian countries. These drama fans watch Korean, Japanese, and Taiwanese dramas without distinction, excluding only a handful of viewers who stick to one country’s contents. Namely, most of the K-pop fans are also fans of East Asian mass culture, thus they are excited about the X-Japan concert and the Japan Expo⁸ at the same time. According to a study on the cultural tastes and practices in

France (Donnat, 2009), Bourdieu's argument on the hierarchy of tastes based on class is no longer convincing. Instead, the "omnivore" taste increases among the young generation in digital cultures. *Hallyu* can be understood as part of the recent phenomenon of omnivore tastes in France. *Hallyu* is like a Korean car running on a well-built highway, primarily constructed and polished by Japanese popular cultures. Thus, it would not be surprising if Taiwanese, Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese cars show up and run on this highway soon.

To properly grasp the circulation of *Hallyu* in the world outside East Asia in the era of the "Hypersphere," we should overcome the theory of cultural proximity in the way in which recognition of lost nostalgia and reaffirmation of homogeneity are achieved and then take it a step further to discuss the "others" in a dialectical way (Descombes, 1979). "Self" should be considered and re-identified not only through sameness but also the difference from others. The self must be formed in a broader sense, thus observing self within others in terms of sameness as well as difference. By doing so, self is formed by a different but preferable element from others. Such dialectical interactions between "me" and "others" can be a new way of a "culture de soi" to grasp self-identification in the era of digital cultures. Meanwhile, if we avert our eyes from the matter of internal identity issues in East Asia toward the matter of similarity and difference between East Asia and the West, we would need to pay more attention to the junction of cultural contents between *Hallyu*, Japan, and Hong Kong in terms of production and consumption, culture industry, and cultural practice. What homogeneous characteristics would be found from the given data? Specifically, the popularity of the *Hallyu* actors and actresses is meaningful in light of the racial politics between the East and the West. The plastic surgery syndrome in association with the popularity of Korean celebrities has the aesthetic ideal of "white face," where the Western standards of beauty are idealized. But the practice of mimicking "whiteness" resulted in creating a Korean variant of beauty standards in "hybridization" between the Western and local Korean standards. Through such negotiations, *Hallyu* put forward an "Asian beauty model" for the Asian youth, which can function as an alternative to the "white supremacy" from Hollywood. Despite the fact that the "Asian beauty model" embodies artificiality and excessive commercialism of the plastic surgery industry, the new model deserves academic interest as an output from interracial identity struggles. To conclude, the *Hallyu*-related discussions should go beyond the identity discourses focused on the cultural similarity inside East Asian region and be expanded to incorporate the comparative analysis of cultural identities between the East and the West, or in the third place between the two containing "hybridity" in Bhabha's term (Bhabha, 2007).

RECONSIDERING THE WESTERN-ORIENTED QUALITY DISCOURSE

To differentiate the Korean media contents from other Asian nations' context, we confront the difficulty on how we assess the quality of these contents. This difficulty also appears in Japanese, Taiwanese, Chinese, other Asian, and even the entire non-Western media contents. But this chapter only focuses on *Hallyu* contents, limited to Korean movies, dramas, K-pop, fashion, and beauty/plastic surgery.

The mass influx of American TV shows renowned as the "quality TV" has changed the hegemony in the European television culture. In France, the cinema culture is indisputably a "high" culture, whereas television has been "low" in the cultural hierarchy for a long time. But this ideology has shaken since 2005. The American shows actually replaced the cinemas in primetime, which were sustained for a long time in French television. Also, research about cultural practice showing that populations with a master's degree or higher as well as male audiences are eagerly watching the American series upends the following preconceptions in France, that (1) the more educated watch fewer television shows; and (2) the major audiences of television shows are females and watching television shows per se is lowbrow (Mehl, 1992). But the American series that have been widely circulated around the world since the mid-1990s, are branded as "Neo Series," and are unprecedentedly critical and self-reflective about American society. This trend clearly broke the rule of white male-centered and American imperialistic ideas that were controversial for a long time. However, these series of shows have become the epitome of "good quality shows" and broadly work well with the complicated and multilayered stories and reduced white male-oriented narrative.

But the boom of quality TV leading the enthusiastic supply and demand of American television shows raises a question about how we grasp this quality. Media critics and scholars analyze that good quality is formed by complicated narratives, a fast tempo of story progress, ambiguous boundaries between good and evil, various interpretations of plural main characters and multiple plots tied with their own revenge, the methods of confronting the ugly reality and critical approach to it, hyper-realistic subjects and settings, excellent performance and directorship, and renovated genres. But many of the elements seem to be also listed on the criteria to sort out "masterpieces" in literature and film. However, these criteria are biased toward the view from the level of production and creation. And, simultaneously, they can only be achieved through repeated cultural experience but cannot be achieved only by school education. That is, these criteria are certainly elites' standards determining "cultural justice" in Bourdieu's term. By applying these criteria into successful East Asian dramas, particularly *Hallyu* dramas, we can easily realize that

these criteria are default. The popular *Hallyu* dramas follow conventions of the excessive melodrama or situation comedy, which appeals to the broad classes and female audiences.

Therefore, the approach of the producer-oriented and highbrow-centered discussions about quality cannot embrace wholly active and creative audiences and the fans who have become *prosumers*. Addressed earlier, the contents in the era of digital cultures are reproducible materials and, besides, audiences are no longer passive receivers who decode the contents in a given way. In a study on Korean drama fandom in France, it is observed that some French audiences resist the definition of good quality in the series of American shows (Hong, 2013). Most of the fans in the group used to be fans of the American shows and are mostly college educated and over. Some of them are still watching the American shows. But, for them, the American series are “too perfect” to get interested in. In this aspect, as the series progresses over years, scenarios become somewhat intentionally complicated and they do not seem to lead to a logical conclusion. Meanwhile, a “bashful love story” in a 10 (Japan) or 20 (Korea) episode-long drama is attractive enough for female audiences who are tired of the Western mass culture that lacks romanticism. They applaud the contemporary convention in Korean romantic comedies where good-looking actors and actresses play Asian versions of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Cinderella* as well as the peculiar “Sassy girl.” In other words, the good-quality American shows with aspects of “highbrow” require some brain play and attention, even though they are in television, a “low brow” media. Meanwhile, the popular East Asian dramas achieve their goals by arousing emotional empathy from the audience and offering the scripts that reflect their desire—as found in “cult cultures,” which emerged from active fandom activities utilizing the contents to make their own. Several Korean dramas, almost cult dramas, are appraised as masterpieces, thus promoting a lot of discussions and repeated reruns within fandoms.⁹ In other words, East Asian dramas, even though they are not circulated and broadcasted through major broadcasts in the West, undoubtedly compete against other media fictions internationally seen on the air. That is, the East Asian dramas can be positioned as one of the alternative genres for fictional TV programs, which are enjoyed by the audiences worldwide in the globalized media environment.

I do not argue that quality in the production level is not necessary. Yet I do argue that it is necessary to observe and grasp how the matter of quality is not only associated with a composition of texts but also hierarchical production and consumption. As explained earlier, cult culture, focusing on specific cultural materials, requires a deeper understanding far beyond the quality of the texts. We would rather explore how the hierarchy is endorsed upon these fictional contents and how cultural practices are developed as cultural tastes

and are embodied, whether following or going against the hierarchy. Needless to say, the American series are currently dominant over the French TV fictions, but there is not a single spectrum in understanding and assessing other non-American fictional contents. As many examples show, the fandoms of a series have a generational transformation over time and the formation of fandoms does not necessarily occur for the series with good-quality texts. The fandoms and cult cultures in “Boys Over Flowers,” “My Name is Kim Sam Soon,” and “Coffee Prince” are worth being studied in the East Asian context as much as those of “Star Wars,” “Doctor Who,” “X-Files,” and “Friends” in the Western context. It appears that the French fans of Korean dramas have subtle distinctions between American series, Japanese dramas, and Korean dramas. They said that American series have a better format but are not providing “fun.” Japanese dramas are similar to Korean dramas and are well-made but are less attractive and interesting. The quality of format would not matter for the audiences. Also, because they were introduced to Korean dramas through Japanese ones, they basically have affinity and nostalgia with Japanese dramas. As a result, the French audiences confess that Korean dramas are addictive; cause them to wait for the next episodes; mix both modern and traditional cultures; and show attractive actors and actresses. I think that the opinion that exploring cultural needs through the audiences’ preference and taste against the cultural hierarchy should be properly understood in terms of cultural practices in globalization and are not limited to research on the contents of the dramas.

OVERCOMING NORTH AMERICAN-CENTERED CULTURAL INDUSTRY

Since culture has become equated with industry, Hollywood, the home of the American film industry, is probably the most frequent topic of study. Hollywood was a dream stage full of possibility and the ideal American lifestyle and was home to internationally iconic celebrities after World War II in the 1950s. In the 1960s and 1970s, Europe seemed to be healed by new types of mass culture based on the working-class culture, of which *The Beatles* were an emblem. As Michael Jackson and Japanese manga and animation appeared to be opposed to this current, the mass cultures became more diversified in the 1980s. The changes to the broadcast environment, namely, deregulation and multichannels, entailed more need for television contents, and this finally resulted in the reinforcement of American cultures in the international market. In academia, the dominance of American mass cultures bore discourses on cultural imperialism, cultural exceptionalism, and even “Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,”¹⁰ as declared by the UNESCO and other critical

voices. To an extent, the discussions began as bellicose and adversarial disputes but grew to encourage cultural pluralism.

The shift of cultural policies involves the development of digital cultures and globalization. As UNESCO's declaration implies that the gaps of the "digital divide" between different cultures should be reduced, the imbalance of cultural communications during this time stems from digital cultures in addition to traditional broadcast systems. The hegemony of American television shows over the international broadcast cultures in the late 1990s and 2000s was a result of the shift of these policies and digital cultures. The advanced digital cultures through the 1990s shook substructures in almost all cultural productions, and, thereby, all the cultural contents can freely travel across different platforms in the form of digitalized information. At the same time, a single genre is no longer circulated through a single platform. Instead, diverse genres construct immense narratives through different types of platforms. It is called "trans-media storytelling." Henry Jenkins in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006) analyzes the collision between old media and new media and its evolution in North America. He develops trans-media storytelling as a vital concept in culture industries that are conglomerated with a new digital environment in America. Since Jenkins' academic achievement of identifying the "trans-media" phenomenon, there have been a number of further research projects on cultural convergence and cases for various trans-media strategies in English-speaking academia.

However, all those cases occurred in the English and European language-speaking cultures and do not cover the East Asian cases at all. Regarding this limitation, I would like to underline two conditions in the hope that generalized theories and discussions properly explain East Asian cases.

First, the importance of the East Asian culture industry should be endorsed regarding its size and the richness of cultural practices in it. The population in Korea, China, Japan, and Taiwan was over 1.5 billion in 2012. The population has increased up to 2.1 billion, including Southeast Asia, which is the highest world market share.¹¹ *Hallyu* motivated ties between East Asian and Southeast Asian countries, since the history of cultural trade within these geographic areas is long, before the advent of *Hallyu*. Through this, the market has more homogeneous contents and practices and, finally, allows scholars to start to consider the region as a single unity of market.

The active interactions between the audiences and the cultural industries in East Asia could correspond with the trans-media strategy in American cultural industries. For example, "Yaoi"¹² in the 1970s existed prior to "slash fiction"¹³ in the West (McHarry & Pagliassotti, 2008). There was a trend where the female manga readers described love stories of the young men in their "fan-fictions" during the period. The publishing business embraced the trend and scouted female writers, massively producing "boys' love stories,"

targeting female readers. The advanced Internet environment encouraged more audiences to participate in the trend, and, consequently, a lot of television series, novels, and films have reversely adapted fan-fictions and group novels through the online route.

South Korea is no exception in the given condition of advanced digital cultures. Japanese manga still has a powerful impact on East Asian cultural industries and is often adapted in transnational cross-media production. The marketing of the manga and drama adaptations across the borders is rather spontaneous and permeates readily, thus leaning on the original version's fame. Besides, this method is one of the trans-media strategies to constantly trigger the fandoms in East Asia and the West that follow-up the Korean tabloids by planting expectation and curiosity about the upcoming outputs. Occasionally, reruns online are more successful than their original airings. "Hana Yori Dango" is one such case. This Shoyo manga was published in thirty-seven volumes from 1992 to 2003, and has been adapted into TV drama in Taiwan (2001, 2002), in Japan (2005, 2007), in South Korea (2009), and in China (2009) as well as into films (1996, 1997) and anime (1996, 1997). The fandoms in Europe that had already read the manga followed each adaptation, comparing the main characters and directors of the previous versions, selecting possible casts, and analyzing the performances of actors. As some of the characters and the songs in the original soundtracks were performed by idol singers, the drama became an influential, huge event online, and many of the characters became big listed stars.

Such a phenomenon lets scholars in cultural studies have a bird's eye view so that they could consider the cultural convergence, being free from North America-centered theory previously built on the phenomenon. Further research on the complexity of cross-media and media-mix should be followed as well as on trans-media franchise strategies in North America and the West. Ultimately, we also need to grasp how these two different convergence traditions have interacted.

Second, the East Asian market is obviously one of the world's best mass culture markets in terms of the scale of economy and its demography. Regarding this, *Hallyu* raises a question about the fluid term "East Asia." What is considered East Asia? Despite this ambiguity, a circulation market, where a wide range of cultural factors is shared, truly exists. But the substantial consumption of East Asian mass cultures is far beyond the borough of East Asia. It is overlapped by the migration routes of China, Korea, and Japan on a worldwide level. The circulation of television dramas on a worldwide level reveals the networks of cultural consumption beyond the diasporic trajectory as well. For decades, the American shows were not only dominant in English-speaking countries but also in Europe, East Asia, and Latin America, and reinvented the international audiences' tastes. Latin American television dramas, called "telenovelas" are occasionally on the air beyond the Spanish-speaking

worlds, but North American and European countries prefer an adaptation to selling entire programs, as is the case of *Ugly Betty*. Also, it is very rare that French dramas are exported beyond the Francophonie. Meanwhile, television dramas produced in the three countries in East Asia are directly circulated with subtitles, and their adaptations are internally expanded without borders in most cases. Transnational adaptations within East Asia are a result of the history of sharing the manga culture (Hong, 2013).

To conclude, the transnational circulation of cultural contents across East Asian countries is a peculiar phenomenon which is neither limited to the identical language nor to historical or political binds in the region. In other words, again, the preexisting theory on the cultural industry in globalization and in the era of digital convergence cannot be generalized because it narrowly dealt with North American and European cases. In consideration of the developmental of the cultural industry and enormous demographic diaspora in East Asia, the observations on East Asian mass culture and the media industry should be reassessed and integrated into general theories in light of convergence culture and globalization.

CONCLUSION

I have introduced several propositions on new paradigms to understand the global consumption of *Hallyu* beyond East Asia in the current media landscape under the influence of digital cultures and globalization. The advanced digital cultures enabled cultural contents spreading over the world to become the primary resources for cultural consumption. This new mediascape meets ethnoscape under the great impact of digital cultures and produces new types of cultural practices. I suggest that three investigations grasp *Hallyu* in globalization: (1) step further from the identity discussion limited in East Asia as one of the dominant discourses on *Hallyu*; (2) reconsider the Western standards on the “quality” television show; (3) and relinquish the dominant view from North American-centered cultural industries.

Proposition (1) demands the necessity of position changes in considering the cultural identity of East Asia: from the discussions on the cultural “sameness” developed from observations on the transnational cultural consumption within East Asia to the discourses of identity in relation to the “otherness” based on the global contents flow. Propositions (2) and (3) are critiques of Western studies focused on Western cases. It is argued that we must consider beyond the Eurocentric concept of “Program Quality.” *Hallyu* phenomenon suggests the legitimacy of academic endeavors into the cultural industries of East Asia in order to develop “universal” communication research and theories.

In an advanced field work on the reception of Korean drama in France (Hong, 2013), I assessed the question of the logic of cultural practice under the changes in digital culture by drawing Bourdieu in theories on class-based cultural consumption and tastes. Korean drama fans in France are not the audiences of a peripheral culture; rather, they have been actively consuming Japanese manga, animation, Japanese drama, and Japanese pop, and eventually reached *Hallyu* contents. Most of them have not only experienced East Asian contents but also the cult contents of Western popular culture. Cultural omnivores and intercultural elites, as I would call them, are ready to enthusiastically accept any popular contents in the world if they are “good.” Thus, the consumption of *Hallyu* has to be seen not as a unique case, distinguished from other cases, but instead as one of the cultural contents that became “good enough to consume” in the process of globalization and under the circumstance of digital cultures. Furthermore, the digital-friendly condition in *Hallyu* functions as an epitome of cultural interaction today.

I hope that the theoretical investigations developed in this chapter not only interpolate the East Asian researchers studying *Hallyu* but also all communication researchers questioning the changes in cultural practice under the digital culture parameters in the process of globalization.

NOTES

1. Large-scale concerts that took place in Europe in 2012 included KBS Music Bank (Paris, February), JYJ (Barcelona and Berlin, October), and Big Bang (London, December).

2. It still holds the record up to now. <http://www.techtimes.com/articles/198870/20170223/psys-gangnam-style-is-still-youtubes-most-watched-music-video-ever-video.htm>

3. *Gangnam Style* has attained a Guinness World Record, whereby it was officially confirmed to be the most-liked video in YouTube history reaching more than 200 million views in less than three months (Guinness World Records, 2012). <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2012/9/gangnam-style-now-most-liked-video-in-youtube-history-44977/>

4. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/01/244-million-international-migrants-living-abroad-worldwide-new-un-statistics-reveal/>

5. ‘Médiasphère’ is the coined term in the study of *Mediology* by Régis Debray, French scholar whose interests include French politics, religion, and religious media. “Médiasphère” refers to media ecology, determining the contemporary media structure on the evolution of human culture. Please see *Cours de médiologie générale* (Debray, R., Paris: Minuit, 1990).

6. As far as I am concerned, no songs in non-European languages have become popular, at least in France.

7. The policies enacted by *La Francophonie*, which aim at seamless communication, are a representative case.

8. Japan Expo in Paris is the largest annual event for East Asian Pop Culture outside Japan, including a variety of events such as *cosplays*, film screenings, exhibitions, and selling products. In fact, Korean dramas were first introduced in France at Japan Expo in 2011.

9. For example, *Full House*, *I'm Sorry, I Love You*, *My Girl*, *Coffee Prince*, *My Name is Kim Sam Soon*, *The City Hall*, and *Princess Hours*.

10. http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, Accessed on May 10, 2017.

11. The official demographic research conducted in eleven countries (Burma, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor, and Vietnam) of Southeast Asia in 2011 and 2012 report that the total population in the region is over 0.6 billion.

12. Yaoi, whose literal meaning is “nothing,” is a fictional media focusing on romantic or/and sexual relationships between male characters drawn from novels, television dramas, films, and notably manga. It's a unique trend engaged in proactive consumption within Japanese female manga readers in the 1970s in Japan. It is a unique trend engaged in proactive consumption within Japanese female manga readers.

13. As the term “slash” indicates, “Slash fiction” relates two irrelevant characters like Tom/Jerry. Fans create love stories between A and B, who are both males and have almost nothing or little in common with each other for their enjoyment of the love stories of A/B.

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Chapter 5

#Unrequited Love in Cottage Industry? Managing K-pop (Transnational) Fandom in the Social Media Age

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INTRODUCTION

K-pop has attracted transnational fans over the years. While many studies have largely been an effort to decipher the reasons for its seemingly borderless appeal, many others have traced the role of online/social media in the strategic manufacturing and managing of fandom worldwide. Fans as an integral part of the global popular culture industry have themselves used social media extensively to indulge in their worship of, by way of mobilizing publicity for, their idols. This chapter focuses on fan-club organizers as capitalists/local intermediaries in the globalized operation of the K-pop celebrity industry, to examine how they capitalize on the algorithmic settings of social media to organize, mobilize, and manage transnational fandom. Given the longstanding scholarship of international fandom, I would like to contribute by articulating the cultural production by K-pop fan clubs by employing notions of “cultural intermediaries” to unpack how *Hallyu* as a global popular culture phenomenon could contribute to the evolution of fandom management, especially in the social media era. I also wish to interrogate the workings of fandom from a capitalism and labor point of view, incorporating the critiques around social media.

In this chapter, I ask these questions:

1. How do transnational fans (in this case in Hong Kong) manage their fan clubs through the social media? How do they “poach texts”/capitalize on the algorithmic architecture of social media to manage strategically and negotiate geographical, cultural, and algorithmic borders to appeal and mobilize their fans, while adorning their desire for their idols? How do (online) fan clubs make use of the algorithmic architecture of the social media to enhance their appeal to fans, both locally and overseas?

2. On the other hand, how do fan-club organizers evaluate the rewards/benefits of the “fruits of their labor”? Despite the voluntary nature of their fan-club organization, they have been willingly “laboring” for the social media. How do fan-club organizers negotiate the “labor” they expend in the process of transnationalizing K-pop fandom?

K-POP FANDOM: “PARTICIPATORY CONSUMERS”?

The productivity of fans has bedazzled international scholarship. Following on Matt Hills’ earliest notions about fan culture as “sub-cultural” (Hills, 2002), Henry Jenkins describes fans as “textual poachers,” who “get to keep what they take and use their plundered goods as the foundations for the construction of an alternative community” (Jenkins, 2013, p.223). With excessive affect as their driving force, they actively produce and circulate information about their idols, and also products associated with their idols. The genesis of online media changed the landscape of fandom and sparked a whole new direction of scholarship which focused on the participatory practices of fandom which traverses between online and offline spaces. Social media, with its emphasis on community, is an important forum for connecting with others, building a transnational audience, and getting feedback on the videos produced, which often borrow seamlessly from other cultures. It is possible to look at the origin of the viewers who comment on social media: they too come from a wide range of locations and age groups. YouTube has become a forum where transnational fans can consume as well as create. For Jenkins, “Fan aesthetic centers on the selection, inflection, juxtaposition, and recirculation of ready-made images and discourses” (Jenkins, 2013, p.223–4).

The idea of “cultural intermediaries” suffices to better articulate the complex roles and activities of fans managing and coordinating artistic production, gatekeeping, curating, cataloguing, editing, scheduling, distributing, marketing/advertising, and retailing. Using Japanese manga as a case study, Lee discussed how they may be caught up with potential conflictual roles: on the one hand, intermediaries desire to accumulate cultural and symbolic capitals such as recognition and reputation, while on the other hand, they are bounded by commercial imperatives (Lee H.J., 2012, p.131). They operate within the market economy context where both the creative ideas/images/sounds they deal with and their own labor are treated as tradable properties (Lee, H.J., *ibid*). It matters, thus, how fans are capable of summoning skills and talents to create mobilized symbolic and material cultural products in a bid to reconcile these two sets of logic, sufficing a different dimension of “creative economy” (Lee, H.J., 2012, p.133).

The strategic use of social media by fans, on the other hand, allows us to think of their cultural production as “participatory,” but essentially in a consumption mode. Fan translation and “fansubbing” (i.e., subtitling by fans) can be considered within the context of participatory cultural consumption. In media and cultural studies, such consumption has been understood as implying consumers' active engagement with cultural texts as well as the consumer community, the convergence of consumers and producers and their co-creation of values (Banks and Deuze, 2009; Jenkins, 2006; Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). Meanwhile, the literature points out tensions inherent in participatory consumption, particularly those around the ownership of consumer-generated/co-created contents and cultural corporations' commercial exploitation of the free and affectionate labor of their consumers (van Dijck, 2009; Terranova, 2004).

The theoretical profile of participatory consumers is further enriched by discussion in marketing and consumer studies, where they are conceptualized and analyzed from the perspective of brand communities or tribes that are socially and culturally constructed groups online or offline rooted in shared experience, enthusiasm, and emotion in relation to a particular brand, product, or activity (Cova and Dallı, 2009; Kozinets et al, 2008; Schau et al., 2009). Members of such communities deeply associate the brand or product with their identity and way of life, have relevant knowledge and skills, exhibit willingness to be involved in the process of innovating it, and have the capability and motivation to work voluntarily toward problem solving. In this sense, participatory consumption seriously pushes the conventional boundary between the company/brand and its consumers. While noting the importance for the company to understand and involve consumers in its production and marketing process, we can also find potential conflicts engendered in this newly conceptualized relationship between the company and its consumers: the former cannot always predict, manage, or coordinate the latter's culture and behavior while the latter is subject to consumer exploitation and control by the former (Cova and Dallı, 2009; Zwick et al. 2008).

With the above in mind, this chapter, by using the case of K-pop fans, pledges to investigate the complex position of these fans as “participatory cultural consumers.” On the one hand, I ask how fans as “cultural intermediaries” would engage in a strategic relationship with a successfully globalized popular music brand such as K-pop, and whether they are caught up in the possible conflictual roles and exploitative relationship with their idol's agent. On the other, I examine how transnational fans of K-pop would use the algorithmic resources of social media to bridge geographical and cultural borders by exploiting the algorithmic resources of the social media. Driven from an ulterior worship of their idols, fans actively capitalize on the algorithmic resources of social media, even for intangible benefits.

Here I would further argue how, in the context of K-pop, fans perform as (inter)cultural intermediaries using the presumptive skills and practices of capitalizing on idol texts for marketing purposes and managing a virtual fan base as well as organizing and traversing online indulgence with offline activities, for an ulterior motive to enhance their own status in the fan hierarchy. In the age of media convergence, this discussion of participatory creative economy has to be set in a multimedia and globalized imagination, as fan clubs traverse the technological, algorithmic, and cultural boundaries, creating a fannish cosmos, imagined as layers of a globalized network connected and managed by the fan-club organizers. Jenkins, in his newer work, asserts the agency of fans to actively engage in textual production (what he referred to in his earlier work as “textual poaching”) especially through online media, and that they contribute to a globalized cultural consciousness. By “pop cosmopolitanism,” he denoted a shared space circulated by pop cultural products, which frames not only the material texts that are circulated, but also the global scope of the idol’s sphere of influence (Jenkins, 2009). This “cultural consciousness,” however, could incur just a superficial sense of cultural openness without being substantiated by a desire to pursue a deeper curiosity and understanding into other cultures. In the social media era where cultural borders are so easily traversed, how is “pop cosmopolitanism” realized in the case of transnational K-pop clubs?

Altogether, I am also posing these questions:

1. To what extent have K-pop fans exhibited this “affective economy”? How has the equation worked for K-pop fan organizers as cultural intermediaries? In particular how has the social media assisted this equation?
2. To what extent has the transnational operation of these K-pop fan sites realized a globalized sense of “pop cosmopolitan” of participatory culture?

A Decade of the Second Korean Wave: The K-pop Chapter

The rise of the Korean Wave in the early 2000s played a significant role in contributing to the rise of international scholarship around transnational fandom. While popular culture has always had its globalizing elements, the onset of Japanese pop has proximated the discussion, giving rise to notions of cultural appropriation and hybridization in explaining the globalizing success of Japanese popular culture (Otmazgin et al, 2012; Iwabuchi, 1993). The Korean Wave’s contribution to this discussion, on the other hand, has to do with the extent of media technology in its ability to advance as well as complicate transnational fan practices. The unexpected and unprecedented success of *Gangnam Style* exemplified the speed and the textual creativity of

fan production. Fans, from the local to the international, exploit the virtual expanse of YouTube to produce, or “vid,” short videos as an immediate response to Psy’s music video on YouTube (Jung and Shim, 2013). In fact, many see *Gangnam Style* as the watershed of a “new Korean Wave,” articulating the strategic use of social media of the K-pop industry in the “G-L-G” process (globalization-localization-globalization) to maximize their reach and inspire successive K-pop groups (such as Girls’ Generation) in their strategies of globalization (Oh, 2013; Jung & Shim, 2013).

While studies on online and social media assume a participatory culture to which these media-enabled netizens belong, recent analyses on K-pop fandom relate how K-pop fans use the social media to manage their stars, and even realize fan charity and activism (vigilantism, fan wars, racist attacks) (Jun, 2011). This displays the diverse, yet potentially contradictory, directions (and outcomes) that K-pop fans can engage in. The expanse and intersectionality of various form of social media provide a platform to nurture fan affect, so much so that their extreme “personal attachments and passions” could be snowballed by expressing, sharing, and circulating news about idols. As a result fans are seen as highly political, as displayed in fan wars (Sperb, 2009; Earl & Kimport (2009), or actively intervening in the affairs of their idols (Jung, 2011).¹ Emphasizing the significance of “emotional attachments and passions” of fans in fan cultures, Jason Sperb highlights how these attachments become especially crucial “when dealing with politically charged texts” (Sperb, 2010, 29). Some activist practices of K-pop fans on social media could be contextual, associating them with the elitist education system (Jung, 2012). While it came as no surprise that there existed a rich diversity of fan agency, the sociality, expanse, convenience, and algorithms/networking of social media enable abundant fan activity, but aggravates fan politics while collapsing that level of social politics with the broader “politics” in society, as Dahlgren warned (Dahlgren, 2012). The affective mobilization of idol worship could easily flip into mobilization for political activities, realizing the participatory nature of fandom.

Transnational Appeal of K-pop

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the role of social media in enhancing political participation of fans in any particular locale, it is worth discussing the advancement of a “transnational imaginary” in global pop fandom. Here, the diversity, extent, and transnationality of fan practices should not be seen as particular to the K-pop fans (fan wars of international celebrity Justin Bieber are a case in point). However, K-pop fandom could illustrate the extent of strategic management of the celebrity (and fan) industry in the Korean Wave. K-pop especially has long been breaking cultural boundaries, from Park Ji-yoon and BoA, to boy bands such as Se7en and TVXQ (Shin,

2009). By carefully marketing products of their agents, be they through CJ or S.M. Entertainment, they have also been seen as potentially taking over the domination of Japanese pop singers; in other words, “it’s the next Japan” (McIntyre, 2002). The regional success of K-pop has also been seen as surpassing that of Korean TV dramas, to which the Korean Wave has often been equated, as Korean idols were seen as “total stars” who were involved in multiple media forms (Shin, 2009). In fact, the term “K-pop” cannot correctly apply to the origin of the membership of some of these groups, because a few, such as Super Junior, are already international groups that include Chinese members (Shin, 2009; Howard, 2006). As such, this cross-media participation by K-pop singers is one of the evidences of the “strategic hybridism” that has rendered the national branding of the Korean Wave (Shim, 2006).

The debates around the global success of K-pop, from Rain to recently Girls’ Generation, seem to center around the fact that they are “stateless” or “*mugukjeok*” (not having any nationality), as in the case of Rain (Jung, 2010). More importantly, other scholars also render the statelessness of K-pop idols as a manifestation, if not glorification, of the embedded/inherent hybridism of Korean popular culture in general. The success of Rain, managed by JYP Entertainment, however, is thought of as essentially a “regional” one, so much so that even his later more global success (evidenced by his world tour reaching the United States) was merely an extensive marketing effort of globalization in which Rain has somehow de-odorized himself into a more global image of love and peace but has also been positioned as an “Asian-star” (Jung, 2010). Recent successes of Boy Bands and Girls’ Groups, such as Super Junior, Wonder Girls, and Girl’s Generation, have even been seen as an even more strategic transnational star production skill to mass produce “standardized but multitasking performers” according to “transnational task requirements” (with multi-genre and multilingual skills) to enhance their transnational appeal (Oh & Park, 2012, p.382). Dubbed “strategic hybridism,” the tactics are seen to include the fusion of synthesized music, video art, fashionable outfits, and teasing sexuality mixed with doe-eyed innocence, as well as bilingual lyrics which appeal to Western audiences (Choe and Russell, 2013).

SOCIAL MEDIA MANIPULATION FOR STRATEGIC MARKETING

The gigantic success of Psy’s *Gangnam Style* has been dubbed the “new Korean Wave” because of its strategic manipulation of the social media, such as YouTube, to generate massive production of cultural products, a phenomenon dubbed as “B2B” and “B2C” (Oh & Park, 2012).² To start with, the

K-pop artist has to have produced easily accessible texts; capitalizing on a globally accessible platform such as YouTube has been seen as key to Psy's globalized success, as his "horse-style" dance has been parodied (intentionally) and viralized (textually and algorithmically). Thereon, South Korea has been seen as a pioneer in firing off a new global business model beyond the artists (artistic) realms, but this model immediately became a maximization of tangible merchandise to be globally marketed and traded, through converged media platforms. South Korean popular music agencies and entertainment companies, such as S.M. Entertainment, are seen as important intermediaries in the global success of K-pop, in that they have been capitalizing on the social media to promote and market their clients'—K-pop artists—products through B2C and B2B, and sharing profits with large search engines such as YouTube and Google over advertising revenues that the K-pop videos reap (Oh & Park, 2012).

The strategic use of YouTube (and social media in general) also added a "downloadable" dimension to the sales success of K-pop groups, as demonstrated by Psy (Messerlin & Shim, 2013). In terms of image management, they publicize their K-pop clients to reach the majority "pre-adolescent" audiences, who are seen to be prone to the "dorky cool factor"—a mixture of "skin-baring sexual appeal" with innocent looks (Ahn, 2011; Shin & Kim, 2013; Choe and Russell, 2013).³ The emphasis on corporeal aesthetics of K-pop stars is matched with sexy and vibrant "dance-intensive segments," to the extent that the latter has been seen as a definitive niche of K-pop itself (Messerlin & Shin, 2013). The brand image of K-pop groups' song and dance styles, electrified and in-sync to a fault, was evidently a result of aggressive celebrity production policy of the celebrity industry in South Korea: highly intensive training, recruitment, team formation, music production, and debut. In this way, they have been seen as important intermediaries in the globalizing success of K-pop, where American/ Hollywood studios seem to have been out-competed (Messerlin & Shim, 2013).

YouTube became a site on which both celebrities and their transnational fans capitalize.⁴ Shin & Kim discussed the organizational factors for the globalizing of K-pop as indicated in *Gangnam Style*'s fan-viralized videos, where fans are able to creatively produce parodies and flash-mob videos, capitalizing on the YouTube platform (Ahn, 2011). Celebrities have also been collaborating with global PR companies and social media to globalize their reach (Jung & Shim, 2014). The success of K-pop groups also prompted fans to start up YouTube channels to produce programs selling fashion, beauty tips, and other goods and services to fellow fans.⁵

Capitalizing on a collective fandom toward K-pop and other Korean cultural products (such as fashion and beauty products), young girls have produced YouTube programs posing themselves as presenters and touring around

Seoul in search of fashion and cosmetics. In a volatile globalized cultural industry, these cases show how social media becomes a space for “fan capitalism,” as fans appropriate and surf on the globalizing wave of K-pop for their textual and economic benefit. But in so doing, they also direct online attention and traffic toward the popularization of Korean celebrities, creating a win-win situation as the fans bask in the halo/glory of their idols, attaining “sub-celebrity” status. A lot has been discussed about the productivity of fans as prolific cultural producers who use the social media to creatively express their excessive energy while collectively creating and sustaining their fan communities. K-pop fans, the majority of whom are aged below twenty-five, are seen to be able to collectively share resources and information, organize activities and events such as flash mobs to adorn their idols as well as strengthen their own fan indulgence through solidarity (Hubinette, 2012; Ahn, 2011).⁶

While fans have been widely acclaimed as parts of communities of active and avid social media “prosumers,” little has been noted of how fan clubs as organizers/institutionalized fandom play a role in the globalization of K-pop, and the capitalization of fan affect. For this chapter, I argue that transnational fan clubs are important “ordinary intermediaries” in the global success of the K-pop industry. Fan-club organizers are special groups of fans, who on the one hand, exemplify the active and creative agency of the ordinary in the social media age, and on the other, bear generous and entrepreneurial attributes to organize, manage, and mobilize fellow fans in their indulgence of idol worship. Transnational fan clubs, in particular, have to breach cultural borders in their mediation/negotiation with South Korean entertainment companies at the outset, and in maximizing the global reach of their fan membership. In the following sections, I will use VIXX, a K-pop boys’ group, to illustrate the dynamics of transnational social media fandom.

Transnational Fan Participation—Capital of Appropriation—K-pop Fandom on Social Media

VIXX may offer a typical example of the rise to global fame of many K-pop boy bands. VIXX, the acronym of “Voice, Visual, Value In Excelsis” started in 2012 as one of the productions of Jellyfish Entertainment, consisting of six members: N, LEO, KEN, RAVI, HONGBIN, HYUK. The group made their debut on the reality TV show *M!Countdown*. Just like their counterparts, VIXX has a multisectorial media presence, starring in TV dramas, films, musicals, and variety/talent shows. VIXX has also won several music awards. Their style oscillates in themes such as hope, dreams, and falling madly in love with a girl even though it hurts.⁷ Most, if not all, of their songs play on the depth of raw human emotion. VIXX plays an active role in producing

their music, with all members participating in the ideas and concepts. They have also swept a few national awards.⁸

As a K-pop group, they have been keen on global marketing. On March 18, 2015, VIXX marked their first official entry into the Chinese and Taiwanese markets with the release of “命中注定 (Destiny Love),” a remake of Harlem Yu’s “Destiny Love” as part of Boys’ Record. It was released through Avex Taiwan. In the months of October and November, VIXX held their first global showcase tour, The Milky Way Global Showcase which was held in South Korea, Japan, Italy, Sweden, Malaysia, and America. They are also hardworking in making overseas/world tours to sustain their global popularity. In 2013 alone they had been to Malaysia, Japan, Sweden, Italy, and the United States; in 2014 they targeted Europe, including Hungary and Poland. Japan seems to be a popular target, as the group has been to different cities in Japan in the years from 2013 to 2016 (VIXX website).

VIXX has also been keen in reaching out to their fans, particularly through the social media. Besides their official webpage and YouTube channel, they also have their own Facebook page, which has more than 1 million likes, which might be proportional to the actual number of fans. As an official page, the Facebook page sparingly posts events, upcoming tours, interviews, or just individual photos. The page also “shares” promotions from its mother company, Jellyfish Entertainment. Fan identity is displayed by the use of nicknames such as “starlights” to refer to fellow fans of star-like idols (VIXX Facebook page). Targeting local and global fans, the official pages serve not only as the cradle of fan worship by offering the most accurate and up-to-date information about the band, but also the visuals that promote the aesthetics of the band members, as well as those that publicize their upcoming activities to mobilize fan support. They also take advantage of the posting mechanism of Facebook and Twitter by posting individual visuals as well as group photos, creating individual brand/aura for fan worship.

The fan pages also reveal fan preference of social media. While several of these pages might originate from the same fan club, there seems to be cultural/geographical distinction in the popularity of the two social media as fan sites. While the pages that have the title of countries/regions on both Twitter and Facebook are the same, countries that are only on Facebook include Peru, Poland, and India; the countries that are only on Twitter are Azerbaijan, Argentina, and Mexico. This is not to exclude the possibility that individuals from any given country could set up their own fan sites on the two platforms. In terms of popularity, the popularity of these pages could only be shown by the number of likes which should be proportional to the fans/avid followers of the page. From the number of likes on these geographically designated Facebook pages, it could be surmised that VIXX’s fan base could be evenly

spread across the continents but countries like Turkey, Brazil, and Peru seemingly have a high concentration of VIXX fans.

Fan comments play an important role in “performing” the globalized reach and popularity of the group. These international fans serve as ambassadors and promoters as they are bound to like and share these postings which will show on their individual pages. Inadvertently, these comments might fuel cultural hierarchy among fans, when they imply favoritism of the band as they tended to “favor” some countries as their tour destinations (such as Japan, and of course South Korea). The Twitter page, on the other hand, is more confined to visuals of individual band members, captured videos of their various appearances on TV, as well as posters announcing their upcoming concerts/ activities. While it is beyond the scope/purpose of this chapter to discuss comparative fan behavior on different fan pages, there needs to be more research to delve into the factors for their differing performances, and the relationship with the strategic marketing and promotion in these respective areas. It is important now to turn our focus onto one such fan-club site to probe into questions about how fandom is strategized on the social media, and the politics that could be involved in the management of fandom online.

Fandom on Social Media: Hong Kong Style

Facebook as a social media site is popular with Hong Kong K-pop fans, which is positively correlated with the popularity of the social media among Hong Kong users. Facebook fan clubs utilize the networked features of social media to set up fan sites across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram on top of a main online blog that provides links of these various sites. They also set up personalized Facebook pages for each member of the pop group. These fan-club organizers, hence, play an important role as “cultural intermediaries” (and even entrepreneurs), not only appropriating, circulating, and sharing idol texts, but also breaching cultural borders by using social media algorithms, and managing this global(ized) economy by liaising between idol companies and local fans. One such fan site is the VIXX Hong Kong Fan Club. Based on focus interviews of fan-club organizers of “VIXX Hong Kong Stop,” I shall discuss the agency of these fan-club organizers to manage transnational social media fandom.

“VIXX Hong Kong Stop” was founded in 2012 by two female university students, “Ping” and “Luk” (aliases). The group’s “found” the boyband by accident (while following some other boy band on social media, they came across the group and were first attracted by their cool “dark” looks). But it was their attentiveness and accessibility that sealed their fannish love toward the boy band (among others). “Because they are very friendly, and seem very kind and caring. Every time we meet them (offline and on Skype) they

asked us how we have been” (interview, June 18, 2016). Besides heterosexual (patriarchal) appeal that male celebrities usually have toward female fans, male K-pop (or TV/ film) artists are seen to depict soft (even feminine) aesthetic features, as well as gentle traits that set Korean celebrities apart from their European/Caucasian counterparts. Some scholars even attributed this to the branding of “Koreanness.” “When interviewed on the reasons for being attracted by K-pop, Europeans (teens or parents, recent immigrants or long-lasting citizens) often say that K-pop offers “other values” than the ones to which they are exposed in Europe. When asked to explain what they mean by “other values,” the interviewed Europeans often cite values—kindness, respect, modesty—which are universal but also the core of the Confucian heritage” (Messerlin & Shin, 2013).

For Ping and Luk, the setting up of the club served three purposes. To be able to share information with fellow fans/“starlight,” and that the Facebook page would have a maximum reach to those who are already fans or would be fans, both local and international, were two. There is also an ulterior motive for Ping, in that, “by being fan-page organizers, they could become more prominent and thus could get closer to [the] idols” (interview with “Ping,” June 18, 2016). The club exists mainly on the web, although there are occasional offline fan activities, as will be discussed later. The heavy reliance on online platforms can be seen through their main page. The “club” does not have a membership registration system, hence “membership” is defined solely by the number of “likes” on the page. The club organizer estimated that the club’s fan-club page fetched a “membership” of around 10,000 in 2012 (interview, June 18, 2016). The looseness of the registration system and reliance on Facebook as their sole club platform may have inferred that no membership fees could be collected. The upside of such loose membership is that entry and exit is open and easy. The downside is that the financial resources of the “club” rely solely on the resale of VIXX’s CD, which is one of the few attractions and promised tasks of the club to its “members.”

