HALLYU AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

LA ROCHELLE UNIVERSITY

LANGUAGES, LITERATURE, ARTS, AND HUMANITIES CAMPUS

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Yoon Jiyong, "Gucci Metamorfosi", 2022

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Institut Roi Sejong La Rochelle

한국문화축제 ICI EN CORÉE Festival de la culture coréenne

ONLINE ENROLLMENT

International Colloquium

Hallyu and the Global South: The Impact of the South Korean Cultural Industry in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America

October 7–8, 2026
La Rochelle University (France)

Languages, Literature, Arts, and Humanities Campus

Over the past several decades, Hallyu — or the "Korean Wave" — has emerged as a major cultural phenomenon, reshaping how cultural products circulate and are received worldwide. Through genres and formats as varied as K-pop, K-dramas, and films, Hallyu has contributed to the diffusion of a renewed image of South Korea while becoming embedded in diverse local contexts of production, appropriation, and reinterpretation. By placing soft power and cultural circulation at the center of the discussion, this conference aims to explore the geopolitical, economic, and identity dynamics associated with the global expansion of South Korean popular culture beyond Western contexts, with a particular focus on South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

Online enrollment

WEDNESDAY, October 7

Lecture Hall 400

09h30 : Registration

09h45 : Introduction
Sora Hong, Director of the Master's programme in Languages, Cultures and International Business at La Rochelle University and Director of the King Sejong Institute in La Rochelle

Fernando Pedraza, Vice-President for International Relations, La Rochelle University

10h00-11h00 : Keynote speaker
Chung-hwan Joe (Hongik University)
Remaking Hallyu in Southeast Asia: Miss Granny and the Multilayered Translation of Cultural Memory

Break

Room B 106

11h30-13h00 : Hallyu and Soft Power : An Alternative to Western Cultural Models ?

Chair: Chung-hwan Joe

Alba Mireya Castro Morales y Cuéllar (Independent researcher)
From Hallyu to Cultural Legitimacy: South Korean Visual Arts, Cultural Diplomacy and the Institutionalisation of Korean Prestige in Mexico

Maïwenn Desplanche (Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas)
A bridge between North and South: Hallyu as a diplomatic tool in a polarized world.

Nguyen Trung Hiep (Seoul National University)
Fandom Geopolitics and Counter-Hegemony : The Clash Between Digital Nationalism and Digital Regionalism in the Hallyu 4.0 Era

15h00-17h30 : Hallyu as a Laboratory of Cultural Hybridization

1st Panel (15h00-16h30)

Chair : Sora Hong

Wonjae Choi (Dongguk University)
The Korean Sentiment of Empathy and Sympathy digitalised

Sanchari Basu Chaudhuri (Symbiosis Law School, Pune, Symbiosis International, Deemed University)
Bollywood Remakes of Korean movies : Songs, Aesthetics and Experience

Pallavi Kumari (Independent researcher)
Glocalising the Webtoon : Hybrid Digital Storytelling and Korean Webtoons in India

Sumathi De Medts (Université Catholique de Louvain)
Les artisans invisibles de la Hallyu : ethnographie d'une communauté internationale de scantrad de webtoons et de travail bénévole dans le Sud global

Break

2nd Panel (16h45-17h30)

Chair : Susrita Das

Jung Hojai (Dongguk University)
Engineered Hybridity and Liminoid Performance : K-pop, Olympic Urbanism, and the Global South

Jeannae Dormido (Independent researcher)
Inspired by K-Pop : A Study on its Influences to the Filipino Youth through Music, Fashion and Social Media

Adriana Robledo Sánchez (Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas)
Arirang as an affective bridge. Nostalgia and performative hybridity among Mexican BTS fans on TikTok

University Library

18h30 : Tour of the "Lucioles" installation designed by Arthur Baude

19h00 : K-pop performance organized by the King Sejong Institute in La Rochelle

THURSDAY, October 8

Room B 106
Languages, Literature, Arts, and Humanities Campus

09h00-10h30 : The Hallyu Wave as a Tool for Political Expression and Mobilization in the Global South

Chair : Sebastian Urioste

Ghaziah Nurika Akhni (Nagoya University)
K-pop Coded Resistance: Fandom Culture and Youth Social Movement in Indonesia

Amalia N. Andini (Rotterdam University)
K-Pop and Youth Activism in Indonesia: A Scoping Review

Hugues Sapin (Sorbonne Université)
La Hallyu, un levier économique et politique à São Paulo ? Transformations et visibilités de la diaspora coréenne dans le quartier du Bom Retiro.