At the same time they also established Twitter and Instagram pages, as well as posted videos through YouTube, just like their idol group. Given the algorithmic difference, “Ping” and “Luk” would assign different roles for the different social media platforms: “Facebook has got more space for comments whereas Twitter is mainly for uploading visuals.” Social media use is also geographically defined, as Twitter has a more global reach and seen by more European fans, whereas “there are more Asians using Instagram and Facebook” (interview, June 18, 2016). There is also an age divide, as Instagram attracts what “Ping” calls “mui,” referring to the teenage “little girls/ sister” (“mui” in Cantonese). The statistics page provided by Facebook depicts the demographics of K-pop fan use of Facebook: the highest population is in their early teens, followed by late teens/ early twenties (“Ping’s

generation). In fact, the Facebook version attracts an international following, with a majority from East and Southeast Asia. Linguistically, the table reveals that Chinese (including Taiwan and Hong Kong) still plays a determining role in the textual reach on the page, but the small percentage of English (if not other language) speakers also impact on the use of texts/visuals/videos on the club's Facebook page.

To appeal to both local and international fans, Ping, who has studied Korean, would exhaust news about her idols from the official VIXX website (and Facebook pages), as well as popular Korean magazines. She would also download photos of her idols from these websites, and videos of interviews about her idol group, from Korean TV websites. She would translate the interviews into Chinese and upload them onto her VIXX Hong Kong Stop. To satisfy the non-Chinese fans, she would also exhaust videos of VIXX in English (Hyuk's video speech in English), while writing headings of postings in traditional Chinese, which is the official script in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Chinese diasporic communities in Southeast Asia and America/Europe. This appears to be a popular labor/practice among transnational fans across media. Fans of Japanese manga have been known to engage in "scanlation": scanning and downloading manga, and translating them into English for consumption by fellow fans (Lee, S., 2012). The fan-club organizers, who have learned Korean, have been translating some taped interviews of the group into Chinese, and reposted them on YouTube and Facebook. While the visuals attracted international fans who would leave comments on the pages, the most active fans are those from Hong Kong and Taiwan because of the language/traditional Chinese scripts on the Facebook page. The linguistic, algorithmic, and visual strategy attracted international fans who would breach the confines of Facebook/Twitter/Instagram to maximize their consumption.

Fan Capitalism—Marketing Fandom on Social Media

While language is still an overriding hurdle to maximum global reach of fan texts, fan-club organizers would resort to photos/visuals to fill their Facebook pages and providing visual and information updates of VIXX's televised appearances (on the various TV shows), and upcoming tours/ fan meetings. To maximize fan enjoyment and indulgence, the fan clubs manage a multilevel/multimodal page design exploiting the algorithmic settings of Facebook. With these postings, the clubs also advertise their upcoming activities by way of selling CDs/MDs of VIXX. The selling of VIXX's products and CDs was managed through Jellyfish Entertainment, where the fan clubs act as middlemen between the Korean intermediaries and the other fans for a small profit.

Another major source of funding is the fans' donations in times of fan activities, or VIXX's organized tours and fan meetings to Hong Kong. "Flash mobs seem to be a habitual fan activity for K-pop fans" although Ping confesses that they only occasionally organized flash mob activities (as it was time-consuming) and could be financially consuming. The major activities consist of organizing fan meetings during VIXX's visits, which include initiating and providing food and other supplies for VIXX while they are in Hong Kong, as well as the actual gatherings. Facebook and Twitter are the sites they exploit to promote such activities to mobilize attendance and support.

For example, in the recent celebration of the club's fourth anniversary, the club organized a lucky draw for members on the condition that they had to write a Facebook posting expressing their thoughts and wishes for the club. In return, participating members had the chance to receive limited editions of "supplies" they had produced for the past fan meetings (such as towels, Boys Record, and SIM cards on VIXX's various performances). Not surprisingly, the poster attracted thirty-five comments on Facebook and seventeen postings on Instagram.⁹ Authors of the postings seem to mostly come from Hong Kong, and some openly expressed their gratitude to the fan club's unquestioned initiative and effort in organizing activities, acting as the bridge between local fans and VIXX, and industriously updating the posts on the various social media. The sudden upsurge of postings was seen as the result of the promise of material incentive for the fans, but it also served as a visual evidence of the success of "Ping's" strategies to attract postings, as well as an emotional and textual reward for "Ping's" labor over the four years. While a majority fans just "liked" the postings, some left their footprints by posting comments after the postings, which serve also to demonstrate the "international" nature of the fan club. Evidently, managing offline activity has become a marketing and PR operation, starting from affective online promotion and mobilization, organizing food, beverage, and entertainment activities, to events organization. To document the labor and feat of this operation, "Ping" and "Luk" would take selfies (both photos and videos) of their daily activities as well as celebratory meals after their day's work.¹⁰ The video depicts them, with smiling faces, proudly describing their journey to the venue where they would gather fans in preparation for VIXX's visit, enjoying their meal at the end of the day.

Managing/Negotiating Algorithmic Censorship

In the face of the club being able to exploit the algorithmic settings of Facebook, its efforts have also been undermined by the latent censorship of the social media page. "Ping" constantly receives reports about the reach of the daily postings; however "Ping" was constantly informed that the posts only

reached a fraction, rather than all, of the users who “liked” the page. “Ping’s” explanation of the problem was the following: i) either Facebook as a marketing tactic consciously enables the posts to reach those frequent “likers” rather than those who are less active; or ii) it could also be a conscious algorithmic cost-cutting strategy to cut down on data flow during peak traffic hours. To circumvent these two possible measures, “Ping” has had to outsmart the Facebook system by sending the important postings when the data flow is lower during the day: “We have found that the late mornings and mid-late afternoons are the less busy hours on Facebook. So we aim at sending the more important messages during that time to make sure that everyone gets them.” The poster about the fourth anniversary, for example, was sent out at 6:00pm (June 1, 2016).

The other tactic is to “spice up” the messages so that they will attract the most “likes” or “shares” from the “likers” (interview, June 18, 2016). Ping would industriously exhaust VIXX’s official pages to select the most handsome photos of the six VIXX members, or sensationalize the heading of postings, and/or personalizing photos of celebrities (posted on official pages) with their intimate sounding Chinese headings. The headings play an important role by bridging cultural gaps and localizing the celebrity photos/news for the majority locals/Taiwanese/Chinese diaspora communities who read traditional Chinese. This is not to leave out non-Chinese likers because the Chinese headings will be religiously followed by English translations. Meanwhile the English translations leave a lot of room to be desired; as exemplified by some examples, the translations are done through Google Translate and obviously miss the linguistic puns in the Chinese narratives. One example was when the Chinese script of “rice” was playfully used as a pronoun to “fan,” (which shares the same sound/phonetics as the Chinese word), it was translated as “rice” in the English translation.

Politics of Managing Transnational/Trans-ethnic Fandom

Besides the above linguistic ruptures, a more decisive rupture occurs in the management of Sinablog. The Hong Kong fan club breached political censorship of mainland China by setting up a site on Sinablog and using simplified Chinese characters to appeal to mainland Chinese fans of VIXX. In the four years of managing the blog, conflicts have erupted between mainland Chinese fans and the Hong Kong organizers. Rivalry between the fan clubs of the two areas has caused fights that were evident on the fan club’s Sinablog page. The organization of the recent fan meeting in Hong Kong Taipo became a point of contention, when the mainland Chinese questioned the organizers about the budget. The Hong Kong fan club has sent messages (through PR companies in Hong Kong) to VIXX in South Korea to promote the fan club’s status/win a place in the heart of VIXX. So when Ping proudly posted a photo of VIXX

holding a cake labeled VIXX Hong Kong, she was expecting widespread acclaim and gratitude from fellow fans on the Facebook page. Instead, this sparked a wave of outcry on Sinablog, as mainland Chinese fans scoffed at the fact that they were not informed/consulted of the cake giving and complained about the lack of transparency on the fan club's part, especially in terms of using their donations. This implied a breach of ethics of the fan club which is suspicious of dishonest handling of collective funds. The algorithmic settings on Sinablog led the fans to copy and paste the accusations while adding their own share of the finger pointing. The repeated accusations were an emotional blow to Ping, who had no choice but to issue the club's financial statements on Sinablog to clear themselves of the accusations, and also issued an apology statement for the commotion they caused to the mainland Chinese fans. The incident was, in hindsight, the final blow to the already estranged relationship between the fan club and the fans on Sinablog: "After the incident, we posted less often on the Sinablog page. I felt quite disheartened by the incident and the flimsy trust between us and the fans." After the last posting on May 4, 2016, there were no new postings on the Sinablog site until June 1, when the fan club posted its fourth anniversary announcement, to which it received seven responses with diplomatic greetings.

While fan wars are not new in online (and offline) fandom, the fight between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese fans may stem from a longstanding political rift between the two areas, despite the fact that Hong Kong has been returned to Chinese sovereignty since 1997, which has intensified and been made complicated by nuanced quotidian cultural distrust and conflicts (Law, 2015). In their heyday, *Hallyu* dramas incited patriotic exchanges between mainland Chinese and Korean fans (Leung, 2008, Jang, 2012), as well as Japanese and Korean fans, the extent of which ranged from criticizing the content of Korean media products, to staging anti-*Hallyu* social action (Chin & Morimoto, 2013). However, this episode on the VIXX Hong Kong Fan Club displays a level of geopolitical dispute which is stemmed from a more deep-seated cultural and political misunderstanding and hostility between mainland Chinese and Hong Kong fans that found expression on a fan site on Facebook. While similar disputes are prevalent on other Internet forums, this fan (civil) war could expose the extent of cultural sub-nationalism in fandom, as inter-fan mistrust escalated into virtual fan "warfare": mainland Chinese and Hong Kong fans ganged up, unveiling the longstanding gulf between two Chinese peoples across the border, which somehow was epitomized by the linguistic and algorithmic boundaries online (Sinablog vs. Facebook page).

Managing Emotive Fan Labor—Unrequited Love?

The VIXX Hong Kong Fan Club episode not only reflected the emotive inter-fan conflict as a rupture in fan management, it also revealed the often

solitary and thankless work of the online fan sites. For “VIXX Hong Kong,” interaction with the South Korean entertainment companies has been low, not to mention meeting VIXX in the flesh. “We only received note from the entertainment companies through the PR company in Hong Kong. They seem to be announcing to us of VIXX’s tour to Hong Kong, expecting us to do everything to prepare for their visit (including food supplies for local fans), without providing any financial, labor, or emotional resources” (phone interview with “Ping” and “Luk,” August 10, 2016). The working style of South Korean agencies has been discussed on a Taiwanese website (Ju, 2012, accessed on August 12, 2016), which complained about the “business-like, manipulative and cold” attitude of staff of the CY Entertainment company (interview with “Ping,” June 7, 2016). The few return “favours” would include that Ping becomes an official agent of VIXX’s merchandise (including CDs, DVDs, flash cards, T-shirts) for fan members on VIXX Hong Kong Stop. To Ping, the four years of labor have not fruited into promising returns, especially in terms of helping her advance her status in gaining more attention and favor from her idol. She remarked, “In the earlier days, he would remember me, even remember my name when I met him at an autographing ceremony. I do understand that now that they have gone more famous, that they will become more distant . . . just recently I had booked a ticket for their concert being the founder of the HK fan club, yet even I couldn’t get in. I felt really down that time. Another time, my fan club partner discovered that her idol (one of VIXX’s members) posted a photo of him eating the cake that was prepared by the rival fan site. She basically was shattered” (interviewed on June 18, 2016).

Despite showering VIXX with gifts, the guarantee of the most up-to-date news about VIXX, and being the first ones to meet VIXX in the flesh during their visit to Hong Kong, Ping had not been rewarded by being granted more frequent direct contact with her idols. The only emotional rewards she felt were the occasional gratitude shown by fellow fans on Facebook. She revealed her helplessness on one Facebook posting, by way of “celebrating” the upcoming fourth anniversary: “A world where only ‘star chasers’ can understand. These 4 years have not been easy . . . I didn’t know why I started this in the first place . . . I left it and came back, only to be encouraged by Ravi’s words. I am kneeling to apologize for not working hard on this page, and will be a good girl in the run-up to the 4th anniversary!”

CONCLUSION

Hallyu, epitomized by K-pop, has morphed into a slick, highly strategic globalized cultural industry, which includes vigorous fan management by

Korean entertainment agencies and PR companies through social media (Jin, 2014). On the other hand, it has also nurtured affective and strategic fan management by “ordinary k-pop fans,” who have been significant contributors to the globalizing and sustained success of K-pop groups. While a lot of scholarship has attributed the creative and abundant agency to a positive fan participatory culture, many others critiqued that the excessive affective and creative fan production has often entailed exploitation. In this chapter, I have argued about the dynamics of social media fandom, as shown in the case of K-pop, in two aspects: (i) whether and how K-pop has capitalized on social media to advance a “creative economy”; and (ii) whether and how this abundant transnational fan activity has elicited “pop cosmopolitanism.”

I have demonstrated how, in the case of “VIXX Hong Kong Stop,” fan-club organizers have assumed the role of cultural intermediaries, capitalizing on the algorithms of social media to appropriate, copy and paste, as well as circulate idol images across converged media platforms. They have also actively translated and subtitled idol videos, thereby linguistically localizing and transnationalizing idol texts for global fan audience consumption. These visual consumptions also help enhance transnational consumption of actual merchandise, where they would also act as middlemen in the merchandising of idol products. Although the organizers claimed no material benefits, these fan-club starters could benefit from an intangible symbolic income. Despite a meager profit through the sale of this merchandise, I argue particularly that K-pop online fan sites are intermediary capitalist and cultural producers, which also perform as affective labor to the amassing global management of the celebrity industry. I would argue that these fan organizers could be deemed as amateur marketers and even capitalists by capitalizing on and cloning idol texts on their own website to enhance legitimacy of the website.

The hybridized image of K-pop star qualities (combining innocent boyish but cool sexy looks with vigorous dance steps) works to enhance their appeal to young females. Fans as ordinary avid users expend their own excessive fan affect not only to mobilize collective worship and solidarity, but also to promote/augment one’s “brownie points,” so that one could promote oneself to be closer in the fan hierarchy to the charismatic super human status of the idols. As discussed above, fan clubs as ordinary intermediaries have been exploiting the algorithmic settings of Facebook to capitalize on and affectively mobilize the emotional and cultural resources of fans even for their own ulterior gains. In the social media era where “impression management” becomes a pivotal feature of the everyday, fan-club organizers profit through becoming “sub-celebrity” by posting videos of themselves, hence turning themselves into visual commodities in the vast textual expanse of Facebook.

On the other hand, Facebook fan-club pages demonstrate the limits of “pop cosmopolitanism.” Social media enhances the resourcefulness and maturity

of K-pop fans to capitalize on the virtual cross-media expanse to manage transnational fandom. The organizers have also catered to “international audiences” through linguistic screening and translation, while most of the offline activities have been confined to Hong Kong (in the case of the VIXX group). However, as demonstrated by the activities of the fan-club organizers of VIXX Hong Kong, while transnationalized fandom is made visible only through statistics and occasional comments from “members,” the “global cultural consciousness” that ensues could at best be seen as textual and performative, and not fathomed by an active forging of transnational exchange and understanding. The fan site is also caught up with the geo-cultural tension between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese netizens, as the competition for their idols’ attention sparked a deep-seated political antagonism, raising doubts about the “publics” conflict as well as the noncommittal (if not exploitative) relationship with South Korean and Hong Kong professional intermediaries, challenging the consensual (and somewhat harmonious) imaginary of social media as “publics.” Social media provides fans of K-pop idols the initiative to traverse cultural, national, and algorithmic boundaries to promote, publicize, and mobilize human and financial capital for their idols. It could also entail fan wars, to the extent of cyberbullying and racial othering.

In the social media era, the unquestioned volunteerism and transnational algorithmic competence of “fan labor” is often assumed, where “labor” is seen as rendering time as fans strategically reproduce their idols’ visual appeal to mesmerize and retain fellow fans, while collectively indulging in idol worship. In their study of fan videos, Lothian and de Kosnik articulate the “free labor” of fandom’s “undercommon” exude in their fan vidding (Lothian, 2015). Fans’ free labor meshes with the already digital emotive labor by unwary avid social media users, as Fuchs articulates in his political economy critique of social media such as Facebook (Fuchs, 2010). The algorithmic settings of Facebook enables fan clubs to maximize their affective fan cultural production, which could be offset by the performative (sub)nationalistic bashing by fellow fans. Rather than seeing it as “conflictual,” I would argue that the case of VIXX Hong Kong Stop effectively exemplifies the complex relationship between celebrities and their transnational fans: while fans indulge in unquestioned voluntary labor to set up their pages out of altruistic fan solidarity, they also profit from an imagined attention and thus “love,” not just from their idols, but from their imagined fans on the social media, in the era where everyone actively labors in the affective/attention economy. The indulgence on visual aesthetics may also have fueled the strategic fanning of K-pop celebrities to nurture the appeal of their sexy looks. This laboring of love extends across a performative vision of globalized solidarity among fans, veiling possible tension among transnational fans. The photos of VIXX holding the cake in

separate occasions become the aesthetics of the rupture of transnational fan management and also the labor that fan clubs expend, only to be rewarded with illusive promises of intimacy from their idol. In the meantime, these fans could be fueled by the longing and promise of another message from the PR company of their idol's next meeting. They can only wait once more.

NOTES

1. For example, fans have intervened with the business decisions of their stars' management companies, even influencing the shift of the media environment. The most notable example is the way in which TVXQ fans collectively and professionally reacted to the group's disbandment (Jung, 2011).

2. "B2B" means supplying directly from one producer to another; while "B2C" means products supplied from producer to consumer (Oh & Park, 2012)

3. S.M. Entertainment is now Korea's largest firm for young pop music idols. In addition to Girls' Generation, the company's current top asset, S.M. Entertainment's roster includes an array of past hit makers like H.O.T., S.E.S., and BoA, and new talents like Super Junior, SHINee, and f(x). With the debut of Girls' Generation, S.M.'s sales, operating profits, and stock value have soared. Sales surged an annual average of 37.5% from 2007 to 2010 while earnings per share (EPS) skyrocketed from minus ₩479 in 2007 to plus ₩266 in 2008 and then to ₩1,342 in 2010, when S.M. singers entered Europe (Ahn, 2011).

4. YouTube played the most important role in globally diffusing and distributing Korean music. The number of YouTube hits for K-pop music videos has reached 2.3 billion views from 235 countries, and that many singers use YouTube as a platform to showcase their songs, often through live broadcasts simultaneously watched by millions.

5. Such as "K-Style channel": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19IHj2Z_3Bw&list=PLZ3FkAH-jI6J20naOVu9YdY64CnG-rwIL

6. In Germany, the First K-Pop Night was hosted by the Korean Cultural Center in Berlin on August 21. At the venue, 300 German K-pop fans gathered to enjoy and share information, watch videos, sing along, practice their dance steps, and participate in a quiz and karaoke contest. In other countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, Kazakhstan, Argentina, and Thailand, people gathered signatures and staged flash mobs to request their cities to host performances of Korean singers (Ahn, 2011, p. 85).

7. Their hits include "On and On" (Hangul: 다칠 준비가 돼 있어), which literally translates into "I'm Ready to Get Hurt," "Voodoo Doll," and "Chained Up"; another theme is breaking up with their lovers as demonstrated in "Love Equation," and "Don't Want to Be An Idol"; generally sad or dark love songs, with the themes of obsession and insanity such as the songs "Hyde" and "G.R.8.U"; and emotional breakdown as in "Error" and the timelessness of love in "Eternity" (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VIXX>, Accessed on December 18, 2016).

8. They received their first award at SBS MTV Best of The Best 2013 for Best Rookie Group and received their first Main Prize Bonsang Award at the 23rd Seoul Music Awards. They received their first music show award at Music Bank with “Voodoo Doll.” In total VIXX has received twenty-four wins on South Korea's televised music shows.

9. as at 7pm on June 1, 2016.

10. Source: VIXX Hong Kong Stop Facebook page.

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Chapter 6

Postcolonial Production and Consumption of Global K-pop

Kyong Yoon

INTRODUCTION

The global circulation of K-pop beyond Asia is particularly intriguing for media studies as it embodies ironies accompanied by globalization.¹ As Ono and Kwon (2013) have pointed out, K-pop's recent global rise "seems almost ironic given Korea's colonized position during much of the twentieth century" (p. 199). In this respect, global K-pop can be considered a postcolonial media phenomenon because its production and dissemination have emerged as a result of Korea's postcolonial struggle. Thus, global K-pop may not be fully analyzed without addressing its postcolonial dimension, which may be insufficiently captured by Western-oriented media theories. K-pop's global flows mean more than its global reach or growing power in media markets, as the flows reveal a complexity and inequality of media production and reception on a global level. K-pop's textual production might be a result of "mimicry" emerging from both the postcolonial cultural histories of Korea (Lie, 2012) and the national media industry's strategic hybridization (Jin, 2016). K-pop's reception process may reflect the disparity, rather than uniformity, of global media audiencehood (Choi & Maliangkay, 2015). In this respect, the production and consumption of global K-pop might be considered an example of "a postcolonial interruption" of Western-oriented, universalized media analysis (Shome, 2016, p. 247).

In order to explore the "postcolonial interruption" of K-pop in media globalization, this chapter analyzes how K-pop is produced and consumed in a transnational context. First, it addresses the production of K-pop as a postcolonial process by exploring how the cultural form has gone through particular historical and cultural moments. Second, it examines the consumption of K-pop as a postcolonial process by exploring how it is resignified

in a transnational context. In particular, to effectively illustrate the media experiences of subaltern audiences in the West, the study addresses a minority group—Asian Canadian youth—that holds a relatively marginal audience position.

The recent phenomenon of global K-pop may offer an intriguing case for furthering postcolonial media studies. Existing media studies have explored the globalization of media, which “has inevitably always carried some postcolonial implications” (Merten & Kramer, 2016, p. 13). However, global media studies has not sufficiently developed a postcolonial perspective that challenges Western-oriented media analyses (Merten & Kramer, 2016; Shome, 2016). Not unlike many other social scientific disciplines, media studies has maintained a highly Western-oriented perspective, which “neglects how media functions in the Global South (including in the ‘developed’ South)” (Shome, 2016, p. 246). Thus, while the application of postcolonial analysis to media studies has been suggested for understanding the historical complexities and power relations of mediated worlds (Cere, 2011, 2016; Fernández, 1999; Shome, 2016; Shome & Hegde, 2002), the field of postcolonial media studies remains nascent. To move beyond the pitfalls of media studies’ default framework, in which a postcolonial perspective is under-explored, an investigation into multiple power relations in media practices is required.

A few recent efforts to facilitate a postcolonial perspective in media studies have explored how such themes as colonizer-colonized relationships, hybridity, orientalism, and subalternity are integrated into global and local media practices (Cere, 2011, 2016). By doing so, media studies has gradually addressed colonial and non-Western media histories as well as the geopolitics of media production and consumption (Merten & Kramer, 2016, p.13; See also Shome, 2016). This chapter’s empirical analysis can deepen an understanding of the power relations implicated in transnational media flows and provide preliminary insights for further facilitating postcolonial media studies.

In Canada, a nation-state that was developed by immigration after settler colonialism, Asian Canadians (Canadians whose ethnic origin is Asia) have occupied a visible community that constitutes approximately 15% of the nation’s population as of 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013). The significant proportion of the Asian population in Canada may explain why Canada has recently been considered one of the major Western national markets for K-pop (Yoon & Jin, 2016). Canada is not only a market for K-pop but also a contributor to this emerging phenomenon because of creative efforts by several Canadian-born and/or raised young talents, such as Henry Lau (a member of Super Junior-M since 2008). While the Canadian music market has been globally ranked seventh in size (Smirke, 2015), it has struggled with

a lack of locally produced content and has relied largely on the American music industry. As of 2011, international artists represented 76.5% of album sales and 85.6% of digital track sales in the Canadian music market (CIMA, 2016). At this point, there is no accumulative data on K-pop's market share in the Canadian market, except for a few data charts, such as the Billboard Canadian Album chart. In the Billboard Top 100 Canadian Album chart, only three K-pop musicians have appeared (Benjamin, 2016): Psy for three songs (*Gangnam Style* at No. 1 for seven weeks in 2012, *Gentleman* at No. 9 in 2013, and *Daddy* at No. 36 in 2015); Exo for *Call Me Baby* (No. 98 in 2015); and BTS for *Wings* (No. 19 in 2016). Thus, it may be assumed that, except for Psy's global hits, K-pop's sales in Canada are rather insignificant. However, despite K-pop's seemingly insignificant market shares, its territory is allegedly increasing among young Canadians and in social media-driven environments, which might not be fully represented by official market share reports (Yoon & Jin, 2016). Given this context, this chapter examines the role of "global K-pop" as a form of pop culture product in national and transnational markets and as cultural texts for marginalized groups of young people in Canada.

PRODUCING GLOBAL K-POP

K-pop's emergence as a key pop musical trend in Korea has been indebted largely to a postcolonial complexity that comprises the country's cultural struggle with the legacy of colonizing forces—Western and Japanese influences. Western pop music styles performed at music clubs on U.S. Army bases (i.e., the Eighth United States Army) and a radio channel established for U.S. soldiers in Korea—AFKN (American Forces Korean Network, renamed AFN Korea)—played key roles in training Korean musicians and audiences (Shin, 2013). Numerous Korean pop musicians from the 1950s–1970s indeed began their music careers at clubs in the U.S. Army bases. The American influence on Korean pop music did not decrease after the 1970s. Rather, it was rapid Westernization that potentially triggered the expansion of Korea's pop music industry during the 1990s. The sensational hip-hop band *Seo Taiji and the Boys* (1991–1996) exemplifies how the Western hip-hop musical style was introduced and localized in mainstream pop music markets in Korea. Interestingly, one of the main reasons for young audiences' enthusiasm and fandom for Seo Taiji's music was that it "did not sound Korean" (Lie, 2012, p. 349).

Along with Western pop music, the Japanese media system has offered Korean music producers and corporations an important reference point. Due to the colonial history and traumas associated with Japan's occupation and

colonization of the Korean peninsula (1910–1945), Japanese pop cultural commodities were banned until 1997 in Korea. Moreover, even after the ban was lifted in 1997, numerous restrictions on the sale of Japanese pop cultural products in Korean media markets have continued. However, despite the long restrictions on Japanese pop culture, the Korean media industry has often been affected by its Japanese counterpart, J-pop, in terms of show format, musical style, and promotion system. In particular, the Japanese “idol (*aidoru*) system” (since the 1980s) has substantially affected the Korean idol (*aidol*) system since the 2000s. Japan’s idol system, established during the country’s economically flourishing “bubble era” of the 1980s, is characterized by the significant role of entertainment management companies or agencies that maximize the commercial value of their own idols via multiple media platforms and loyal fan bases (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012). A major K-pop corporation, S.M. Entertainment, has actively accommodated J-pop’s idol system as shown in the case of BoA, who was trained through the J-pop system and enjoyed stardom in Korea and Japan.

Western and Japanese influences on the emergence of global K-pop offer an intriguing case for postcolonial media studies. Global K-pop might be an example of “mimicry,” the concept that some postcolonial theorists, such as Bhabha, appropriate to explain the colonized desire “for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86, emphasis in original). In postcolonial Korea, the traces of two colonizing forces—Japanese and American powers—had to be denied, yet were already inscribed in Korea’s media texts, industries, and audiences. In particular, American cultural texts have been considered not only as high quality material but also as liberating and youthful commodities.

Since the legacy of colonizing powers has been so pervasive and persistent in the realms of everyday life in Korea, it might not be surprising that Korean cultural attributes in K-pop have remained ambiguous. Indeed, Fuhr (2016, p. 118) suggests that K-pop contains limited “images for representing Korea’s identity” and instead adopts “American retro images” to “serve as substitutes for Korea’s own power cultural repository.” In this respect, citing Fredric Jameson’s theories on postmodernism, Fuhr (2016, p. 118) even describes the “absence of K” in K-pop as a symptom of “nostalgia for a historical past that never existed.”

However, postcolonial hybridity inscribed in K-pop does not simply mean the disappearance or absence of Korean cultural attributes. On the contrary, the textual and contextual aspects of K-pop may reveal Korea’s postcolonial desire for generating national signifiers to ensure its identity as a nation-state that developed through struggles to overcome colonial legacy. For example, despite the increasing recruitment of overseas talent, K-pop stars have presented themselves (and have been represented by the media) as “national

idols” by emphasizing their role in enhancing national pride (Lee, 2012). For example, 2012’s YouTube sensation Psy, the K-pop singer, shouted in Korean, “*Daehanminguk Manse!* (The Republic of Korea, hurrah!)” during his appearance on NBC’s “Today Show” (Shin, 2013, pp. 157–158). Psy’s response may show not only his national pride but also how the *Gangnam Style* phenomenon, and the global rise of K-pop in general, is consumed and signified among Korean audiences and news media. That is, the global recognition of K-pop has triggered a nationalistic response in the country of origin, where overseas consumption of Korean-made cultural products is often attributed to the excellence and uniqueness of Korean culture.

The Korean national news media discourse of global K-pop within Korea has attempted to essentialize its national culture as a key attraction in the global media market. For Koreans, the global recognition of K-pop is utilized as a way to affirm its collective national identity and nationalism. This recent pop cultural nationalism can be understood in the historical context of Korean nationalism, which “was formed in response to Japanese colonial racism and assimilation and later developed as the postcolonial national identity” (Kal, 2011, p. 122). In this respect, it is not surprising that consecutive Korean governments have used K-pop as a symbolic tool to reinforce the cultural hegemony of the ruling regimes, on the one hand, and as a national brand or “soft power” to facilitate overseas recognition of Korean products and culture, on the other. For example, during several of her overseas trips, former president Park (2013–2017) met and encouraged K-pop stars on their global tours, as she claimed to be dedicated to “cultural diplomacy” (Kim & Jin, 2016).

In this manner, K-pop is an ambiguous yet highly exploited signifier for Koreans who have struggled to generate a cultural identity after their colonial histories. However, K-pop’s textual nature as a pastiche (if not parody) of Western and Japanese pop musical styles has been a reason for some critics’ skepticism about the global penetration of K-pop (Fuhr, 2016). However, from a postcolonial perspective, K-pop may imply the “excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 123). In other words, although K-pop may seem like sheer pastiche or imitation of Western and Japanese texts, its effects can subvert the Western hegemony in global pop music industries and consumption. Indeed, a few scholars and critics have claimed that K-pop can be seen as a signal of postcolonial subversion. For example, Shim (2006, p. 40) defines the Korean media industry in the twenty-first century as “a sign of resilience of the subaltern,” and Ono and Kwon (2013) see K-pop as a hybrid culture through which the subaltern can speak and challenge Westernizing and colonizing forces. Indeed, as Ono and Kwon (2013) suggest, the global distribution of K-pop can be seen as a signal of how a music form from the non-West (if not the periphery) appropriates a global platform for challenging the dominant flow of pop music distribution.

Indeed, the Korean music industry has widely exploited YouTube and other global social media platforms as an effective way to disseminate its products and to increase its revenues (Jung, 2015).

The global circulation of K-pop may provide a case study to challenge the universalized narrative in media studies in which the West is contrasted with the stereotyped rest and to show the ongoing effects of colonial power in a global mediascape. However, despite recent attempts to address postcolonial issues in Korean media (Choi & Maliangkay, 2015; Ono & Kwon, 2013; Shim, 2006), there have been few studies that examine how the postcoloniality inscribed in K-pop might be recognized and/or challenged by global audiences, and how global K-pop audiences might embody postcolonial subjectivities in their particular locations of reception. Moreover, the literature has not sufficiently addressed how K-pop can be resignified in a non-Korean context where the text's postcoloniality may be dislocated. Thus, further empirical analyses of the global audiencehood of K-pop are required.

CONSUMING GLOBAL K-POP

A recent Canadian newspaper's coverage of a Syrian refugee family's settlement in Canada incidentally gives us a glimpse into the ways in which K-pop might be primarily consumed in the West as well as who may be consuming it. *The Globe and Mail* article entitled "Three years after fleeing Syria, family of nine makes a home in Canada" (Bascaramurty & Kullab, 2015) includes the story of Alysar, the 11-year-old daughter of the refugee family, who is enthusiastic about K-pop. The article states that, while Alysar's English is "still shaky," she memorizes the lyrics of several K-pop songs. It also humorously describes that when her father leaves the house for a doctor's appointment Alysar is "quick to grab the TV remote" to play her favorite K-pop music video on the TV screen. The story of Alysar implies that diasporic youth on the transnational move might become enthusiastic about K-pop without necessarily being interested in Western pop culture. In addition, the story implies that K-pop has been globalized through digital technology with which music is conveniently remediated as a visual form.

While global K-pop's postcolonial traces may be inscribed in the histories of its production and in the hybrid nature of its textual characteristics, the traces are also observed in the ways that K-pop is consumed overseas. As briefly hinted at in Alysar's story above, two aspects of consumption may be noteworthy in discussing the postcolonial nature of global K-pop circulation—audience groups' subalternity and their reappropriation of global technologies. That is, the text of K-pop, which emerged from Korea's postcolonial historical context, is resignified by the fans who assume such marginal

subject positions as immigrants, refugees, diasporic individuals, and/or ethnic minorities in a transnational context. In this process, a Western-developed media platform (YouTube in particular) is appropriated to negotiate with the hegemonic media system, in which mainstream Western pop music is prioritized over other music forms.

To explore the postcolonial traces in K-pop consumption, the remainder of this chapter examines the narratives of young diasporic fans of K-pop in the Canadian context. As part of a larger project on the K-pop phenomenon across Canada (2015–2016), the data of semi-structured interviews with 20 young K-pop fans in Canada (excluding those of Korean heritage) were analyzed. The interview participants, who were recruited via online advertisements and snowballing in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia, were all young Asian Canadians under the age of 30 (19 female and one male) and identified themselves as dedicated K-pop fans. They were university students except for one person who was in the workforce. While some participants were locally grown K-pop fans who were introduced to K-pop during their childhood in their current residence, others were international or internal migrants who had been introduced to K-pop prior to coming to their current residence. Interestingly, many participants had some form of internal and international migration experience for reasons such as education and family business, and thus, it might be difficult to clearly pinpoint a receiving location of a global fan's experiences with K-pop.

Eleven participants were young people of East Asian heritage (Chinese, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese Canadians), while nine participants had Southeast Asian or South Asian backgrounds (Filipinos, Vietnamese, Bruneian, and Pakistani Canadians). The participants whose accounts are directly quoted in this chapter are anonymized by using pseudonyms. In individual interviews, which were conducted for approximately 60–120 minutes per person, participants were asked to talk about several topics: how they were introduced to K-pop; what aspects of K-pop and K-pop idols they liked or disliked; how they used social media for fan activities; and how they perceived difference or similarities of K-pop and other pop music forms. Overall, despite their own identification as “K-pop fans,” the participants showed diversities in fan activities. They may not necessarily fit the profile of typical young pop culture fans who are “public, communal, creative, communitarian and politically active” (Duffett, 2014, p. 5). Some young people were more actively involved in participatory fan culture (such as K-pop cover dance clubs), whereas several young people did not particularly engage with any visible group activities. Drawing on the interview data, this chapter addresses K-pop fans' subalternity and technology appropriation, both of which may imply certain challenges to Western hegemony in global cultural flows.

Subaltern Audiencehood

As the officially used Canadian term “visible minorities” (those who are neither Caucasian nor Aboriginal) implies (Statistics Canada, 2016), non-white Canadians are identified as minorities who are subject to visible classification, often accompanied by grouping and stereotypes, in opposition to white individuals (Karim, 1993). According to the Asian Canadian fans in the study, K-pop’s performers—Korean idol stars—were especially attractive. K-pop might be seen as an alternative to the hegemonic discourse of whiteness in Canadian media, where ethnic minorities remain marginalized (Mahtani, 2008). Wendy, a 21 year-old woman of Chinese heritage, who was born and grew up in Canada noted:

(I like K-pop idols) because they are Asians. When I was growing up, whenever I saw TV shows, if it had any Asian character, then it doesn’t matter whether it’s Korean, Japanese, or Chinese. “Oh, that’s my favorite character! They are Asians!” K-pop idols are singing, dancing, getting famous, and they are much more identifiable.

In this manner, many respondents felt personally close to Asian personalities—K-pop idols, who were different from white personalities often shown on mainstream TV. As pointed out by the respondents, Asian personalities on Canadian TV seem to be underrepresented or negatively represented. The ongoing operation of the dominant white ideology implicated in national policies and media (Mahtani, 2008) may work in parallel with the marginalization of people of color in the global media system (Fleras, 2011).

It may not be a coincidence that relatively marginalized members of Western audiences constitute an enthusiastic fandom of global K-pop. As suggested by recent empirical studies (Choi & Maliangkay, 2015; Yoon & Jin, 2016), the global audience of K-pop may not be fully addressed without discussing the role of the subaltern groups who struggle for cultural recognition in the white dominant cultural landscape. In particular, Choi and Maliangkay (2015, p.14) define global K-pop fans as “cultural subaltern” groups, who might share the “sentiments of minority solidarity.” According to post-colonial media studies, the subaltern is defined as subordinate social groups, such as ethnic minorities, whose agency is negated yet reclaimed in the media (Cere, 2011, p. 10). Subaltern audiences are subject to the marginalization of their cultural tastes and identities.

This subaltern aspect of media consumption was observed among the project’s research participants. For example, Amy, a 17-year-old girl of Chinese heritage, felt that some of her non-Asian peers did not respect her taste for K-pop: “Sometimes they’re just not that open minded to receive new kinds

of knowledge or information about different cultures. And sometimes they stop me from talking to them (about K-pop).” Similarly, Sarah, a 21-year-old woman of Pakistani heritage, described how K-pop is reduced to a stereotype. She noted, “[People think] ‘it’s just like a bunch of girly looking guys’ and then, ‘they’re just dancing around and they have a lot of makeup and like, basically, yeah they were like copying the 90s popular (American) boy bands.’” In this manner, as the research participants’ enthusiasm about K-pop was often marginalized as an Asian ethnic taste, K-pop seemed to be considered as the racialized Other of Western pop culture in Canada.

The marginalized status of K-pop might resonate with young Asian Canadians’ everyday experiences as ethnic minorities. While young Asian Canadians may seek multiple senses of belonging (Song, 2003), they tend to be othered by the white gaze. Unlike the white youth who might be able to perform symbolic ethnicity, Asian youth may be unable to “slip in and out of ‘being ethnic’” (Kibria, 2002, p.101). Young Asian Canadian fans seemed to feel good about themselves and their ethnic backgrounds by being connected with other Asian youth. Jasmine, a 29-year-old woman of Filipino heritage, recalled how K-pop facilitated her peer network:

I took my first trip without my family to Asia to stay with a friend that I met through K-pop. And so, after that, I would travel around Asia more so, I started meeting new people. . . . It would just happen that we’d meet at a hostel and we would just talk about stuff and then be like “oh you like K-pop too” and then we would become friends.

In this manner, K-pop might stimulate diasporic young Asians’ sense of a pan-Asian identity, with which being, and being affiliated with, Asian or Asian Canadian becomes an important component of selfhood (Kibria, 2002). Participation in K-pop fandom appeared to offer some interviewees an enhanced cultural agency with which they could seek a positive self-identity. Global K-pop performed by young Korean idols might offer the interviewees resources for empowering their racialized body and identity.

Given that “visible minorities”—youth of Asian heritage in particular—appear to constitute the center of K-pop’s fan base in Canada, it is necessary to discuss how and why K-pop is particularly appealing to subaltern audiences. While the respondents in the present study identified its hybrid nature as an enchanting factor of K-pop, they enjoyed K-pop as a form of “doing” or practice. In particular, those who were involved in cover dance groups often praised the verve of K-pop performance. “Their (K-pop bands’) choreography is always really difficult and strong, so it just makes an impact. . . . they’re able to make a choreography for every song and I feel like that’s a really hard thing to do, so it’s really, a praiseworthy thing,” noted Sarah, who

was a member of a K-pop cover dance team. The act of performing a K-pop cover dance was described as a process through which the young Asian Canadians might positively engage with their bodies and that might eventually lead to their self-expression in urban space.

In some cases, they digitally recorded their performances and/or competed with other cover dance teams. Also, some respondents occasionally organized flash mobs or other offline events. In doing so, they territorialized and reappropriated urban space, which might otherwise remain insignificant for the racialized youth. While consuming K-pop itself might not necessarily “guarantee any form of resistance” (Grossberg, 1992, p. 64), the subaltern subjects’ appropriation of K-pop may enable the fan to symbolically resist the dominant social order and to reimagine their own cultural identity. In the present study, young fans’ cultural consumption as a process of negotiating their subaltern positions through reappropriation of a transnational cultural form can be seen as an implicit cultural resistance that contributes to creating “new language, meanings, and vision of the future” (Duncome 2002, p. 8).

Western Technology Reappropriation

The respondents’ narratives on their consumption of K-pop revealed an extensive use of social media and an increasing tendency of media convergence. In particular, social media appears to allow for playful, low-cost, and socially networked processes of cultural consumption through which a particular cultural economy of fandom is generated and maintained. An interviewee’s account shows how overseas fans access and consume K-pop. Linh, an 18-year-old Vietnamese Canadian woman, explained, “If I’m on Facebook, and Allkpop releases some news about a music release, I go to YouTube and watch the music video, or listen to the song. And then I download it, off a blog. I don’t buy it (laughs). I download it.” As illustrated in this account, the consumption of K-pop did not necessarily involve purchasing materials but rather comprised digital navigating, sharing, and downloading. For example, Sarah (the 21-year-old Pakistani Canadian) noted, “We do have a lot of online Facebook groups that we are in. So, people share music videos and we’ll talk about them, or they play these games like guess who’s this and whatever.” In this manner, K-pop music videos were consumed via social media, through which information and emotion were playfully shared. However, this global consumption pattern of K-pop has been considered a challenge for K-pop industries because of the pervasive piracy and personal reproduction of original K-pop products (Jin, 2015).

This digital sharing economy of K-pop fandom is heavily reliant on Western-dominant new media platforms. Among other social media channels, the globally dominant digital platform YouTube has played a particularly

important role in circulating K-pop music videos and boosting its global fan base. For many respondents, consuming K-pop meant not only listening or viewing but also “doing” K-pop on YouTube. For example, Amy, who was a member of a K-pop cover dance group, pointed out the importance of participating in K-pop and reworking K-pop materials:

Whenever I see something I really like, I just want to create videos for them like for me. I do dancing, I put dance covers, sometimes review videos, or music video reactions, and stuff like that. So it's kind of a skills challenge for me as well to edit in such a short period of time and put it out there for other people to enjoy as well. And, um, it's kind of just K-pop is just my source of life to be cheesy (laughs). It's like . . . yeah it's my daily activities that revolve around K-pop a lot.

In Amy's “doing” K-pop, YouTube, sometimes along with other social media platforms, appeared to function as an effective means through which her fan activities were recorded, reflected, and shared. Her account seems to resonate with Ono and Kwon's (2013) study on the role of YouTube in K-pop fan culture as a platform offering opportunities for postcolonial subjects to facilitate multidirectional media flows through which the Western-dominant media system can be reoriented. That is, YouTube, which is a dominant Western-produced media platform, could paradoxically be appropriated as a means of challenging the Western-oriented media markets. YouTube may show a new phase of media imperialism and has been considered a primary component of “platform imperialism,” which refers to Western dominance in technological development and the infrastructure of new media platforms (Jin, 2013). However, Ono and Kwon (2013) argue that Western-owned and controlled media platforms can be utilized by postcolonial media producers and audiences, and thus eventually be appropriated to strike back at the Western hegemony.

K-pop fans' reappropriation of the Western media platform can be observed in reaction videos and user-created content on YouTube. In the present study, several respondents often uploaded their own reaction videos and/or cover dance/cover song videos on YouTube. As Sarah (the 21-year-old Pakistani Canadian) noted, fans may generate or watch K-pop reaction videos “because you wanna see if they had the same reaction as you did. So if they were also shocked or they also like the music just as much as you did.” Reaction videos may be an extended mode of the culture of commenting on or reviewing the original text. However, compared to other forms of consumer review activities, reaction videos have unique features comprising a visual performance and the appearance of commenters, along with particular aesthetics—such as the ordinary, natural, and self-immersed nature of video texts (Kim, 2015, p. 336). Also, reaction videos tend to involve particular desires for, and sensibilities of,

K-pop fandom, as they can generate a sense of belonging beyond geographic or cultural distance. As Amy (the 17-year-old Chinese Canadian) noted, reaction videos might contribute to spreading K-pop to global Internet users, and to enhancing a sense of an imagined community of K-pop fans:

When people make reaction videos, they have the video of themselves and a little screen for the music video [that they react to]. So, it kind of promotes the music video as well, if you haven't watched the music video. And it also gives some people the feeling of "Oh, they [i.e., the video uploaders] want to watch it with someone, but they can't really do so." So, it's like, having a sense of belonging. So, they want to watch it indirectly with other people.

In this manner, the creators and viewers of reaction videos seem to participate in such activities as promoting and talking about their favorite music videos and exploring how others think of the video across different cultural and linguistic contexts. In so doing, they compare their own interpretation with others' reactions and seek a sense of belonging in an imaginary way.

The popular circulation of reaction videos may have implications for understanding the consumption of global K-pop as a postcolonial process. Above all, fans' playful participation in reaction videos has facilitated the rise of K-pop as a set of non-Western cultural texts on a global scale, moving beyond the typical national gatekeepers of transcultural cultural commodities such as broadcast media (Kim, 2015). Moreover, in the K-pop culture of reaction videos, which encourages playful reengagement with the original text, grassroots translation of other cultures becomes a main activity of cultural consumption. "Doing" K-pop via online platforms suggests that the postcolonial hybridity inscribed in the text and traces of K-pop can be even further hybridized by various participants who are networked via social media. The increasing process of YouTube-mediated translation implies that K-pop fans do not simply receive and decode the original text, but rather regenerate it from their own perspectives. As Fiske (1992) claimed, pop cultural consumption to some extent resembles high-brow cultural consumption, which relies on cultural hierarchies between haves and have-nots in terms of cultural capital. However, K-pop fans' participatory culture of reaction and grassroots translation might, in a way, dismantle the cultural hierarchies within fan communities. Thus, by "doing" K-pop on YouTube, fans may engage with a "subaltern standpoint," which refers to the social position, experiences, and viewpoints of peripheral groups (Go, 2016, p. 159). Indeed, as Kim (2015) implies, the participatory culture of K-pop reaction videos might allow the reactors to question Western-oriented norms and to be keenly aware of cultural diversity to some extent, while sharing and viewing different reactions.

However, while YouTube and reaction videos play a significant role in the rise of global K-pop fandom, this does not necessarily mean that K-pop fans always consider the increasing number of reaction videos as a positive participatory culture. Several respondents, who were not particularly interested in viewing or generating reaction videos, disdained the cultural ignorance allegedly observed in K-pop reaction videos. These fans were particularly critical about younger YouTubers who produced reaction videos and were seemingly ignorant about the cultural context of K-pop. Natalie, a 20-year-old fan of Vietnamese heritage described, “There are a bunch of Americans and people who weren’t used to K-pop. Their expressions were ‘weird, colourful’ or like ‘an explosion of randomness.’” Also, Linh (the 18-year-old Vietnamese Canadian fan) described reaction video enthusiasts as “outsiders” while claiming that those uploaders might not be sufficiently knowledgeable about K-pop: “I don’t like to watch reaction videos. It’s because they’re obviously. . . most of these people are outsiders, right? Teens react, for example, right? They say comments that I don’t like. I tend to avoid things like that.” In this manner, some of this study’s fans, who considered themselves as highly dedicated fans, tended to distinguish themselves from “outsiders” or K-pop novices, who make reaction videos. This critical view, contrasted with the view suggested by the aforementioned reaction video enthusiasts, implies that K-pop fans’ engagement with social media is not necessarily always participatory, but rather diverse (or even contradictory). That is, some fans playfully use social media to react to original texts as their practice of “doing K-pop,” while others disregarded amateurish content generated by other fans. The fans’ different reactions to K-pop reaction videos show how popular social media platforms, such as YouTube, can be appropriated for different meanings—for example, the reproduction of the Western gaze and challenges to this gaze. The contradictory reappropriation of social media implies that its seemingly open platform, which is typically provided to its users for free, is not necessarily a neutral space for subaltern media audiences.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed how a cultural form emerging from a postcolonial context can be resignified and reappropriated as a means of cultural negotiation for subaltern groups. It has analyzed global K-pop as a cultural practice that implies postcolonial legacies and struggles in media production and consumption. On its production side, the Korean music industry as a semi-peripheral export market in global capitalism has generated the “idol system,” in which Western genre music is localized by young Korean performers and then globally distributed through social media-driven fan

bases. As an industrial endeavor of Korea, the Korean music industry has increasingly assumed a semi-peripheral role in the global music industry system by relentlessly attempting to export its products through Western-dominant media outlets (Oh, 2013). The idol system has reproduced copy-cat boy/girl groups, while embracing the Western cultural paradigm (Unger, 2015, p. 25). The Korean music industry's idol manufacturing system has relied on the exploitation of (mostly local) labor powers, including not only young idol stars but also a large number of "trainees (*yeonseupsaeng*)" and potential trainees (as industrial reserves), who struggle with long work hours and highly intensive emotional labor. Given K-pop's exploitative production system and its semi-peripheral position in the global music industry, it might still be too early to suggest that K-pop is generating an alternative media production system that challenges global capitalism.

Meanwhile, K-pop is integrated into young fans' daily contexts of "doing" pop music. Young fans in this study—those who assume subaltern audience positions in the Canadian mediascape—consumed K-pop via emerging media platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook. K-pop fans' extensive use of social media, such as YouTube, shows that Western-based platforms are reappropriated for the circulation of non-Western media content and the formation of particular pop cultural capital. The playful participatory culture exercised especially by cover dance groups and reaction video uploaders might imply a postcolonial moment, in which the colonized perform their resistance and thus destabilize the colonizer's authority. Indeed, "visible minority" K-pop fans in the present study seemed to question the Western-oriented mediascape to some extent, while primarily relying on the Western-based platform of YouTube for "doing" K-pop.

By critically examining how the participatory culture of K-pop is facilitated by and integrated into social media platforms, the social effects of "doing K-pop" can be further explored. In the technological environment of participatory K-pop fandom, the fans' cognitive or immaterial labor is encouraged without any financial rewards, and as a consequence, platform providers gain the profits through user-targeted advertisements and data collection in an attention economy (Kim, 2015). In this regard, while "doing" K-pop might involve the cultural expressions of subaltern audiences, the process might not be free from the cultural influence of Western-based media platforms and the commodification of users' behaviors accelerated by global capitalism.

By examining the production and consumption of global K-pop, this chapter has presented a preliminary effort to explore the meaning of K-pop in media globalization from a postcolonial perspective. Further studies are required to investigate the nature of postcoloniality in K-pop as a media production system and as a mode of participatory consumption. While there is a need for further studies and debates, the global circulation of K-pop suggests

how the Western-oriented history of media practices can be deconstructed and thus different histories can be explored (Shome, 2016).

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Part III

**ONLINE MEDIA AND
GLOBAL FANDOM**

Chapter 7

Fan Economy and Consumption

Fandom of Korean Music Bands in China

Qian Zhang and Anthony Y. H. Fung

This chapter documents and analyzes the fan economy in relation to Korean idolatry and consumption in China. Given that the Chinese Internet is guarded by the “Chinese Great Firewall” and that the circulation of Korean content on mass media in China is much controlled, there emerges a unique financial and organizational structure in which Chinese fans (or what Chinese call *fensi*) are connected to their idols in Korea. It also engenders the formation of a kind of fan economy or circle of fandom in which a few “big fans” (*dafen* in Chinese) dominate the transactions in relation to consumption of idols’ cultural and material products (e.g., CDs and sponsored products) between ordinary fans and the entertainment companies which brand and market their idols. These big fans in essence constitute a cultural nexus through which both economic transaction and political controls can be made possible. Such cultural nexus takes the form of a VIP account on major social media platforms such as Weibo (Chinese Twitter), and to a certain extent it shapes the cultural image of these Korean idols in the eyes of the Chinese fans.

INFLUX OF KOREAN POP CULTURE INTO CHINA

On November 19, 1999, *Beijing Youth Post* for the first time used the term *Hallyu* to describe the prevalence of Korean popular culture, including TV dramas, music, and films in China. Since that year, the Chinese dictionary has formally incorporated the term. Since the end of the 1990s, Korean TV dramas have become one of the mainstream entertainment platforms for youth in China, and Chinese audiences also first learned about K-pop through television dramas. This started in 1998 when Phoenix TV broadcast *Byeoreun Nae Gaseume* with the theme song *Forever*. It was then followed by the popularity

of H.O.T. from SM Entertainment and NRG where their albums sold 400,000 and 200,000 copies, respectively, in China in 1998 and 1999 (Piao, 2003). It was in the early 2000s that scholars started to examine Korean fandom in China. Arguing that the Korean Wave was a displacement of a global facet of pop culture, Cho (2005) described the popularity of an H.O.T. concert in China and the popularity of their album in China.

The next milestone for the Korean Wave was the TV drama *Dae Jang Geum* in 2005. It was the same year when the *Full House* Korean actor Rain turned out to be the first Korean artist to organize an event on a large scale in China. In that event, Rain crystallized 40,000 fans in Beijing. His VIP concert tickets in Beijing were sold out in one hour. Rain and his popularity could be seen as the first hype of the Korean Wave. In the book *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption: Yonsama, Rain, Oldboy and K-pop Idols*, Jung (2011) described how the Korean Wave subtly constructed a new meaning of masculinities that influence Asian and Chinese through traditional mass media, including the Chinese Central Television (CCTV).

Yet there were setbacks. In 2006, with the banner of “promoting multinational influx, refusing sole Korean hegemony,” the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) in China started to restrict Korean TV dramas in China leading to an abrupt decline in the airing of Korean dramas on Chinese TV. The fandom discussed in this chapter focuses then on a new Korean Wave era roughly after 2010 when the Internet platforms became the major revenue sources of entertainment, including China’s own entertainment business. In this chapter, we refer to it as the new Korean Wave because it relies on a different model of promotion, circulation, and distribution of Korean cultural artifacts in China. When direct import and broadcast of Korean dramas on Chinese televisions became impossible, Korean entertainment agencies had to devise a new way of generating profit in China. Thus, specifically, the new Korean Wave does not mean that the Korean contents channeled are different; rather it refers to a new business model of selling Korean entertainment content in China. The outcome is one in which Korean entertainment is produced and circulated with new media and social media, together with online formation of fandom and investment from non-state capitals.

The turning point for the Korean Wave in China was the formation of the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) in 2009, which actively strategized to promote a pan-entertainment cultural industry in relations to K-pop, Korean dramas, and Korean variety, and reality shows. The three entertainment companies, SM, YG, and JYP Entertainments in Korea then promoted musicians EXO, BigBang, and Super Junior to a younger audience community in China. On the other hand, besides importing reality shows into China, the production of cloned Korean reality TV formats on Chinese television

simultaneously promoted Korean-based entertainment and the related artists. For example, since 2012, different provincial and city televisions have produced at least 15 franchised Korean variety shows, and from 2007 to 2015, BigBang frequently participated in Chinese variety shows, and among those, including Hunan Satellite TV Year End Concert in 2016 and SMG Shanghai Dragon TV Spring Festival in 2015. Other Korean bands, including Super Junior, Girl Generation, SHINee, and EXO to name a few, appeared in these shows, and they even spoke a few sentences in Chinese purposively addressing to the mainland Chinese audience.

MUSIC CULTURE AND FANDOM IN CHINA

The new era of Korean pop in China in this chapter refers to a period in which Korean pop culture, mainly Korean pop songs, are circulated and disseminated through online fandom, roughly since 2010. The Chinese Internet Trend Report 2016 pointed out that in the past ten years, Chinese Internet experienced a fundamental change, with 50 percent of the Internet market occupied by the mobile (phone) market. In the same year, International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI)'s Global Music Report also concluded that circulation of pop music in streaming media has already exceeded that of the traditional channels (IFPI, 2016, April 12). In fact, as early as 2013, the *Chinese Music Industry Development Report* showed that revenues of traditional dissemination (e.g., CDs) started to decrease in 2013 (from RMB 650 million to 615 million in 2014—and then it continued to decrease—but music sales of the digital market jumped to a record high at 49.8 billion (Lu and Cui, 2016). The very establishment of various digital market platforms for popular music has paved the way for the circulation of K-pop in both audio and video format, and to a certain extent K-pop also becomes the fundamental content that reinforces various digital platforms, such as Baidu, Weibo, Bililbili, to name but a few. Among these, the sales of streaming Korean albums and direct payment for video content of K-pop are the most common opportunities for profit for K-pop. According to the figures released by Tencent Entertainment (2015, August 28), in 2015, the sales of two digital albums, *D* and *E*, of BigBang exceeded one million in number and their four mini albums altogether reached 3.4 million on QQ Music (the online music platform of Tencent). While the sales of other Korean singers and bands are not publicly revealed, on the same platform, the number of followers of Girl Generation and EXO reached 2.57 and 1.12 million, respectively. This also implies that sales of digital music in general for Korean artists are extremely high.

When Korean pop music is intertwined with the Internet in China, it echoes with what Henry Jenkins called spreadable media (Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins,

Ford and Green, 2013). K-pop as a cultural product in China is promoted by interactive interface and designs, shared by social media, and then circulated via PCs, tablets, mobile phones, and on big screens and the audio-visual content is ultimately transformed into practically material gifts and symbolic resources for users. The denial of access to K-pop-related information and products via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram then gives rise to the reliance on these social media and Internet in China. For example, the rise of Chinese Weibo (equivalent of Facebook in China) in 2009 and the emergence of WeChat (equivalent of Twitter in China) in 2011 have made these the fundamental platforms for circulation of K-pop and hence the formation of fandom thereafter. In this period, the noticeable change is that the promotion of Korean bands gradually switched from television (mainly variety shows) to online platforms.

Of course, the prevalence of Korean pop culture is not only a matter of Chinese demand. The pushing factor from Korea is as important. The Global Music Report 2016 indicates that the Korean music industry still maintains a 12 percent growth rate, a figure that is much ahead of that of other countries. Not to mention the tangible and intangible support from the Korean authorities, the competitive advantages are direct consequences of the Korean business model for exporting their entertainment industries overseas. The typical example specifically for targeting China is the strategic move to recruit Chinese members into Korean bands. As early as 2006, a Chinese member joined Super Junior which then produced Chinese songs. In 2012, Korean band EXO prevailed with the Chinese market with their core EXO-K, comprising a membership of all Korean singers. While EXO-M was formed in China with Chinese members performing in Chinese, EXO-M also dubbed the song in Korean, although admittedly the strategy was not too successful as Chinese members eventually terminated the contract with the Korean management company. Yet the China target is overt, as the three main Korean entertainment companies also established branch offices in China.

Finally, media capital is at work. It leads to a closer economic relationship between China's online media and Korea's entertainment industry. In January 2016, the Tieba (the blog page) of China's Baidu, the online search engine in China (equivalent of blogs available on Google) and Korea's SBS declared a strategic partnership to operate fans' commerce. In February of the same year, Alibaba also invested RMB190 million in Korea's SM to own 4 percent of the company. In the same month, Omusic, which is now the China Music Corporation and JYP also settled their copyright agreement. In May 2016, the company Tencent and its online ticket sales portal Wepiao invested \$85 million in YG Entertainment, the largest Hip Hop entertainment company in Korea. As we can see, in such a short period, the online market has evolved into a symbiotic environment; it is one in which China's circulation

channels and Korean content companies coexist. Now they join hands to create the fan economy on Chinese Internet.

However, we also want to emphasize that such a fan economy, referring to the transaction of any goods in relation to Korean artists among fans or between fans and the entertainment companies, that has developed is not entirely under free market rules. First, online platforms in China are not merely commercial enterprises. As one can imagine, all these giant Internet platforms, including companies such as Baidu, Tencent, and Alibaba, are oligopolistic competitors in the market. Their growth and existence were highly scrutinized by the state. On these platforms, basically any messages detected that are detrimental to the state and ideologically at odds with the party agendas would be immediately removed by the operators. Of course, on the other hand, these giant corporations are also protected by the state from overseas competitors (e.g., Facebook and Google) by means of erecting a cultural firewall on the Internet. Second, real politics is at work. In summer 2016, China publicly expressed its dissatisfaction with the strategic collaboration between Korea and the United States which resulted in the installation of THAAD, an advanced missile defense system on the Korean Peninsula. Soon after that, in July 2016, it was said that China blocked most of the public performance Korean artists in China. Though without publicly released regulations by SAPPRFT (State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, film and Television of the People's Republic of China), concerts of Korean singers were cancelled and no more Korean singers were invited to perform on Chinese TV (Sins News Centre, 2016, August 3). Yet, the effect of the alleged retaliation against Korea has not yet extended to those Internet platforms in China. But certainly, the fan economy could be easily upset if China pushed the throttle of its control more.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

Thus, what this chapter explains is how Korean fan economy exists in China against the background of a highly regulated or state-monitored political environment and a relatively looser control on these commercially driven Internet platforms. As we are going to explain, given that the controlled space—both the real performance space and distribution channels as well as the virtual Internet space—is very much in the rein of the Chinese authorities, how would the Korean popular culture, as a foreign imported fad be allowed to survive and prosper? This is made possible by a very unique structure, what we call a cultural nexus, where the activities of the fans, fan economy, and even ideologies are ready to be publicly checked. The cultural nexus is a structural collaboration between major coordinators of the fan base working

hand in hand with various online platforms, including the social media platforms Baidu, Weibo, and all major Internet platforms in China.

In terms of methodology, this study adopts a mix of qualitative methods, including ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews. Six undergraduate students majoring in music communication were recruited from Communication University of China. They were informed of the subject, trained, and dispatched to conduct the fieldwork from January to August 2016. These six selected students are themselves BigBang fans. Thus, they are able to be fully integrated into their community for observation, from going online for discussion (not limited only to BigBang fans) to physically going to BigBang concerts. While for most of the fans activities these student researchers volunteered to conduct the studies, for some paid activities (e.g., BigBang concert in Beijing) their expenses were covered as this study is supported by organizers of concerts in Beijing. As the interviews are mainly with BigBang fans, this study can also be regarded as an exploration of the fan economy with BigBang as a case study, although other Korean bands will also be mentioned as supplementary information.

Therefore the ethnographic work involves both a self-narrative of these six student researchers and also their fandom—in their own words, circle of Korean fandom or Hanfanquan. The subjects targeted are mainly female fans, aged 19–25, who are their friends and classmates. Online ethnography is primarily discussion on Baidu and Weibo, in which these researchers talked to the Korean fans to understand their attitudes and behaviors, including K-pop-related consumption habits. With a list of preset questions on everyday life, social media use, consumption, personal condition, pirate life (which will not be discussed in this chapter), personal involvement, and fandom and their behaviors, upon consent, 32 fans were selected for in-depth interviews. Of course, in the process of the study, these student researchers were always reminded of their subject positions as both fans and researchers, and subsequent fans interviewed were clearly informed of the research intent. What needs to be further explained is the data used and selected in this chapter. The fans interviewed are teenagers and they have no academic background about the fandom studies. Their everyday activities are to follow their idols' information and they only aim to remain attached to their idols as much as possible. Quite expectedly, most of them could not articulate their role as fans in the fan economy, other than sharing what they do and how they act every day. Quite a few of them have only shared simple information about their acts. While these fans do provide background to us about the fan economy in China, their verbatim interview content may not be too meaningful to be quoted in this study. Thus, only selected six interviews with more insight that informs this study are cited in this chapter.

In the Western context, Jenson (1992) argued that there is a misconception that fans are in general seen as frenetic, out-of-control, pathological, and irrational, and hence warned researchers of this biased position. In our study, we are therefore self-reflexive of this potential bias. While we are aware of the potential public and self-bias against these Chinese fans, we intend to seek the reason that they act as active or passive fans in this particular social context. We regard what they express online as mediated discourses shaped by the community, K-pop agencies, and their sociopolitical context. In our follow-up interviews, we draw on cases (e.g., a particular concert) to understand what K-pop fandom means to them, the community, and the society. In the actual fieldwork, as a matter of fact, we acknowledge that there are diversities from fandom to anti-fandom (in which some online users are very hostile to certain fandom formation), from one singer to another, and from one K-pop agency to its competitors. The discourses we study are full of emotions, contradictions, and are polyphonic. What we extract in the following discussions is what we intend to use to illustrate the Korean fan economy in China.

FAN ECONOMY AND TRANSACTION

Fan economy can be seen mainly as a system of practices of fans' material consumption of their idols' products and practices of cultural consumption with occasional fans' own (re)production of their idols' images, products, and side products that manifest the creative dimension of fandom, apart from the commercial aspect (Larsen and Zubernis, 2012). As in any economic practice, the Korean fan economy in China is well-operated by economic agents, including fan clubs (formal or informal), and distribution channels of idolatry information and news, and the economy is sustained by the transaction of goods and services offered to fans, and in this case, certain "big fans" take up a stronger role in driving such transactions. Clearly, a power relationship exists between these fans, big fans, and the ordinary ones, and between the agencies and fans.

Ostensibly this fan economy is not something negative inside the fandom, or among fans in a communist context, it is a highly controlled environment where there is limited access to information from foreign countries and where free and mass direct transaction with outside parties (e.g., transaction on eBay) is forbidden. Fans themselves are even aware of the economy and are able to describe the transactions involved with this term. A female fan of Ftisland named Xiaoyan, whom we interviewed, mentioned that she knew about Ftisland in 2012 and became their fan in 2014. She said:

During that period, I went for their live concert, feeling the power of their stage charisma. This was the period that I love them most. I am not as in love them as I was in that period. My enthusiasm is now weaker but I am still supporting them. Now because I am a university student, and I also learn about some knowledge about fan economy (*fensi jingji*), I feel fans are just “ordinary fans.” They are just common people but just act differently from other people. Simply due to [the nature of] this “occupation” [as fans], they attract more attention. They and other ordinary people are the same. That is why I feel good if I just support [these fans] and do not act more radical than these fans, it will be good enough and appropriate (interview at Beijing).

Xiaoyan in other words has informed us that fans are all aware of these fans’ economic activities and radical behaviors, which in fact constitute the structure of the fan economy. As an educated fan, rather than expressing critical thoughts against such commodification processes, she actually supports such fandom and acknowledges the professional and occupational nature of these fans in the circuit of this economy.

It looks like such a fan economy is a market economy in that the demand and supply are quite fluid and open; and in most cases, they actually are. Seldom do any fans question this stable and well-established economy, and the entire economy operates in an efficient way in the sense that fans could purchase products of their idols and concert tickets in an open and “fair” way. The transaction is ostensibly commercial; it is beyond just a formation of networked community. In fact, it operates more like a command-based economy in which a few big fans determine what circulates on the network. Of course, given that the online media are state monitored, ultimately such fan economy and all transactions fall under the scrutiny of the state. This brings us back to the basic discussion about the dichotomy of community and hierarchy in fandom (Hills, 2002). The fan economy is commanded by certain opinion leaders in the groups or “big fans” on certain platforms in a hierarchical way although the messages left on these social media celebrate a sense of community. The contradictions are never resolved or simply the fans do not bother to resolve them or think critically.

In everyday life, fans regard the structure of the fan economy as a potpourri of “services from intermediates” and a “supporting culture” from fans (Ding and Chen, 2016). For the former, it includes ticket sales to live concerts (or performance), audio-visual products (e.g., physical CDs and digital copies), products with idols’ icons or signatures, products advertised by idols, cosmetics, filming devices, and accommodation and means of transportation in Korea and China that come with the itinerary of idols. The last few items are basically packaged services enabling fans to chase idols. For the latter, the supporting culture includes emotional rapport and discussion about issues

about idols on social media as well as ritualistic acts (e.g., chasing stars) organized collectively.

A particular action that can be singled out for discussion is the rendezvous with idols at the airport. The airport-located festivities or simply the extent of the confusion or chaos made represents the popularity of the idols. As a matter of fact, these events are semi-planned as fans are informed of the flight schedule of the idol while the idol has prepared for the swift mediated meeting with fans. These events become ritualistic practices but they are performative in nature as well. The way the idols dress, speak, and interact with fans are at least well-thought out. On the other hand, fans themselves also dress up to meet their “husband” or “brother.” As lingering at an airport takes hours, fans mingle and interact and these events also become natural rendezvous among fans.

In the last instance, fan economy is maintained by the emotional bondage between the fans and the idols. To strengthen the bonds, fans, if affordable, are willing to monetarily contribute to both tangible and intangible goods. Given that there exists an imbalance of power and resources among the fans, naturally some “big fans” on the online platform take the primary task to relay the fans to their idols by means of channeling their information and news, selling their products, and creating a sense of shared feelings toward their idols, to name a few.

EMOTIONAL ECONOMY AND FANDOM

Thus, the transactions in the network are just means to demonstrate the connection to the idols. What the fans really want is the emotional attachment to the idols, though idols residing in Korea are geographically disconnected from the fans in China. In practice, fans’ immediate connection is the emotional tie to the community crystallized by the few important fans and fan clubs on major online platforms. By participating in the discussion, consumption, and other offline activities, fans who are fragmented as merely consumers, are reconnected to the rest of the fans and feel like a part of the fandom. In essence, the fandom is selling the relationship to the fans, which we might call an emotional economy (c.f. Howard, 2011). Emotional economy in this context can be regarded as ways of circulating and producing emotional performances (Grindstaff and Murray, 2015). Using the term “affect” in cultural studies (Grossberg, 1992), emotional economy can be regarded as a kind of affect generated under the commodification of fans’ emotions that invests in and is embedded in their relationship with the idol.

In the relationship, fans feel like they are emotionally attached to the idols, who indeed do occasionally respond to fans directly on social media.

Yet, fans are not totally passive and subservient to the system either. Apparently aware of the commercial nature of the fandom, a fan Xiaoli who we interviewed said, “The Korean agency will prompt the artist to act or tell something to fans, letting fans feel the power of boyfriend-ship and creating an illusion of being loved.”

The emotion constructed resembles a love relationship. In the interviews we did, most of the fans called their idols “laogong” or husband, “nanpiao” or boyfriend, while some more timid fans will call them “nanshen” or male god, or “gege” or brother. The kind of relationship is ambiguous. Rather than simply thinking of it as a relation with emotional estrangement (Duffett, 2013), fans rationally sustain the liminal joy between the reality and the fantasy. Fans know that they are never girlfriends of the idols, and no fan would challenge such commodified emotion or constructed love feeling in the network. Thus the construction of fantasy goes both ways.

Products made for the fans also alleviate the geographical boundaries. Apart from CDs and posters, we observed that many fans purchased pillows, blankets, and even real-size idol-like cushions to be put inside their bedrooms, possibly for extending their fantasy into their private space. In our interviews with fans, we could also see that the profile pictures or screen pictures on their mobile phones are photos of the idols as if the idol is their boyfriend. Our observation regarding these Chinese fans with Korean idols is that in fact most of these fans are single. It has also been said that such idolatry is a form of escapism from their emotional emptiness.

Besides, in certain cases the fan economy is not just limited to purchasing products related to the idols. One of the female fans, Xiaoli, who is a fan of Kwon Ji Yong of D-Dragon, said:

Most of the gifts to idols are given on a group-basis through Aidou (Love Beans, an app for idol information and activity). For example, during concerts, they will on behalf of a fandom, be presented with a bouquet of flowers backstage. On an idol’s birthday, the platform Aidou will collectively purchase expensive gifts. Quite commonly, these platforms will give expensive items that idols will carry or wear so that they appear on photos [during public events]. Then fans will be particularly happy (interview in Beijing).

Based on what Xiaoli said, it seems that fandom activities are not possible in China as individual acts. Besides, these acts have to be made public so as to appeal to more fans at the same time. It is a deliberate attempt of idols to make their itinerary public so that fans will feel that the details and experience of the idols are part of the life of the fans. The availability of mobile devices accompanied with apps (such as Aidou) enable fans to keep themselves “updated” on the movement of their idols. Besides, practically through

such apps, they are able to connect to idols by purchasing concert tickets or other items. Xiaojiang, a female fan who has chased BigBang for four years told us:

Now for purchasing these [concert] tickets, it is difficult to “grasp” them through official channels. We can now only regard these “yellow cow” (or illegal ticket channels which sell tickets for expensive prices) as ticket counters. In official ticket channels, all the tickets are sold immediately. Most fans could only use exorbitant prices to purchase tickets (interview in Beijing).

As we understand, these online platforms and apps are all information channels for these illegal ticket sites to sell the tickets. While we might think that fans feel unhappy paying high prices, going by what Xiaojiang told us, on the contrary, she is quite happy to get a ticket for BigBang from these sites. That is why these platforms serve a vital role to get connected emotionally, and practically to idols. It also shows that the emotion economy is all dependent on the political economy of the fandom.

Of course, such an emotion economy sometimes does become “radical.” There are some “frenetic” fans, commonly known as “Sishengfan” which means that they physically pursue the private lives of idols. In theoretical terms, such extreme fan behaviors digress from the imagined love relationship and turn to a realistic gaze of their “lovers.” Such transgression from emotion to behavior, needless to say, invites abhorrence in the eyes of idols as well as the management companies.

CULTURAL NEXUS OF THE FANDOM

Chinese audiences are segregated from the rest of the world without direct reception of foreign (and Korean) media, and the Internet is shielded by the Great Firewall of China. Thus, fans can only rely on the formal channels in China to connect to their Korean idols. Directly linked to these formal channels—including Weibo, LeTV, Tudou, and Inke, which provide real-time direct broadcast of Korean entertainment—are Korean management agencies of the idols. According to personnel in LeTV, the exclusive right to broadcast such Korean content is highly expensive and might lead to a financial loss, although such content constantly keeps a large online audience.

There is also an interlocking relationship between these Chinese online platforms and the Korean artist’s agency. As mentioned earlier, the Korean entertainment companies and China’s online platforms get into a joint investment. As seen, such partnership develops between Korean pop agencies and Chinese online platforms, but not often with traditional media because the

latter are state-owned enterprises that are under strict command of the state. Any state intervention would easily jeopardize the relationship. Naturally these platforms have become the sole windows for Chinese fans to get access to news and products of Korean artists from the outside. From the viewpoint of these platforms, these fans and entertainment companies from Korea are valuable assets for profit. Then on the macro level, it is no surprise that they have attempted to respond to the state's demands quickly and if necessary, they will act to satisfy the authorities' requests in order to protect this fan economy. At the same time, on the micro level, they have to allow certain flexibility for certain big fans to operate on the network so that these platforms can share the economic benefit. Big fans to a certain extent are what we call key opinion leaders on their social network (formed among the digital platforms such as Weibo), serving as important sources of idol's news, even scandals. On this aspect, the fans in China are not too different from Western fans (Jenkins, 2006). But unlike earlier bloggers in a more information-free-access place in the West (Jenkins, 2006), these big fans in China have become the sources of consumption for other fans (e.g., Xiaoyan, mentioned in the interview) who are relatively passive in consuming the products, though they do express their critical feelings and comment on various idolatry events and products.

At this point, the fandom structure in China is seen not as a flat, democratic platform in which everyone so simply admires and expresses feelings toward an idol. Given the commercial nature of the platforms, certain big fans and the platforms occupy the key role in mobilizing the fandom, driving its economy, and motivating other fans' participation. If we regard fandom as sites in which cultural commodification is taking place—and of course cultural politics does exist within unequal distribution of power—these online platforms and self-selected fans (big fans) are a cultural nexus that enable and animate the fan economy.

ACCOMPLICE OF THE STATE OR CULTURAL PROMOTER?

Therefore, it comes down to a fundamental problem about whether fandom—as it has been studied in the West—is a place in which fans could express their subjectivity and genuine identity, thereby resembling a cultural space for which youth could offer some kind of (subcultural) resistance against the state.

In the case of China's fandom surrounding these Korean artists, if we have to gauge the fandom in a stringent way, we could say that the fandom is being commoditized and perverted by commercialization. Equally, Politically, as the fan economy is in the vein of these media capital that serves as a surrogate

for the state's surveillance, it is then far from an ideal fandom space where fans could have their creativity, freedom, and genuinely articulate their own identities.

Nevertheless, given that the fandom survives in a boarder authoritarian space (nation), which is rarely investigated (e.g., Fung, 2009), we would argue for a different understanding of such fandom. As said, for fans, immersing themselves in such fandom hinges upon the emotion economy as such. To a certain extent, what is said is in line with the focus on the emotional or affective dimensions of fandom (c.f. Jenkins, 2006). The added dimension here is the process of commodification interweaved with tears, laughter, and yelling that are nonetheless real to the young female fans. Quite different from studies of the public sphere on social media, instead of "perverting" the system, the commodification process, however, buttresses and underpins the structure of economy. The commercial nature in fact is a driving force for these media capital to protect such fandom. Besides, the phenomenon observed is in line with the argument about the coexistence of an everyday life populist celebration of fandom and the elitist version of big fans leading the layman fans, and these two sides of fandom do not necessarily contradict each other. This echoes Hills' argument (2016) that in the study of fan practices, both the producer/fan binary and the fans' creativity could be equally viable within the digital enhanced fandom and the web 2.0 framework.

Politically, in line with general state-media policy (e.g., the complete ban of Korean actors on Chinese TV), all Korean dramas and reality and variety shows have been taken down from online sites. Online fandom is also under control and there should not be fandom activities which are too overtly seen to challenge the official order of the ban of the Korean Wave. Admittedly, the online platforms have obligations to assist the state to monitor the public. But this does not mean that the fandom given is an accomplice of the state to control the publics. As seen in various cases, the state's position and that of the online platforms are often different. For example, while information and news of Korean artists are still publicly accessible, K-pop is still available for streaming on various sites such as QQ Music, the music platform of Tencent. Occasional setbacks to the fan economy however do happen, as with the state's ban on Korean popular culture in major media in 2016. Given that the fandom is somewhat dependent on mass media, the ban on Korean entertainment on TV somewhat disturbs the economy. One of the female college university fans of EXO and Super Junior, Xiaozi, said that she first got a feel of these Korean singers by watching the variety and reality shows (which she still does), including *Running Man*, *Radio Star*, *Roommate*, *The Law of the Jungle*, and *Superman Returns*, on which these idols appear (interview in Beijing). The state's interference somewhat disrupts the initial part of the fandom. Whereas in reality, official channels completely removed any programs

and videos (including music videos) of Korean artists, some fans mentioned that they still could search for these programs online via illegal websites.

However, the platforms and the big fans, and perhaps with other ordinary fans as well, the fandom seldom trespasses the boundaries allowed by the state. As a matter of fact, none of the fans whom we interviewed talked about fandom in political terms. Simply in China, a breakthrough in fandom—open, free access, and fluid interactions—is a cultural politics that is more advanced than can be seen in other domains in China. There is no need for fans to engage in any resistance in political terms. Then, in the end such fandom stands aloof—or makes itself distant—from the dominant social and hegemonic political culture outside the fandom economy. At this point, although we are far from arguing that the social media and the web 2.0 platform as cultural nexus constitute a democratization of production, this does not mean that the cultural mission of fandom in China is impotent and meaningless.

CONCLUSION

This chapter elucidates how a new Korean Wave in China is being formed by the fandom economy online. This fandom economy is characterized by the presence of some major online platforms (e.g., *Baidu*, *Tudou*, etc.) as cultural nexuses that connect ordinary fans via some key opinion leaders named as big fans in this study. It forms an interlocking mechanism in which the Chinese online platforms and Korean entertainment companies could mutually make revenues and at the same time, fans also fulfill their desires of acquiring what they need in terms of consumption and feel closer to their idols psychologically. In the wake of China's ban on live performance of Korean artists and their television programs, the fandom economy which relies on the transaction of goods about the Korean artists is still viable. It continues to serve to connect virtually Korean artists to their fans in China at a time when face-to-face rendezvous between Korean artists and fans is obstructed. As to how long this virtual link through online fan economy could sustain this Korean Wave is a question mark at this moment. There is hardly any similar historical case to be seen but history will soon tell us the answer.

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Chapter 8

Korean Wave Reception and the Participatory Fan Culture in Latin America

What Lies Beyond the Media Reports

Wonjung Min

INTRODUCTION

Although discussing the Korean Wave (or *Hallyu* in Korean) in Latin America poses special challenges, the sheer scope of the topic makes it especially alluring. It is most important to acknowledge that Latin America is composed of more than thirty countries, and is not defined by the limits of a single continent. Spanish is the primary language for a majority of the Latin American countries; however, Portuguese is the primary language of the vast country of Brazil and there are other exceptions including Haiti, Belize, Guiana, among others. But perhaps more notable is the number of diverse ethnic groups that are encompassed throughout the region. According to the official data on ethnicity, the Latin American population is divided as follows: Mestizo 43.8%, White 35.4%, indigenous people 13.3%, black 4.5%, and only 2.6% are Asian (World Bank, 2013). The total number of Korean inhabitants is also small as shown in Table 8.1. In areas where the size of the Korean communities is minimal, the reception of K-pop, the diffusion of the Korean Wave, and the size of the fandom would likely be impacted.

An analysis of the phenomenon of the Korean Wave in Latin America shows that it did not develop at the same time as it did in Asia. Lee & Nornes (2015) describe the initial stage of the popularity of Korean popular cultural content in Asia as *Hallyu* 1.0, as contrasted to *Hallyu* 2.0—*Hallyu* in the age of social media. The original *Hallyu* (1.0) “emphasized the cultural export to East Asia from the late 1990s to 2007” (Lim, 2016, p. 137). However, these phases do not necessarily coincide with the popularity of the Korean Wave in Latin America. In the *Hallyu* 1.0 era, Korean popular

Table 8.1 Korean Population in Latin American Countries

Country	Korean Population	Total Population
Argentina	22,730	41.45 million
Brazil	50,418	200.4 million
Chile	2,725	17.6 million
Colombia	915	48.32 million
Mexico	11,484	122.3 million
Paraguay	5,090	6.553 million
Peru	1,198	30.77 million

Source: Overseas Korean Foundation, 2015.

culture was part of a dynamic intra-Asian cultural flow, mainly through the distribution of Korean dramas. During that period, the Korean Wave was rarely seen in Latin America (see also Jin, 2016, *New Korean Wave*). However, by the end of the 1990s, with the impact of social media, fans from all around the world, including Latin America, had participated in fandom activities.

This chapter also aims to highlight the widespread misperception in Korea that Latin America is a homogeneous region—one unity. Although Latin American countries are close neighbors and most share the common language of Spanish, each country is distinctly diverse—ethnically, culturally, and linguistically. Acknowledging this diversity, this chapter uses the term “Latin America” to discuss the Korean Wave in the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru. The reason for this focus is that the Korean Wave has been relatively more active in these countries and has been reported on in the Korean media. That is not to say that these countries represent the whole of Latin America, but rather that they are the largest countries in Latin America, in terms of population and geography, and they are relatively stronger economically.

Regarding the Korean Wave in the region, it is true that Korean culture has become more visible in Latin America, resulting in the increased exchange of cultural products. Several K-pop idols have become famous among specific teenage groups, and the number of Korean language learners has been increasing among popular music fans in Latin America. Since the early 2000s, a number of Korean television series have been aired in Latin America. *All about Eve* (2000) was aired in Mexico in 2002, followed by *Star in My Heart* (1997), and *Winter Sonata* (2002) in 2003. In Venezuela, *Winter Sonata* was broadcast in 2006, along with *Star in My Heart* and *All about Eve* in 2007. Korean television series and films have also been aired in Peru, Paraguay, and other Latin American countries contributing to an enhanced awareness and appreciation of Korean culture among the peoples in the region (Min, 2008, p. 27). *Stairs to Heaven* (2003~2004) was first aired on TVN in Chile on March

13, 2006. This marked the first appearance of a Korean television series on Chilean television. The film *The Way Home* (2002) was shown in Argentina and Chile in 2005 and 2006, respectively. While Korean dramas and films or other popular culture products were rarely seen in Latin America in the early 2000s, several K-pop idol groups began to appear and subsequently formed their own fan clubs. They have garnered the attention of Latin Americans via the Internet since 2008.