Bernardita González Lustig (Central University of Chile)
Socio-political Movements and K-global Citizenship: The Case of Kpopers for Boric in Chile

Break

10h45 – 12h00 : Hallyu and Youth in the Global South: Consumption, Identification, and Creation in India

Chair : Paroma Ghose

Susmita Dash (Pondicherry University)
State Intervention, Commodification of Beauty and Its Consumption: A Critical study of "Glass skin" phenomena in contemporary India

Aishwarya Satish (Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology)
Intimate Hallyu: Adult Korean Webtoons and the Global Circulation of Digital Desire

Susrita Das (University of Copenhagen, Danemark)
Eating K-pop, consuming "Korea": Transcultural fandoms and the affective lives of Hallyu fans in India

14h30-16h30 : Hallyu and Youth in the Global South: Consumption, Identification, and Creation in Latin America

Chair : Alba Mireya Castro Morales y Cuéllar

Erica Vogel (Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, California)
Ununuly Global Buzz: Creating, Documenting, and Consuming the rise of K-pop in Mexico City

Jessica L. Quijano Herrera (Universidad pedagógica de El Salvador)
Hallyu among Salvadoran Youth: Cultural Consumption, Symbolic Images of Korea, and Recommendation Intentions

Janice Tapia Silva (Universidad Central de Chile)
Creating Queer Spaces for Overflowing Affection: Ethnographic Perspectives on the Chilean K-pop Fandom

Dinorah Lizeth Contreras Aragón (Independent researcher) and Karina Juárez Morales (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México)
The Arrival of Hallyu and Its Impact on Mexican-South Korean Political and Cultural Relations: A History Told by and For Fans

Break

16h45-17h15 : Closing remarks by Paroma Ghose and Sebastian Urioste

17h15-17h45 : Discussion

18h00: Closing of the conference

ABSTRACTS

■ Keynote speaker

Chung-hwan Joe (Hongik University) : ***Remaking Hallyu in Southeast Asia: Miss Granny and the Multilayered Translation of Cultural Memory***

This paper examines how Hallyu is remade in Southeast Asia through multilayered processes of localization, appropriation, and cultural translation rather than through the export of a stable Korean text. Focusing on the Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Philippine remakes of Miss Granny (2014), it argues that the film's regional mobility depends less on fidelity to the Korean original than on the rearticulation of youth, memory, and music within historically grounded national frameworks.

A key condition of this remake circulation is a Korean major film studio, CJ ENM's strategy of co-investment, collaboration with local subsidiaries, production companies and producers, and involvement in adaptation. This model enabled the carefully differentiated circulation of Korean intellectual property across Southeast Asia while allowing each remake to negotiate cultural memories and gendered imaginaries of aging and rejuvenation.

In the Korean original, Audrey Hepburn serves as a figure of youth, elegance, and cosmopolitan femininity, furnishing the rejuvenated heroine with a template for self-fashioning. In the Southeast Asian remakes, however, that template is retained, displaced, or translated. In Vietnam, rejuvenation is anchored in a heroine born in 1944 and linked to the Second World War, the August Revolution of 1945, post-1975 North-to-South migration, and memories of anti-U.S. resistance; songs associated with Trịnh Công Sơn convert personal nostalgia into national cultural memory. In Indonesia, youth is reimagined through Lebaran, dangdut, classic Indonesian songs, and the star image of Mieke Wijaya, locating nostalgia in post-independence popular memory. In the Philippines, the heroine's remembered past is tied to the post-Second World War decades, while music and performance function as key vehicles of intergenerational memory; Hepburn remains visible here in the alias Audrey de Leon. *Miss Granny* thus reveals Hallyu as a multilayered translation of cultural memory enacted through remake circulation.