The event that most clearly signaled the popularity of K-pop was the successful tour of boy band group JYJ, traveling to both Chile and Peru in 2012. Though their concerts were mostly full of teenage girls, Korean media enthusiastically reported on the resounding popularity of Korean popular culture in distant Latin America. Most Korean media, from major press outlets to free street media, gave extensive coverage to Latin American interest in Korean pop music. Chilean media coverage that commented on the JYJ concerts were reported in Korea as major media outlets, even though most of them were free newspapers handed out in the street. The international hit *Gangnam Style* from K-pop star Psy was a great success in Latin America in 2012, but his next album was not received as well. In that same year, one of the Korean entertainment programs, *Music Bank*, visited Chile and Peru and several of the most popular Korean groups in Latin America, including Super Junior, CNBlue, MBLAQ, Raina, After School, and Davichi gave their first performances in Latin America. Korean media reported that *Music Bank* was a resounding success. Such media coverage suggests that Koreans tend to make a strong connection between commercial success and a strong national image. This, in turn, furthers the notion among Koreans that the Korean Wave, more specifically K-pop, contributes to the promotion of everything Korean—ranging from representing a national branding image to the development of Korean Studies programs at foreign universities.

The key question is whether the popularity of Korean popular culture in Latin America represents a substantial transnational cross-cultural reception of Korean culture, or merely an ephemeral fan culture. In this regard, it is important to question the limited scope of the reporting done by the Korean media. While it is true that performances by several K-pop stars attracted thousands of Chilean fans, the Korean media failed to point out that most of the fans were teenage girls. With such a narrow base of fans, this phenomenon alone cannot represent a Korean national image. Also conveniently overlooked by the Korean media is the fact that several performances by K-pop stars in Chile have been cancelled since 2013. Such lopsided reporting leaves one to wonder if the Korean Wave, or more specifically K-pop, has really “shaken” Latin America and become an intrinsic part of the domestic and local culture, or whether perhaps it is a passing fancy. It is also interesting to note that although K-Dramas and Korean films are entering the region on a

scale similar to that of K-pop, coverage by the Korean media of their fan base and overall reception is noticeably lacking.

As previously mentioned, most Latin American fans enjoy Korean television series and pop music through Internet sites. In essence, those dynamic processes of viewing and listening involve the constant encoding and decoding of cultural messages transmitted by the pop music and dramas. Fans and viewers throughout Latin America interpret Korean-ness on their own terms, filtered by their own cultural codes. Conversely, those same dynamic processes affect the Korean media when analyzing the audiences in Latin America and the many diverse cultural perspectives throughout that region. Thus the expectations of Koreans, and the Korean media, filtered by their own cultural codes, will not necessarily match those of their Latin American counterparts. As Stuart Hall has observed, in cross-cultural communication, “the codes of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical (...) What are called ‘distortions’ or ‘misunderstandings’ arise precisely from the lack of equivalence between the two sides in the communicative exchange” (Hall, 1973, p. 54).

The focus of this chapter is to provide some insight into the *lack of equivalence* in order to facilitate deeper intercultural understanding. This analysis will use the Korean and Latin American media reports on the concerts of K-pop idol groups from 2012 through 2014. I will consider and juxtapose two dynamic forces at play—the “sender,” hereby represented by the Korean Wave (in all its forms), and the “receiver,” represented by Korean Wave consumers. The sender, by definition, composes the outgoing messages and delivers notification to the receiver. The interaction includes both the intended and unintended messages of the sender as well as the interpretation of the messages by the receiver.

HOW THE LATIN AMERICAN AUDIENCE IS CONNECTED TO THE KOREAN WAVE

Korean popular culture has become an interesting topic of study for many different disciplines, but analysis of its rapid development tends to be overgeneralized. The concept of “global culture” seems to imply that all individuals have equal access to the same news, entertainment, and education, and that cultural perspectives throughout the world are similar. Obviously, this is not true. The Korean Wave in Latin America has been studied much less than has its impact on other regions, yet recently a number of scholars brought attention to it as an academic subject (Di Masi, 2008; Min, 2008; Yoon, 2009; Carranza, No, Kim and Simoes, 2014a; Carranza, No, Kim and Simoes, 2014b; Choi, Vargas Meza and Park, 2014; Del Pilar Alvarez, 2014; Molnar, 2014; Vargas Meza and Park, 2014; Choi, 2015; Min 2015; Vargas Meza, 2015).

The first works on the Korean Wave (Min, 2008; Di Masi, 2008) were rather journalistic in nature, for they were published in a book called *Korean Wave* (2008). For this collection highlighting Korean Wave around the World, *The Korea Herald* newspaper asked contributing authors to submit profiles showing the reception of Korean popular culture in various countries. Min's article explains how Korean popular culture gained popularity in Asia during the 1990s, but not in Latin America, where it was little known until the introduction of Korean films and television series after 2000. Thus, the Korean Wave in Latin America skipped the *Hallyu* 1.0 stage and went directly to the *Hallyu* 2.0 stage. In the early 2000s, several Korean television series were aired in Mexico and fan clubs of the Korean actors were organized. Mexican interest in Korean popular culture became noticeable, and Korean media began to pay attention to this growth in popularity. The Korean film *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring* (2003) by director Kim Ki-duk was screened in Chile in 2005 and received an astonishing response from Chilean audiences. Min indicates that the Chilean audience seemed unaware of whether Kim Ki-duk was from Korea or some other East Asian country (Min, 2008, p. 171), which means the Chilean audience liked the movie but was not particularly drawn to it because of its Korean-ness. She also points out the possibility that the Korean Wave was spreading in Latin America due to the fact that some students listen to Korean popular music and watch Korean dramas through the Internet (Min, 2008, p. 173).

In his assessment of the Korean Wave in Argentina, Di Masi argues that the impact of the Korean Wave in Argentina was not significant because of the geographical distance from Korea and the lack of interest in the local Argentinian market. He suggests that perhaps more innovative marketing could be used to promote Korean popular culture in that region (Di Masi, 2008, p. 181).

Yoon (2009) also analyzes the spread of *Hallyu* in Argentina and Chile. Her study aims to provide a detailed picture of the wide spread of the phenomenon of *Hallyu* in Argentina and Chile. She argues that *Hallyu* does not exist as a mass social phenomenon in these two countries as in other Latin American countries, but only in a limited sector of the population. She contends that *Hallyu* in Latin America started mainly in Mexico and Peru, where it spread throughout the society. However, no evidence is presented to prove that the Korean Wave has gained such massive popularity in Mexico and Peru among segments of the population other than teenage girls. Yoon conducted a survey in situ in Argentina and Chile via the Internet, with complementary personal and telephone interviews. She found that the Argentinean and Chilean *Hallyu* fans are limited to a very small segment of the population and most of the fans are female adolescents. She notes that while the fans enjoy Asian popular culture in general, it is Korean popular music, or K-pop, that is the most popular

form of Korean popular culture among Argentinean and Chilean *Hallyu* fans, and access to K-pop is primarily through the Internet. She concludes that there are limited K-pop fans in Argentina and Chile because these countries have a primarily European ethnic and cultural heritage.

After 2009, there was no research related to Korean Wave until 2013. The boy band group JYJ held concerts in Latin America in 2012 and was the first K-pop idol group, among hundreds, to perform in Latin America. The global success of Psy's hit *Gangnam Style* in 2012 generated further academic attention.

Del Pilar Alvarez (2013) analyzes how the audience is connected to K-pop and the ways in which K-pop represents "Korean Values." She points out that the role of the Internet has been important for the expansion of K-pop in Argentina and that social media has contributed to form Argentinean fan clubs. She found that the fans do not need actual physical meetings to feel socially identified with the trend. In fact, the majority of her interviewees have said that they prefer to participate almost only through Facebook. She notes that the online interactions among members have become an essential part of their daily life. In contrast, my observation in Chile during a span of over ten years is that Chilean K-pop fans gather every weekend to practice dance. Perhaps it is necessary to investigate whether the Argentinean K-pop fans have similar interactions.

Carranza Ko, Kim, No, and Simoes (2014a) examine the effects of the second wave of *Hallyu* on Peruvian society through surveys. The results of their field research surveys "further support the idea of the Cinderella narrative as an attractive marker of escapism for *Hallyu* amongst Peruvians" (Carranza Ko, Kim, No, & Simoes, 2014a, p. 338). They consider some of the changes that have occurred since the diffusion of the Korean Wave, including the presence of K-pop idol stars in concert venues, media coverage, the creation of separate thematic webpage links on *Hallyu*, the airing of Korean dramas on major television networks, and increased interest on Korean language instruction. They admit, however, that the Korean Wave does not enjoy extensive popularity in Peruvian society and that most of its followers are from the lower socioeconomic groups (Carranza Ko, Kim, No, & Simoes, 2014a, p. 343). The authors cite Boesten to describe Peru as a "hierarchical society" where there is a "racist basis of social inequality" (Boesten, 2010, p. 11). Yoon (2009) also argues that there is a social factor in the appeal of the Korean Wave, attributing its limited success in Argentina and Chile to identification with European ethnic and cultural heritage in these countries, as mentioned earlier. Further research has to be conducted to determine whether the escapism from the socioeconomic reality that it offers some individuals is reason enough to explain why the attraction to K-pop seems to be limited to members of lower socioeconomic groups in certain areas of Latin America.

In their subsequent work, Carranza Ko, Kim, No, and Simoes (2014b) analyze how *Hallyu* suddenly emerged in Brazil and Peru, and the factors that led to its development. The authors determined that the findings of their field research in Brazil and Peru “brings the argument away from the cultural proximity for both states with high levels of Asian migration (i.e., Japanese and Chinese) and provides an interesting insight into discussions on socio-economic grounds that may have influenced individuals’ interests towards *Hallyu*” (Carranza Ko, Kim, No, & Simoes, 2014b, p. 297). They found that the majority of the Brazilian and Peruvian *Hallyu* fans were of non-Asian descent and that the fans were characterized by a high level of education in addition to a low economic status.

Choi, Vargas Meza, and Park (2014) used the Twitter API in order to collect Twitter comments with the hashtag #kpop from March to August 2012, analyzing them with a set of webometric methodologies. Their results indicate that “#kpop power Twitterians in Mexico were more likely to be related to the public television broadcast” (Choi, Vargas Meza, & Park, 2014, p. 36). They interpret these trends as positive because not only K-pop but also Korean dramas have considerable influence on the Korean Wave in Mexico. These findings on the continuing impact of Korean dramas in Mexico are persuasive, especially considering that it was in Mexico that Korean dramas were first screened, and that Mexican fans formed the first Latin American fan clubs for Korean actors. The authors emphasize the importance of their contribution to the literature on this topic by being the first to map the network of K-pop in Mexico. However, their research fails to reveal the Twitterians’ social identification or gender.

The Argentinian scholar Molnar (2014) presents an anthropological analysis of the Korean Wave focused on the concepts of “nationalism,” “tradition,” and “the construction of otherness” to show the “political use” of the phenomenon of transnational fanaticism, which South Korea uses as a strategy of international relations to “land,” “strengthen,” and “expand” the nation’s influence to Latin America. Taking a different approach to other research on the topic, the author watched the *Concurso Mundial K-Pop América Latina* (Latin American K-pop World Contest) held in Seoul on October 20, 2013 and analyzed it. She defines *Hallyu* as soft power for “South Korean capitalist expansionism” (Molnar, 2014, p. 165). She describes the *Hallyu* as a “Korean Dream” of “transnationalism and new imagined communities” (Molnar, 2014, p. 168). The “imagined community” of K-pop is possible thanks to the Internet and mediation of the social media where a simultaneous expansion is generated. She insists that South Korea has used the Korean Wave as a tool for the pursuit of its national interest, and attributes its rejection in Argentina to racism.

Vargas Meza and Park (Vargas Meza & Park, 2014) examine the Twitter network of K-pop diffusion in Spanish-speaking countries by addressing its communication patterns and illustrating activities and relationships of K-pop fans on Twitter. According to them, “Music listeners in Hispanic countries tend to be culturally predisposed to accept foreign musical genres. Regardless of language differences, the main focus appears to be on collective activities” (Vargas Meza & Park, 2014, p. 1357). There is no precise investigation of the number of social media users in Latin America and their social media preferences; therefore the objectivity of Vargas Meza and Park’s methodology and research is questionable.

Choi (2015) analyzes how K-pop travels to distant places and through what channels. He finds that the explanation is both technological and anthropological, for the question combines geographic and cultural distance. He contends that Korean dramas in Latin America have piqued cultural interest in Korea as a whole, and paved the way for the influx of K-pop; that Japanese popular cultures have been a powerful intermediary for the “chemistry” between K-pop and Latin American youth; and that K-pop gets acclimatized to Latin cultural milieus. He wrote, “Latin American audiences are exceptionally responsive to the theme songs of Korean dramas. The original soundtracks of Korean dramas have enjoyed resounding reception, and CD and DVD purchases have spiraled accordingly. Encouraged by the unexpected success of drama music, a Korean MP3 device manufacturer Mpio launched several models specifically targeted at the Latin American market a decade ago” (Choi, 2015, p. 102). Though more specific research should be conducted, I am not convinced since I have rarely seen in situ observation that Chilean K-pop fans purchased legal non-pirated copies or used an MP3 player produced by Mpio. Choi thinks the unusual popularity of Korean drama music facilitated the success K-pop among Latin American youth. I would suggest that this view may be too much of a generalization since Latin America is such a vast region.

The research methodology and findings of Vargas Meza (2015) are very similar to those of Vargas Meza and Park (2014). Vargas Meza insists that the findings support the research of Kim (2012), who drew parallels between Tango and K-pop.

In a recent article, Min (2015) describes the general evolution of the diffusion of the Korean Wave throughout the world. She questions whether the Korean Wave had a big impact in Latin America, and suggests that further research on the topic is needed. Research on the Korean Wave in Latin America has confirmed that the Internet has hastened the spread of K-pop to Latin America. Another commonality is that the Korean Wave is popular in particular socioeconomic groupings, none of which are of Asian heritage.

To date there has been very little research done on the Korean Wave in Latin America. Although there are thirty-three countries in Latin America, the few investigations that have been conducted have focused on only five of those countries —Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru. A review of the current literature shows that the Korean Wave has not engendered massive popularity in any of these five countries, yet the writers continue to theorize (without substantiation) that the Korean Wave might possibly be more vibrant in other countries. Undoubtedly, more quantitative and qualitative research needs to be conducted on the topic, and future studies should consider more of the countries of Latin America, considering each country separately.

LATIN AMERICAN STYLE *HALLYU* 2.0

In his article “Hallyu versus Hallyu-hwa,” Choi questions what is the standard or criteria for using the term *Hallyu*, and who makes the decision to apply the use of that term. Choi explains that the answer is anti-dramatic, because “much of it depends on the response of overseas fans, regardless of the situation in Korea. After all, *Hallyu* is meant to signify the ideal wave of Korean popular cultures generated outside Korea” (Choi, 2015, p. 31). In this regard, the Korean Wave (or *Hallyu*) in Latin America is no exception. It has its own way of developing in different countries, and filtered through the unique cultures of each country, this development reflects the understanding and interpretation of Korean popular culture by the fans throughout Latin American.

An essay by Stuart Hall, Encoding and Decoding (Hall, [1993], 1999), offers a theoretical approach to examine how media messages are produced, disseminated, and interpreted. His model claims that television and other media audiences are presented with messages that are decoded, or interpreted in different ways depending on the cultural background of each individual viewer, and are influenced by economic standing and personal experiences. Borrowing some terms from Karl Marx, Hall suggests a four-stage model of communication that takes into account the “production, circulation, distribution (or consumption), reproduction.”

Circulation and reception are, indeed, “moments” of the production process in television and reincorporated, via a number of skewed and structured “feedbacks,” into the production process itself. The consumption or reception of the television message is thus also itself a “moment” of the production process in its larger sense, though the latter is “predominant” because it is the “point of departure for the realizations” of the message. Production and reception of

the television message are not, therefore, identical, but they are differentiated moments within the totality formed by the social relations of the communicative as a whole. (Hall, [1993], 1999, p. 509)

The “moments” of the production process—production, circulation, distribution (or consumption), reproduction—of Korean popular culture in Latin America, starting in the early 2000s, have not coincided with those in Asian countries where those “moments” began in the 1990s.

In Argentina, films were the most important representation of the Korean Wave in the early 2000s. Nowadays, K-pop enjoys the most popularity, but Korean films still continue to attract wide audiences. However, Di Masi argues that despite the success of several Korean films, they did not become popular throughout Argentina. He theorizes that this is probably due to cultural differences that might make it more difficult to comprehend the contents of the films, and thus produce a gap between the products and the audience (Di Masi, 2008).

When analyzing the Korean Wave in Brazil, it is important to consider the fact that, with the official language of Portuguese, Brazil differs linguistically from most of the other Latin American countries, and the language and culture influence the reception of the Korean Wave in that country. It has been argued that the existence of a large community of Korean immigrants in Brazil and the huge Japanese community might explain the popularity of Korean cultural products (Tuk, 2012). However, as mentioned earlier, Caranza Ko, Kim, No, and Simoes indicate that almost all Brazilian *Hallyu* fans are of non-Asian descent and from lower socioeconomic groups. This lends support to the theory that there are other factors influencing the Korean Wave fans in Brazil besides proximity to Asian communities.

In Chile, K-pop idol cover dance groups have been forming since 2009. Since that time, K-pop seems to dominate the Korean Wave in Chile. Similar fandoms have evolved in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Among K-pop idol groups, the most popular have been Super Junior, DBSK, Shinee, SS05, Girls’ Generation, and Big Bang. The fans from these have held “Korea festivals” on their own and each of the fan clubs has its own Social Network Service (SNS), including blogs, online forums, Facebook, and Photolog, to promote their activities and share information with each other. A considerable number of Korean bands and singers have also visited Chile. In addition, the Korean K-pop television show called *Music Bank* was recorded in Chile and attracted K-pop fans from Chile and even neighboring countries.

The Chilean cover dance group for Super Junior is called Blue Boy. They themselves have become so famous that Blue Boy now has its own fan club. One of the members of the dance group, Shippo, looks very similar to Super Junior member Shindong. In 2011, the Korean television station KBS did a

special report on him, going to the Korean community in the Patronato neighborhood of Santiago to buy Korean food ingredients and eating *Tteokbokki*, a popular street food made from soft rice cake, fish cake, and the sweet red chili sauce called *gochujang*. Patronato is a culturally diverse, lower socioeconomic neighborhood in Santiago, and it is the home of many immigrant groups. The area is known for selling clothes, accessories, and footwear at affordable prices. Here, the Korean Wave became quite noticeable in the year 2012, when public as well as cable stations began to air Korean television series.

Currently, Mexico seems to be the place where the Korean Wave has had the greatest influence in Latin America. It has the most Korean soap operas and the greatest number of fans. After the success of the Korean television series in the early 2000s, fan clubs of the Korean actors Jang Dong-gun and Ahn Jae-wook were formed. When the former president of South Korea, Roh Moo-hyun, visited Mexico in 2005, these fan club members asked him to bring those actors along with him to Mexico. Min (2008), however, argues that it seems that this success is not as great as some Korean commentators have implied. The Mexican media has shown little interest in the phenomenon even though some Korean actors have a considerable body of hard-core fans.

In Peru, the Korean Wave seems to be as strong as in Mexico. Evidence of a strong fan base is apparent in the great number of individual blogs related to the Korean Wave. Television series have been an important means for the dissemination of Korean popular culture and have even been aired in prime time. One interesting fact is that fans organized a flash mob in Lima, and posted the video on YouTube as a way of petitioning their favorite K-pop groups in Korea to come to perform in Peru (Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011).

Although each country in Latin America is culturally unique, there are some common characteristics of Korean Wave or, more specifically K-pop fans. In general, the number of fans seems to be much less than in Asia and North America, but precise figures are elusive. As previous research shows, many Korean Wave fans also like Japanese popular culture—there is no particular loyalty or preference for one national popular culture over another. Fandom activities are complex, with some fans participating in several fan clubs simultaneously. Economically speaking, the Korean Wave in Latin America has not generated a market of goods as it has done in Southeast Asia. What it has generated is an Otaku fandom—a fandom based mostly on individualistic passions, with many fans from the lower socioeconomic group with no purchasing power and a feeling of being somewhat outside of societal norms. As Beng Huat Chua says, Latin American fandom has experienced “domesticating and localizing practices” (Chua, 2012)—each country has customized reception to the Korean Wave and K-pop.

Since 2009, local Korean Embassies in Latin American countries have begun to organize K-pop dance competitions among dance cover groups to promote K-pop specifically and Korean culture generally. The winners from each country then participate in the K-pop World Contest held in Seoul, South Korea. In 2012, *Gangnam Style* became widely successful in Latin America and indeed throughout the world. However, to proclaim this success as a worldwide recognition of the Korean Wave is flawed, as any popular song can soon be forgotten. Since 2012, the coverage by the Korean media has become more visible. For example, when JYJ visited Chile and Peru, most of the Korean news media boasted about the K-pop “fever” and the “success” of K-pop culture in Latin America. The media may be misinterpreting and exaggerating the popularity of the Korean Wave and the degree to which it has been absorbed in Latin America, which results in spreading the misconception among Koreans that Korean Wave is widely accepted and wildly popular in Latin America.

An analysis of the numbers tells a somewhat different story. Despite the expansion of Korean popular culture in Latin America through the Internet, very few K-pop CDs are sold in Latin America. In December 2013, the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) and the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) announced statistics on the exportation of cultural products. The game industry was responsible for 58% of the total, while music amounted to only 5%. The KOCCA cultural products exportation data gives regional statistics, but not national statistics. Latin America is categorized as “Other” with Africa and Oceania; therefore, it is not feasible to calculate the total amount of Korean cultural products exported to Latin America. While there are many Korean Wave fan tourists from China, Japan, and other South East Asian countries, few K-pop tourists from Latin America ever visit Korea. There is almost no exportation of Korean cultural products to Latin America. These facts are not acknowledged in the Korean media, which continues to seize on any evidence of enthusiasm for K-pop to herald the growth of an international audience for Korean popular culture.

The only way to know the real popularity of the singers or bands is to know the number of tickets sold at concerts, but concerts involve taking risks, and the organizing agencies are not always willing to take those risks. After JYJ’s concert in Chile, the performances of several K-pop stars in Chile were cancelled in 2013, and this has never been reported in Korea. The reason for the cancellations can be explained by the fans’ lack of financial resources to purchase tickets.

To analyze local acceptance is another topic since very few major news outlets in Latin America cover K-pop. Most of the media that cover K-pop are entertainment magazines or related webzines or blogs. After JYJ’s performance in Chile, the main Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio*, in an unusual move, covered this Korean idol group in their entertainment section, but the

tone of the article was rather sarcastic, and read as follows: “After the band returned to the stage, translators accompanied the performers to converse with the Chilean (female) public, but little was understood due to the excited screams of the crazy fans and the [translator’s] complicated Korean accent” (El Mercurio, 2012).

The weekly magazine *Ya* is produced by *El Mercurio* and in 2012 they ran a special article entitled “*Korean Devotion*” featuring four Korean-Chilean female professionals revealing their age in parentheses (which is unusual in Chile). The four professionals, most of whom were over thirty (unlike the typical fan), wore skinny jeans and hot pants of various hues, floral print blouses, and exotic, but somewhat frivolous make up.

One of the Chilean banks, Banco Estado, hired a Korean-Chilean to do a commercial using *Gangnam Style* to advertise the bank’s “Creditazo Style” and attract the growing market of middle-class borrowers. This commercial used the *Gangnam Style* dance with a “seductive” duck (the bank’s symbol) doing the moves in imitation of the popular music video. It is not clear if the commercial produced any benefits for the bank.

In Santiago, Chile, K-poppers gather at the Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral (GAM) every Friday afternoon to practice and participate in K-pop activities. This important cultural center was named after the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral, who was the first Latin American woman to receive the Nobel Prize in literature in 1945. One of the Chilean TV channels, Chilevision reported on this Friday activity. The announcer described the activity as “a trend which crosses social class, age and gender, which is worth paying attention to.” The announcer went on to say that the city of Santiago stipulates that the K-pop fans practice “only” at the GAM to prevent public disturbance. This report reveals prevailing class prejudices and helps to understand why K-pop is not well-known, or is simply ignored or unaccepted by the upper-middle and upper class in general—as if to say “If it is beneath my class, it cannot be accepted.”

Undoubtedly more ongoing research needs to be conducted, but currently, most of the Argentinian, Mexican, and Peruvian media reports on K-pop are from Internet news outlets related to entertainment stories and full of provocative photos. While the preferred word of the Korean media to describe the success of K-pop in Latin America is “fever,” the word most often used by the Latin American media is “sensation.”

A LACK OF EQUIVALENCE

The huge success of the Korean Wave and the hybridization of the Korean Wave in Asian countries can be attributed mostly to the cultural affinity among neighboring countries. Ryoo (2009) points out that much of the

success of the Korean Wave is closely related to the ability of South Korean culture and media to translate Western or American culture to fit Asian taste. Then how does it fit with Latin America? Unlike the Asian countries, where the Korean Wave easily attracted audiences, Latin American countries have little or no cultural or geographic proximity to Korean culture. Also, most of the Latin American countries have only a relatively recent residential Korean community. Simply speaking, little awareness of Korean culture has evolved in Latin America.

Under these circumstances, how will the Korean Wave sender transmit to the receiver, or consumer, who is likely to have little knowledge or awareness of Korean culture? How will K-pop be delivered to Latin American fans? Korean Wave producers have created new cultural products and formats in their quest to find and capture new audiences, as well as for commercial purposes. Korean Wave fans in Asia or the United States often begin by listening to K-pop, then go on to enjoy other activities related to Korea, such as watching Korean TV series, joining online fan clubs for Korean popular cultures in general, trying Korean food, learning the Korean language, purchasing Korean cosmetics and electronic goods, studying abroad in Korea, making Korean friends, picking up cultural idioms and traditional customs, launching personal blogs on Korea, or working for Korea-related institutions of various sorts. This kind of progression seldom occurs in Latin America. In general, many Latin American K-pop fans initially had an interest in Japanese manga, and first encountered K-pop when browsing manga sites on the Internet. Fans started cover dancing on their own, gathered with their friends who liked the same idols, and later expanded their fandom through the Internet. They are not important commercial consumers since most of them are teenage girls who have little purchasing power. Concert ticket sales volumes are one of the only objective ways to measure the number of fans. But in numerous cases, the local Korean Embassy and/or Korean Cultural Center generously handed out the tickets, so there are no figures on the number of fans who purchased the tickets on their own.

The Korean media has blown the popularity of K-pop in Latin America out of proportion. The major publications and news media outlets in Latin America have not paid a lot of attention to K-pop, as Koreans have been led to believe. Additionally, the popularity of K-pop is limited to specific groups. This is an example of the reinterpretation by the sender of the receiver's interpretation. Hall explains that "reality exists outside language, but it is constantly mediated by and through language; and what we can know [perceive] and say has to be produced in and through discourse" (Hall, 1973, p. 55). Surely, there is no compelling reason to exclude the role of K-pop in increasing Latin American interest in Korea and Korean culture. The point is not to confuse and/or mix those three elements: Korea, Korean culture, and K-pop. People tend to enjoy cultural products in and of themselves, yet sometimes they might wonder

about the origin of the cultural products they purchase, or encounter. Korean popular culture has been formed through imitation, appropriation, and revision by external influences. In Korea, it has generated its own sociopolitical significance in a specific time and space, with values that are expressed everywhere in various cultural products. This hybridization process can be viewed as Korean receivers' interpretations of the unintended messages of foreign senders. In Latin America, where the geographical and cultural distances from northeast Asia are extreme, it is no surprise that misinterpretation by both parties occur often. As previously mentioned, the coverage by *El Mercurio* of the JYJ concert in Santiago, and the special article in the women's magazine *Ya*, show how Chilean media interpret K-pop from their distinct perspective.

CONCLUSION

To understand the reception of the Korean Wave in Latin America, we must consider the socioeconomic gap as well as the generational gap that Adorno mentions. This is because, as previous research shows (Yoon 2009; Carranza, No, Kim, and Simoes, 2014a; Carranza, No, Kim and Simoes, 2014b; Del Pilar Alvarez, 2014; Molnar, 2014), most of the K-pop fans in Latin America belong to the relatively lower middle-class stratum in society. Or, is K-pop popular simply because "types of popular music are bound up with dance" (Adorno, [1994], 1998, p. 199), and K-pop has abundant cover dance routines. This is only a partial explanation, because not all of the Latin American teenage groups like K-pop. While Hall and Whannel contend that "pop music is regarded as the exclusive property of the teenager, [with] admission to outsiders reserved" (Hall & Whannel, *The Young Audience*, [1994], 1998, p. 66), this does not sufficiently explain the partial popularity of K-pop among younger generations in Latin America.

The reception of K-pop in Latin America and participatory fan culture continues to be somewhat sporadic, unstable, and entirely based on cultural interpretations by each individual fan. Whether this is because of escapism, or the predominance of teenagers in the K-pop fan base, any "distortions" or "misunderstandings" arise precisely from the lack of equivalence in the communicative exchange between the two sides, as Hall states.

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Chapter 9

When Korean Wave Flows into the Islamic World

A Study of Hallyu in Tunisia

Eunbyul Lee

INTRODUCTION

*I want our nation to become the most beautiful in the world. I do not want our nation to be the most powerful one. . . . The only thing that I desire is the power of a distinguished culture. The power of culture makes us happy; moreover, brings happiness to others.*¹ (Kim Koo, 2002, p.431)

Kim Koo (1876–1949), a Korean nationalist politician who led the independence movement from Japanese colonization, longed for Korea to enjoy the power of culture. Today, the Korean Wave (hereafter *Hallyu*) serves as an empowering force in Korea, a source of pride for the nation and promoting consumers of Korean culture around the globe. To be specific, *Hallyu* is now flourishing beyond Asia, making inroads in America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. While many Koreans may not be surprised by the sudden popularity of Korean popular culture in neighboring countries (particularly, in China, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong), many are unaware that *Hallyu* also flows into the Islamic world. This is because, when it comes to the outside world, many Koreans have limited cultural awareness, often inducing biased judgments toward international communities.

This study examines the spread of *Hallyu* to better understand how Korean culture is accepted in other cultural areas focusing on one nation as a case study. Tunisia, a predominantly Islamic nation located in North Africa, was the site of several fatal acts of terrorism in 2015—the attack on Bardo National Museum located in the capital city, Tunis, in March and another one in the Mediterranean city, Sousse in June—and it is also well-known as the site of the Jasmine Revolution, the starting point of the Arab Spring in 2011. Despite its stigma as a fragile state beset by terrorism and being in

a transition stage of democracy, Tunisia is affected by the influx of *Hallyu*; in fact, the country has widely accepted K-pop and Korean dramas leading to a demand for greater Korean language learning and more Korean cultural events. Yook (2014) analyzed the interaction between *Hallyu* products and the process of ethnic identity development, focusing on the cultural adaption of Korean transnationals in the United States. Her study found that second-generation Korean Americans who are totally Americanized have the least amount of affiliation with Korean identity. These results imply that *Hallyu* has a stronger effect on those who already have existing emotional ties with Korean culture. In this context, the sudden surge of popularity of Korean culture in Islamic society is a phenomenon worth considering.

At first glance, because of the geographical distance and the lack of direct interchangeability between Korea and the Middle East, one can surmise that both a psychological and cultural barrier exists between Islamic and Korean cultures. Furthermore, unfair, unreliable, and subjective news coverage regarding Arab and Islamic peoples in Korea leads most Koreans to formulate biased and negative attitudes toward them (Kim, 2016). Thus, it may come as a surprise that people of Islamic backgrounds enjoy Korean popular culture. However, while the majority of research on *Hallyu* concerns itself with regions in Southeast Asia, it is important to note that *Hallyu* has also successfully penetrated the Middle East and North Africa as well. Indeed, although both scholarly research and media coverage on *Hallyu* are increasing, the growing popularity of *Hallyu* in the Islamic world has not gained much recognition.

In respect to globalization, *Hallyu* has become central to the proliferation of Korean culture beyond national borders. To investigate the *Hallyu* phenomenon in the Islamic world, this study focuses on Tunisia, a country which is barely considered in the academic field as a place where *Hallyu* is widely consumed. The similarities and uniqueness in today's media globalization are based on the following questions: 1) What characteristics of Korean culture attract Tunisian audiences? 2) How do Tunisian fans consume Korean culture as cultural practice? 3) How can *Hallyu* in Tunisia contribute to a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances cultural exchange between Korea and Tunisia?

HALLYU 2.0: BEYOND ASIA

While Korean dramas began their diffusion in East and Southeast Asia roughly fifteen years ago, *Hallyu* has also emerged as a transnational cultural phenomenon across the globe in the twenty-first century. After an initial unexpected hype, *Winter Sonata* (Kyŏul Yŏn'ga, 2002) ignited the subsequent

“Yon-sama”² phenomenon among Japanese middle-aged female audiences. Despite the language barrier, cultural proximity is likely to function in neighboring countries for many reasons—most prominently, familiar themes and similar content in media products. While the earlier Korean Wave of the late 1990s resulted from the huge popularity of Korean dramas, *Hallyu* 2.0 in the 2010s is associated with the development of social media and its use by global audiences who consume Korean culture. This transition of *Hallyu* has subsequently been fostered in tandem with the diffusion of social media that has allowed Tunisian audiences to broaden their cultural tastes.

Sohn (2009) attempted a meta-analysis of 250 Korean research papers (November 1998–November 2008) regarding *Hallyu*; she found that previous studies focused on the short-term, economic benefits that originated from *Hallyu* in the fields of management, tourism, and traditional media studies. More importantly, the analysis showed that most studies in the beginning stage of *Hallyu*—in the late 1990s and the early 2000s—were limited to specific geographic locations in Eastern and Southern parts of Asia and did not examine reciprocal cultural understanding among audiences and their societies. Furthermore, excluding certain case studies in specific pocket regions, there have been a very limited number of academic approaches to *Hallyu* outside of Asia. Still, some researchers have studied *Hallyu* beyond Asia: Europe—France (Hong, 2013); South America—Peru and Brazil (Ko, et al, 2014); and The Middle East—Iran (Koo, 2014), Israel and Palestine (Otmazgin & Lyan, 2013), and Egypt (Noh, 2011). In the most current research on *Hallyu*, cooperative governmental relationships and economic interests have been given priority to the practical influx of culture.

Previous studies attribute *Hallyu*'s success to cultural hybridity, which occurs in contexts of transcultural exchange. This hybridity mediates tensions between the center and periphery, the global and local, and the West and the East. The Asian drama boom started in 2004–2005 and peaked around 2005–2006 (Hong 2013, p.196). Prior to the arrival of Asian dramas, French television broadcasted Japanese manga (comics) for a decade (1987–1997). Thereafter, audiences who had broadened their cultural tastes with Japanese animation became avid consumers of Korean dramas. Hong (2013) classified French fans of *Hallyu* into three types based on the duration and pattern of consumption of Korean culture: 1) cinephiles who regularly watch Korean movies; 2) young and middle-aged adults who enthuse over Asian popular culture and music (thanks to the increased distribution facilitated by the Internet since the 2000s); and 3) millennials who take advantage of digital media platforms, and experienced the sudden influx of Korean popular culture in the late 2000s. These millennials portray an adolescent subculture whose members display a passion to learn all about Korea and imitate K-pop stars with other fans. Tunisian audiences belong to this third group.

Previous studies of *Hallyu* have been based on a traditional binary opposition, which viewed culture as flowing between the core and periphery. In this regard, it is disputable to examine *Hallyu* considering countercultural flow. Filipino audiences enjoy a cultural closeness and share a sociocultural context with Korean society through Korean soap operas—so-called “Koreanovela.” Many Filipino consumers are attracted to Korean contemporary features such as community-centric socialization and hierarchical family relationships (Kwon, 2007). *Hallyu* consumers in Peru and Brazil are of both European and indigenous descent, varying in socioeconomic class and education levels. They utilize different communication platforms such as television and the Internet. Accordingly, in Latin America, where most residents are of non-Asian descent and have non-Asian linguistic backgrounds, ethnicity and cultural proximity are not associated with *Hallyu* fandom (Ko, et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, a degree of cultural counterflow has occurred with Latin American soap operas—“Telenovelas.” Kim (2013) compared *Hallyu* and the telenovela. The similarities discovered are as follows: 1) with regard to cultural imperialism, the diffusion of certain media content elevated both the Pan-Asian and transnational Hispanic identities despite suppression by Western media such as Hollywood movies and the U.S. television drama series; 2) both *Hallyu* and telenovela contribute to their respective national economic interests and also enhance images of their countries politically; and 3) when it comes to gender issues, each content represents women as challengers who are strong enough to resist patriarchal society. In addition, both *Hallyu* and telenovela portray sexuality in a more moderate manner than American soap operas.

On the other hand, there are remarkable differences between the forms as well; *Hallyu* productions should be translated mostly into English to overcome the language barrier, whereas telenovelas are exported to either Spanish-speaking countries or to countries where Spanish populations amass. In this regard, *Hallyu* television drama is likely to denominate to Koreanovela; however, fans who are enjoying Korean dramas today (*Hallyu* 2.0) depend heavily on the Internet as opposed to television networks despite the existence of a Pan-Arabic channel that airs Korean dramas. North American *Hallyu* advocates also seem to effectively consume Korean popular culture by enhancing the technological affordances of social media. Fans are socially interacting with each other, making *Hallyu* expand globally despite the tensions and barriers of transcultural flows (Jin & Yoon, 2016).

Lately, scholars have examined the newest *Hallyu* hotspots in the Middle East—Iran (see, Koo 2014), Israel and Palestine (see, Lyan & Levkowitz 2015; Otmazgin & Lyan 2013), and Egypt (see, Noh 2011). These case studies suggest areas of cultural overlap where Korean culture, especially those aspects originating from Confucianism, meets Islamic culture. Koo (2014)

identified a “Koreanness” possibly manifesting across the nations. A major reason Korean dramas have found and cultivated popularity in Iranian society is that certain stylistic features, such as relatable storylines and family-oriented characters/backgrounds that are found in the dramas, are acceptable to the Iranian public as well as in a global context. These few studies notwithstanding, *Hallyu* in the Middle East, predominantly in Islamic countries, has generally been overlooked. As Lyan and Levkowitz (2015) pointed out, small market size and Islamic stereotypes have been barriers to extensive research. Indeed, researchers tend to take a monolithic approach toward the Middle East, regarding the Islamic world as homogeneous even though each country has its own history and cultural identity. In fact, there are subtle but significant cultural differences among Islamic countries, and a monolithic view of the Islamic world’s cultural identity does not fully explain how and why *Hallyu* has emerged in distant nations. Thus, effectively investigating the current popularity of *Hallyu* in Islamic society will require case studies of individual cultural areas.

Previous research focusing on Egyptian *Hallyu* (Noh, 2011) found that subaltern women who have been culturally silenced instead of speaking for themselves eventually learn to speak out due to foreign media exposure. On the contrary, Tunisian women have relatively more freedom compared to those in other Islamic countries. For example, Tunisian women have the constitutional right to educational equality. Furthermore, in 1956, Tunisia was the first Arab state to formally abolish polygamy. Today, Tunisia officially stands as a monogamous society. In this sense, the case of *Hallyu* in Tunisia requires a multifaceted approach.

OVERVIEW OF *HALLYU* IN TUNISIA

To delve into *Hallyu* in Tunisia, it is important to examine the following areas in-depth: 1) a historical and cultural context that puts a premium on Tunisian cultural uniqueness, and 2) the Tunisian media-scape and acceptance of Korean popular culture. First, historically, Tunisia’s geographic location has made it a key strategic point for more powerful countries. Because of Tunisia’s geopolitical location and tactical positioning, it suffered early invasions by both the Romans and Andalusians and, more recently, colonial rule by the French—a history that had a direct impact on the diversity of Tunisian culture. Subsequently, the official Tunisian language is a dialect of Arabic with a strong French inflection that is distinct from the Arabic language spoken in the Middle East. As the mixed characters of their language indicate, Tunisians are open-minded to other cultures; therefore, the country is generally regarded as inherently multifaceted. Geographically, it is located in North

Africa, in an area called Maghreb;³ the official religion is Islam and Tunisians are predominantly Islamic; and the country is highly dependent on Europe, both governmentally and economically, as a result of historical circumstance and physical proximity.

When it comes to media-scape in Tunisia, according to Arab Media Outlook (2016), Tunisians spend around eighty hours a week using media platforms (36% Internet and 33% television), which represents the highest media usage in any country in Arab society. Despite the increasing prevalence of digital platforms, national TV channels (El Wataniya 1 and El Wataniya 2) and thirteen private satellite channels still receive a higher proportion of overall spending. In late 2007, the Tunisian state-owned television network, “El Wataniya 1” aired *Sad Love Story* (*Sŭlp'ŭn Yŏn'ga*, 2005), the first official Korean drama on Tunisian TV, and thereafter it aired on the private channel “Hannibal TV.” After the initial success of Korean drama via public broadcasting, *Jewel in the Palace* (*Taechanggŭm*, 2003), *Jumong* (2006), *Emperor of the Sea* (*Hae-sin*, 2004), and *Full House* (2004) also rapidly promoted *Hallyu* on Tunisian TV. At that time, high distribution rates of satellite television sets in Tunisia contributed to the spread of Korean dramas to every household. Korean-based broadcast networks such as Korea TV, Arirang TV, and KBS World collectively played significant roles in spreading Korean media content and culture. Currently, fourteen Korean dramas are listed on MBC 4;⁴ in Tunisia, *Fashion King* (*Paesyeon Wang*, 2012), *The Master's Sun* (*Jugun-ui Taeyang*, 2013), and *That Winter, the Wind Blows* (*Geu Gyeo-ul, Baram-i Bunda*, 2013) are currently being aired on television. The genres include but are not limited to romance, comedy, and drama and are favorably and effectively penetrating different cultural fields daily.

A major limitation concerning Korean dramas on Pan-Arab television networks is the dubbing process. Dubbing into Arabic insufficiently portrays and naturally takes away from the drama's narrative. Retaining the drama's original language and using subtitles instead of dubbing certainly promotes more foreignness. Tunisian fans have demonstrated a willingness to learn about the Korean language itself to better understand Korean media productions and Korean communities. Moreover, Arab television networks often edit scenes and rarely air the latest Korean dramas. In Tunisia, there are dozens of K-pop and Korean drama online communities on Facebook; in addition, many individuals have their own accounts on social media. They generally share up-to-date information from official websites such as allkpop (<http://www.allkpop.com/>) and the official announcements from the entertainment agencies—JYP, YG, and SM—to spread information about Korean popular culture in real time. In addition to uploading information, like many international fans, Tunisians tend to express their opinions mostly in English.

Notwithstanding the advantages of utilizing social media, Tunisian fans are also likely to create offline associations—so-called “cultural exchange communities.” These communities are voluntarily established as venues to share Korean culture with like-minded individuals and to enhance Tunisian fans’ sociality. Because they prefer to communicate face-to-face and share their common interests in Korea, most female Tunisian fans actively engage in fan communities. The main Tunisian fan communities are displayed in Table 9.1; in addition to these three Tunis-based clubs, there are two more regional clubs in Bizerte – KBFC (Korea’s Bizertians Fan Club) – and Sfax – KIFA (Korea Inspiration Fans Sfax).

This chapter employs an ethnographic approach to gaining insight into Tunisian fans. This approach included participant observation by the author as a Korean language instructor belonging to the embassy of Korea in Tunisia for six months (from September 2014 to February 2015) in cooperation with TUN-HAN, and in-depth interviews of participants. The participant observation, which focused on one core member of TUN-HAN, served as an opportunity to witness Tunisian women actively practicing Korean culture. This club’s members are mostly female and presumably middle to upper class—most of them can afford Internet access and are fluent or conversant in English as well as in French, meaning they are well-educated. Using in-depth interviews, the study aims to obtain a detailed understanding of the ways in which young Tunisian women experience Korean popular culture.

Table 9.1 Tunisian Offline Fan Community

<i>Title</i>	<i>Established year (Number of members)</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
TOKE	2011 (120)	Acronym of Tunisian Organization of Korean Cultural Exchange Arranges travel to Korea every summer and winter Promotes cultural exchange program	Individual
ACTC	2012 (100)	Acronym of Association Culturelle Tunisio-Coreenne Hosts annual “Asian Bridge” cultural event and regular Korean language courses	Individual
TUN-HAN	2014 (60)	Affiliated with computer science department Organizes weekly cultural exchange seminars and annual TUN-HAN day every April	University

Table 9.2 Interviewees

<i>ID</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Feature</i>
Interviewee 1	23	College Student	Founder of TUN-HAN
Interviewee 2	23	College Student	Korean language course attendant
Interviewee 3	22	College Student	Korean language course attendant
Interviewee 4	24	Worker	Korean language course attendant
Interviewee 5	20	College Student	Korean language course attendant
Interviewee 6	29	Officer	Visited Korea in 2015 to receive administrative training
Interviewee 7	24	College Student	Korean language course attendant Visited Korea in 2016 as 3rd winner of Korean language competition organized by Korea Embassy in Tunisia
Interviewee 8	23	College Student	Visited Korea in 2015 Representative of Tunisia in the 2015 <i>Quiz on Korea</i>
Interviewee 9	25	College Student	Visited Korea in 2014 Founder of Bubble Korea
Interviewee 10	25	Graduate Student	Recipient of Korean government scholarship for foreigner in 2015

Ten Tunisian women served as interviewees; half of them had visited Korea to receive higher education, governmental training, and/or to participate in *Quiz on Korea*.⁵ Interviews were conducted after TUN-HAN weekly seminars between February and April 2015, and each interview lasted more than one hour. Because Korean dramas have ignited Tunisian audiences' curiosity toward Korean popular culture, the interviews focused on how Korean dramas served as the primary starting point of *Hallyu* in Tunisia and how they fueled the increasing popularity of Korean pop artists.

EXPERIENCING FOREIGNNESS THROUGH KOREAN DRAMA

The Korean Wave began spreading to Tunisia around 2007 when *Sad Love Story*⁶ aired on the Tunisian state-owned television network, El Wataniya 1. Prior to the emergence of social media, the high distribution rate of television and satellite TV played a significant role in attracting Tunisian audiences and their attention. The interviewees recalled the moment when they first encountered Korean drama on television. Most of all, interviewee 8 states:

When I was a teenager, I fell in love with Kwon Sang-woo who starred in *Sad Love Story*; for me, he was the ideal man. Not only the main character, the whole story of that drama really touched me and thereafter I became more and more interested in Korea.

Likewise, another participant clearly indicates:

In 2009, when I discovered “Korea TV,” *Stairway to Heaven* was airing. I was familiar with the male character named Kwon Sang-woo because I had already watched *Sad Love Story*. Later on, I just became addicted to that Korean TV show and everything about Korea . . . like K-pop, Korean food, and Korean language as well.

In the early years of *Hallyu*, satellite television played a crucial role in bringing Korean drama to Tunisia—particularly the first Korean satellite station, Korea TV. Increased rates of Internet usage and the corresponding explosive growth of social media usage led to the shift toward *Hallyu* 2.0, in which K-pop and Korean drama fans use social media obsessively to participate in online communities. Meanwhile, regarding Korea as an attractive and modern country, Tunisian fans actively use social media platforms to follow real-time information on Korean popular culture. They search for any information on Korean celebrities and watch original Korean dramas with English subtitles. This led audiences to the exposure of Korean dramas regardless of genres and platforms. One respondent points out:

Heo-jun on Arirang TV was my first Korean drama. At that time, I found Korean culture to be very different and mysterious and I started watching more Korean cultural programs on Arirang TV and KBS World.

Interviewee 4 also mentioned the uniqueness of Korean drama comparing to other media contents from Arab regions and the United States:

Korean contents are unique. They are totally different from Arabic and American programs. That was something new for me.

Many Tunisians who prefer Korean drama have become disenchanted by the uniformity of American media and indifferent to Islamic productions from Turkey or Egypt, which portray conflicts among families and in-laws dramatically in longer episodes than Korean drama. Although it comes from a distant part of the world, Tunisian fans seek out brand-new Korean media content because it represents high levels of modernity. When it comes to gender-related themes, Korean drama allows young Tunisian women to feel a sense of emancipation—enabling them to temporarily escape daily routines and experience a vicarious sense of satisfaction. Their experience with Korean drama is remarkable when it comes to relationships, as one interviewee notes:

Compared to Tunisian men, Korean men are so romantic and sweet. Unlike Tunisian men who tend to control their partners, Korean men know how to treat their girlfriends. As a woman, I found what I am looking for.

Interviewee 7 seems to be impressed by how the media represents young couples, who are hardly featured on media in her homeland. She specifically indicates:

How cute are they! We couldn't imagine having couple items like T-shirts and key holders for couples. When we go on dates, we can hold hands together, but it is not common to share accessories to show that "we are a couple." If I ask to do that with my boyfriend, he will be surprised and I can imagine his response—too bad.

Basically, Korean dramas portray harmonious relationships between male and female characters, showing men treating women as equals. The friendly relationships of young couples in these dramas are particularly attractive to Tunisian women. In addition, the charmingly decorated rooms and up-to-date clothes of women in their twenties inspire Tunisian fans to form interests for contemporary Korean culture to a greater extent. In other words, dramas allow access into an imaginative world full of freshness currently unavailable to Tunisian fans in reality. In this way, Korean drama helps Tunisian audiences experience innate emotions and desires of which they may not otherwise have previously been aware. Moreover, images that they formulate from characters in dramas extend to other cultural aspects of Korea such as K-pop entertainers. One interviewee reveals her opinion on Korean pop stars regarding their performance, as she mentions:

I like their natural looks and behavior. I do not like what Westerners do, especially their sex-appealing performances. In this conservative Islamic culture, K-pop stars don't cross the line. They just appear to enjoy their performances on the stage.

Interviewee 4 keeps comparing Korean media contents to the Westerners:

Americans look serious and try to make themselves very special. But Koreans know how to make and have fun for others. They always do their best to make other people happy. Korean singers usually perform in groups, which means they work, sing, and dance together. The viewers never get bored.

Whether in reference to Korean dramas or K-pop, Tunisians emphasize the uniqueness of Korean content compared to its American counterpart. In Islamic culture, the manner of representation, especially when it comes to women, is a determining factor of consumption of foreign culture. In the case of *Hallyu* entertainment, Tunisian fans strongly believe that Korean media contents function as a filter for Western values which moderately represent the performance.

Tunisian fans are interested in all aspects of Korea—its people, its language, and its traditional and contemporary culture. Just as Egyptian fans utilize Korean familial terms such as “unnie” and “oppa” (Noh 2011), Tunisians also prefer to call their Korean language instructor—the ethnographer involved in this study—“unnie” or “seon-saeng-nim” to build a strong relationship with the Korean language and build solidarity among the members of the Korean cultural community. As a result of their exposure to Korean dramas, they are more than willing to practice using intimate Korean terms in person. Likewise, an idealized and romanticized image of Korea, particularly Seoul as a dream city, is widespread to Tunisians. The modern elements such as splendid cityscape at night, majestic bridges over the Han River, and well-equipped lifestyle are discussed below. Korean culture is certainly foreign to them and Tunisian fans regard Korea as the source of exotic cultural products that they have never experienced before. Indeed, physical distance arouses their curiosity of the unknown. The attractive exoticism of Korean culture has been boosted by the arrival of *Hallyu* 2.0. In the case of Tunisia, as interviewee 1 noted, “After Ben Ali, we finally could have access to YouTube and Facebook freely where all Korean dramas and K-pop are uploaded.”⁷

Since 2011, the rate of Internet usage in Tunisia has increased, enabling YouTube to function as a gateway for current Korean dramas. Other sites that provide access to Korean dramas with English subtitles instead of Arabic dubbing include: <http://www.jaewinter.com/> and <http://sweetnona83.blogspot.kr/>. These sites provide sufficient access to the latest Korean dramas, ultimately satisfying Tunisian audiences who want to build intimacy with Korean actors and actresses by hearing their actual voices. Young Tunisians who are regularly exposed to Korean culture have no difficulty with English subtitles on YouTube, unlike their parents who experienced French colonial rule and prefer French as a result. The Tunisian youth prefer to learn and practice English so they can communicate more broadly and gather more information about Korea.

THE ISLAMIC MIND'S IDENTIFICATION WITH KOREAN CULTURE

To a large extent, Islamic society has been excluded from cultural exchange and economic trade with Korea; by the same token, prior to *Hallyu* 2.0, Korean media producers hardly expected the explosive popularity of their products in Islamic countries. As previously mentioned, Tunisian audiences who are drawn to the melodramatic but realistic representation of everyday life find that certain contents are acceptable in their sociocultural setting. To some extent, it is necessary not to undermine the Islamic cultural values.

Tunisian audiences dread constant Western media content exposure which deviates from their religious faith. For instance, depicting excessive sexuality and propagating false ideas have a negative effect on the norms and familial fabric of Islamic society. One respondent clearly noted the moment when Koreans dramas encouraged family interaction:

I can remember my father trying to finish work early and come home to watch the drama, *Emperor of the Sea*. When he couldn't watch the episode, he called my mother asking for a live update of what was going on in the drama. It was that famous in Tunisia at that time.

To this point, characters and narratives of Korean drama are influenced by the Confucian culture as interviewee 5 indicates:

I like Korean family culture—the way they treat each other, especially when it comes to respecting elders.

Despite the chasm that exists between dramas and real-life situations, Korean dramas are likely to satisfy major Islamic cultural ideals via the authentic relation-oriented lifestyles presented in Korean culture. The emphasis on the value of family and friends as well as hospitality to foreigners in Korean drama resonates strongly in Islamic cultures. Koo (2014) found evidence of such cultural proximity among Iranian women; Tunisians are also comfortable with Korean media that embody respect to elders and traditional family values. This is because family is the most important unit in the Islamic world. The family-centric lifestyle in both countries significantly reduces the degree of cultural disparity. Similar to the degree of how much earlier audiences enjoyed the purity—the family values and pure love—aspect of Korean contents (Lee & Ju, 2010), most contemporary audiences are attracted to the moderate but fresh storylines. Iwabuchi (2002) maintained that despite its foreign origin, fans of Korean popular culture accept as their own because its messages and values resonate deeply within them. Tunisian fans embrace Korean culture as well. For example, the Confucian way of thinking engenders even greater cultural intimacy with Tunisian identity. Interviewee 6 notes:

My first Korean drama, *My name is Kim Sam-Soon*, made me start to watch other drama. Sam-Soon struggles to achieve her love, which occurs a little bit later in her life. While I was watching this drama, I couldn't help but compare myself to her; what if I encounter or experience the same problem? How would I overcome this situation? I kept asking myself these questions, ultimately unknowingly, and naturally rooting for Sam-Soon as if she were my close friend. She was strong enough and never hesitated to express her emotions.

Most of our native dramas cover situations like this unrealistically, but Korean dramas are different.

In Tunisian society, soon-to-be married couples often experience rifts and fraught relationships coming from both sides of the family. Parents force their children—particularly, daughters—to get married at a certain age, which stands at the pinnacle of universal social customs derived from patriarchy. Chung (2007) revealed that Korean college students identified with the main female character “Sam-Soon,” pleasantly accepting the television drama reality rather than resisting patriarchal ideology. Due to their familiarity and satisfaction with the drama’s narrative and depiction of reality, Tunisian audiences also appear to share cultural values and beliefs in spite of the language barrier. Noh (2011) also indicated cultural proximity between Arabic and Korean cultures in a global context—specifically in regard to gender. Young Tunisian women empathize with the main female characters in Korean dramas. Thus, *Hallyu* has resulted in gendered fandom, capitalizing on certain personality and images—romantic, cute, sweet, and so on—that stimulate its audience’s emotions and sympathy regardless of the cultural barrier. Korean drama content both platonically and romantically portrays love relationships between main characters, without simply focusing on sexual love, which appeals to Arabic women’s ideals about romantic relationships and pureness.

Audiences also demonstrate awareness of historical and political similarities between Korea and Tunisia. Interviewee 3 noted: “As far as I understand, Japanese colonization was a historical tragedy for Korea, still affecting contemporary Korean society. I totally agree with the Korean public opinion. Tunisia was also colonized by France in a similar way.” Sharing colonial experience with Korea makes it easier for Tunisians to embrace Korean culture. Most interviewees also identified the reign of former Tunisian president Ben Ali with that of the former Korean dictator, former president Park Chung-hee, who led economic development during his presidency (1963–1979). In this way, the prevalence of Korean dramas satisfies Tunisian desire to cultivate multicultural minds while maintaining distance from Americanized culture. Indeed, despite Korea’s geographical distance from Tunisia, *Hallyu* nonetheless creates a sense of affiliation with Korean culture among Tunisians, thereby engendering intercultural communication.

NEGOTIATING AN ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY AND THE ASPIRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Tunisia and Korea experienced colonial rule in a similar fashion: Korea suffered from Japanese colonization between 1910 and 1945, and Tunisia

was subject and afflicted under French colonial rule from 1881 to 1956. What makes Tunisian colonization different from its neighboring country, Algeria, is that Tunisia was a French protectorate like Morocco. In other words, France influenced Tunisia to manifest their sociocultural ways without the violent and harsh resistance often found under colonial rule. Furthermore, Tunisia accepted the French policy of cultural assimilation, which enabled easy and harmonious relationships with other cultures. Their historical background made Tunisia more inclusive and open-minded compared to other Islamic countries who accepted foreign cultures. Tunisian fans are likely to recognize their country's colonial history as comparable to Korea's, which bolsters their attraction to Korean culture. Most of all, as interviewee 8 notes:

We shared things in common that both of us suffered through such as colonization, but the difference between Korea and Tunisia is that Koreans never gave up, struggled, and fought back until they changed the state of their country's miserable situation into a world miracle.

Another respondent also mentions a lesson from Korean history emphasizing on how to overcome difficulties:

I have read about Korean history regarding the experience of Japanese colonization. We share the same historical pain, as Tunisia also struggled to fight against France. Even though Korea had to face lots of difficulty during colonization, they overcame the worst in the end.

Because a number of Tunisians have graduated from prestigious European universities, their intellectuals who participate in scholarly work have been heavily influenced by the European academic system. Thus, they have brought Westernized content and perspectives into their disciplines. The absence of Arabic references in the curriculum has resulted in a heavy reliance on European literature, books, and academic journals in the Tunisian education system, from primary school to university. Although the Tunisian education system does not offer mandatory courses related to Asia, the education system does offer a plethora of chances to learn about Korean premodern society in the aftermath of Japanese colonization and the Korean War. Despite a biased historical perspective, the way of collaborating the public and its power to take off for a better future inspires Tunisian youths. In this sense, Korean culture is readily connected to Tunisian society. Interviewee 1 clearly indicates:

I really want to learn how to develop my country [Tunisia] based on Korea.

Interviewee 7 adds her opinion comparing Korea to China:

China is still growing. I don't think it is a "developed country" yet like Korea. We need a role model to develop our country, Tunisia.

Another interviewee points out the specific reason that Tunisians should learn lessons from Korea by degrading Tunisian culture:

What I found through Korean drama is that the more you work, the more you earn. Unfortunately, that is not possible in Tunisia. Even though the Korean lifestyle looks very hectic, I believe that it made possible the miracle of Korean economic and cultural development. I really admire it.

In the Tunisian workplace, few employees arrive at work on time. Not to attribute this habitual tardiness to Tunisian ethnicity, but the Tunisian economic standard has certainly been affected by the mindset of citizens toward community and nation. Young Tunisians, in particular, recognize the negative aspects of their way of life and seek to discover the means to bolster their country's development. In this sense, they regard Korea as a role model and their desire for economic development is reinforced through their exposure to Korean media. This raises the question: Why do respondents regard Korea as a role model over other countries? In particular, why do Tunisians consider Korea as a role model and not Japan or China? One respondent maintains:

I think Japanese culture is a little bit strange for me—something weird. I found too much individualism, like America. In Japanese drama, all family members live together, but they don't talk to each other. Eating alone, crying alone, playing alone . . . I don't understand. I think Chinese culture copies other Asian cultures in their drama and entertainment programs. They don't have their own identity.

Korean drama incorporates modern elements such as the metropolitan atmosphere of Seoul, modern relationships, and romances that sustain traditional family values. Moreover, Korea functions as a filter for Western values and provides access to a promising future for not only Asians but also for Tunisians. The urban middle-class scenery and Seoul-centric imagery in Korean drama suggests that hard work and a hectic lifestyle guarantee citizens a fair chance to achieve a high quality of life.

The Americanization generated by U.S. media content has contributed significantly to the formation and globalization of the Western identity, which has caused the homogenization of other global cultures. However, in Tunisia anti-American sentiment originating from Western media coverage of Islam

combines with antipathy against sex-appealing content that is unacceptable in Islamic culture. In this way, Tunisians have attempted to identify alternative models of emulation as their country develops. According to interviewee 2, Tunisians seem to have a psychological barrier toward America, as she notes:

America always treats us as terrorists, assuming all Muslims are radical Islamists. Unlike others, I believe that Koreans are generous enough and open-minded enough to maintain a balanced view of the Islamic world.

While Western-centeredness dominates the globe, Tunisia has avoided Americanized globalization due to Internet censorship. At the same time, feelings of victimization by the United States have spread ever since the United States fueled anti-Islamism in the wake of 9/11, which led to Islamophobia around the world. Meanwhile, as the Tunisian economy has developed, the nascence of a modern society has required that Tunisians reconsider their national system and Korea has come to stand as a model for achieving a desirable modernity.

CONCLUSION

Prior to the emergence of social media, Tunisia had already been exposed to Korean culture. Due to TV distribution and habitual viewing after family dinners, Tunisian families were widely exposed to Korean drama. *Hallyu* in Tunisia was an unprecedented phenomenon that proved the possibility of cultural influx into dissimilar cultural fields. The spread of the Internet and subsequent explosion of social media enabled audiences to become more closely acquainted with Korean culture, which fueled the emergence of *Hallyu* 2.0. To be specific, as the most influential viewing medium in the pre-Internet era, the Tunisian national television networks and satellite dishes had a decisive impact on the diffusion of Korean dramas. Prior to the arrival of *Hallyu* 2.0, Korean dramas played an essential role in promoting the acceptance of Korean culture among Tunisians; this allowed for Korean media content to gradually spread throughout Tunisian households. Beginning with family-oriented drama contents in late 2007, Korean drama appealed to young and old consumers alike. Since then, the popularity of family-centric Korean drama has passed to members of younger generations who watched the drama with their parents, and thereafter began to seek out additional Korean media products independently. Globalization drives the dispersal of media content around the globe, and thanks to the increasingly widespread availability of Internet service, Tunisia is no exception to this trend.

The decline of Internet censorship and the subsequent increase in Internet usage accelerated the diffusion of *Hallyu*, particularly K-pop and Korean drama with English subtitles. Exposure to Korean cultural products through diverse mediums enhanced Tunisia's cultural intimacy with Korea, which stemmed from Tunisian's recognition of shared cultural values.

This study has paved the way for investigations into the Islamic world beyond the geographical limitations of the Middle East, by conducting a case study in Tunisia, North Africa. Furthermore, in regard to the exclusion of Tunisia as an intercultural field among Koreans, this study contributes to promoting research into cultural hybridity. Moreover, the Western media addresses Tunisia as a nation with insecurity resulting from Islamist terrorism. As discussed in this research, without a comprehensive understanding of Islam, balanced cultural exchange is impossible among diverse cultural fields. For instance, Tunisians are relatively more accepting of other cultures and pleasantly enjoy their everyday lives compared to other countries. However, Tunisia remains an essentially Islamic society, which necessitates respect for essential religious practices such as conservative clothing for women, prohibition against alcohol, and fasting during Ramadan. In this sense, *Hallyu* in Tunisia is an encouraging development.

As this research has shown, experiencing foreignness through Korean media contents actually allows Islamic people to identify with Korean culture and to cultivate aspirations for advanced society by negotiating alternative modernity. More importantly, sharing the postcolonial experience has played a significant role in establishing cultural sympathy and it has cultivated Tunisian desire for national development. Overall, relation-oriented narratives and universal themes of Korean drama fill the gap between traditional Islamic values and the growing forces of modernity outside the Islamic world. Recognizing this fact, this study recommends that future studies explore *Hallyu* beyond Asia and analyze public diplomatic strategies throughout the Islamic world. Despite the unexpected spread of *Hallyu* in the Middle East and Africa, media research on *Hallyu* has mainly focused on Korea's neighboring countries in Eastern and Southern Asia. To be specific, Korean dramas actually ignited *Hallyu* in 2007. This means that the parents of the interviewees were of the first generation of Tunisian *Hallyu* in this study. However, this study does not discuss their consumption of Korean drama. Therefore, an additional study focusing on the intercultural diffusion across generations based on *Hallyu* in the Islamic world is suggested.

Given that the Korean government and citizens tend to take Korean popular culture and its explosive growth for granted, mutual understanding between different cultural fields is required to sustain the future growth of *Hallyu* around the globe. Moreover, this study actually contributes to both the further exchange with the Islamic world where a cultural barrier exists

due to Korea's dependence on the West and, in this age of globalization, the expansion of *Hallyu* into unexplored territories.

NOTES

1. Translated by the author.
2. *Yon-sama* refers to the South Korean actor Bae Yong-joon who starred in *Winter Sonata*, which earned unexpected popularity in Japan as well as the honorific nickname *Yon-sama*, which means Emperor Yon in Japanese.
3. Maghreb means the West in Arabic, and in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco the word also means sunset.
4. The MBC (the Middle East Broadcasting Center) group was the first private free-to-air satellite broadcasting company in the Arab World, headquartered in Dubai. It has ten television channels, two radio stations, and one specialized documentary production unit covering Arabic-speaking countries.
5. A South Korean television show organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea and KBS (Korea Broadcasting System) as part of an annual international public diplomacy strategy.
6. *Sad Love Story* (Seulpeun Yeon-ga: Sŭlp'ŭn Yŏn'ga) aired from January to March 2005 on MBC for 20 episodes. It also aired on the Arabic channel Dubai TV worldwide; therefore, Tunisians were able to watch this drama on TV.
7. During the Ben Ali regime, Tunisia suffered from Internet censorship; for example, social networking sites such as YouTube had strict filters. After the success of the Arab Spring—Tunisian revolution in January 2011—there was greater freedom of expression in Tunisia; Tunisians were eventually able to live without surveillance.

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Part IV

**TRANSNATIONALITY OF
THE KOREAN WAVE**

Chapter 10

The Korean Wave and Anti-Korean Wave Sentiment in Japan

*The Rise of a New Soft Power for a Cultural Minority**

Hyangjin Lee

INTRODUCTION: THREE FRAMEWORKS WITH WHICH TO SEE THE KOREAN WAVE

The Korean Wave is a newly risen soft power and it is often considered as a global version of Korean popular culture. As a transnational phenomenon, the Korean Wave has developed as a subculture of a group of peoples regardless of their nationalities or which country they live in. In more recent years, the rapid growth of pan-Asian production of Korean Wave dramas and K-pop has included Koreans as a part of its consumers. To a greater extent, audiences who enjoy the Korean Wave as a new global culture tend to consume it as active receivers (Mori 2004), whereas Koreans greatly benefit from the transnational expansion of their local culture serving as a source of their national pride and economic and diplomatic power. In this sense, the global consumption of the Korean Wave assumes the difference of nationality between the recipient and the producer countries regardless of the multilateral production and consumption process.

As a soft power of Korea, the Korean Wave represents the national interests of the producing country and has important political, economic, and diplomatic roles. However, from the perspective of the receiving countries, the commanding power of the Korean Wave shows considerable regional variations. In the late 1990s, as the Korean Wave emerged as a pan-Asian

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phenomenon, anti-Korean Wave rhetoric generated debate in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Mongolia among others. It was a movement attempting to protect the cultural industry of the region from the Korean Wave. From the standpoint of progressives, it was perceived as a criticism of popular culture degenerated by capitalism. The Chinese government even made regulations to stop the rapid spread of the Korean Wave. Nevertheless, the rationale for the regulations was similar to the arguments of progressives, who claimed that indiscreet diffusion of the Korean Wave was not different than the imperialist cultural invasion by Western society and can threaten the cultural identity of the recipient countries (Paik 2005, Shin 2006, Lee 2006, Huang 2009 and Han 2013).¹

However, the Japanese notion of anti-Korean Wave is different from the argument of progressives who tend to be more concerned about the marginalization of local culture by the invasion of the culture of Western capitalism. It is cultural elitism advocated by conservatives trying to prevent the intrusion of the “inferior” culture of a marginal country into a “Western” country, which has hegemonic soft power, on the presupposition that some cultures are superior to others. They claim that the Korean Wave is a cultural invasion from a former colony and ethnic Koreans in Japan, brought on by cleverly blurring its boundary to deceive “ignorant middle-aged women.”² Therefore, while inciting cultural bigotry that comes from ethnic superiority, they regard Japanese companies and the media that push the Korean Wave in front as enemies which threaten the myth of racial homogeneity (Itagaki 2007, Hwang 2014). Moreover, it conveys that the recognition of Japanese society with regard to cultural diversity is also Western oriented (Yoshimi 1999, 2002, 2003).

The majority of those who lead the anti-Korean Wave sentiments and anti-Korean Wave demonstrations are from a social hierarchy facing accumulated alienation and a relative inferiority complex, wandering in long-term unemployment and non-regular employment.³ They try to relieve the political dissatisfaction and economic anxiety for the mainstream society through antipathy and rejection of *Zainichi* Koreans (Korean residents in Japan) and beautify it as an expression of patriotism. However, the anti-Korean Wave sentiments and anti-Korean Wave demonstrations are merely an expression of morally justified emotion pursuing a collective catharsis by insulting Korean Wave fans and passive recipients.⁴ They try to get the support of the various forms of conservative social groups, stimulating the historical issues between Korea and Japan, and the deep-rooted sense of discrimination against *Zainichi* Koreans. Ironically, however, the incitements and violent demonstrations of those who support the anti-Korean Wave sentiments made not only Korean Wave fans but also passive general consumers become conscious of justification of cultural choices. As a result, they became conscious consumers as agents.⁵

Moreover, a social group consisting of feminists and cultural activists demanded self-restraint over racial discrimination from the perspective of progressivism, resulting in the Third Korean Wave debate. It negates not only the apolitical stance of Korean Wave fandom but also the ideological ground of anti-Korean Wave sentiment.⁶ In addition, the extreme hatred of *Zainichi* Koreans and persistent threatening acts caused disruption in the political solidarity among conservatives and a conflict within them.⁷

In the past ten years, the process of adaptation of the Korean Wave in Japan has undergone a “revolutionary” evolution as mentioned above. The reason that the process is “revolutionary” is that, from a Japanese perspective, the Korean Wave, as an “unsophisticated” culture of its former colony and one that was looked down upon, has become a subculture of ordinary citizens within a short period of time, challenging the cultural prejudice against Koreans as well as *Zainichi* Koreans. The highly popular Hong Kong films in the 1980s were led by young female fans in their 20s and 30s, and ended shortly without a change of Japanese perception on Asia. The rise of a serious interest in Korean society and culture among a small number of young, progressive college graduates in the 1980s and 90s was the “maibumu (my boom)” phenomenon. In other words, it is generally accepted that the Korean Wave was the first massive hit of Asian popular culture on the mainstream society leading ordinary citizens to a multilaterally globalized media environment in Japan. Moreover, after the anti-Korean Wave demonstrations, though they were not conspicuous, the Korean Wave recipients continued to practice their cultural citizenship and began to demand self-restraint to racists.

In this regard, the Korean Wave is ideologically ambivalent and pursues resistance for cultural minorities within the mainstream society. Through this process, I believe that the Korean Wave can be a communication space that enhances the unity of a social group that counteracts the prejudice of political conservatives. Focusing on this point, my discussion here is to categorize and analyze the adaptation process of the Korean Wave in Japan as a subculture; the Korean Wave as a newly risen soft power, the anti-Korean Wave sentiment, and the Third Korean Wave, are political sublimations of these two arguments. Following the first movement led by middle-aged women partaking in drama fandom in the 2000s, and the second initiated by the K-pop fandoms of younger generations in the 2010s, the “Third Korean Wave” can provide a framework to analyze the social meanings and roles of the Korean Wave in a more comprehensive sense than the Korean Wave 2.0 or the Korean Wave 3.0 which are currently classified by genre and medium (Jin & Yoon 2014).

The Third Korean Wave as a cultural movement is closely related to the fact that the Korean Wave has undergone significant changes and expansions regarding consumers, genres, and meanings in the past fifteen years.

In other words, the Korean Wave in Japan began with mainly female drama fans of *Winter Sonata* in 2003 and a media leading the public opinion of the mainstream society, but the Korean Wave was revived as the Second Korean Wave by the girl idol group KARA in 2010. It was mainly lead by K-pop fans of the young generation and expanded by Internet shopping for clothing and cosmetics, and virtual reality of new media such as YouTube and social network sites (SNS). As the third stage, the consumption of Korean food such as kimchi and bibimbap increased throughout the country, and Korean food took its root as a culture of intimacy and relationships for people to enjoy together with family and friends. Of course, Korean food has been consumed from long ago, but Korean food consumption rose along with the media culture (like drama and music) and became everyday food. Therefore, this chapter is not only to examine the passive role of the Korean Wave, merely pursuing the national interests of the producer nation, but also to critically examine the process of the Korean Wave taking its root as a new subculture where a receiving country, that is, Japan, can practice the will of change and resistance to its society.

THE RISE OF A NEW SOFT POWER AND JAPANESE KOREAN DRAMA FANDOM

Joseph Nye states that soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments” (Nye 2004, x). It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideas, and policies. It is most effectively realized with the support of hard power such as military forces and economic strength. Soft power includes the concept of propaganda in its broadest term, whereas economic resources can be used to attract as well as coerce (Nye 2011, 85). International institution is also a significant resource to attain the ability of persuasion. In short, the performance of soft power is over-determined by various factors, but more significantly it is still heavily affected by the hierarchical power relationship between two countries that are directly involved. In contrast to the United States’ relative military and economic supremacy over other countries, South Korea achieves its soft power through a much more complex and multilayered system. China and Japan, the major markets for the Korean Wave, and the United States, the most strategically important country for the Korean Wave, may achieve greater relative military and economic supremacy than Korea. In other words, if “*attraction and persuasion are socially constructed,*” and *soft power is a dance that requires partners*” (Nye 2011, 84), South Korea sometimes needs to be the follower rather than the leader in performance of the Korean Wave. Furthermore, the Korean Wave in the rest of Asia, as well as other regions, has to

compete with the hegemonic soft power of the West. The performance of the Korean Wave is even affected by the often complex relationships between the major global powers. For example, Nye points out that in China, American and Japanese cultural ideas tend to be considered more attractive when they arrive via South Korea. The Chinese audiences feel closer to the lifestyles, political systems, and economies portrayed in Korean dramas than American dramas, even though they are somewhat similar to each other (Nye 2011, 85). This is the very reason we can identify the Korean Wave as a non-hegemonic power.

In our everyday lives, instruments of hegemonic soft power such as Hollywood movies, Disney, Ghibli, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's are part of the *a priori* cultural environment that existed before we were born. Many Japanese say Disney is a place where they return, not visit. Unlike these mainstream global cultures, which are a part of everyday life, a newly risen soft power such as the Korean Wave has to develop new markets and create demand. It must appeal its attractions to unfamiliar consumers. Indeed, the anti-Korean sentiment that occurred in part of Asia was based on the antagonism against the up-down and unilateral flows of the Korean Wave due to the imitative nature and the hybridity of the Korean Wave in Western styles (Shim 2006). In other words, in a number of societies in Asia, the Korean Wave appears as a hegemonic soft power to suggest the unbalanced power relationship and economic gap between the producing and receiving countries, similar to a Western soft power. On the other hand, despite the economic superiority or/and diplomatic influence of Korea to the receiving countries, the Korean Wave is still relatively inferior to the pop culture of Japan and the United States, which already have hegemonic positions in the regions. From a global perspective, the competition with Western soft power is somewhat harsher, which is already established in the society, as well as the cultural industry of the recipient country, for example, Japan, whose economic scale is larger than Korea's. It can also be subject to prejudice because it is not a culture of the country, which is subject to inertial envy like Western culture. It is hard to draw attention while fighting the indifference of mainstream society, if not racist anti-Korean extremists in Japan.

Distinctions such as the center and the periphery, or the Western and the non-Western strengthen the dual and contradictory characteristics of the Korean Wave as a soft power. In other words, the Korean Wave is benchmarking a hegemonic soft power, but at the same time, it is a born underdog and born with the resistance of the weak culture. The trends and consumption patterns of Korean Wave fans, which have increased significantly in North and South America and Europe in recent years, effectively represent the resistance movement of the Korean Wave, which flows back from the periphery to the center. It resists the unilateral, up-down flows of dominant culture,

expressing a different taste and needs of cultural minorities in a given society. It challenges the racial prejudice of the mainstream society.

In general, Korean Wave fans do not mind boundaries between countries. They enjoy a borderless cultural experience but do not ask for expensive overseas travel or consumption of overseas luxury goods. Such cultural minorities, who cannot satisfy their needs and desires by the products that can be easily obtained in the society where they live and the contents provided by the mainstream media, are the very consumers of Korean dramas, K-pop, and Korea-related products. Some of them enjoy free online services, but some of them live in certain areas of Eastern Europe or South America where it is still not easy to access online services, enjoy Korean dramas and K-pop through videos, CDs, or DVDs. In those areas, the Korean government holds various cultural events, sends the Korean Wave stars as friendly ambassadors, or provides free distribution packages. In this way, the accessibility and method of consuming media vary depending on the areas in which fans live.

Sometimes, popular Korean Wave dramas, stars, or idol groups in a society where the government plays a significant intermediary role are different from those in other societies with free online services. However, the Korean Wave fans, to a great extent, are committed to a different culture separated from the dominant culture of mainstream society, and express their own cultural identity, different from others. For example, rental businesses and satellite broadcasting channels of Korean dramas in Chinese-Asian ethnic minority communities around the world and various websites such as YouTube established the Korean Wave as an everyday entertainment culture that provides “trans-pan-Asianism” to the local people. It can be thought that making the cultural presence visible in the society to which it belongs leads to a liberal attitude of the mainstream society to cultural minorities living in various countries and regions (Um 2014, Howard 2014, Park 2013, Sung 2013).

It is not easy, to be sure, for the Korean Wave, which is consumed mainly by cultural minorities, to go into the mainstream society. The soft power of Western countries, including Japan, can be more powerful in the recipient country with the full backing of hard power such as economic and military power. For example, the popularity of Hollywood movies or the advance of Jazz music in Asia, including in Korea and Japan, has been endorsed by American economic or/and military influences in the area for decades. Historically, the soft power of Western countries has exerted its influence to the daily life of the target country unilaterally for a long time through colonial rule, aggression, war, economic assistance, and so on. However, unlike Western soft power, the Korean Wave must exist without the support of hard power in many countries including Japan. It must be recognized for its “attraction” as the culture of everyday life and mass entertainment with differentiation and entertainment.

The Korean Wave is merely a popular culture. It is a form of soft power which, in many cases, cannot fully receive the support of synergistic effects of diplomatic advantages and the support of envy due to the normative order. Therefore, if the Korean Wave is to promote its “attraction” without the assistance of hard power or other different forms of soft power demonstrating moral or social superiority of Korea to the receiving countries, interactive exchanges are indispensable. Especially in situations with postcolonial relations like Japan and South Korea, recipient countries are likely to have decision power. In fact, new soft power is embryologically different from the hegemonic soft power of powerful nations (Nye 2004).

The reason why the Korea Wave in Japan can have resistance for cultural minorities in the global society is that, as mentioned above, despite the fact that it is a commercial culture, the producer country, Korea, has to stand in the weak position regarding the power relationship with the recipient country. Although the beginning of the Korean Wave attracted attention with its astonishingly explosive appeal, it soon brought on anti-Korean Wave racists’ blatant mockery and street demonstrations. In this process, it became resistant as a culture of socially vulnerable people against racism. Therefore, the excessive PR activities and intervention of the Korean government can have a negative effect on the recipient-centered dynamism of the Korean Wave. The criticism of the governmental intervention or exploitation has been consistently pointed out by those who are engaged in the Korean cultural industry. The excessive promotion from the Korean side may have a negative influence because the Korean Wave’s non-mainstream position carries a differentiation that can counter mainstream culture.⁸

The Korean Wave in Japan has evolved in a situation where the power relationship between the producer and the recipient can be determined by the latter. In this sense, the ideological ground of anti-Korean Wave sentiment in Japan is different from those in other societies in Asia. As discussed above, in Taiwan and Vietnam, for example, the Korean Wave can be conceived as a hegemonic soft power threatening the local industries. It is the limitation that non-hegemonic soft power confronts in a hegemonic society, but such a limitation is a condition that non-hegemonic power can take root as a minority culture in that society. Specifically, first of all, the Korean Wave is not a culture of domination and superiority. It is rather a culture of resistance that constantly tries to break the boundary with mainstream society, beginning with inequitable postcolonial bilateral relationships and peripheral identity that fight against prejudices of the former colonial lower class culture. The Korean Wave needs to be refined through the hybridization and the strategy of Western soft power. At the same time, it must give recipients a sense of Asian cultural closeness. The early representative Korean Wave dramas such as *Winter Sonata*, *Autumn Fairy Tale*, and *Hotelier* were all nostalgic

trend-setting dramas. The audience felt familiarity with the society and stories in these works where the past and the present coexist.

Second, the Korean Wave in Japan has evolved through a negotiation process by various agents in Japan. It tends to be influenced by exclusive interests from political negotiations, which have different ideas while sharing the same goal. Let us first look at the economic aspect. The Korean Wave started in the latter half of the 1990s, but in Japan, it began in 2003–2004 with the explosive popularity of TV dramas. Since releasing her Japanese debut single in 2001, BoA has been a significant success. In 2003 DVXQ made their debut in Japan, but what led Japan to being the biggest market for the Korean Wave was ordinary TV viewers fascinated by *Winter Sonata*. Japan yielded the niche market after the commercial value of the Korean Wave had been fully verified in China and Southeast Asia. Many studies cited, as factors for the success of the Korean Wave in Japan, that the recognition of Korean society had changed since the mid-1980s and that the distance between Korea and Japan had shrunk. In other words, the “Korean economic myth” is represented by Samsung’s global success and the political stability brought about by democratization, going back to the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988. However, in reality, before the 2002 FIFA World Cup cohosted in Japan and Korea, public attention toward Korea was not high.⁹ Japan had only been on the sidelines for several years since the emergence of the Korean Wave.

Furthermore, it is politically important that the Korean Wave was established in Japan and called a “social phenomenon.” Since 2005, designated as “Korea-Japan Friendship Year,” Korean stars have always become Goodwill Ambassadors for Japan and Korea. The Koizumi Cabinet (2001–2006), which proposed the concept of the East Asian community, and the Korean Wave diplomacy of the First Abe Cabinet (2006–2007) are good examples that show a recipient country can have more decisive roles than a producer country in spreading a new soft power. For Japanese politicians, imitating Korean stars and expressing themselves as Korean fans were attempts to seek Japan’s return to Asia and pursuing leadership, and also a performance tool to gain popular support from female voters. Therefore, both politicians and the media utilized the popularity of the Korean Wave and took up a strategy to appeal to sensibility. Representative examples are episodes of Prime Minister Koizumi, who invited actress Choi Ji-woo to his office and took pictures with her and said that he would like to be called “*Jun-sama*” like “*Yon-sama*” (Bae Yong-joon).¹⁰ As a politician, he used and promoted Korean popularity as mass media. Prime Minister Koizumi conducted Korean Wave diplomacy from the standpoint of the recipient country by meeting President Roh Moo-hyun at a shooting place of *Shiri*, Cheju Island, just like he did with the U.S. president Bush by revealing that he was an enthusiastic fan of Elvis Presley. Then, in the first Abe cabinet, Korean Wave diplomacy was carried out by the

prime minister appealing his “Love for *Yakiniku*” (grilled meat), and his wife, Akie appealing her being a fan of Korean dramas and stars and that she can speak Korean fluently. In this way, the pursuit of profit of the Japanese media and the efforts of politicians trying to gain the support of the voters were the social factors to the rapid spreading of the Korean Wave.