■ Panel « Hallyu and Soft Power : An Alternative to Western Cultural Models ? »

Alba Mireya Castro Morales y Cuéllar (Independent researcher) : ***From Hallyu to Cultural Legitimacy: South Korean Visual Arts, Cultural Diplomacy and the Institutionalisation of Korean Prestige in Mexico***

The international success of Hallyu has made South Korea a major cultural actor of the twenty-first century. While scholarship has largely examined K-pop, television dramas, and film as instruments of soft power, less attention has been paid to how cultural popularity is transformed into cultural legitimacy. This paper argues that Hallyu's long-term impact depends not only on media consumption but also on the institutions that convert cultural attraction into recognition and prestige.

Drawing on theories of cultural diplomacy, soft power, and cultural legitimacy, the study examines how South Korean cultural influence in Mexico has expanded beyond popular entertainment through visual arts initiatives, exhibitions, educational programmes, and cultural institutions. It focuses on the role of museums, cultural centres, academic collaborations, and language institutes in generating institutional visibility and symbolic value for Korean culture within the Mexican cultural field.

The paper proposes that Hallyu functions not only as a vehicle of cultural diffusion but also as a gateway to spaces associated with cultural authority. As interest generated by popular culture intersects with museums, universities, and cultural diplomacy initiatives, Korean cultural production becomes embedded within local structures of validation. Through this process, Korean culture moves from being consumed as a foreign popular phenomenon to being recognised as a legitimate object of cultural knowledge and artistic appreciation.

Using Mexico as a case study, this research explores how cultural institutions mediate the transition from popularity to legitimacy and contribute to the consolidation of South Korea's cultural presence in international cultural networks. By shifting attention from consumption to institutional recognition, the paper highlights the role of visual arts and cultural institutions in the construction of cultural prestige beyond Western centres of influence.

Maïwenn Desplanche (Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas) : ***A bridge between North and South: Hallyu as a diplomatic tool in a polarized world.***

Hallyu is symptomatic of the ongoing geopolitical shifts in power relations and cultural exchanges. While the Korean Wave builds a bridge between East and West, this bridge now extends strategically between Northeast Asia and the Global South.

This research analyzes state projection by asking how Seoul uses Hallyu to transform identitarian and cultural nostalgia into a diplomatic lever, in order to consolidate new alliances in a polarized world.

This paper seeks to show that South Korea uses this hybridity to resolve an identity paradox. Although it has undergone an economic and political "de-Southernization" by joining the ranks of Northern donors, it maintains a rhetoric of "nostalgic solidarity" with the Global South. Having never belonged to the political South, and its development having brought it closer to the North, Seoul cannot offer an alliance in the way China does. It therefore projects a soft power that is differentiated from that of the United States, along with a shared memory of suffering (colonization, war, poverty) as a tool of diplomacy.

Drawing on Wendt, we show how Korea dissociates its type identity — a Northern power — from its role identity — a peer of the South — through its staging of history. Hallyu acts as a "mirror," reflecting an image of accessible resilience, and as a "stage" that makes it possible to maintain a horizontal link where development aid creates a verticality. Through a critical discourse analysis of public policy (2018–2026), this study demonstrates that this projection generates a capital of trust that is indispensable to a hedging strategy. Faced with American and Chinese influence, Korea positions itself as a particular kind of mediator — a Northern power by virtue of its status, yet a Southern one by virtue of its memory and history.