Third, the most important characteristic is the subjectivity of the consumer as an agent. It is a cultural pattern that requires the subjective consciousness to select, decide, and communicate on its own and even confront the social prejudices bravely. *Winter Sonata* in 2003–2004 and Bae Yong-joon’s popularity became the catalysts for the explosion of interest in the culture of the restrained outside world. Until then mainstream media had provided traditional family dramas and detective dramas, and there was a shortage of drama or genre or program production for female viewers. According to the author’s survey on Korean Wave fandom in Japan between 2005 and 2006, many of these fans were middle-aged or above, who spent their time watching daytime TV programs, but a significant number of them were also young female viewers having full-time jobs, such as company employees, business women, professors, and high-ranking public officials, who watched TV in the late evening after taking care of their children or family (Lee 2008). As a result, those female viewers were left behind in the blind spots of the cultural industry as cultural agents. In such circumstances, Korean dramas became substitute content suitable for filling daytime hours of various channels such as satellite broadcasting as well as terrestrial broadcasting, and for DVD rental shops. Unlike variety shows for young people who mainly watch at night and TV dramas for all generations, the age group of Korean drama audiences often stays at home during the day or they finally have their own time late at night. Therefore, Korean romantic melodramas that evoked nostalgia attracted female viewers in the early 2000s, followed by historical dramas such as *Jewel in the Palace* and *Jumong* which attracted male viewers in the late 2000s. As a result, Korean dramas became attractive contents for multi-generation and multitier. It is considered to be the most direct success factor.¹¹

THE ANTI-KOREAN WAVE SENTIMENT, K-POP, AND NEW MEDIA GENERATION

It can be said that the explosive popularity of Korean dramas proved to be a win-win phenomenon for the government of the recipient country, television stations, the cultural industry, and consumers. The Korean Wave also provided a communication space for political conservatives and racists who became popular writers or celebrities with their anti-Korean Wave activities.¹² Many fans of the Korean Wave dramas were faithful supporters of

Japanese popular culture (Lee 2008). They were a fixed audience of NHK's morning dramas and the "trendy" dramas. However, once they were in a constantly changing global media environment, they naturally began to seek new contents. As creating tailor-made content for them was difficult because of the cost, Korean dramas, which were already verified as popular by female viewers in Asia, were the best choice. Therefore, as one reason that the Korean Wave flowed into Japanese society so rapidly as attractive soft power, we should consider the pull factor of the internal demand for media and contents in Japanese society.

Of course, we do not underestimate the fact that the Korean Wave contributed to Korean society as a soft power and the decision power of Korean society. What I would like to point out here is that although the Korean government and producers have approached the recipients aggressively, the diffusion of the early Korean Wave was impossible without the structural pull power and policy initiative of Japanese society and changes in the citizens who were indifferent to cultural racism and insensitive to the very existence of surrounding countries and their active involvement. Many concerts and cultural events mobilizing popular Korean Wave stars and idol groups were held by the government, but in stricter terms, they primarily served to promote Korea's interests in Japan using the popularity of the Korean Wave dramas among the existing fans rather than creating a new fan groups.

However, it can be said that the inflow of the Korean Wave in Japan, in which multilayered interests are involved, paradoxically gave a sense of crisis and victim mentality to some anti-Korean groups (McLelland 2008, Ito 2013). Those with anti-Korean Wave sentiment toward not only the Korean Wave fans but also TV stations and publishers saw the government as the enemy, and argued that they had forgotten patriotism by devoting themselves to the Korean Wave (Yasuda 2012).¹³ They criticized that innocent middle-aged women who know nothing are driving the Japanese society into crisis by watching Korean dramas all day provided by profit-seeking TV stations without their historical consciousness or social judgment. Then, they call for these women to wake up, appealing to their patriotism. Furthermore, the anti-Korean Wave groups argue that they are the victims and attack not only Korean fans but also the government, television stations, and publishers. However, it can be said that *Manga Kenkanryu* and its sequels written by Yoshinori Kobayashi, the publisher of *Manga Kenkanryu*, Shinyusha, or actor Sosuke Takaoka's anti-Korean Wave comments led a series of demonstrations which were mainly performed in front of Fuji TV, or even the anti-Korean Wave debate itself attracted people's attention because of the influence of *Winter Sonata* as the premise (Sakamoto & Allen 2007).

Among supporters of anti-Korean Wave sentiments, there was a group of women who looked on housewives consuming the Korean Wave-related

goods and traveling and attracting the attention of not only Japanese but even foreign media as enemies betraying national prides and interests. The anti-Korean Wave condemned that “*Kanryu Obasan* (Madam Korean Wave)” should stop their “ignorant, unpatriotic” act. According to Kitahara and Park, “*obasan*, the middle-aged female fans” were most directly damaged by the anti-Korean Wave groups (Kitahara and Park 2014). The anti-Korean Wave groups insisted that the reason why the Korean Wave has brought considerable influence and change to Japanese society and attracted attention as a social phenomenon was a great consumption of the middle-aged female fans” and that it was a “lowbrow” social act which was visible and everyday. Unlike the traditional Japanese subculture which has established itself in the economically alienated hierarchy and generation, or in a very private space, the Korean Wave has become established as a subculture of Japan, being broadcasted on NHK and other major terrestrial media. *Winter Sonata* was rebroadcasted several times in two years, and Korean stars appeared intensively in Japanese TV programs and media. The morning and daytime hours of satellite broadcasting were filled with relatively low-price Korean dramas.

Racist hate speech on the streets that appears when international relations deteriorate is not particularly new. However, a society where racist street demonstrations against a certain ethnic minority group regularly take place in the middle of the city, where the police guard their safety, racist press release reports defending them, and the books on international racist relations written by intellectuals become the best sellers of the publishing industry, would be rare. “Go home to the peninsula now!” and “You can throw a stone to Korean women and/or rape Korean women”¹⁴ were some of the racist phrases used by the anti-Korean Wave groups at the demonstration sites. In such a situation, female Korean Wave fans finally stopped doing Korean Wave cosplay (*kosu-pure*), that is, sharing fan mentality by wearing photographs or goods of Korean drama and stars. Korean Wave cosplay has been put in the back of the closet. On the contrary, the anti-Korean Wave people who had been active anonymously on the Internet appeared to the real society in the form of street demonstrations.

However, when adults were suffering in this way, trendy young people enjoyed the Korean Wave in different ways. They are the children of the generation who watched *Winter Sonata*. “The children of the *Winter Sonata* generation” enjoy the Korean Wave more privately and at a faster speed. They enjoy new songs and dramas with no delay from Korea. Their main interest is K-pop, not Korean dramas that have many episodes and require concentration to watch. They buy cosmetics and clothes themselves on the Internet, and they take trips to Korea reasonably on weekends. They start to learn Korean in middle or high school. They fully enjoy the culture of new media generation, and the culture of mobility.

The New Korean Wave, or the Korean Wave 2.0, led by K-pop which put out idol groups such as KARA and Girls' Generation in front in 2010, shifted its place of activity to the virtual space of new media and caused a new wave among young people. On the other hand, the anti-Korean Wave people appeared in real society, starting with the demonstration of Fuji TV in 2011, slightly after the New Korean Wave. However, many drama fans have already moved to private channels or cultural space like the Internet, not terrestrial broadcasting which the anti-Korean demonstrators had attacked. The women of the bubble economy generation with rich economic power purchase K-pop concert tickets for the entire family and enjoy the New Korean Wave with their sons, daughters, and grandchildren. On the other hand, anti-Korean Wave groups are continuing to shout abusive language at their backs. From this point of view, anti-Korean Wave demonstrations were to publicize their existence to the general citizens and Japanese media rather than direct them at Korean Wave fans.

The fundamental limit of such anachronistic anti-Korean sentiment in Japan is that, unlike resisting the Korean Wave in China and Taiwan, it is hatred toward the Korean Wave. This means that they do not resist, but they hate, confusing patriotism and racism, which comes from the prejudicial historical consciousness. It also follows the norms of old-fashioned masculine sex culture. A representative example is a reproachful condemnation against female Korean Wave fans by the patriotic women of the organization called *Hanadokei* (Flower Clock) (Kitahara, 2013). They condemn the women who enjoy coffee at a Korean Wave café or samgyeopsal at Korean restaurants in Shin-Ōkubo such as Coffee Prince No.1, Dae Jang Geum and Tonchan, where good-looking men who look like Korean idol stars serve, and who attend Korean style hair salons or saunas, as immoral Japanese who lost patriotism. To the patriotic women of *Hanadokei*, the Korean men in Shin-Ōkubo who stimulate these women sexually, or the *Zainichi* Koreans, should be expelled as soon as possible. Shin-Ōkubo appears to the patriotic women as an illegal, liberated area or a battlefield of women who rebel against hypocritical masculine sexual norms. Although they are open-minded to Japanese men who go to Akihabara and enjoy the performance of AKB 48, one of the most famous Japanese girl groups, they cannot tolerate women gathering at Shin-Ōkubo to enjoy the Korean boys' customer service. They shout out moral judgments against female Korean Wave fans: "Awake! Go home and concentrate on child rearing for the country." Their sexist position has things in common with that of a male commentator of a mainstream media and a foreign correspondent who ironically commented that the *Yon-sama* boom in the early 2000s was an outlet of dissatisfaction of leisurely housewives or middle-aged women's sexless marriages.

Many scholars such as Koichi Iwabuchi and Ryuta Itagaki have criticized the ideological fictionality, logical blind spot, and political conservatism of the anti-Korean Wave groups (Iwabuchi 2004, Itagaki 2007). They have warned that extreme exclusion of *Zainichi* Koreans is getting worse by the Korean Wave boom. However, the racists do not care about such critical viewpoints. They took hold of the negative Korean Wave-related best sellers in the publishing industry, emphasized their position as victims in the mainstream media, put the anti-Korean sentiment, which has its root in the past of Korea and Japan, on the tide, and made it into the ideological ground of anti-Korean Wave sentiment. The demonstrations of anti-Korean Wave groups, who had acted anonymously on the Internet, regarded the Korean Wave fandom as an indulgence in an inferior culture of a former colonial country, re-marginalizing Korean Wave fans as cultural minorities.

At the mecca of the Korean Wave in Japan, Shin-Ōkubo, demonstration groups appeared every weekend, and people heard abusive insults like “*Baikokudo*” (Traitor) from loudspeakers, and were surrounded by ten times more police officers than the number of demonstrators. Not only Korean Wave fans but general consumers stopped visiting Shin-Ōkubo. As a result, the income of the food-and-drink establishments and other shops was reduced by half or one-third.¹⁵ Moreover, the owners of the shops, who are *Zainichi* Koreans, suffered from threatening phone calls from the anti-Korean Wave groups. This pressure was also communicated by a group of Bae Yong-joon’s fans, whom the author originally interviewed in 2006. Some interviewees among them, who the author met in 2012, said that they were uncomfortable to go to Shin-Ōkubo and sorry that they caused inconvenience to the society because of their being ignorant of political issues such as Korea and Japan’s history problems and Dokdo (Takeshima). They no longer express their cultural identities with Korean Wave cosplay or files with photos of Korean stars or key holders. They have turned into unnoticed fans “in the closet,” or fans of the past recalling the good times that ended in just a few years.

KOREAN WAVE GOURMETS, CULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL MINORITIES, AND THE RISE OF NEW KOREAN WAVE RALLIES

In China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia, the Korean Wave had already started in the latter half of the 1990s from dramas such as *What is Love All About* and *Star in My Heart*, or dance music such as H.O.T, NRG, Clon, and so on. It had already taken its roots in 2002. In other words, despite

the debut of the singer BoA in 2001 and the release of *Shiri* in 2002, Japan did not experience the early stage of the Korean Wave simultaneously with other Asian nations. Japan intensively purchased and broadcasted Korean dramas in later years, which were much cheaper than the drama production costs in the home country and already recorded high viewing rates in China and Taiwan. Mainstream TV stations prepurchased Korean dramas and invested in and distributed them indiscreetly. Japanese investment companies intervened from the stage of the scenario production to make Korean Wave movies like a theatrical version of TV dramas and use the Korean Wave stars. They completely changed the map of the Korean Wave. In fact, Japan was the largest Korean Wave market in the world until 2012. Japan lost that position to China in the following year, but it was thanks to such explosive consumption in Japan that the Korean Wave became known as a global cultural phenomenon. Therefore, due to such an explosive influx, viewers became accustomed to the appearance of dramas and idols of the country, which was the object of indifference and prejudice, all day on the television in the living room, and as a way to reduce the production cost, many “cheap” Korean dramas were imported. It is well-known that some people in the entertainment industry began to have a sense of crisis in such a situation.¹⁶

On the other hand, those who make positive evaluations of the Korean Wave emphasize that the Korean Wave offered new contents for alienated middle-aged female viewers and that the explosive popularity of *Winter Sonata* and Bae Yong-joon proved that global culture in Japanese society could not necessarily only be derived from the West, but Asia as well. They also emphasize the necessity and importance of more open and diverse cultural exchanges. Early Korean drama fans learned that there were people who enjoy Korean dramas every day and had similar cultural desires and followed the news of Korean stars in many countries such as Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Mongolia, and other Asia countries as well as Canada, the United States, and South America, and these fans started cross-border exchanges. They hold *beon’gaeting*, instant fan meetings, learn foreign languages such as English and Korean to communicate, and absorb the outside world through dramas. As a result, marginalized Asian women came to be concerned about their own lives. In other words, the Korean Wave fandom has gone beyond Japan and expanded as a transnational cultural common view in Asia, and the recipients have continued the process of confirming their transnational cultural identity through this process, being actively engaged in the cultural and human exchanges through the frequent communication with friends they met newly through fan activities (Lee 2008). Furthermore, the active engagement of Korean Wave fans in the transnational cultural flows and human exchanges often leads to concern in the issues of various forms of minorities such as ethnic minority groups, migrant workers, and sexual minorities.¹⁷ In

this respect, I believe that the Korean Wave in Japan can have character as a social movement.

South Korean mainstream mass media discusses nationalistic aspects or economic effects of the Korean Wave, lamenting that Korean Wave dramas are not broadcasted on Japanese fixed channels such as terrestrial broadcasting or K-pop idols cannot participate in *Kohaku-uta-gassen* (Red and White Singing Contest). However, they overlook the cultural dynamism, that the Korean Wave is creating communication among the various social groups in Japanese society. Japan, along with China, still leads in Korean Wave consumption. However, more important elements of the Korean Wave in Japan exist inside the Japanese society. As the expression “Japanese style of Korean Wave” suggests, the Korean Wave in Japan has been localized for the Japanese audience, coexisting between ambivalent feelings of Asian intimacy with Korean culture and Western-oriented cultural longing (Mori 2004). Through such localization processes, the Korean Wave in Japan most dramatically revealed the racist discrimination faced by a new soft power of a non-Western society in a so-called Western-oriented developed country. As a non-hegemonic culture of resistance, the Korean Wave keeps breaking the boundary between minority ethnic culture of *Zainichi* Koreans, who are attacked by racists, and non-Western foreign culture enjoyed by ordinary Japanese citizens.

The best visual confirmation of such considerations would be a menu of family restaurants or Japanese-style pubs, *izakaya*, with affiliated restaurants all over Japan. Most ordinary people do not read a book like *Manga Kenkan-ryu*, the bible of peoples supporting the anti-Korean Wave sentiment, or see a website like 2 Channel. At the same time, they are not core fans either. They do not watch Korean dramas or K-pop in front of their TVs or PCs everyday, or travel in Seoul, looking for Korean language schools. Keeping a certain distance from the political controversy over Japan and South Korea and enjoying the Korean Wave widely and shallowly, they buy and eat *tteokbokki* and *samgyeopsal*, which are Korean Wave gourmets. Their actions could be termed the Third Korean Wave as a new cultural movement, which is neither anti-Korean demonstrations of Japan's right-wing social groups nor counterdemos of social groups opposing them. Today, *bibimbap*, *jijimi* (pajeon), *japchai*, or *jjige* are regular items for many restaurants. Kimchi is increasing its presence in the pickles market, and kimchi fried rice is a popular menu for school lunch.¹⁸

This does not mean Korean Wave gourmets are particularly interested in social movements or exceptionally pro-Korean. However, it seems that the Korean Wave has brought a certain change to Japanese people's views on Korean society and offensive racial Asian views, which have been deeply rooted in Japanese society. A typical example of this is *yakiniku-joshikai*

(girls-only grilled meat party), which is still being held by women at Shin-Ōkubo, where the anti-Korean Wave demonstrations are taking place. College students, office workers, and housewives, regardless of their occupation, enjoy samgyeopsal, shōju, makgeolli, and raw garlic during daytime, casually crossing over the sexist norm of drinking culture in Japan.¹⁹ Many websites explain the manners of grilled meat dates for girls or how to liven up the mood, which is different from the old notion of “*yakiniku dēto*,” which implied “intimate relationship” between a man and a woman or explicit sexual connotation for the bubble boom generation. Before the arrival of the Korean Wave in Japan, *yakiniku shokudo* (bistro) was a smelly, shabby, cheap eating-house run by *Zainichi*, and *yakiniku dēto* suggested a couple had a meal at midnight or early morning after spending a night together. The couple didn’t care of garlic breath and “improper” table manners, using his or her chopsticks to pick *yakiniku* from the dishes and feed the partner. In other words, the Korean Wave in Japan sways in reconciliation and tension; what continues without change is the communication space through the food culture of individuals and social groups, who are not interfered by political campaigns or mass media. From the peak time of the Korean drama boom, many Japanese people have wondered why Korean dramas have so many meal scenes. Now, it can be said that the Korean Wave of Japan is searching for the answer by itself.

Furthermore, in the Third Korean Wave, it can be expected that the spread of social movements, for example, sending a message of resistance against the racist anti-Korean Wave demonstrations, or trying to overcome prejudice against not only *Zainichi* Koreans but also diverse social minorities, was triggered by anti-Korean demonstrations. According to the announcement by the organization called *Norikoe-net* formed by progressive intellectuals such as Chizuko Ueno, Makoto Sataka, and other social activists in August 2013, 161 hate-speech demonstrations were held from March 2013 to August 2013.²⁰ The stages of the demonstrations were Shin-Ōkubo in Tokyo and Tsuruhashi in Osaka. The main activity of *Norikoe-net* is to inform society about the danger of hate speech. Although they severely criticize the exclusion of *Zainichi* Koreans and anti-Korean Wave groups, the reason and the purpose of the foundation of the group was that they had felt that they could no longer keep silent against the racism, which had been increasingly becoming extreme. They call for cultural solidarity to the general public as well as critical intellectuals on the Internet and TV. Because of this, they are often attacked by so-called “Right-wing citizen’s groups based on ultra-exclusionist nationalism and anti-foreignism” such as *Zaitokukai*, right-wing organizations, racists, and so on.

Women’s Action Network (WAN) is also a good example. From the standpoint of feminism, WAN has introduced a new image of women based on independent and strong mothers appearing in Korean dramas. In this way,

the Korean Wave in Japan began as a new soft power that brought a win-win relationship to the two societies, and through anti-Korean Wave rallies, anti-Korean Wave demonstrations and counterdemonstrations, as well as production of resistance discussions, not only Korea but also diverse social groups of a recipient country could become great threats and bring about confrontations. However, through the revealing process of the confrontation, the Third Korean Wave rallies have emerged. This reflects on Western-oriented, racist cultural consumption that has led the Japanese society so far and causes interest in various kinds of social minorities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the evolving process of the Korean Wave in Japan in the past fifteen years based on the concept of a non-hegemonic soft power's resistance of a global minority culture and negotiation power. As a transnational Asian culture, recognizing the Korean Wave as an interactive cultural exchange is essential. It should not be discussed from only one way, from Korea or Japan, or focus intensively on the government, production groups, or the fans. Although many studies on the Korean Wave have been done so far, Korean media still keep praising the Korean Wave as a national brand of the Korean government and cultural industry. On the contrary, Japanese critics have ironically repeated the same argument that "the Korean Wave is just tracing Samsung's global strategy," or "Japanese Samsung complex," over the past fifteen years. Both discussions overlook the importance of interactive cultural exchanges of the Korean Wave.

Since 2015, the violent anti-Korean Wave demonstrations have stalled and kept a low profile. Meanwhile, starting with the controversy over the agreement of Japanese military sexual slavery during the Second World War, Japanese and Korean society abandoned future-oriented reconciliation by Korean Wave diplomacy, and is heading toward an era of endless confrontation again. With such a political situation, some scholars and mainstream media are still trying to see the present and future of the Korean Wave only in the logic of the past. They pull back or resolve the Korean Wave to the confrontation of colonial rule and territorial dispute which can be said to be the origin of the anti-Korean theory. They tend to see the Korean Wave only in the history of Korea-Japan relations which repeats patterns of deterioration and improvement.²¹

However, the political, economic determinist position does not understand the importance of the Korean Wave in Japan, which has developed and evolved into various forms in the past ten years; that is, it has been formed as a means of communication among social groups with different values. This chapter considered, while keeping a distance from the one-sided and

exclusive position, that the evolution process of the Korean Wave in Japan experienced in the past ten years is the result of interactive cultural exchanges by multiple agents between Korea and Japan. In addition, it considered that the Korean Wave has increased its depth continuously through communication among not only politicians and the people in the cultural industry but also ordinary citizens including Korean Wave fans, and has raised a new awareness of the issue focusing on the emergence of new recipient groups and communication processes, in three stages: the Korean Wave; the anti-Korean Wave; and the rise of Korean Wave gourmets.

While the Korean Wave imitates Western hegemonic soft power, it also has an inclination toward the resistance of minority culture located at the periphery. This ambivalence creates interactive exchanges between the producers and the recipients, or dialogue among various interest groups in the recipient country. The Korean Wave in Japan shows how the global and transnational cultures, where the recipient country's power groups often initiate or cope with the cultural advance of the producing country, exert their dynamism in the acceptance process. Moreover, the revolutionary change in the Korean Wave in Japan means, as mentioned above, that the food culture of a minority ethnic group of a surrounding country, which had been eliminated and discriminated, has become a part of everyday meals of many ordinary Japanese families. This has penetrated to school lunches, taverns, and convenience stores all over Japan and, as a result, the Korean Wave has become remarkably visible. Moreover, the fact that the Korean Wave has brought about a change in Japanese society's perception of global culture may have great implications for other countries.

Today, with the advancement of globalization, the number of foreign migrant workers is increasing, and what the phenomenon accompanying the Korean Wave in Japan implies is not limited to Japan-Korea relations or Asian countries. For countries that have experienced relationships of colonial occupation in the past, and for the people who were from the colonized country and then become a minority group of the colonizer society (again, in this case Japan), there is always the possibility of confronting racist cultural arguments. The evolution process of the Korean Wave as a new soft power in Japan shows how racist cultural arguments can create invisible violence, how counterarguments are evoked, and how they engage in conflicts and disputes.

NOTES

1. The term "Korean Wave" first appeared in China in 1997. It started to be actively used when *Beijing Youth Daily News* introduced H.O.T fandom in 1999.

Since H.O.T's live performances became popular among young people in 2000, the Chinese government imposed sanctions prohibiting the performance of Korean singers against Korean popular culture imports. For details, see Han (2013).

2. *Manga Kenkanryu* (Comic Book, the Anti-Korean Wave) only introduces the Korean Wave boom and *Winter Sonata* in the epilogue of its special edition, not discussing the Korean Wave much. It attacks the media and middle-aged female fans of the bubble boom generation who lead the "incomprehensible boom" and it asserts that the *kenkanryuronsya*, that is, a group of peoples who support the anti-Korean Wave sentiments were rather victims alienated from the mainstream media. Ironically, however, this book has received the most benefit from the Korean Wave boom, and it is said that it became a best seller exceeding 200,000 copies a week after launch.

3. For example, the main social factors leading up to the foundation of *Zaitokukai* that is, Association of Citizens against the Special Privileges of the *Zainichi*, are the relative economic and hierarchical alienation and an accumulated feeling of refusal of the *Zainichi* Korean community felt by the chairman Makoto Sakurai and other core members. For details, see Yoshida (2012).

4. In particular, the demonstration by *Zaitokukai* held in front of the Kyoto Chosen Daiichi Elementary School in 2009 was a human rights violation act which drew international as well as domestic attention. *The New York Times* introduced the critical viewpoints of Japanese society that considers *Zaitokukai* as Western racist "Skin-heads" or Neo-Nazism, and many of these groups are composed of young people who have chronic unemployment problems, and impute the cause of personal frustration to foreigners. See *The New York Times*, "Japanese Court Fines Rightist Group over Protests at a School in Kyoto." October 8, 2013 A10 (L).

5. According to interviews and questionnaire surveys on Korean drama fans conducted by the author from 2005 to 2006, most of them did not mind publications such *Kenkanryu* and messages on the Internet. On the other hand, they clearly showed a critical position against TV stations, which pursued commercial profits and targeted Korean Wave fans as entertainment materials, and the advertisements of extreme-rightist weekly and monthly magazines in the train, which ridiculed Korean Wave fans, aiming to produce and expand the anti-Korean sentiment. They also explained why they were not interested in Japanese old-fashioned dramas and variety programs, or why they were enjoying new contents different from existing TV programs. In the meantime, they were skeptical about the mainstream TV stations and mass media communicating negative images about South Korea and *Zainichi* Koreans. Some of the fans held meetings regularly to learn about history and Korean and Japanese society as they had recognized that they had been indifferent or misunderstood about the North Korea-South Korea relations, the historical issues of Japan and South Korea, and *Zainichi* Koreans and so on. In addition, all the interviewees emphasized that they made judgments and decisions with clear subjective consciousness as consumers. For details, see Lee (2008).

6. Heitosupīchi-to reisizumu-wo norikoeru kokusai nettowāku Norikoe-netto (*Norikoe-net*, the International Network to Overcome Hate Speech and Racism) <<http://www.norikoenet.org>>. The occurrence of frequent anti-Korean demonstrations caused the hidden Japanese racist discrimination to surface and became violent.

In response, they are fighting against human rights violations and discrimination via Internet broadcasting and websites. Specific activities are described in the text of this chapter.

7. Toru Hashimoto vs. *Zaitokukai* Makoto Sakurai, October 20 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACRxHAC-tyg>> Toru Hashimoto, mayor of Osaka vs. Makoto Sakurai, chairman of *Zaitokukai* (Accessed August 18, 2015).

8. Park Jin-young, the founder of major Korean music production company JYP entertainment, in his lecture at Harvard University in 2007, stressed that it is unreasonable to associate the Korean Wave with nationalism or associate traditional Korean music such as *pansori* with hip hop, and therefore, people should stop discussing the Korean Wave in such a context.

9. Although President Kim Dae-jung gradually opened South Korea to Japanese pop culture, the impact that it gave to Japan at that time was limited. Until the Korean drama had become popular in 2003, Korean popular culture was only for the “my boom” generation, which was screened at mini theaters even for commercial movies such as *Shiri* (1999, Kang Je-gyu).

10. “*Hana-no shitaga nagaku nacchau, Shusyo, fuyusona joyūno hōmon-ni*” (Isn’t she pretty, Mr. Prime Minister? The Visiting of the Actress of *Winter Sonata*) http://www.shikoku-np.co.jp/national/culture_entertainment/20040722000399 *Shikoku Shinbunsha*, July 28, 2004 18:53 (Accessed August 18, 2015). Choi Ji-woo was Korea Representative Ambassador for Public Relations in 2005, “Japan-Korea Friendship Year.” In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Korea appointed Yang Mi-kyeong of *Jewel in the Palace* as the Korean Agriculture Food Export Public Relations Ambassador in 2005 and Ryu Si-won as a PR ambassador to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism from 2006 to 2008.

11. For a detailed study on the early Korean Wave fandom in Japan, see Lee (2008).

12. asahi.com: Amazon.co.jp Washo sōgō (Japanese Best Sellers), August 15–21 <<http://book.asahi.com/ranking/TKY200508260242.html>> (Accessed August 29, 2015).

13. “2013.5.26 Nikkan kokkō danzestu kokumin daikōshin” (The National Parade for Severing Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Korea) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5GpknduDAI>> (Accessed August 18, 2015). Various videos of hate speech have been uploaded on YouTube and are causing international controversy.

14. “2013.3.24 Nikkan dankō demo in Osaka” (Demonstration for the Severing of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Korea) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7Dbq8gX-J8>> (accessed August 18, 2015)

15. I interviewed *Zainichi* Koreans who operate Korean restaurants, and shops around them in Shin-Ōkubo in 2012. See also *Shinjuku-ku Shinbun* “Kanryu būmu wa chijimi . . . chūgokutokuju ha kieta!” (The Korean Wave boom shrunk. Chinese Special Demand disappeared). <<http://www.shinjuku-shinbun.co.jp/images/2012/121025.pdf>> (accessed August 29, 2015).

16. Asahi Shinbun digital “Ryōdomondai, han‘kanryu’ . . . nikkankankei-no korekara” (Territorial issues, the Anti-Korean Wave . . . The Future of Japan-Korea Relations) August 9, 2011 <<http://webronza.asahi.com/politics/themes/2911080800002.html>> (accessed August 29, 2015).

17. Norikoe-netto, Heitosupīchi-to reisizumu-wo norikoeru kokusai “nettowāku.” (Norikoe-net, the International Network to Overcome Hate Speech and Racism “Network”) <<https://www.norikoenet.org/network>> (accessed August 29, 2015). “Norikoe-net Murasaki-no Kaze” promotes human rights protection activities of sexual minorities in Japan and Korea. “Norikoe-net Warera” which was formed by volunteers in Tottori prefecture, aims to support those oppressed by racial discrimination.

18. Sukiya “Sukiya-no ‘Nabeyakibibinbateshoku’ shinhatubai!!” (Sukiya’s New Menu, “Hot Stone Pot Bibibap”!!) <<http://www.sukiya.jp/news/2015/03/20150326.html>> (accessed August 29, 2015); Tōyōkeizai onrain “Amai kimuchi-de daiyakushin, kakumeiji pikkurusu-no yabō” (Great March of Sweet Kimchi, the Ambition of Pikkurusu Starting a Revolution) February 9, 2012 <http://toyokeizai.net/articles/-/8533/> (accessed August 29, 2015), and Suginami-ku “Kyūshoku shokuzai kōkai shisutemutakaido higashi shōgakkō” [School Lunch Food Reserves Open System] <<http://www.suginami-school.ed.jp/kyushoku/View.do;jsessionid=B424493B5632FF0AA5FCBC617828DF7E?school=142942&ynd=2015%2F05%2F25>> (accessed August 29, 2015).

19. Changes in the recognition about *yakiniku* and *yakiniku* date can be confirmed in Itami Jyuzo’s *Tanpopo* (1985) and Gu Suyon’s *Yakiniku The Movie Purugogi* (2007). In the former, the *yakiniku* date suggests that the heroine and the hero have entered into a sexual relationship, while in the latter, the *yakiniku* date is depicted as fashionable but at the same time, it shows the *Zainichi* Koreans’ identity and nostalgic sensibility.

20. “Heito supīchi gaisen, chihō-demo zenkoku-de hantoshi-ni 161 ken” (Hate Speech Street Demonstrations Occur in the Country, Too. 161 times for a Half Year Nationwide), *Asahi Shinbun*, November 6, 2013, Kōdōhoshu ākaibu purojekuto “tōkeisiryō” (Activist Conservatism Archive Project “Statistics Data”) <<http://www.acap.link/>>, and Norikoenetto TV “kakusansuru heito supīchi” (Expanding Hate Speech) Nakazawa Kei <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyyWq-3X5LE>> (accessed August 18, 2015).

21. Korea MBN Broadcasting, *Sōnggon Dakyu Ch’oigoda* (Documentary of Success, The Best), Episode 192, The 70th Anniversary of Liberation Special Program, “Kukche Hyōpyōkūi Hallyurūl Ilguda” (Cultivate the Korean Wave for International Cooperation), August 15, 2015.

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Chapter 11

The Unscripted Format Trade in a New Era of the Korean Wave

A Comparative Analysis of the Chinese Remaking of the Korean Reality TV Show, Dad! Where Are You Going?

Ju Oak Kim and Luling Huang

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese television industry's interest in Korean reality shows was sparked by the remarkable success of the remade music contest program, *I Am a Singer* (hereafter *Singer*) in 2013.¹ According to Tencent, one of China's portal websites, more than 200 million hits were associated with video clips of the remade show during its first season (Chung, 2013). Later in that year, Hunan TV, inspired by the success of *Singer*, made another deal with MBC to localize the reality show, *Dad! Where Are You Going?* (hereafter *Dad*) and created another nationwide sensation in the Chinese media industry, reaching its highest viewer ratings among Korean programs, either imported to or remade in China (Chung, 2013).

This back-to-back penetration of Korean reality formats to China shows us that interregional media connections have taken place in the context of industrial and structural transformations. Korean and Chinese content providers have developed closer partnerships in the preproduction stages, and have moved beyond the era when Chinese broadcasters merely bought Korean media content and aired it without sophisticated production exchanges. Chinese media professionals have become more interested in remade shows' advanced production value, and have thus adopted the hybrid form of a reality and talk show (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2013).

Understanding that Korean reality formats have brought about important transformations in the East Asian media industries, this chapter attempts to explore the following questions. What is the social context of the Chinese television industry that remakes Korean reality shows? What are the similarities and differences between the Korean reality show, *Dad* and the Chinese

remaking of the show? Through a comparative analysis of Korean and Chinese versions of the reality show *Dad*, this chapter argues that Korean-Chinese connections in television production have shaped a new direction for the Korean Wave phenomenon through the localization of Korean popular content, which has strengthened trans-local media connections within the East Asian cultural community.

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM RECONSIDERED

With the development of global media systems, the transnational transactions of television programs have been a major issue in media studies. During the 1970s and early 1980s, some political economists criticized the dominance of American content in the global media market (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1975; H. Schiller, 1976). Dorfman and Mattelart (1975) argued that American media texts, such as Disney comics, are an important tool in spreading capitalism to the rest of the world and encouraging audiences in underdeveloped countries to accept the dominance of American culture. Schiller (1976) further elaborated the cultural imperialism thesis by pointing out that one-way flows of media texts from Western to non-Western countries have expanded to other culture industries, including food, music, and fashion (p. 15). In his view, American values have occupied “the realm of individual and social consciousness in the penetrated provinces” in the expansion of economic penetration to the cultural sphere (Schiller, 1976, p. 8).

Several postcolonial scholars have maintained that the core-periphery model overestimates American domination over the rest of the world (Ang, 1995; Appadurai, 1996; Straubhaar, 1991). Based on the presumption that audiences consume television content for their own needs, the dynamics between media production and audiences has become an issue in studying media flows at the global level (Herman & McChesney, 1997). Ang (1995) previously claimed that no media texts can possibly be consumed by all viewers within and across societies. Similarly, Appadurai (1996) underscored the active participation of regional audiences consuming American media content, identifying the disjunctive flow of media cultures and practices in the global media system. Straubhaar (1991) coined the term “cultural proximity” to refer to the phenomenon that local audiences prefer to consume media contents produced by neighboring countries, based on cultural-linguistic dimensions (p. 39). In his perspective, regional preference has intensified in the growth of the global television market; the reinforcement of locality in the television industry has led to the regionalization of entertainment programs. He critically pointed out that, in spite of this distinctive tendency,

globalization theorists often overlook the role of local producers in global media production and consumption.

The presumption that social and cultural ideologies and backgrounds are considerably involved in the audience's television-watching behavior helps explain the popularity of Korean popular content within East and Southeast Asian societies. Some East Asian media scholars have discussed the ways in which Korean cultural products have penetrated the regional market. Huat and Iwabuchi (2008) asserted that Korean media content has become popular by incorporating Western cultures and values into an Asian context. They understood "cultural affinity" as a new impetus for promoting interregional media flows, insofar as East and Southeast Asian audiences are aware that they are connected to each other through the consumption of Korean television dramas (Huat & Iwabuchi, 2008, p. 6).

The advancement of communication technologies, however, has discouraged media scholars from employing "cultural proximity" to observe media flows in the global society (Straubhaar, 1991, p. 39). The Internet has enabled the expansion of local cultures into various societies, regardless of whether or not they share cultural boundaries; the Korean Wave phenomenon that has expanded to the United States, Europe, and Latin America, has become an example that diminishes the validity of this thesis (Hong, 2013). Understanding the global expansion of Korean media content beyond the Asian region, the strengthened relationship between Korea and China in media production has become an important subject of study to understand, moving beyond cultural proximity and cultural affinity. Huat (2010) argued that the integration of East Asian television markets brought "the possibility of [a] 'pan-East Asian' identity," which is constructed through the consumption of East Asian popular culture (p. 221). However, East Asian audiences have very different cultural norms, as well as some common characteristics. Therefore, cultural differences, in addition to cultural similarities, should be considered as a major driving force in establishing close relationships among East Asian media industries.

REALITY TV FORMATS ACROSS BORDERS

The increase of television format trades—licensing the local adoption of television shows—has recently drawn scholarly attention in global media studies (Chalaby, 2011, 2016; Moran, 2006). Chalaby (2011) noted that the fundamental transformations of industrial structures, including "the emergence of four exceptional formats (*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, and *Idol*), the formation of a programming market, the rise of the independent production sector, and the globalization of information

flows” (p. 293), led to the rapid growth of the global format market in the television industry. The television format trade market has been dominated by U.S. media providers for nearly half a century: in their early stages, American game shows led to the TV format revolution. American reality TV programming later became another impetus for continuing the format business at the transnational level (Chalaby, 2016). Moran (2006) emphasized that the multichannel environment of television systems, such as the Internet, satellite, and cable channels, has reshaped the rise and decline of certain television programming genres. As an example, Moran (2006) mentioned the decreasing demand of expensive dramas and current affairs programs in the United Kingdom and Australia; instead, certain types of television programs that could be recycled and transferred have become spotlighted in television production. The rapidly changing media ecology thus invigorates local broadcasters to prefer format-adopted programs over finished programs because the localization of exceptional formats is beneficial to adopters in “secur[ing] a degree of financial and cultural insurance not easily available in the multichannel environment” (Moran, 2006, p. 11).

Along with global media market trends, inter-East Asian connections in the TV format business have been recently promoted. Keane (2004) asserted that the rise of television formats has complicated the long-standing relationship between core and periphery countries in the global media system. In Keane’s (2004) view, the format takes a central role in proliferating the dynamics of production and consumption within Asian media industries. In particular, the Korean media industry has actively attempted to expand transnational business by utilizing the Korean Wave, and by going beyond selling finished programs (Jin, 2016). Korean broadcasters have developed co-production systems with neighboring partners in order to attract foreign investment and enter regional markets. We revisit Keane’s (2004) assertion that changes in the global media system, such as digitally restructured delivery platforms and multichannel environments, intensify interactions between local societies, as well as diversify the production and distribution of media content in Asia. Deep and invigorating transformations in East Asian media have received little attention, in spite of their impacts on the global media industry. By understanding the Korean-Chinese media collaboration, this chapter underscores the regional dynamics that Korean media culture has created.

METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the ways in which Korean reality TV shows have been remade by Chinese production actors, this chapter employs a comparative analysis of the television program, “*Dad! Where Are You Going?*” aired on

MBC in Korea from January 6, 2013 to January 19, 2014 and Hunan TV in mainland China from October 11, 2013 to December 27, 2013. This program is a Korean reality show format that has not only caused a huge sensation in Chinese society, but has also created an impulse that has proliferated Chinese-Korean collaboration in the production stage. All episodes of the first season were chosen as the subject of analysis from both broadcasting companies.² Primary data were gathered from the U.S.-based video streaming service website, TBOgo.com, and the official YouTube channel of Hunan TV. News articles covering the program were also analyzed to examine how media texts have created a social discussion of transborder television production.

Each program was subjected to textual analysis as “an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3). Fairclough (2003) developed a textual analysis in the form of a qualitative social analysis. Closely associated with Halliday’s (1994) analytical methods, this approach is employed to analyze television texts as “social processes” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 6). Fairclough (2003) thus examined “distinctive patterns of co-occurrence or collocation between keywords and other words” (p. 6). Drawing from Fairclough’s (2003) way of analyzing media texts, this chapter mainly focuses on conversations among celebrities and visual elements, including subtitles and shots. In the reality show, *Dad! Where Are You Going?*, conversations and subtitles are substantial elements in showing the process of developing the father and son’s relationship. The programs were separately analyzed, according to the broadcasting companies. Based on this information, similarities and differences between the Korean and Chinese programs are discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

CREATING KOREAN-STYLE REALITY SHOWS

During the past decade, the Korean television industry underwent a significant transformation in reality show production. In the earlier stages, broadcasting companies put more emphasis on producing slapstick comedy shows in their studios, which cut down on production costs. In 2005, however, the huge success of the reality-based variety show, *Infinite Challenge*, filming all scenes on location, profoundly reshaped the landscape of reality show production in the Korean television industry. Similar to a documentary, this reality show initially used dozens of cameras in order to record every movement of the guests. The directors and writers reprocessed the characters and stories of the episodes in the postproduction stage. In this process, the subtitles and sound effects became important elements in creating humor for these shows.

The popularity of *Infinite Challenge* changed the landscape of Korean reality show production, from performing fictional characters in the studio to

characterizing celebrities' personalities on location. As such, Korean audiences have become accustomed to consuming the "pseudo-real" everyday lives of celebrities offstage in television programming. In an interview with the *Hankyoreh* (a daily newspaper), Young-Seok Na, a reality show director of the Korean cable channel tvN, claimed that Korean audiences no longer want to watch reality in television reality shows (Lee, 2014). Rather, they long for pseudo-reality, which makes them believe it is reality. Korean audiences, who feel exhausted and stressed out by social realities, want to consume pseudo-reality in reality shows, either as a healing process or as an escape. As a result, the notion of realism, which is one of the major traits in reality show production, has been rearticulated, blurring the boundary between reality and fantasy.

The introduction of pseudo-reality was followed by the hybrid form of documentary and variety show formats. *Singer* could be a representative example in understanding the blurred distinction between reality and pseudo-reality in current Korean reality show production. This program brought together seven top-class vocalists to compete against one another, and invited spectators to determine the ranking of the singers' performances. During the show, television viewers could observe these celebrities offstage, where the cameras in the waiting rooms and backstage recorded the tension and anxiety of the guests, before and after their performances. These offstage scenes gave audiences the pleasure of peeping at the candid faces of the celebrities. The behind-the-scenes of music performances allowed larger audiences to fully immerse themselves in the show.

Dad includes similar strategies as *Singer*, in that handheld cameras reveal the celebrities' personal moments. The show provides a yearlong story in terms of how a trip can salvage the relationship between a father and his child. The main narrative of the show involves observing how five male celebrities and their children spend their times in the countryside. These fathers, who are occupied with their work, do not spend enough time with their children. Hence, their short overnight itinerary gives the audience a glimpse into the personal lives of the celebrities. This show initially attracted Korean audiences by bringing celebrities' families onto primetime television. Later, however, the show enriched the public discussion on fatherhood, child-rearing, and the reality TV format among viewers.

In the first episode of the show, five male celebrities were interviewed with regard to what made them decide to appear on the show. These scenes helped the audience understand the reason the director cast the main characters of the program. Most of them have not built good relationships with their children for various reasons. For example, Dong-il Sung, a 50-year-old actor, said in his interview that he had been abused by his father during his childhood (Kim & Yeoh, 2013a). The absence of a father in his boyhood caused him to have

difficulties in communicating with his son. His interview was followed by a scene where the director of the show had visited his house (Kim & Yeoh, 2013a). The actor's son burst out crying when the staff walked into his room (Kim & Yeoh, 2013a). In that situation, the father suddenly shouted at his son instead of talking to him empathetically (Kim & Yeoh, 2013a). As the storyteller, the show director inserted these scenes to emphasize the celebrity father's unfamiliarity with childrearing. Another cast member, Min-Soo Yoon, who is a 34-year-old singer, usually performs at concerts during the night and sleeps during the day. Due to his unusual daily work pattern, his son thought of his father as a tenant for a long time. During his interview explaining their strange relationship, a long shot of the father resting on his bed was overlapped with his son playing a console game alone (Kim & Yeoh, 2013a). These interviews helped the audience understand the celebrity fathers' feelings when they discovered unexpected traits about their kids during the trip.

In *Dad*, dozens of handheld cameras were used to record all of the guests individually during the whole trip. The hybrid form of the documentary and onstage show allowed Korean television directors to highlight the reality of the edited footage in the postproduction stage. Directors even installed unmanned cameras and turned off the lights in the rooms to record their private conversations during the night. These production settings, including the unmanned cameras, the absence of light, and the appearance of children, induce viewers to believe that the conversations between the fathers and their kids are genuine. One example is a conversation between Minsoo Yoon and his son, Hoo Yoon, in a tent (Kim & Yeoh, 2013b). When the boy asked his father about his indifference, the camera was set up in the corner of the tent, and the resolution of the scene was unclear (Kim & Yeoh, 2013b). Due to this preset angle, the audience could believe that they were eavesdropping on this conversation in real life.

Korean viewers tend to forget their distressed, busy, bustling, everyday lives and obtain emotional healing while consuming reality-based variety shows on Sunday nights. As such, observing genuine characters in a natural setting has thus become a new trend in Korean reality-based television production. *Dad* also received recognition among other competitive programs when Hoo Yoon repeatedly exhibited his warm character throughout numerous episodes. Some Korean parents have enthusiasm for their children's education. Hence, in the Gangnam district of Seoul, children already experience excessive competition at the elementary school level. In such a "dog-eat-dog" society, children are taught to become selfish in order to survive the stiff competition. This climate is related to the social problems of school bullying and adolescent suicide. Therefore, the appearance of a young boy character who cares about others and respects his elders has greatly resonated with the national public, and in addition, has brought about the need to strengthen

humanistic education in society (Seo, 2014). The monthly magazine, *GQ Korea*, selected him as “Person of the Year” in December 2013, and noted the following reason for doing so:

A plump boy in the first grade did greater than hundreds of members of the National Assembly who shouted their efforts for the nation. . . . Above all, his words, facial expressions, thoughts, and behaviors are more beautiful than we expected. . . . How can we be a good adult to him? (“The person,” 2013)

The Nielsen Media Research Institute announced that the main viewers of the show are females in their 20s, 40s, and 50s (Kim, 2013). These data indicate that women who do not shoulder the burden of childcare are enthusiastic about the show. *Dad* provides scenes that fill these main viewers with vicarious satisfaction. For example, there was a scene in which a six-year-old boy, Junsu, wrote the word “singer” on the blackboard while his father, Jong-Hyuk Lee, was setting up a tent in a classroom (Kim & Yeoh, 2013c). In this scene, the director inserted a flashback in which the boy had written his own name incorrectly on the previous trip (Kim & Yeoh, 2013c). Because he was not literate at the beginning of the show, the audience could follow his growth every Sunday. Similarly, other child members of the show lost their upper teeth and increased in stature throughout the year.

The consistent and continuous stories of these celebrities and their children have resulted in the construction of para-social relationships between the audience and the characters. In this setting, some loyal viewers have even referred to themselves as the “LAN cable mother,” or they have called the children in the program “LAN cable sons or daughters.” These new terms, referring to the virtually constructed intimacy between viewers and celebrity characters, show that serialized storytelling and the production style of the reality show allow the national audience to construct pseudo-relationships with celebrities.

A CHINESE CASE: “NOTHING NEGATIVE”

The Chinese broadcaster Hunan TV imported *Dad* from MBC in early 2013 and broadcast it from October 2013 to December 2013. After Hunan TV purchased the format of the program from MBC for 11 million yuan (Zuo & Song, 2015), it created a Chinese version of the show (Li, 2014). Xie Dikui, who had gained his reputation from another Chinese reality show, *Bian Xing Ji* (The Metamorphosis), was chosen to direct the Chinese version of *Dad* (Li, 2014; Zhang, 2014). The director argued that his show was “more localized”

than the Chinese remake of *Singer*, highlighting the difference between the two localized shows in the production setting. *Dad* was mainly composed of scenes shot outdoors, whereas *Singer* was an indoor singing contest (Li, 2013). The Chinese production team carefully selected six shooting places across mainland China to bring new experiences of local areas to the national audience (Li, 2014). In addition, compared to the original version, the Chinese show focused more on a documentary style of shooting and included more interviewing scenes of the fathers and kids so as to provide audiences with emotional moments (Li, 2013).

Another point to mention is that the Chinese news media largely described the first season of the remade show as a “zero negative comment” experience (*ling cha ping*). The first season received a high “favorable degree” (89%), according to a study based on user data gathered from the largest Chinese microblogging website, *Sina Weibo* (Datatopia, 2013). The degree was higher than that of any other popular reality show in the nation, such as Zhejiang TV’s *The Voice of China*, and Jiangsu TV’s *If You Are the One* (Datatopia, 2013). Episode 10 of the first season had a record-breaking rating point of 5.3 and a share of 23.22%, which became the most-watched television show in mainland China in 2013 (Duan, 2013; Xu, 2013). Online viewing reached over 2.5 billion hits by the end of 2013 (Xu, 2013). On *Sina Weibo*, there were 40 million posts about the show by late December 2013. The second and third seasons continued to show success in 2014 and 2015. The title sponsorship fee increased from 28 million yuan for the first season, to the second season’s 312 million yuan, and to the third season’s 500 million yuan (Li, 2016; Wong, 2013).

Such groundbreaking popularity of the show can be interpreted in connection with the relaxing and ending of the one-child policy and concern over fatherhood in contemporary Chinese society. Contemporary China has entered an era where the government has considered loosening its decades-old social control ruling—the one-child policy in urban areas.³ The loosening and ending of the one-child policy has provided a broader audience market for children and entertainment products. In this light, some Chinese media scholars see the popularity of *Dad* as a reflection of social change with regard to childrearing. Guo and Dong (2014) claimed that the potential target audience of the reality show includes three generations: the ready-for-childbearing generation who was born in the 1990s, the childbearing-age generation who was born in the 1980s, and the generation born in the 1970s who are expecting a second child. The Chinese audience had a pragmatic goal while watching the show: according to survey research conducted by *China Youth Daily*, 56.2 % of the respondents said that they watched parent-child shows in order to gain knowledge about childrearing (Sun, 2014).

In Episode 6 of the first season, there was a scene in which a celebrity father taught his son how to become independent (Xie, 2013b). When the kids were required to go fishing and find vegetables for dinner, Kimi, a son of the Taiwanese actor Lin Chih Ying, was extremely unwilling to leave his father. Lin Chih Ying was struggling to teach his son to perform the task with the other kids. The father finally left his son behind without telling him. In this scene, the picture of Lin on a boat away from his son was montaged with the picture of Kimi searching for his father. The voice-over of Lin from an introspective interview was added over the picture, in which Lin expressed that he did not know how to deal with the situation. Lin later recognized that he did the right thing when he learned how Kimi reacted (Xie, 2013b). In another scene of the same episode, Lin shared his experience of parenting with two other fathers on the show. A series of scenes indicated that Chinese parents' primary mission is to foster a spirit of independence in childrearing. In addition, Lin's statement that patience is an importance consideration in a conversation with kids, instead of compelling them to follow their parents' instruction, shows how *Dad* has mainly dealt with issues of childrearing in the narrative (Xie, 2013b).

Another point to mention with regard to the success of the remade show is the marginalization of men's status in contemporary Chinese families. Mothers have obtained their powerful positions in families as they became competent in both tasks at work and in the home. As such, the absence of the father's role has become a hot-button issue in Chinese society. In this context, *Dad* sparked public discussions regarding how the patriarchal role should return to the center of parenting within Chinese families (Lam, 2013), highlighting the importance of fathers in raising children. The following are examples of *Dad* that have provided Chinese viewers with the impetus to begin social discussions on fatherhood. At the end of Episode 2, actor Guo Tao showed anger when his son, Shitou, would not sing a song in front of the other guests (Xie, 2013a). Guo then shut his son outside of a door for a moment. On their way home, Guo and Shitou tried to reconcile by having a conversation on what each other was thinking with respect to the situation (Xie, 2013a). During the entire situation, Guo maintained his parental authority, which is a stereotype of the father figure in Chinese families.

In Episode 6, another scene brought gender roles to the fore of discussions in Chinese society. Zhang Liang, a fashion model and reality celebrity, told the kids of the show about different responsibilities of boys and girls when his son Tiantian was teamed up with Cindy, the daughter of Tian Liang, who is an Olympic diving gold medalist and actor. When the two kids were asked to collect food, Zhang told his son that boys should take the responsibility for carrying the basket when working with girls. He also asked Cindy to behave more girlishly when getting along with boys (Xie, 2013b).

These scenes highlighted the role of fathers in teaching children gender roles, especially for boys in Chinese society.

NARRATING FATHERHOOD AND CHILDREARING IN KOREAN AND CHINESE TELEVISION

The Chinese remaking of a Korean reality show, *Dad*, created a regional model of the global television format trade through which both television industries have identified the impetus of cultural intimacy in transnational media transactions. Certainly, the multinational success of the Korean reality show, *Dad*, displays the two societies' shared interests in fatherhood and childrearing (Chuang, 2013; Kim & Quek, 2013). History tells us that East Asian societies have recently experienced the marginalization of fatherhood in family relationships (Kim & Quek, 2013; Chuang, 2013). In the context of the social transformation, the main narrative of *Dad*—the reestablishment of relationships between fathers and children—has resonated with numerous Korean and Chinese audiences who are concerned about the forgotten roles of fathers in childrearing. From this viewpoint, the format's popularity also reflects the discrepancy between the ideal “new fatherhood” and the reality of unequal gender roles in parenting; in modern societies, women carry the burden of working, doing household chores, and taking care of children, whereas men still practice the traditional father role as the breadwinners (Liong, 2017).

Yet, there have been differences in the depiction of fatherhood and childrearing in Korean and Chinese episodes of the reality show, *Dad*. The role of fathers in teaching children about their independence and gender roles was more often depicted in the Chinese version. In China, learning how to interact with others outside the family was a major concern in the one-child policy era. Hence, Chinese parents were willing to learn childrearing skills from the show (Sun, 2014). Facing long-lasting criticism as the spoiled generation born under the one-child policy, the show addresses the target audience's wishes to self-reflect and change their way of parenting (Waldmeir, 2014). Now that the one-child era has ended, childrearing continues to be a central issue for Chinese couples.

The Korean path is much more complicated to mention the differences in the two nations' fertility policies. Currently, the decline in the birth rate became one of the most serious social issues in Korea. The country has the lowest fertility rate in the world, which is less than 1.2 births per woman, compared to 2.45 children per woman at the global level in 2014 (The World Bank, 2014; Tsuya, 2016). The National Statistical Office announced that the average number of children per married female in her 30s has dropped

dramatically from 1.94 in 1990 to 1.4 in 2010 (Kim, 2014). Furthermore, Korean women of childbearing age tend not to have a second baby due to the increasing financial burden of supporting their children's private education (Kim, 2014). Parents may feel uncomfortable about seeing celebrity family trips during the weekends because they may not be able to provide similar experiences to their own children (Kim, 2013). Instead, female audiences who are not struggling with childrearing enjoy the celebrities' family trips to obtain vicarious satisfaction through watching the reality show.

DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on how the Chinese remaking of Korean reality shows has illuminated the regional dimension of the format trade. The interregional flow of television formats allows both local audiences and television directors to become aware of the interconnectedness of East Asian media cultures and practices. From an industrial perspective, Chinese media corporations could make huge profits from adapting Korean reality shows, as well as developing the ability to produce their own reality shows.⁴ The Korean television industry could have additional export content and could continue its legacy of the Korean Wave. However, while emphasizing the industrial aspects in the television format trade, the public nature of media for balanced representation within a society could be overlooked (Iwabuchi, 2010). As an example, the values and beliefs of childrearing and fatherhood conveyed on *Dad* do not speak to different classes, ethnicities, or cultural subgroups in the two societies. This does not necessarily mean that different social statuses determine different views on childrearing and fatherhood. Rather, a confined social group, and the imported reality show format provide fewer opportunities to represent families from other social groups within society.

By understanding the Korean Wave as a transnational transfer of Korean cultural practices and values, the rise of Korean reality shows in the Chinese television industry reveals a new direction of the Korean Wave. *Dad* demonstrates that the localization of Korean reality shows allows larger Chinese audiences to become immersed in Korean media products, compared to the consumption of completed Korean programs. However, the mixture of Korean and Chinese cultural traditions and values in the remaking process covers the local context in which the remade show could become a sensation in Chinese society. As this comparative analysis of *Dad* in the Korean and Chinese versions has shown, despite the cultural affinity of these two societies, cultural differences in childrearing, family backgrounds, celebrity characters, production locations, and broadcasters are deeply involved in the Chinese adoption of the Korean reality format. This case study demonstrates

that the Korean Wave, through “a localizing process” (Kim, 2016, p. 1), diversifies the ways of spreading Korean media products within and across East Asia. Future research should be conducted to discuss what the local adoption of Korean television shows invigorates in imported societies.

NOTES

1. *Singer* had been created and broadcast on MBC, one of the three major television networks in Korea and was exported to and localized by Hunan TV, a provincial satellite television station in mainland China.

2. The MBC channel broadcast 56 episodes from January 6, 2013 to January 14, 2014, and Hunan TV aired 12 episodes from October 11, 2013 to December 27, 2013.

3. The birth control policy was a response to the dramatic population growth during the 1950s and 1960s. An early version of the policy had encouraged “later child bearing, longer spacing, and fewer children” (Zhu, 2003, p. 463). To begin the economic reform in the late 1970s, the Communist leadership under Deng Xiaoping viewed the large population base and its expected continuous growth as a constraint to the national economy. Therefore, the government reinforced the policy that urban families could have only one child (Zhu, 2003). Worried by the shrinking work age population and its negative influence on the economy, the Chinese government has been loosening its one-child policy in order to stimulate population growth again. Starting in 2013, China eased some restrictions on the one-child policy (Waldmeir, 2014). Finally, the one-child policy ended on January 1, 2016: all couples can now request to have two children (Wei, 2015).

4. The production team used 10% of its financial income (approximately \$24 million) to upgrade the shooting equipment and to promote the show (Wang, 2014).

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Chapter 12

Transnational Media Culture and Soft Power of the Korean Wave in the United States

Hyeri Jung

INTRODUCTION

With the development of digital technologies, along with the rapid globalization process in the 1990s, there has been a surge of transnational cultural flow of Korean media content in the domain of global media culture. Korea's media market expansion facilitated the export of its popular culture, which has received worldwide attention and popularity. Rigorously supported by the Korean government and entrepreneurs as an official national policy, productions and content of Korean popular culture have become a giant cultural industry and have widely enchanted other countries (Jin, 2016; KOCIS, 2012; Shim, 2006). This successful reception of Korean popular culture overseas is known as the Korean Wave (or *Hallyu* in Korean). The Korean Wave denotes not Korean popular culture per se, but the popularity of Korean popular culture in non-Korean territories.

Although a handful of previous studies (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Jung & Shim, 2014; Kim, 2009a; Yang, 2012) looked at how individuals in different countries engage with the Korean Wave, very few investigations have explored it empirically with first-hand accounts in Western contexts, particularly the United States. This is mainly because the reverse cultural flow from the Asian sphere to the Western sphere has been relatively limited, at least until now, which led most Korean Wave scholars to focus on the analysis of intraregional cultural flows within the Asian region. However, the increasing prominence of the Korean Wave, especially K-pop among the young digital generation in the United States, compels scholars to reexamine the phenomenon much further.

This study employs what I call a reversed media ethnographic approach to examine multiple aspects of the Korean Wave as transnational media culture

in the United States. I have closely participated and interacted with American audiences and fans of the Korean Wave for more than two years, from early 2015 to early 2017 to explore beyond what has already been studied and below the surfaces of their expressed interpretations. I revisit some of the relevant theoretical concepts and frameworks of globalization in light of the Korean Wave in order to address the following inquiries: What motivates Americans to interact with Korean popular culture? How do they interpret Korean popular culture? What are the cross-cultural similarities and differences they see in Korean popular culture versus American popular culture? What aspects of soft power can be found within Americans' reception of Korean popular culture? What implications does Korean Wave's soft power have on American audiences/fans' identity? How does cultural hybridity of Korean popular culture un/consciously facilitate sociopolitical implications of soft power in the United States, arguably one of the strongest cultural industries in the world? And what cultural, social, and political implications does the Korean Wave yield in global/international contexts?

I do not attempt to provide generalizations about Americans' reception of Korean popular culture. Rather, by providing an in-depth, fragmented moment of the whole ecology, I attempt to provide unforeseen discoveries through detailed analyses and possible conceptualizations of recurring patterns, a major strength of qualitative media ethnographic research (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). The purpose of studying the reception of the Korean Wave among American audiences/fans is not to argue for Korean imperialism, but to reconfigure globalization theories that recognize the dynamic formations of identity and hybridity at the local level while not dismissing the power inequalities and domination of some nation-states at the expense of others. As regards the style of writing about the nature of cultural studies, this chapter has a fluid style and is less conventionally structured. I'll first briefly examine theoretical concepts in the realm of transnational media culture and then elaborate on methods, findings, and discussion, respectively. However, my arguments on theoretical concepts and ideas are elaborated throughout the chapter in a more fluid and flexible structure.

HYBRIDITY IN THE SPHERE OF TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA CULTURE

The term transnational is commonly used to describe a condition "by which people, commodities, and ideas literally cross and transgress national boundaries and are not identified with a single place of origin" (Watson, 2006, p. 11), which is facilitated by globalization processes. Scholars of the globalization theories argue that the composition, the global flow, and the

audience's use of media products are far more complex than the naïve argument of cultural imperialists. Appadurai (1996) supports this notion by stating that there is no undefeatable single leader of a world system of images, but instead the world system is consisted of multiple nodes of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes.

Increasingly complex interdependencies among countries and the development of technologies have signaled the demise of the cultural imperialism theses and elicited substantial attention for multilayered transnational media culture in a postcolonial context. The globalization paradigm views media culture as more dynamic, multipolar, and multicentral in which the key distinctive characteristic of the contemporary global world from earlier periods lies in this "necessary complexity" (Sparks, 2007, p. 130). Our places are increasingly penetrated both in in/tangible ways by the connectivity of globalization, and location becomes less the matter in modern culture. We mundanely experience global media via the Internet and social media: enabling "action(s) at a distance" (Giddens, 1990) and creating imagined communities that share experiences/memories in a "deterritorialized mediascape" (Appadurai, 1996). All nation-states now seek to govern populations whose identities are multilayered. However, this doesn't signal the waning significance of identification with the nation because they are not mutually exclusive. It suggests that national identity is experienced in multiple ways in the era of globalization (Tomlinson, 2003).

Most forms of culture in the world today are, to varying extents, hybrid in that different values, beliefs, and practices have become deeply entwined. "Globalization essentially is hybridity" (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 32) and "it is clear that hybridization is an inevitable course for all cultures" (Kraidy, 1999, p. 459). In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994) argues that "the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable" (p. 55). Claiming pure authenticity in modern popular culture is problematic because it justifies a certain group's appropriation of other culture as guaranteed and legitimizes those who get to define one's cultural authenticity. Global capitalism infused with white imperialism has normalized its cultural dominance and privilege under the disguise of authenticity (Oh, 2014). By systematically denying agency and stigmatizing others as being inauthentic which eventually facilitated imperialism theories, white imperialists have secured their own "pure" authenticity and "neutral" normativity while freely appropriating the sources of all "Otherness." Claiming pure cultural authenticity over popular culture—which should be considered as fluid elements, reflecting the inevitably multidirectional flows of media cultures—is asserting imagined superiority and reinforcing exoticization of "Others" (Said, 1978).

Cultural hybridity or hybridization has been one of the most frequently associated terms when explaining the Korean Wave phenomenon (Shim,

2006). It investigates power relations between the center and the periphery from the postcolonial perspective (Appadurai, 1996; Bhabha, 1994; Kraidy, 2002; Ryoo, 2009; Shim, 2006; Young, 1995). One should be careful when understanding hybridity as a simple binary relation between the center and the periphery as this logic is limited when explaining the Korean Wave phenomenon for Korea as a producer that has been neither a part of the traditional world centers nor peripheries.

Hybridity should not be understood as the denial or contradiction of identity (Bhabha, 1994), but rather that its core function is always mixed, relational, and negotiable. Hybridized media culture invites people into a distinctive location that is neither an authentic locality nor power-neutral. The hybridized media culture is neither merely imitating different elements that ultimately form a culture-less identity, nor simply aggregating differences. Rather, it marks the continuous negotiation of various discourses and identity among various cultural agents. Theoretically recognizing hybridization as an inevitable phase for all contemporary cultures in the era of globalization (Pieterse, 1994) is necessary in order to understand the politics and the intersection of globality and locality, especially when it comes to popular culture. Hybridity helps us to understand the local not merely as a location, but as a crossroads of transnational receptions (Murphy & Kraidy, 2003).

TRANSFORMATION OF HYBRIDITY INTO MULTIFACETED SOFT POWER

The Korean Wave phenomenon has proven to be more than a pop cultural craze for it penetrates into world politics and international relations (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Kim, 2015). The globalization paradigm relates to an overarching concept called “soft power,” which looks at the power relations in world politics and international relations. More than a simple persuasion, soft power is the ability to get desired outcomes without coercion (Nye, 2011). Soft power has been challenged for being illusive and idealistic (Fan, 2008; Frum & Perle, 2004; Murphy, 2010), and being another implicit form of imperialism (Schiller 1991). However, these challenges misconstrue the multiple facets of soft power as a normative, rather than a descriptive, concept. Soft power is neither a form of idealism nor imperialism, but is a form of power in which legitimacy is achieved over competitive struggles (Nye, 2011).

The way the Korean Wave creates soft power is distinct from the way historically powerful colonizers and imperialists—such as the United States, Britain, or Japan—utilize their soft power in global/international contexts. Within the Asian sphere, it’s true that Japan’s strong political, economic, and

cultural power has influenced many Asian countries, which traces back to its colonial period. However, the colonial past hinders Japan's deep penetration into some parts of Asia. Given this situation, Korea's unique historical legacy leaves room for its popular culture and products to find a niche in its neighboring markets because Korea doesn't carry the burden of 'colonial legacy' that was present in Japanese media (Park, 1996; Ter Molen, 2014). There's a lingering anticolonial sentiment lurking in the memories of people in many Asian countries. However, the Korean Wave appears to benefit from the sense of solidarity and sympathy rather than resentment among non-Korean people who shared a similar colonial past and continue to struggle in a current postcolonial situation.

Korea has followed a different path by exerting power through its popular culture, not through coercive economic and military power. Korea as a 'sub-empire' (Ryoo, 2009) has relatively smaller land size with limited natural resources. However, all these limitations and historical contexts ironically work together to exert its unique aspect of soft power that differs from the ones exerted by historical imperial powers. I suggest we need a more flexible understanding of soft power, one that does not build on hard power—economic and military—the way the power of the United States or Japan does. Soft power is deeply interrelated with identity formation (Kim, 2009b), which is interlocked with multiple layers of cultural hybridity. I argue that the way the Korean Wave creates soft power by appealing to non-Koreans elicits a different sense of attraction, solidarity, and ideological twists, not only within the Asian regions but, interestingly, also in the West, the historical center.

This study unravels how the hybridity embedded in the Korean Wave transforms into the multifaceted layer of soft power and interrelates with audiences/fans' identity negotiations in the United States. The purpose of my research, reception of the Korean Wave among American audiences/fans, is not to argue for Korean imperialism, but to reconfigure globalization theories by considering pertinent arguments as pieces of a broader theoretical argument and recognize their aggregate power in the hope that we can better understand the complex webs of transnational media culture, albeit provisional. One of the ways to do so is when we start to take audiences/fans' reception of transnational popular culture more seriously, and closely interact with them with a trans-local ethnographic approach at the heart of globalization.

METHODOLOGY

Various qualitative methods are employed throughout the study to observe American audiences/fans' receptions of Korean popular culture, mostly but

not limited to K-pop, K-drama, K-films, Korean language, and Korean food. With an overarching approach of what I call “reversed media ethnography,” this study employs participant observations and qualitative interviews. I regularly engaged in participatory observation of the meetings, events, and activities related to Korean popular culture between early 2015 and early 2017. I used semi-structured interviews to allow for more flexible and organic expressions and communication of experiences of informants outside of structured questions.

WHY REVERSED MEDIA ETHNOGRAPHY

Whereas traditional ethnography conducted by anthropologists is extremely local, media ethnographic approach to global media studies attempts to move radically from local to global—interlocked with reception studies—in the much more complex realm of globalization (Murphy & Kraidy, 2003). One critical view of ethnography was that the ethnographic practice was seen as a product of colonial, and thus Western-philic, discourses, a charge that focused mainly on how ethnographies inscribed ethnocentric perspectives (Murphy & Kraidy, 2003).

Traditional ethnographic research has been conducted by Western researchers onto the so-called non-Western cultures and people as exotic “Other” (Said, 1978), and thus the point of departure inevitably reflected the Western perspectives (Weiss, 1994). Seen in this vein, I consider my study to be a reversed media ethnographic approach because a) I am observing Westerners through a non-Westerner’s gaze; and b) instead of studying people and their culture, I’m studying their understanding of my native culture, which is somewhat like studies that have been done in places like Israel about their reactions to U.S. culture on television (Katriel, 2012), but again reversing the focus to examine impacts in the United States.

INFORMANTS

There is an online social media site of local groups where people sharing similar interests gather together to improve themselves and their local communities. Within this site, there is a ‘Korean Wave Group’ (a pseudonym, hereafter KWG) which is a non-governmental organization founded in the 2010s. Most members in this group live in Texas and share a similar interest: Korean popular culture. There are about 300 members registered in KWG. Among them, about 30 members regularly gather once or twice a week and

participate in various activities related to Korean popular culture such as: learning the Korean language, watching K-dramas, discussing and sharing information about Korean popular culture, eating Korean cuisine, attending K-pop concerts, and practicing K-pop choreography.

KWG is comprised of mostly U.S. nationals with varying backgrounds. Females outnumber males, and the age range varies from 10s to 50s with most members clustered around the 20s and 30s. Some of them are self-proclaimed K-pop and/or K-drama fans, while others are general *audiences* who have genuine interests in Korean popular culture. I conducted in-depth interviews with eight informants whom I've established a close rapport with for more than two years. All of them were born and/or raised in the United States for a significant amount of time, are not native Korean, speak English as their first language, and identify themselves as American the most.

The rich corpus of data I've collected over the two-year period consists of textual, aural, and visual records of the informants, objects, events, and processes under study. I employ various qualitative and interpretive techniques including grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to analyze the rich corpus of data. I reiterate that I do not attempt to provide generalizations, but rather, by providing an in-depth, fragmented moment of the whole ecology, I aimed at uncovering detailed analyses and possible conceptualizations by connecting recurring patterns.

FLUIDITY OF TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

Transnational media culture engenders an unpredictable, fluid, and creative form of hybridization (Shim, 2006). By looking at how Korean popular culture hybridizes various cultural forms by incorporating their local sentiment and creating new forms, we can come closer to understanding what aspects of hybridity in Korean popular culture appeal to Americans beyond Asia. The hybridity seen in K-pop, for example, represents a great example of the fluid nature of popular culture in the era of globalization. Thanks to new technological developments, such as YouTube and other social media platforms, the transnational success and expansion of K-pop is boosted beyond Asia. The extremely clean-cut and aesthetically pleasing K-pop performers and performances are appropriate for the digital age and social media generation. K-pop distinctly appeals to Americans by exemplifying a world of pop culture as a total package: catchy tunes, good singing, attractive appearances, mesmerizing performances, well-thought-out merchandise, and most of all, humbleness. Two of my female informants, Tiffany and Rosalie who are in their late 20s, state:

Tiffany: I love the choreography in K-pop. In Korea, they have weekly music shows. Instead of just showing music videos, they have the actual groups perform on stage. In America, we have nothing like that. It's going to go up and down when it comes to the pop thing. In the U.S., boy bands come and go. But in K-pop, it's been just continuous flow since the 90s. And they have been so successful that you don't see it as a huge off and on like the U.S. because the fan base just keeps growing internationally.

Rosalie: In America, we don't buy physical albums anymore. They just put it in the plastic case and that's it. It's a different story in K-pop. Although everything is digital in K-pop too, people still buy physical albums because they put more thoughts into its design and everything from the packaging of the albums to all the extra stuff [like photo cards and season's greetings]. Fans are getting something they can't get digitally. It helps the whole *fandom* communities get larger and larger. Although they [United States and Korea] are both digital-centric, in K-pop, there's just a lot of effort into it. It's just well thought out.

Cultural elements travel, get reinterpreted, and repackaged in a way that's more appealing and better received internationally. The way the Korean cultural industry creates and repackages various cultural elements is so skillfully and carefully done. By strategically incorporating a wide range of music and choreographic genres, K-pop creates its unique mode of hybridity with extremely polished looks in nonthreatening and pleasant packages. Theia who is in her mid-30s and Joseph who is in his early 30s mention:

Theia: There are many comparisons in K-pop to American artists like Michael Jackson. That's the cool thing about K-pop artists and K-dramas. Whoever their choreographer or director is, they literally bring you into what they are talking about. I think it [visual stimulation] helps those who don't know the language because . . . you can literally follow the story without knowing what the translation is.

Joseph: When I look at Korean popular culture, even though they have a lot of American influences to get it going, they made it their own. It's theirs, it's not ours. The way they do it and their passions come from their culture.

Korean entertainment industries indulge themselves in maximization of profit by exporting their products to the largest number of audiences possible, which is seen as a capitalistic strategy justified in the name of national interest. However, this approach neglects deeper sociocultural and political implications that popular culture generates. Arguments that Korean popular culture is all about profit-driven commodities and a national-institutional campaign can't be legitimized for neglecting the non-negligible fact: the Korean Wave is profoundly dependent on overseas audiences/fans. The mechanisms of the pleasure (Ang, 1996) that American audiences/fans find in

Korean popular culture should be taken seriously. As commercial industrial products, producers have to have certain ideas of what the audience will find pleasurable, so that they can attract consumers and make profits. The strategy of the producers will be directed at the elaboration of what they already know about popular pleasure. In the context of the United States, what Korean popular culture seems to be particularly good at is skillfully formulating this capitalist-driven strategy of hybridity to arouse a feeling of nostalgia: what I call the emotional proximity.

EMOTIONAL PROXIMITY

As I noted earlier, soft power, as a descriptive concept, encompasses multiple facets. The way the Korean Wave exerts soft power in international contexts differs from the way historically imperialist countries do; Korean popular culture is seen as less threatening in the eye of the beholder because sociohistorically Korea has never invaded or colonized any other countries (Hong, 2014). Ryoo (2009) contends that because Korea has been considered as 'sub-empire,' the Korean Wave can find a niche and reposition itself as a cultural mediator in the midst of global cultural transformation. The Korean Wave works as a mediator not only in Asia, but also in the West. In other words, the Korean Wave brings American people with different racial/ethnic/social/cultural backgrounds together by creating shared emotional proximity. How Americans find Korean popular culture attractive and pleasurable lies in their previous experience. The carefully structured way of touching and arousing nostalgic emotion with highly modernized and hybridized looks can be understood as *emotional proximity*, another layer of Straubhaar (1991)'s cultural proximity theory. The skillfully hybridized Korean media texts provoke certain nostalgia among Americans, which also ironically encourages them to rediscover their own identity and culture. What one perceives as more culturally proximate doesn't necessarily relate to their national, linguistic, or geographical proximity.

In the realm of global popular culture, especially in Hollywood, the major players have been Caucasian with some Afro-Caribbean figures. Asian performers have seldom become major players with very few exceptions. Hogarth (2013) views the Korean Wave as a reaction and a challenge to Western-dominated global popular culture. K-pop and K-drama have distinct Asian physical features no matter how hybridized they are. K-dramas reflect the traditional Asian values and ethos, which makes Asian audiences feel culturally proximate and some Western audiences feel emotionally proximate. The Korean Wave fills a large demand (Jin, 2016) for audiences of both the

East and the West that were desperately waiting for clean-cut, non-violent, non-aggressive, and less promiscuous content.

The popularity of Korean popular culture among Americans is bound to have social, cultural, and political ramifications. I argue that American audiences/fans—both non-white and white—find this very complex layer of hybridity in Korean popular culture *comfortably appealing*, associated with a notion of *appreciation*, not *exoticization* (Said, 1978), and that they consider the people in Korean popular culture as a *third race*. This debunks the dichotomous logic of race and gender structured in the West and the prevalent stereotypes of Asians, mainly males, portrayed in American mainstream media. In this vein, the popularity of the Korean Wave among whites deeply *messes with* the long-held racial and colonial superiority and imperialism theories driven by Western modernization in the global sphere. Three of my informants, Angie (early 30s), Anya (late 40s), and Miranda (late teenager), state:

Angie: We don't have attractive Asian men in our media, and the ones we do have are typically nerdy and thin like a smart tech guy. There is nothing sexy about them. I think that in American culture, it's structured in such a way that it benefits White men. White men can make Asian men not as attractive by being like 'oh they are so feminine,' and that bears out in our media.

Anya: I feel like Korean dramas are very innovative in a way. I think they allow both men and women to be more vulnerable in different ways and even more completely as characters in American movies and cultures are. The men don't have to be macho masculine.

Miranda: K-pop male idols wear make-up, and they always look like the most beautiful people in the world. When you watch K-dramas, the men are just so romantic and cute.

The Korean Wave differs from previously stronger Asian popular culture—the Japanese.

Whereas the Japanese industry consciously made it culturally odorless in an effort to universalize products (Iwabuchi, 2002), the Korean Wave emphasizes hybridity of formats with localized content and appeal (Jin, 2016; Ryoo, 2009). Unlike Japanese animations and comic books, K-pop and K-drama possess explicit cultural odor in terms of the agents who are associated with the country's bodily, racial, and ethnic characteristics. In other words, the people in Korean media represent physical features of a country of origin as well as images of its nation, and these agents with Korean ethnicity physically appeal to international audiences.

All modern cultures are hybrid, thus, hybridity can't be the sole attribution of the Korean Wave's popularity in the United States. Interestingly, the well-received hybridity of the Korean Wave may reflect Kraidy (2002)'s theory of

intercontextual hybridity. The favorable reception of the Korean Wave shows what Americans have been missing in their own media. One of my close informants, Anya who is a mother of her two children, expresses her thoughts:

Anya: What has become reality in America, especially with the aggressiveness and violence, is just too exhausting. It wasn't like that when I was growing up, but that is everywhere now. It just gets worse and worse. And I find it much more appealing that in Korean culture, it doesn't seem to be accepted. I appreciate that they make the effort to put this out as something to be emulated, encouraged, and followed. They are glorifying good behavior. . . . I think that they are pretty genuine to who they are. They are not trying to be shocking, and they are very sweet. And that is more appealing. Whatever the reason is, I think that's why it doesn't register yet with the majority of Americans. [What Americans are used to is] just the nastiest, the most horrible, sexually assaulting things. It makes me feel like I'm losing my country, and I'm looking for other cultures that are doing this better. They [K-pop artists] are championing the good behavior [that is] modest, kind, and considerate. People could say that K-pop and the K-culture is just sort of an escape from reality. But I think it's also its own reality chosen to be promoted that's more positive and modest. There is a different level of integrity that I don't find in my American culture.

The complex level of hybridity in Korean popular culture reflects the argument that hybridity ironically encourages local people to revisit and rediscover what they have neglected or forgotten (Kraidy, 2002; Ryoo, 2009). The great level of hybridity in Korean popular culture arouses emotional proximity among not only Asian audiences but also American audiences to realize what they've been missing in their relentless drive toward modernization and capitalization during the past several decades. This simultaneously complex yet fluid hybridity of Korean popular culture, I argue, transforms into a multifaceted soft power, appealing to American audiences/fans.

WOORI-NESS AS ALTERNATIVE-POST-WESTERN SOFT POWER

It might be argued that soft power is just another implicit method of imperialism or propaganda because power relationships in globalization often remain highly unequal (Appadurai, 2016). While I agree with this assessment, it can be seen as overly simplistic for neglecting sociohistorical factors that are always complex-and-context-bound. Soft power is not equivalent to propaganda but relatable. It, however, differs from propaganda in that it puts human interaction up front and its core agent is the interactive public (Snow, 2012). Unlike propaganda, which retains a negative connotation in

democratic societies, public diplomacy has elicited little controversy as it is perceived to be a more persuasive instrument of foreign policy, one that is not coercive but soft, and one which is conducted by states in conjunction with private actors as well as civil society groups (Nye, 2011).

I acknowledge that soft power is not a panacea for public diplomacy in international relations and world politics. However, the fact that the public, not necessarily state-related agents, can be a source of soft power by allowing them to form their own resources against official policy in pursuit of the public good makes it worthwhile to explore. There is a particular notion that can be associated with the Korean Wave phenomenon: the *woori-ness* (meaning we-ness in English), which signifies the unity of collective mindset. Miranda, a late teenager, states that “people are so divided in the United States like being white or not whereas in Korea, it’s just one.” Whereas the form of the Korean Wave is highly hybridized and transnational, the driving force behind it, ironically, is homogeneous and unified. Theia who is in her mid-30s and Joseph who is in his early 30s state:

Theia: I honestly have to believe that the popularity of the Korean Wave in the world has a lot to do with their pride in their nation as a whole. There is a unity there. It definitely helps to promote the culture and the country. Korean people take pride in the Korean Wave phenomenon. That’s definitely the fantasy world you just have to believe.

Joseph: In Korean popular culture, they have strong roots and they have pride in their culture. They are proud of who they are. We are proud of ourselves but not so much at national level. We’ve got some roots but it’s relatively short compared to Korea. Americans tend to water things down really quickly.

Two of my female informants, Tiffany and Rosalie in late 20s, mention:

Tiffany: K-pop fans in Korea are really united. They come up with their fan group name, fan group color, fan group donation, and many have their fan chants. In America, you don’t hear fan chants through the song. It’s just in K-pop. Fan chants are there in a specific spot in a particular song. In the U.S., it’s more like girls screaming, and there’s no on-point chant. There’s more unison in K-pop fandom. It feels so unified when I am at K-pop concerts versus American concerts. When you are at the show, you are all together, you’re all there to talk about your *biases* [favorite members in groups], you’re all there to literally enjoy what you’re about to see.

Rosalie: [The American pop scene] is more individualistic. [K-pop training systems] wouldn’t work in the U.S. It goes back to the culture. Korean culture is very much about community and collective society as “we are one.” In the U.S., it’s very much about the individual. It’s not *we*, it’s *I*; it’s *my* house, it’s not *woori* [our] house as in Korean. And that mindset is one of the main reasons why Korea went from being one of the poorest countries in the world to what it is today in such a short time. There is no way that if we [America] had gone through something like that, we wouldn’t be there in the same amount of time because everyone is for themselves and not for each other.

Since the early 2010s, K-pop's contra-flow popularity in the United States—especially among the digital native generation fueled by social media—demonstrates its much more hybridized form as 'spreadable media' (Jin & Yoon, 2014). K-pop, with its idol boy/girl group formation, which can be traced back to the 1980s, now has its own distinguishable cultural aesthetics and traits international fans familiarize with, such as *kkonminam* or soft masculinity (Jung, 2011), overlapping masculinities (Anderson, 2014), *K-pop training system*, *aegyo* (acting/speaking in extremely cute ways), certain make-ups, and outfits, just to name a few. One of the unique K-pop traits that American fans identify with and enjoy is, what I term, *playful hierarchical relationships* derived from Korea's *woori-ness*; there is a specific position attributed to each member based on age in most K-pop idol groups, such as *leader* (usually the oldest member in a group) and *maknae* (the youngest member in a group). The notion of age difference is socioculturally less important in the United States where fundamental individualism dominates, whereas in Korea, it's one of the most important aspects. Korea's age-sensitive culture creates a rigid hierarchy yet also creates a feeling of collective integrity that it's *we*, not *I*. This top-down hierarchical relationship based on age becomes a *playful and admirable element* for American fans, working as soft power.

The notion of an imagined nation-state (Anderson, 1983) may apply to both Korea and the United States. However, if America's nation-state arose out of a top-down process of modernity, then Korea followed a different path. Its long history going back thousands of years, national unification, and relatively homogeneous ethnicity have been the fundamental means of survival throughout various historical phases—industrialization, modernization, democratization, and globalization. Korean history from the Koryo Kingdom (918–1392) throughout the modern era, such as its geographical location, the Korean War, and military dictatorship, has created this *mythical norm* that only by being together as *one*, can we survive (Ryoo, 2004). Therefore, Korea's *woori-ness*, at the expense of individualism, was a way of surviving and it brought Korea to its status as a semi-global power in addition to the Korean Wave phenomenon in the twenty-first century.