Nguyen Trung Hiep (Seoul National University) : *Fandom Geopolitics and Counter-Hegemony : The Clash Between Digital Nationalism and Digital Regionalism in the Hallyu 4.0 Era*

The platformization of East Asian media culture has transformed the Korean Wave (Hallyu) from a unidirectional cultural export into a highly contested, multipolar field. While existing literature extensively investigates Hallyu's global expansion, a research gap persists regarding how Global South audiences leverage digital platforms to construct resistive regional identities against the ethno-nationalistic gatekeeping of domestic Korean fans. This study examines the geopolitics of fandom and counter-hegemony by focusing on the January 2026 DAY6 concert controversy in Kuala Lumpur, which triggered a fierce transnational clash between South Korean netizens' (K-netizens) exclusionary rhetoric and the viral emergence of the Southeast Asian fan-driven #SEAblings movement. Rather than a simple act of fandom's idol defense, this phenomenon represents the rise of digital regionalism, which is a transnational solidarity mechanism through which Southeast Asia contests South Korean cultural hegemony.

This study has two primary research questions : (1) How did K-netizens leverage digital platform architectures to enforce digital nationalism and maintain cultural-hegemonic boundaries against Southeast Asian fans ? And, (2) In what ways did the #SEAblings movement shift from localized fan-artist loyalty to peer-regional solidarity in order to renegotiate the cultural hierarchies of Hallyu? To answer these questions, this research integrates Dal Yong Jin's (2025) "3Cs" (Creativity, Control, Credentials) framework with transnational cultural negotiation theory to examine how peripheral entities actively resist assimilation and reshape the exporting nation's soft power structure. Employing a qualitative design, this study uses digital discourse analysis, and netnography to analyze social media interactions from January 2026. Key findings indicate a critical transition from traditional fan-artist loyalty toward peer-regional solidarity, where Southeast Asian fans leverage their economic and streaming "credentials" to contest the "control" of Hallyu's cultural standards historically held by the Korean center.

This research provides an interesting case study for the Global South by demonstrating a shift in fandom power : Southeast Asian fans are no longer passive economic anchors but active agents demanding cultural status equality. It highlights that youth political mobilization and social movements in the Global South need not confront traditional political forces but can manifest powerfully by restructuring global popular culture hierarchies.

- **Panel « Hallyu as a Laboratory of Cultural Hybridization »**

Wonjae Choi (Dongguk University) : *The Korean Sentiment of Empathy and Sympathy digitalised*

The Korean Wave, Hallyu, clearly demonstrates how Korean sentiment, interwoven with major characteristics of Korean Neo-Confucianism, manifests in its content. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in Asia. In Japan, it has taken root as an « oshi (favorite) culture » that energizes the daily lives of the younger generation and

quenches their emotional thirst. Politically, it also functions as a medium for improving Korea–Japan relations, showing that Korean sentiment is not merely a temporary fad or craze, but has become an object of learning and even admiration in Japan. This kind of consumption unfolds within a shared understanding of locality between the two countries. In Vietnam, too, there are attempts to catch up with Korean sentiments. Local Hallyu fandoms have grown into active social actors who confidently voice their opinions on issues of sovereignty and on a perceived lack of cultural respect. The influx of Hallyu has led, within the Vietnamese fandom, to the formation of stages of critical reception and systematic organization ; paradoxically, this is generating fatigue and resistance toward the unilateral influx of Korean culture. The same phenomenon is observed in Mongolia, where the feelings of empathy and sympathy unique to Hallyu have taken root across generations. Operating in a cultural and psychological manner, the Korean Wave has actively and naturally infiltrated and been absorbed into various cultural spheres, producing the highest cultural-transfer outcomes achieved by the brand of Korea. This also demonstrates the deterritorialization of Hallyu driven by digital technology, proving that Hallyu is no longer the exclusive property of Korea but has become a common noun for people around the world.

Sanchari Basu Chaudhuri (Symbiosis Law School, Pune, Symbiosis International, Deemed University) : ***Bollywood Remakes of Korean movies : Songs, Aesthetics and Experience***

Korean cinema has gained immense popularity worldwide for its innovative storytelling, compelling narratives, and distinct visual style. At the turn of the millennium, Bollywood filmmakers started to draw influence from Korean films though they remain uncredited. The study will examine how Bollywood films adapt Korean movies by analyzing the aesthetics and popularity of *Awarapan* (2007), a remake of *A Bittersweet Life* (2005), *Murder 2* (2011), a remake of *The Chaser* (2008) and *Ek Villain* (2014), remake of *I Saw the Devil* (2010).