American audiences and fans are drawn to the Korean Wave and find Korea's unique cultural aspect of *woori-ness* as a path to globalization fascinating. This works as one of the multilayered facets of soft power in the Korean Wave. Rosalie who is in her late 20s expresses her fascination:

The togetherness [*woori-ness*] of Korea and its [popular] culture is not ethnocentric because they are not saying this is better than yours. They are like we're all together in building up a better future for all of us, not just some of us. Korea's *woori-ness*, its nationalism, is not ethnocentric because they are not saying "we're better than you" but "we work together to make something better."

The Korean Wave isn't reinforcing another facet of ethnocentric imperialism, but is suggesting a *different kind* of nationalism and modernity in the name of *woori-ness* as the three actors un/consciously collaborate together: state, market, and people. Even the artists and stars often claim themselves to be an "entertainment-diplomatic complex" (Kim, 2013) and are considered as the most treasured national assets. Unlike the typically heterogeneous Western experience, the Korean nation-state and cultural identity are made tangible because they are negotiated, shared, and articulated by the more homogenous people as a means to survive for nearly 5,000 years (Ryoo, 2004). National unification in Korea is a symbol for democracy in contrast to the individuals' freedom and diversity in the United States.

I argue that this relatively coherent *woori-ness* may be seen as one of the multifaceted layers of soft power in the eyes of non-Koreans, especially in Western societies where national unification and sacrifice have relatively been silenced for the sake of individual freedom. It is important to remark that although soft power can only be made possible with substantial hard power, it's not always guaranteed. This is where Korea's historical position of 'in-between' and 'sub-empire' derived from *woori-ness* comes in, working as a distinctive facet of soft power in international settings.

THE LEGIONS OF THE KOREAN WAVE IN GLOBAL SPHERE

The Korean Wave and its fandom culture, which has the largest fandom size worldwide according to the Guinness Book of World Records (Anderson, 2014), provide a good example when trying to answer why and how popular culture matters in larger social contexts. What makes Korean popular culture transnational and global, and thus the term Korean Wave, are the often-neglected intellectual craftspeople: international audiences/fans (Choi & Maliankay, 2015). The media convergence and the development of communication technologies have enabled audiences to shape their media engagements and participatory culture in a greater variety of contexts on their own. This has been particularly evident in the study of fans (Jenkins, 2006; Kim, 2015). Fans have been among the first to create opportunities to do creative work: creating what Appadurai (1996) called the "shared collective experiences in mediascape" on a global level.

Although the Korean Wave is apolitical, its consequences can be political as evidenced in a number of previous studies (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Kim, 2009a; Kim, 2015). One should be careful not to simplify or dichotomize the cultural hybridity found in Korean popular culture as either the East or the West. Global audiences enjoy what the Korean Wave has to offer, and in doing so they actively construct and negotiate cultural meanings and identities

on their own. Even though the Korean Wave is apparently tied to the culture, economy, policy, and politics of Korea, the primary site of reception for international audiences/fans is their own locality (Choi & Maliankay, 2015). Shim (2013) argues that an access to foreign popular culture, be it via social media or not, doesn't *guarantee* its popularity overseas because the *cultural habitus* of audiences is intrinsically complex, fluid, and unpredictable. The reception of products is neither fully controllable nor predictable by media producers and policy makers. Media texts are never self-sufficient structures of meanings themselves; they are provokers of meanings and pleasure and are full of humor, like *puns* (Fiske, 2011). The very act of audiences/fans' interpreting, transforming, reproducing, and sharing of the so-called hybridized Korean popular culture makes it transnational and global, not necessarily the forms and content per se.

A number of KWG members expressed their frustration about "having to explain" to other Americans why they like Korean popular culture. It's seen as taken-for-granted for Asians liking Korean popular culture. However, when it comes to Americans, they often face the looks of surprise, curiosity, or even straightforward derision. They are the ones who constantly have to reflect upon why they like to listen to K-pop that's not in English and why they find the so-called "too feminine" Asian guys attractive. This is where the globality of transnational Korean Wave meets the locality of American audiences/fans, leading them to continuous negotiations of their cultural identities.

The purpose of studying the reception of the Korean Wave among American audiences/fans should be directed at reconfiguring globalization theories that recognize the dynamic formations of identity and hybridity at the local level while not dismissing the power inequalities in international settings. Popular culture is bound to have social, cultural, and political ramifications, the *effect of micro on macro* (Fiske, 2011), especially in the global sphere. We can better understand the complex webs of transnational media culture, albeit provisional, only when we start to take audiences/fans' reception of transnational popular culture more rigorously. Closely interacting with them with a trans-local ethnographic approach at the heart of globalization provides not only context-sensitive but also comparative accounts.

One of the interesting traits of K-pop fandom in the United States is its immensely multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural communities. Leoy who is in her late 20s states that "it's mostly *liberal* people in the U.S. who like K-pop." K-pop fans in the United States acknowledge the diverse polycentric communities of K-pop fandom. Those who interact with Korean popular culture in/voluntarily promote and reinforce diversity and multiculturalism by intersecting and transgressing beyond their cultural boundaries. One of my close informants, Rosalie who is in her late 20s, states:

The worldwide phenomenon of the Korean Wave is a good signifier of breaking stereotypes, particularly toward Asian people in the U.S. And even in the *reverse* though. I hope that they [Koreans] become more aware of other people liking Korean culture. I know it's very [racially] homogeneous in Asia. I hope the Korean Wave sends *reverse wave* back that it's not only the White people in the West. I hope the Korean Wave would also help break some of the stereotypes Koreans have toward non-Koreans. I hope the Korean Wave *brings* diversity into Korea.

The Korean Wave, as hybridized media culture, not only encourages Americans to rediscover their cultural identity, but it also works in the reversed way. The unexpected popularity of Korean popular culture outside of the Korean territory encourages the so-called homogeneous country to be aware of diversity and multiculturalism. It's important, therefore, to look at not only content and forms of Korean popular culture, but also what sociopolitical implications it might yield in global/international settings. This study unraveled dynamic interactions between Korean popular culture and its U.S. audiences/fans, how cultural hybridity of the Korean Wave un/consciously facilitates soft power, and what sociopolitical implications it might yield in global/international contexts. The Korean Wave exemplifies strategically well-balanced cultural hybridity, evokes continuous negotiations of identities, and generates nonthreatening fantasies that appeal to American audiences/fans with varying degrees of ethnic, racial, social, and cultural backgrounds under the name of *woori-ness*. The nature of hybridized Korean popular culture as transnational media culture defies being identified as a single place of pure originality. In the midst of this phenomenon, there are the often-neglected participatory international audiences/fans as legions of craftspeople who enthusiastically and willingly consume, share, and reproduce the culture of the "Other," actualizing the Korean Wave.

Table 12.1 Informants

<i>ID</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Native Language</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>
Joseph	Early 30s	Male	United States	English	Hispanic
Tiffany	Late 20s	Female	United States	English	Half-Caucasian, Half-Asian
Angie	Early 30s	Female	United States	English	Caucasian
Theia	Mid-30s	Female	United States	English	Black
Miranda	Late 10s	Female	United States	English	Hispanic
Rosalie	Late 20s	Female	United States	English	Half-Black, Half-Asian
Leoy	Late 20s	Female	United States	English	Caucasian
Any	Late 40s	Female	United States	English	Caucasian

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Chapter 13

A Study on Transnational Cultural Flows in Asia through the Case of *Hallyu* in Vietnam

Mi-Sook Park

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the relationship between cultural products and the global market has become a significant component of contemporary research work. Particularly, with respect to the popularity of *Hallyu* in Asia, many acknowledge that cultural products are now driving the new economy. This is because cultural products attribute dual functions. Cultural products increase not only cultural industries themselves, but also the additional benefits of increasing consumption of other goods. Cultural industries positively affect other manufacturing industries such as electronics. In the case of Korea, the country has benefited from the content and industrial structure of its cultural industry since the Kim Young Sam government's audio-visual industry promotion plan since 1993. The size of Korea's broadcasting content exports has steadily increased from about \$28.8 million in 2002 to about \$313.8 million in 2014. More specifically, with the popularity of *Hallyu* in Vietnam, Korean products' (K-product) exports to Vietnam in 2014 are estimated at \$4.7 billion and ranked fifth export market for Korea (KITA, 2015).

In a way, cultural flows in Asia seem like those in the West but the current Asian cultural flows cannot be separate from the government-led economic development. Asian developmentalism as a theoretical framework has been significant in economic development since the 1980s, and theoreticians emphasize the role of state as part of a convincing framework in analyzing the rapid economic development in Asia (Amsden, 1992; Evans, 1998; Fritz, 2006; Johnson, 1982; Suehiro, 2008; Woo-Cumings, 1999). The core of Asia developmentalism theory is that specific industries develop based on protection and promotion of state policies as well as governmental institutions to nurture economy and increase international competition (Johnson, 1982).

Within this context, this chapter examines how cultural products are formulated to increase the economy through Korean-based global business and Korean governmental organizations through the case of *Hallyu* in Vietnam from the early 1990s until now.

However, the aim of this chapter is not to rehash the question of whether or not to explain *Hallyu* as cultural imperialism theory. Instead, the main goal here is to investigate the real elements in the creation of a transnational cultural phenomenon. Many scholars attempted to seek the reasons for the popularity of Korean content products as development of social media or the Internet. In this context, Korean content products can become the content for online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube by individual users to interact with others. However, who is the first messenger and how has the popularity of *Hallyu* continued over the last two decades? The aim of this chapter is to first question the assumed characteristics and reach of *Hallyu*, and then to differentiate *Hallyu* from the general transnational cultural flow.

This chapter utilizes the concept of cultural flow and cultural industries as a fundamental assumption in analyzing the recent expansion of cultural markets in Asia. The term cultural flow has been rooted in cultural globalization with a focus on migrations and mobilities (Southerton, 2011). Although cultural flows originally referred to multidirectional movements, including human beings and artifacts (Southerton, 2011), throughout this chapter, the term is used to stress its link to a general global trend toward cultural industries under the condition in which it is currently inclined to the export and import of culture. Additionally, it is noted that popular culture has become the mainstay for new markets. For instance, in the initial period of the development of Korean content products over the last decade of the twentieth century, *Hallyu* was treated as a media material, but since the start of the twenty-first century, *Hallyu* has included not only content products such as TV programs, films, music, and online games, but also brought human resources and other Korean brand products like cosmetics and food into the global markets. As shall be detailed in the next section, throughout this chapter, the concept of cultural industries refers to the international trade of cultural goods including services.

Although previous studies have contributed to our understanding of *Hallyu* in and beyond Asia, the research has moved away from its substantive roots in terms of the political, social, and material issues because of the emphasis on reception theory, concerning content products in the regions. Obviously, it is because *Hallyu* is the phenomenal success of Korean content products in overseas market (Dang, 2010; Kang, 2009; Nguyen 2014). Considering this, the following section shows a new model around how global businesses link content products to their businesses in general. This chapter shall focus on a systematic implementation in terms of the engagement of the Korean governmental organizations as well as promotion by large Korean corporations

to raise the population's interest in Korean content products. Additionally, it shall discuss what I call the Government-led Cultural Industry Development plan (GLCID) as a national-institutional promotion for the cultural industry. This research adopts Asian developmentalism concepts in order to offer a deeper analysis of the presence of *Hallyu* in East Asia. GLCID can better elaborate the cultural phenomenon in Asia in accordance with specific governmental institutions and industries, which have been highly involved in promoting cultural industries to increase economic development. Thus, based on this definition, this chapter will refer to cultural industries as new growth industries in the twenty-first century and it adopts Asia developmentalism theory to catch up on cultural industries as new emerging growth industries, especially in the context of Asia.

THE ARRIVAL OF KOREAN CULTURAL PRODUCTS IN VIETNAM

Soon after Vietnam and Korea established diplomatic ties in 1992, Korean big businesses, or *Chaebôls*, like LG, Hyundai, and Samsung, accelerated the establishment of local subsidiaries and factories in Vietnam. For example, Samsung established its factory there in 1995, and Korean Heavy Industry opened a co-investment corporation, Han Viet CO. Ltd (Hanvico) in 1996. Furthermore, Lotte Group Korea also opened in 1998, and Hyundai's Mipo Dockyard opened in 1999. Korean-based global companies were the first to move into Vietnam, followed by the labor-intensive industries such as Hyosung in textiles, and Samyang in footwear in 1999 (KOTRA, 2003). According to Korean Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA, 2013), Vietnam joining the WTO in 2005 has facilitated the rise of Korean transnational corporations' (TNCs) investment in Vietnam, which peaked in 2008. Although these investments dropped due to the 2008 financial crisis, according to the Korean embassy in Vietnam, there were still more than 3,300 Korean businesses in Vietnam in 2014 (Kim, 2014).

The concept of culture industry, which emerged in the early 1950s, refers to the expansion of cultural products through mass production (Pratt, 2005). However, the cultural industry has also become the medium to strengthen other industrial sectors globally. In particular, the growth of Korean cultural products in Vietnam shows how cultural products are closely associated with the activity of global businesses and the role of national institutions. For instance, Korean government and businesses have supported Social Overhead Capital and Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Vietnam since 1992. Table 13.1 below shows the Korean government's effort to increase soft power in Vietnam between 1991 and 2002.

Table 13.1 Korea's ODA Support to Vietnam (1991–2002) (Unit: US\$1,000)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount of funding</i>
1991	21
1992	297
1993	999
1994	2291
1995	3312
1996	3649
1997	2755
1998	3126
1999	6193
2000	4736
2001	5162
2002	4891

Source: (KOFICE, 2012).

Given the data in Table 13.1, it is important to understand *Hallyu* in Vietnam from various dimensions and contexts. *Hallyu* was meant to refer to the popularity of Korean cultural products in overseas markets, but it also coincided with the arrival of Korean global businesses into Vietnam. This brings us to the next section to differentiate *Hallyu* from the general transnational cultural flow.

WHICH COMES FIRST, THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

In 1986, the Vietnamese Communist Party introduced a series of economic reforms known as *Doi Moi* (renovation), which transformed its centrally planned economy to what is known today as a socialist-oriented market economy. *Doi Moi* is based on five-year economic plans designed to allow state control of the market forces in the name of resource allocation efficiency. Since *Doi Moi* in Vietnam, many foreign corporations and countries have attempted to establish ties with Vietnam, so Korean businesses like Samsung and LG and Korean government involvement are not exceptional.

Contrary to expectations, however, Samsung's and LG's profits in Vietnam were low and the Vietnamese were unfamiliar with the brands (H. W. Lee, 2002). Hence, Samsung tried to promote the image of Korea and of its brand. However, due to the tight foreign media regulations in Vietnam, particularly over television advertisements, Samsung had to look for alternatives and they found Korean TV dramas, an ideal replacement of TV commercials. Samsung offered to air Korean dramas free on Vietnamese National Television (VTV), such as *Doctor Brothers* (1997) (H. W. Lee, 2002).

After Samsung's success sponsoring Korean TV dramas, LG followed suit. Although LG had started its business in association with Vietnam's National Corporation, Vocarimex, from 1997 (KOTRA, 2014), LG Household & Health Care's (hereafter LG VINA) profits in Vietnam were low because the brand was less well-known compared to other foreign brands, such as L'Oréal, P&G, and Lancôme which entered the Vietnamese market much earlier (LGAD, 2000). However, with the increasing popularity of Korean dramas and actors who were also LG VINA's advertising models, Vietnamese consumers' familiarity with the brand rapidly increased. For example, LG VINA bought the copyrights of Korean television dramas, *Steal My Heart* (1998), *Women and Men in the City* (1999), and *Model* (2000), and offered these to Vietnamese broadcasters (Baek, 2005). Between 1998 and 2002, LG VINA provided eighteen TV programs free to Vietnamese central and local television broadcasters (LG VINA, 2004). Furthermore, LG's marketing strategy using Korean content products was not limited to television dramas. It also screened the Korean film, *Tie a Yellow Ribbon* in Vietnam in 2001 (H. W. Lee, 2002). In addition, LG sponsored cosmetics and products, such as LG Electric's White Electrics for product placement (PPL) on the film (Lee, 2002).

In other words, in the earlier phase, Korean corporations used Korean contents product such as TV dramas as a medium to expand their customer base. This was, in fact, the origin of the Korean drama boom in Vietnam. Following the popularity of these dramas, actors like Kim Nam-Joo, Chang Dong-Gun, and Ahn Jae-Wook also became celebrities in Vietnam (Lee 2002). Subsequently, LG used Korean celebrities, in particular Kim, Nam-Joo, to promote its brand in Vietnam. For instance, LG VINA hosted music concerts of Kim, Nam-Joo together with Vietnamese celebrities in 2000. The concerts were a big hit and aired on nationwide TV channels. As a result, LG VINA achieved a 70% share of the Vietnamese cosmetics market in 2002, which was a meteoric rise from a mere 16% in 1998 (KOCCA, 2013d).

Large Korean companies' sponsorship of Korean content products as a form of marketing strategy in Vietnamese markets was not limited to TV dramas, and included other cultural products too. According to LG Advertising Agency (2000), LG VINA sponsored its first free music concert in 2000, followed by the *Korean Dream Concert* in 2002, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the normalizing of diplomatic ties between the two countries. These were significant events in which the movers and shakers of Vietnamese society and celebrities were invited to promote LG cosmetics as luxury products (LGAD, 2000). Besides, the LGAD agency in Vietnam also persuaded Vietnamese local media such as Ho Chi Minh City TV to constantly report on the Korean celebrities' activities in Vietnam, such as through concerts, fashion shows, fan meetings, visits of Korean stars like Kim, Nam-Joo to

Vietnam, and so on. The concert it sponsored aired on Hanoi TV, local TV, and even the official Vietnamese Communist Daily reported on it (Advertising Information Centre, 2000). In addition, LG VINA officially sponsored the Miss Vietnam Beauty Contest in which all participants used only LG cosmetics (KOTRA, 2005).

Korean firms used Korean cultural products to promote their corporate images and brands in Vietnam in various ways, including through sports events and via the sector of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that funds educational and social programs. For instance, Samsung supported football, badminton matches, and high-profile events like the World Cyber Games and the Samsung Cup in Taekwondo. Samsung Electronics in Vietnam also hosted social programs, most notably for the victims of Agent Orange (thanhniennews, 2004), survivors of floods, beneficiaries of its medical programs (Korean Institution for National Unification, 2004), and so on. Indeed, all these activities aired nationwide (Korean Institution for National Unification, 2004).

LG also sponsored educational programs, such as Toward Olympia, a well-known TV program aired on VTV3 since 1999. It has opened the LG Digital Centre, and sponsored talent-training events such as the Painting Festival since 2002 (Lee, 2002). LG Electronics in Vietnam has provided scholarships to 59 students of Hanoi University and Ho Chi Minh University since 2002, and has then hired them after graduation (S. H. Kim, 2003).

Statistics from the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST) of Korea in 2013, on broadcasting media trade between Vietnam and Korea since 2000 (Table 13.2) confirm this synergetic relationship between Korean content products and the expansion of Korean-based global corporations into the Vietnamese market.

Furthermore, coupled with the popularity of Korean television dramas, the popularity of other Korean cultural products, such as K-pop, films, food, and fashion, has also increased among young people. The marketing strategy of large Korean companies through TV dramas in Vietnam implied that the positive image from content products triggered a positive image of Korea and Korean brands. This is because cultural products attribute dual functions. Cultural products increase not only cultural industries themselves,

Table 13.2 Korean Trade Volumes in Broadcasting Media Content (Unit: US\$1,000)

	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
China	5	95	463	Na	936	3663	6803	7528	5495	13391
Vietnam	0	0	0	0	201	533	982	762	971	2210
Japan	62	59	352	Na	1926	2311	36084	49167	79113	81615

Source: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2013.

but also the additional benefits of increasing consumption of other goods. However, the relationship of *Hallyu* and other products has mainly been treated with reception studies or cultural hybridity. Korean dramas in turn promote broader Korean popular culture, including music and films among the younger generation in Vietnam. Although *Hallyu* cannot exist without the practices of overseas fans, *Hallyu* in Vietnam as transnational cultural phenomena is not independent from the efforts of the Korean government and Korean businesses. To put it bluntly, without the promotion of the Korean state and conglomerates, the current Korean cultural phenomenon across Asia would not exist. The following section discusses the formation of *Hallyu* in Vietnam; in particular, how the Korean state organizations and Korean businesses formulate Korean popular culture as a soft power to expand overseas markets.

K-POP AS THE PLATFORM FOR KOREAN BUSINESS

The popularity of K-pop in Vietnam shows not only the opaqueness of popular cultural boundaries, but also shows how cultural phenomena are becoming economic tools. First, the fan practices between Korean television dramas and Korean pop music (K-pop) among Vietnamese youth since 2000 appear to account for the imprecision of content products' boundaries. In fact, the popularity of K-pop began with the original soundtracks of Korean TV dramas and films (Lee & Lee, 2013). For instance, although actors Ahn, Jae-Wook and Kim, Nam-Joo were not pop singers, they even appeared in music concerts. The original soundtrack, "I Believe" from the film *My Sassy Girl* (2001) also became a mega hit (Lee & Lee, 2013).

With K-pop's increasing popularity in Vietnam, K-pop singers began to appear in cultural events held in Vietnam like the *2002 Korean Dream Concert* (KOFICE, 2003; KOCCA, 2002). More recently, the popularity of K-pop celebrities, such as Super Junior, Girls Generation, 2NE1, Beast, CNBlue, M-Black, IU, Sister, Secret, and Davich is still on the rise. However, K-pop in Vietnam has not yet become as lucrative as its popularity would suggest (Brasor, 2012). According to Choo In-Han, a Korean investor in Vietnamese show business, Vietnamese teenagers enjoy K-pop mostly through the free mediums of the Internet and television. In fact, K-pop stars like Rain and Super Junior are cases of financial flops for the Korean music industry in Vietnam (KOCCA, 2014c). Nonetheless, from the year 2000 onward, numerous K-pop concerts have been successful, as the section below explores.

Secondly, most K-pop music live performances in Vietnam are events for cultural exchange (Van, 2012). Although the recent popularity of K-pop in Vietnam has given the impression that K-pop is booming and a very

lucrative business, the reality is different. For example, *K-pop Festival 2012* was the first ticket-selling event in Vietnam but the show did not make much profit (Brasor, 2012; Van, 2012). Furthermore, numerous Korean concerts, sponsored by Korean businesses and supported by the Korean government, have been held in Vietnam since 2000 (Cho, 2011) and have continued despite their limited profitability only because the parties involved are keen to enhance their soft power through these cultural events. For example, the global conglomerate *Unilever* supported the first Korean pop star, Chang Dong-Gun's concert in 1999 and in the following year too, while LG fully sponsored Kim Nam-Joo's concert in 2000 (Lee, 2002).

K-pop in Vietnam shows how cultural product and business alterability correlates with the question of formation. As K-dramas garnered sponsorship from Korean businesses in Vietnam during the initial stage, K-pop often gets support from the Korean government and Korean businesses. The Korean governmental organizations actively use Korean pop stars as a form of soft power. For example, Korean girl group 2NE1 held a concert in 2011 at the National Convention Centre in Hanoi, sponsored by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) and Silk Road Corporation (Cho, 2011; Soompi, 2011). Other such examples are the concerts of Korean idol group Super Junior, who appeared at the *MTV EXIT* concert in 2010 (M. S. Kim, 2010) and at the *Vietnam-Korea Festival in 2012*, co-hosted by Korean Broadcasting System and Vietnamese Television (VTV). Other invited pop stars were Beast, CNBLUE, M-Black, IU, Sister, Secret, and Davich (Vinahanin, 2012). Despite the success of K-pop in Vietnam, it has been difficult for the Korean music industry to recoup their investment in Vietnam because of the limited spending power of young Vietnamese fans. Korean businesses and the Korean government promote them as free entertainment events instead, with the hope that this will enhance the sale of other Korean products in Vietnam.

K-pop in Vietnam reflects the expansion of the technological environment that has transformed the media landscape of Vietnam in a fundamental way. Increased popularity of K-pop through a hyper-connected new media environment has led to a great diversity of users and audience's synesthetic experiences. In fact, most new K-pop songs are freely available through YouTube or other user-generated content sites (Oh 2013). According to KOCCA and the Samsung Economic Research Institute, Vietnam is one of the top countries for viewing K-pop on YouTube. Meanwhile, most K-pop stars earn their money from advertising as models rather than directly from the K-pop music industry (Williamson, 2011).

Another indispensable factor is K-pop in Vietnam becomes a new type of business tool used by Korean and local businesses. This is especially true with the new trend of TV shows like reality audition programs. Firstly, VK

Pop Super Star, based on the Korean TV show *K-pop Star*, is the most popular and successful reality TV show on the VTV network. According to VTV, more than 45 % of the Vietnamese population watched the final competition of *VK Pop Super Star* in 2014 (VTV, 2014). The show, which began its first season in 2014, is a singing competition to discover new singing talent across the country. The contestants sing Korean pop songs solo or in duets or do Korean pop dances. The winner not only takes away a prize worth VND 7.5 billion (\$ 353,000), but he/she is also offered intensive training in Korea and a contract with a Korean entertainment company (News Gateway of Vietnam, 2014).

VK Pop Super Star begins with preliminary auditions in selected locations with the support of Lotte Mart across Vietnam. Tens of thousands of candidates who dream of becoming pop idols audition, and most are eliminated by judges (H. H. Kim, 2014) who are renowned singers, artists, and entertainment producers from both Korea and Vietnam. The program was coproduced by Korean and Vietnamese businesses like Rainbow Bridge, which is a Korean international entertainment production company, and Vietnamese production company VNK. Rainbow Bridge's CEO announced that the winner would debut in Korea and Vietnam through entertainment agencies set up as Vietnam-Korea joint ventures (KOFICE, 2014).

Lotte supported *VK Pop Super Star* with \$340 million. The group also provided additional support, as seen in Table 13.3, in a range of ways, such as providing the audition locations. Lotte provided a stage at its Lotte Marts across Vietnam and accommodation for the final fifteen candidates in a Lotte hotel in Korea (Kim, 2014). Furthermore, during the season, Lotte provided meals and snacks to candidates, such as *Lotteria* hamburgers and a free sampling menu from *Angel in Us*, a Lotte franchise coffee shop (Chon, 2014).

Table 13.3 Support Provided for *VK Pop Super Star* by Lotte

<i>Company</i>	<i>Support</i>
Lotte Mart	Temporary Stage
Bibica (Local brand of Lotte)	Invitation to Lotte World in Seoul
Lotte Department Store	Lotte Hotel in Seoul
Lotte Vietnam Co. Ltd.	Lotteria Hamburgers in Vietnam
Lotteria	Lotte Snacks
Lotter E&C	Angel in Us Coffee
Lotte Home Shopping	Intermission Advertisement
Lotte Data Communication	Stage Design
Lotte Cinema	Advertisement
Lotte Hotel & Resorts	Provide free accommodations

Source: (Chon, 2014; Ko, 2014).

During the season of *VK Pop Super Star*, there was tremendous interest not only among K-pop fans but also the public. Such programs also enjoy add-on publicity opportunities for the contestants and the sponsors as various official and unofficial websites, magazines, and newspapers feature information on contestants' hobbies, their personalities, socioeconomic background and so on (Kim, 2013). Throughout the season of *VK Pop Super Star*, Lotte and all its sponsored products received wide advertisement and exposure. Lotte was investing substantially in a wide range of marketing tools through K-pop. This further illustrates how businesses are reinforced by cultural products.

Furthermore, the Korean film industry in Vietnam links more directly to Korean capital into Vietnam. While Korean businesses already use K-drama and K-pop as their business platforms, the Vietnamese film market has only recently become a new target for Korean capital.

KOREAN CAPITAL BUILDS ANOTHER PLATFORM IN VIETNAM

The case of the Korean film industry in Vietnam demonstrates not only the expansion of the Korean cultural industry but also the national-institutional development plan. Unlike the Korean TV industry and music industry, the Korean film industry targets the Vietnamese specifically as consumers. Global corporations like the CJ Group and Lotte have found their place in the Vietnamese film market by riding on the wave of modernization in Vietnam (KOFICE, 2005a). The entry of the Korean film industry into the Vietnamese market shows the Vietnamese government's role in the cultural sector as well.

The film industry in Vietnam is part of a national policy; like the TV industry in Vietnam, the film industry is state owned and the state has been managing it since 1975. However, these cinemas are now outdated in terms of equipment and facilities and are totally falling behind international trends in the cinema business (Giòi, 2012). However, as Vietnam modernizes, this is also gradually changing and the government is supporting the modernization process in various ways.

First, regulations on distribution and filmmaking, which used to be a state monopoly, were the first to relax. The national film agency, FaFilm, used to monopolize the film distribution system but, since 2003, private companies could distribute films as well (Dodona Research, 2001; KOFICE, 2005). Furthermore, according to Ben Stocking of the Associated Press (2007), "Vietnam's film industry is changing quickly, from an old state-run studio system into a more modern industry that began allowing private companies to make movies in 2003" (Stocking, 2007).

Secondly, the government is subsidizing Vietnamese cinema by upgrading its infrastructure and allowing private foreign investors into the film industry (Dodona Research, 2001; KOFICE, 2005). For instance, Tran Luinân Kim, chairman of the Vietnamese Cinema Association, mentioned, in the newspaper *Labour* in 2006, that upgrading infrastructure would resolve the challenges faced by Vietnam's film industry. In response, the government has invested VND 15 billion. Part of this money was to encourage Vietnamese filmmakers to participate in international film festivals. Despite government effort, the Vietnamese film industry is still bogged down by out-of-date technology, style (e.g., pace is too slow for younger audiences), the lack of film professionals, and so on.

Korean government and Korean businesses have thus come in at the right time. Agreements such as the Korea-Vietnam Cultural Exchange Plan (1994) were signed and renewed in 2004 and 2008, respectively (KOCCA, 2009). These agreements have accelerated support from Korean government agencies such as Korean Film Council (KOFIC) and Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) to the Vietnamese film industry. For example, since KOFIC and the Vietnam Cinema Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2008, BIFF has supported the Vietnam International Film Festival since 2010 (D'Sa, 2010; KOFIC, 2008).

Furthermore, the Korean governmental nonprofit organizations under MCST have evolved over the years to emerge as promotion for the Korean cultural industry internationally. For instance, Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE) has invited and provided workshops to Vietnamese filmmakers and producers in Korea since 2003 (see Table 13.4),

Table 13.4 List of Visitors from Vietnam

<i>Name</i>	<i>Job</i>
Mr LAI VAN SINH	Head of Vietnam Cinema Department
Mr DANG TAT BINH	CEO, FIRST FILM
Mr LE DUC TIEN	CEO, Vietnam Film
Mr NGUYEN THAI HOA	Vice President, Vietnam National Cinema Distribution
Mrs PHAM VAN HOA	Executive Manager, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
Mrs NGUYEN THI GIA PHONG	Manager, the Ministry of Finance
Mrs NGUYEN THI PHU HA	Manager, the Ministry of Finance
Mrs TRAN THI MINH	Executive Manager, Vietnam Cinema Department
Mr DANG VAN HAO	Financial Manager, Vietnam Cinema Department
Mr VU KHAC LUONG	Executive Manager, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

Source: (KOFIC, 2008b).

particularly on new film technology, as part of a cultural exchange program in November 2003 (KOFICE, 2005). Vietnam film professional Tran Thi Thuy Nga was invited to a three-month Asian Film Professionals Training Programme, hosted by the KOFICE, between October and December of 2007 (KOFICE, 2008). KOFICE also hosted workshops for Vietnamese cultural industry professionals, including film professionals, in November 2008 (KOFICE, 2008).

Soon after the introduction of Korean dramas into Vietnam, Korean films like *Letter* were screened in Hanoi (Cine21, 2001). The first Korean film screening was a joint venture between the Vietnamese state-owned film agency FaFilm, responsible for importing and licensing films and videos, and a Korean film company (Cine21, 2001), while the second was *Love Wind, Love Song* screened in March 2001 in Ho Chi Minh City. From 2000 to 2003, 23 Korean films were screened throughout Vietnam (Korean Film Year Book, 2000–2003). *My Sassy Girl* was screened in 2001 and was a hit even though the main actors were relatively unknown in Vietnam (Movist, 2001). However, by early 2004 Korean films, while popular, were not lucrative in Vietnam (KOFICE, 2004).

The reasons are varied. First, like with the music industry, piracy is a serious issue in Vietnam. Secondly, the golden age of the Vietnamese film industry was in the late 1980s and since then, there has not been much development (KOCCA, 2004a). Illegal reproductions of DVDs and CDs, as well as Internet and mobile piracy have risen in tandem with the expansion of Internet use, broadband, and mobile usage (Domon, 2006). In Vietnam, copyright infringement was not seen as a problem until 2004 (KOTRA, 2004), and it had a significant financial impact, as Table 13.5 shows. One example is that the department store Diamond Plaza in Hanoi sold illegal DVDs of Korean films at the same time as their screening in Vietnam (KOCCA, 2003b).

Vietnamese audiences tend not to go to cinemas because the cinemas are outdated, as mentioned above. Even though cinema was introduced to Vietnam at the turn of the twentieth century, it was not fully developed until the independence of the nation in 1945. Ever since its leader Ho Chi Minh established the Vietnam Movie and Photography Enterprise as a state-owned

Table 13.5 Piracy of Korean Films in 2002 in Vietnam (Unit US\$)

<i>Cultural Industries Sales</i>		83,383,016
Illegal reproductions		Total: 29,857,429
	Music	4,709,570
	DVD, VCD	6,222,099
	Video tape	18,925,760

Source: KAREC 2003.

apparatus in 1953, Vietnam has produced more documentaries than feature films, and the majority of them focused on the Vietnam War (Nguyen, 2013).

Even though the film industry started out as a state-owned industry, the state has gradually reduced its support since *Doi Moi*. Consequently, while some state cinemas closed, others received enough state funding to renovate their premises (Tuoi Tre, 2014b). The Vietnamese government owned the cinemas, and acted as the main film distributor through the national agency FaFilm, but since 2003 the government has allowed foreign private investors into the film industry (Dodona Research, 2001). For instance, a joint venture between Korea and Vietnam, known as The Good Friends Initiative with 90% Korean investment was established in Vietnam to distribute films (KOFICE, 2005b). The Good Friends initiative opened multiplex cinemas in Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, and Hanoi (KOFICE, 2005). These modern Korean cinema chains have stimulated film sales and fueled a Korean film boom. In this context, the *Saigon Times* in 2001 reported that the “Korean film industry has revived the Vietnamese film industry.” Along with the Vietnamese government’s new long-term plans to expand its film industry, private Korean film companies, such as the CJ Group and Lotte have invested immensely in Vietnam by opening several cinema chains throughout the country (Sung, 2013). The case of CJ Group in Vietnam illuminates how transnational corporations seek to minimize costs and globalize their businesses to indirectly or directly serve the culture-ideology of consumerism. It confirms the role of such TNCs in sustaining global capitalism in a variety of ways.

1996 was the year CJ Group opened its first Vietnam office. The group established a production line for animal feed in 2001 because of rising production costs in Korea, so its manufacturing operations relocated to developing countries. It also entered the Vietnamese bakery market with its flagship brand *TOUS les JOURS* in 2007. Its business peaked in Vietnam in 2011. The group started the home shopping channel SCJ through a joint venture with the country’s top cable TV operator SCTV, as well as a channel for logistics and agricultural products. It also acquired Vietnam’s largest multiplex chain and film distribution company, Megastar (Lee, 2012).

After opening 10 cinemas and 90 screens in 2011 in Vietnam, CJ opened another 14 cinemas and 100 screens across Vietnam in 2014 (see Table 13.6). Notably, CJ Group even has cinemas in small cities like Hải Phòng in 2014. According to Im Yong-Kun, CJ E&M (CJ Entertainment & Media) executive manager in charge of the Asian Film market, the Vietnamese film market is not lucrative currently but he expects the situation to improve because 60 percent of Vietnam’s population of 90 million is under the age of 35. Furthermore, the Vietnamese government is determined to promote the country’s economic growth through its film industry.

Table 13.6 Main Vietnamese Film Exhibition Companies in 2014

<i>Brand</i>	<i>Number of cinemas</i>	<i>City</i>
CJ-CGV (Korea)	13	Ho Chi Minh City 6 Hanoi 2, Hai Phong 1 Quang Ninh 1, Can Tho 1 Da Nang 1, Dong Nai 1
Lotte Cinema (Korea)	12	Ho Chi Minh City 5 Hanoi 2, Dong Nai 1 Da Nang 1, Nha Trang 1 Binh Tuan 1, Binh Duong 1
Galaxy Cinema (Vietnam)	4	Ho Chi Minh City 4
Platinum Cineplex (Indonesia)	5	Hanoi 4, Nha Trang 1
BHD Star Cineplex (Vietnam)	3	Ho Chi Minh City 3
National Cinema Centre (Vietnam)	1	Hanoi 1

Source: (S. W. Jung, 2015; C. H. Lee, 2014).

Furthermore, the CJ E&M chairman emphasized the importance of the Vietnamese market for the group's global expansion. It is as important as the Chinese market because Vietnam is close to Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, which are potential markets too. In this context, CJ's chairman invited Vietnam's prime minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, to Seoul in March 2012(J. Y. Lee, 2012). After the meeting, CJ E&M signed an agreement with the Vietnamese government to coproduce films and TV shows starting in 2013 (C. H. Lee, 2014). CJ signed similar agreements in 2014 (H. S. Jung, 2014). CJ also works with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to help farmers in Vietnam's Ninh Thuan province to set up a Creating Shared Value (CSV) program (CJ E&M Times, 2014).

CJ Group, together with the Korean and Vietnamese governments, has tried to apply the model *Saemaul Movement* (New Community Movement) in Vietnam, which was a political initiative launched by Korean president Park Chung-Hee in Korea in the 1970s, as a way of modernizing the country's rural economy. This program, a private-public partnership program set up in the south-central coast of Vietnam, was introduced in 2014 to alleviate poverty among Vietnamese farmers (H. S. Jung, 2014). KOICA was responsible for the overall administrative work and funding of the program. Meanwhile, CJ also introduced new farming technologies and farm products, such as red pepper cultivation in Vietnam. In fact, red pepper harvested in Vietnam is sold as a product made in Korea by CJ Cheil-Jedang (CJEM, 2014).

In terms of Vietnam's film industry, CJ hosted the first Vietnam-Korean film festival in Ho Chi Minh City in October 2012 to celebrate 20 years of diplomatic ties between Korean and Vietnam. During the festival, 12 Korean films were screened and a seminar was held on how to create joint creative works and increase mutual trade (CJ E&M, 2011). Resulting from CJ's new

globalizing vision and effort, CJ E&M established a joint venture with Vietnamese national TV station Vietnam Television (VTV) in late 2014, which is the first of its kind for a national TV station like VTV (CJ EM Times, 2014). Its first co-production was a TV drama series, *Tuoi Thanh Xuan (Forever Young)*, shown in 36 episodes and shot in Korea, as well as in Vietnam (Tuoi Tre, 2014a).

More recently, CJ E&M and Vietnam's Chanh Phuong Films coproduced a film, *Let Hoi Decide 2 (De Main Tihn 2)*, which scored a record-breaking \$268,000 on its opening day, December 30, 2014 (Kil, 2015). Not only was this the first successful coproduction between CJ and Vietnam, it was even more popular than the Hollywood film, *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*, screened at the same time. It is also a good example of the successful globalization of transnational corporations. The film was made, funded, and distributed by CJ E&M in Vietnam, and all the human resources came from Vietnam, including the film director and actors (Kil, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Korea has become an emerging cultural product export country. This can be seen in the continued popularity of *Hallyu* in and beyond Asia for more than a decade. This may be the time to investigate this phenomenon and recognize its study as a moving target. Generally, transnational cultural flow has been understood to flow from the West to the rest of world through the media during the twentieth century. Although Western media content still dominates in many markets, in the paragraphs above, this chapter has demonstrated a new process of transnational cultural flow that occurs without the involvement of the Western media.

This chapter has explored the flow of *Hallyu* to Vietnam. An important point to make about the success of *Hallyu* in Vietnam is that there is an invisible hand that introduced the content products. In the first case, Korean content was not introduced by Korean media agencies/industry but by global corporations instead. In the second case, Korean businesses actively used the popularity of *Hallyu* to extend their markets. In both cases, the popularity of *Hallyu* in Vietnam seems to be a bottom-up cultural phenomenon but a thoroughly planned and implemented marketing strategy by global firms. What is significant is that new transnational cultural flow expands based on the capitals.

Over the last twenty years, the Korean culture industry has developed under what I would call GLCID. The government established special governmental institutions for the industry and attempted to graft cultural industry onto economic development. As the bilateral agreement on the culture/media sector that originated in 1992 demonstrates, the Korean government steadily supports

Korean cultural events including educational programs in Vietnam. As mentioned above, cultural products contribute to links with other commodities as well. Global businesses' changing marketing strategies through content products and multiple roles suggest that they are accommodating the key role of cultural industries in the economy. As shown, based more on physical capital, Korea-based global firms have penetrated their content into local Vietnamese markets with the support of the Korean governmental institutions.

Furthermore, the cultural industry itself is becoming an important element, ultimately with the potential of shaping economic development. *Hallyu* in Vietnam demonstrates the Korean government's efforts to nurture cultural industries and global corporations' mechanisms to extend their markets. This shows that Korean cultural products are popular in Vietnam, reflecting not only unique cultural flows, which are the non-Western cultural influences in the region, but also new strategies of global enterprises to expand into new markets. As shown, the case of *Hallyu* in Vietnam is constructed on organizational, political, and economic imperatives asserted by Korean firms, media industry, and the government. Nonetheless, due to *Hallyu*'s characteristics which are not derived from the West, it is easy to overlook the nature of the Asian state's political mechanisms.

In other words, although current cultural flows in Asia are not mainly derived from the West, due to the Vietnam's selective and conditional opening-up of the market, cultural flow can be operated within the parameters set by the Vietnam state. Alongside political economic factors, these parameters are crucial in determining the trend and direction of the cultural phenomena. Although the domestic cultural industries may benefit from the conditional inflow of foreign cultural capital and skill that the state permits, the industries are not free from the state's control and censorship. As a result, cultural producers remain caught between market demand and Vietnamese state censorship. Ironically, transnational cultural flow in the twenty-first century has been caused by institutional boundaries.

This chapter has talked about transnational cultural flow in Asia. Although Korean cultural products have created both the domestic and global cultural market landscapes, *Hallyu*, despite its short history, is inextricably linked with global companies seeking to expand into new markets. Lastly, I would like to ask you to define the real elements in the creation of a transnational cultural phenomenon in the twenty-first century.

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