The structure of Korean revenge films is adapted to fit Bollywood movies by introducing narrative elements that diverge from the formulaic, family-centric love stories traditionally seen in Bollywood. This retains the elements of Indian storytelling (Nayar 2004) amid the different world of Korean plot. I show how the Indianizing element has increased over the years by understanding the choice of filming locations which shifted to reflect varying levels of Indianization. Another critical Indianizing factor lies in their song selection. Indian songs are unique as they convey emotions and take the form of contemplations, imaginations or illusions (Dwyer, 2000). Like other songs of Bollywood movies, these songs offer escapist pleasures to the accustomed Bollywood audience (Gopal and Moorti, 2008). By delving into the intricate relationship between music, visuals, and cultural representation, the paper will understand how these aspects contribute to the overall cinematic experience and resonate with viewers on various levels.

Continuing gender roles remain a central feature of the Bollywood remakes. The redemption arc of the protagonist and the masculinity-in-crisis of the antagonist arise from the strain imposed by patriarchal expectations (Levant 1997). I argue that such narratives aid in understanding the gendered anxieties tied to male subjectivity in India, especially as shifting conceptions of identity challenge traditional notions of masculinity.

Pallavi Kumari (Independent researcher) : *Glocalising the Webtoon : Hybrid Digital Storytelling and Korean Webtoons in India*

Korean webtoons are becoming a more recognizable form of Hallyu in India's emerging platform culture.Webtoons were first developed in South Korea as web based comics intended for vertical scrolling are currently reaching young Indians via bilingual platforms, mobile reading, streaming adaptations and online fan communities. Even though webtoons are becoming more visible in Indian digital media, they have not gotten as much attention as k-pop & k-dramas in studies of Hallyu in India.

This paper examines how Korean webtoons are being adapted in India as hybrid forms of digital storytelling that blend Korean cultural formats with Indian digital culture. By using Doobo Shim's concept of cultural hybridity and ideas about platform culture to analyse that webtoons are not just imported content. It is a travelling format "a style of storytelling based on vertical scrolling, web-based, smartphones and serial reading that gets reshaped through translations, platform systems and local reading habits." In this way, webtoons help us understand how Korean cultural industries evolve beyond simple export models and become part of new cultural environments in the Global South.

The paper uses qualitative analysis and exploratory case studies of webtoon localization in India. Through the examples such as Toonsutra as a multilingual Indian webtoon platform, the promotion of webtoon by Korean Cultural Centre India and expansion of Korean platforms in the Indian regional-language market. the paper explores how Korean identity is shown, changed or reduced during localization, and how Indian creators and readers take part in reshaping the format.

Rather than seeing India solely as a consumer of Korean digital culture, this paper argues that Indian audiences, creators, and platforms are actively engaging with Korean webtoons, adapting them to local contexts and contributing to new forms of digital storytelling and creative production. By placing webtoons within debates on Hallyu, cultural hybridity, glocalisation and platform culture, the paper contributes to wider discussions about how Korean media forms change in transnational settings.

Sumathi De Medts (Université Catholique de Louvain) : *Les artisans invisibles de la Hallyu : ethnographie d'une communauté internationale de scantrad de webtoons et de travail bénévole dans le Sud global*

L'expansion mondiale de la *Hallyu* est généralement étudiée à travers la *K-pop*, les séries ou les *webtoons*. Pourtant, les acteurs qui participent quotidiennement à la circulation de ces productions demeurent largement invisibles. Cette communication s'intéresse aux communautés de *scantrad* sur Discord comme espaces de travail bénévole transnational contribuant à la diffusion et à la réappropriation des *webtoons* au sein du Sud global.

Notre terrain repose sur une ethnographie numérique menée durant deux années au sein de *Siren Scan*, l'une des principales équipes internationales de *scantrad*. Organisée en plusieurs branches linguistiques, cette communauté rassemble des centaines de bénévoles répartis entre l'Asie du Sud, l'Asie du Sud-Est, l'Afrique du Nord,

l'Amérique latine et l'Europe. Le cadre théorique mobilisé s'inscrit dans les *Fan Studies* et les recherches consacrées au travail numérique. L'analyse montre que la circulation des *webtoons* repose largement sur le travail invisible de ces bénévoles. Étudiants, jeunes diplômés ou jeunes chômeurs investissent ces espaces pour développer des compétences, élargir leurs réseaux sociaux ou obtenir des formes de rémunération indirectes. Les décalages horaires permettent une production quasi continue, tandis que les échanges quotidiens mêlent anglais, français, arabe et hindi.

Nous soutenons que les communautés de *scantrad* constituent des laboratoires d'hybridation culturelle où les œuvres sud-coréennes sont traduites, réinterprétées et relocalisées. Plus largement, elles révèlent comment le rayonnement de la *Hallyu* s'appuie sur des infrastructures informelles de travail bénévole, participant à de nouvelles formes de circulation culturelle et de co-production transnationale.

Cette communication cherchera ainsi à répondre à trois questions principales : qui sont les acteurs du Sud global qui traduisent et diffusent quotidiennement les webtoons ? Pourquoi ces jeunes investissent-ils une part importante de leur temps dans ces activités bénévoles ? Enfin, comment ces communautés participent-elles à la circulation et à l'hybridation des productions culturelles sud-coréennes ?

Jung Hojai (Dongguk University) : ***Engineered Hybridity and Liminoid Performance : K-pop, Olympic Urbanism, and the Global South***

This paper examines K-pop as a case of "engineered hybridity," focusing on how hybrid cultural forms emerge through organized systems of production, performance, and circulation. Unlike classical postcolonial theories of hybridity, which mainly explain cultural mixing through colonial encounters and unequal power relations, the Korean case shows a different trajectory. K-pop developed through South Korea's active appropriation and reorganization of global pop music techniques within an industrial and performative system.

The paper argues that this process cannot be fully understood without considering Seoul's Olympic urbanism, especially the development of Jamsil (Southeast of Seoul) during and after the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The Olympic ceremonies created not only technical infrastructures such as stadium-scale broadcasting systems and synchronized mass performances, but also aesthetic models based on spectacle, collective participation, and large-scale choreography. These conditions later influenced the development of K-pop concert culture in Jamsil.

Drawing on Victor Turner's concept of the liminoid, this paper approaches K-pop concerts as repeatable environments of collective immersion. Contemporary K-pop stadium concerts, including BTS performances at Seoul Olympic Stadium, can be understood as extending earlier forms of synchronized spectacle connected to Olympic mass performances, now reorganized through digital platforms and global fandom participation.

In this context, K-pop operates as a reproducible performative system composed of choreography, audiovisual formats, fan chants, cover dance practices, and digital remix culture. This reproducibility enables K-pop to circulate not only as cultural export, but also as an adaptable framework for local reinterpretation.

The paper further argues that Hallyu's resonance in the Global South lies less in passive consumption than in localized reproduction. Examples from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Brazil show how local actors selectively combine K-pop performance structures with local cultural styles and musical forms.

By connecting Olympic urbanism, liminoid performance, and industrialized hybridity, this paper reconsiders K-pop as a non-Western model of cultural production that cannot be fully explained through classical postcolonial frameworks alone.

Jeannae Dormido (Independent researcher) : ***Inspired by K-Pop : A Study on its Influences to the Filipino Youth through Music, Fashion and Social Media***

K-Pop is a music genre originating from South Korea following the popularity of Japan's J-Pop. Besides J-Pop, it also has the influences of Reggae, Afro-American music, Soul, R&B, Jazz, Techno, Experimental, among others. While some records claim that it was first launched in 1992, it has only reached worldwide fame after it was successfully marketed internationally as part of Hallyu in the early 21st century, largely contributing to the rise of South Korea's "soft power". With dynamic dance moves, catchy tunes, pretty doll-like female singers and charming boyish boy bands, K-pop has quickly captured the hearts of its audiences. From its early years until now, K-Pop has cultivated itself solid fan communities around the world evolving it into a dominant popular culture.

Among its top consumers is the Philippines with age groups spanning from young teenagers to adults, students to professionals. The K-Pop phenomenon even inspired the birth of P-Pop's (Pinoy Pop) own phenomenal music groups – SB19 and BINI. Not only in music, but Filipino fans has also adapted the K-Pop culture in many aspects. But was it always good and safe? This study posits that while K-Pop fandom may be inspirational at times, it can also leave a dual impact especially to young girls through social media exchange. Employing the combination of quantitative data analysis and qualitative content examination, this study analyzes the logics of K-Pop aesthetics and provides an overview of content engagement. Moreover, the research also identifies the patterns in content replicated by the Filipino youth and the cultural influence that impacts their style, lifestyle, art and social media performance.

Adriana Robledo Sánchez (Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas): ***Arirang as an affective bridge. Nostalgia and performative hybridity among Mexican BTS fans on TikTok***

This proposal examines how non-Korean audiences, specifically Mexican BTS fans, construct emotional connections with Korean culture through the reappropriation of the traditional Arirang symbol, incorporated into the song "Body to Body" of BTS. Analyzing comments and videos posted on TikTok, users express nostalgia and national pride without being Korean or fully understanding the song's original context. This phenomenon demonstrates that "Koreanness" is not limited to ethnic or national origin, but is a socially and politically constructed process, rooted in local emotions and reinterpretations.

In the reviewed comments, fans recognize the Arirang as an emblem of Korean identity, while simultaneously initiating a comparative exercise with their own Mexican cultural symbols. For example, some videos superimpose the Arirang fragment onto images of Mexican patriotic icons (such as landscapes or traditional dances), generating debates about what the "Mexican Arirang" would be. These discussions include historical parallels between Mexico and Korea (such as experiences of colonization or resistance) and a renewed appreciation of their own culture.

Drawing on García Canclini's (1990) notion of cultural hybridity, Jeffrey Alexander's (2005) concept of cultural performance, and the analysis of restored behavior (Schechner, 1985), as well as Díaz Cruz's (2008) theory of mimesis, the concept of performative hybridity emerged to explain how fans become actors in a performance where Arirang functions as a system of collective representation. The success of this hybridity depends on maintaining the Arirang fragment as a stable reference point; without it, neither affective recognition nor the "mirror effect" that redirect emotion toward the fans' own culture would be posible.

Thus, the non-Korean audiences does not seek to "become Korean", but rather participates affectively from within their own cultural frameworks. This process reveals that nationality is a dynamic construct and that the global circulation of Hallyu can, paradoxically, foster a greater appreciation of local cultures.

■ Panel « The Hallyu Wave as a Tool for Political Expression and Mobilization in the Global South «

Ghaziah Nurika Akhni (Nagoya University) : *K-pop Coded Resistance : Fandom Culture and Youth Social Movement in Indonesia*

Studies on K-pop and fan activism are nothing new, yet their particular deployment as political resistance in the diverse localities remains significant to explore. This paper aims to investigate two interrelated practices among Indonesian K-Pop fans on the internet, rooted in K-pop fandom culture, as forms of political expression and resistance during the #ReformasiDiKorupsi and #ResetIndonesia political events in 2024 - 2025. The first case is the use of K-pop aesthetics and fan practices by an Instagram account *@kpopmovement.ina* as forms of political expression and commentary. The second case covers the strategic deployment of *Hangeu*l (the Korean alphabet) as a hidden transcript to evade state surveillance across multiple digital platforms. For the analysis, this paper uses Brough and Shresthova's (2012) concept of fan activism and Lee's (2024) concept of digital infra-politics, while, for methodology, interpretative textual analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and internet ethnography are employed. The use of K-Pop elements, such as slogans, memes, idol-related posts, and fandom phrases or vocabulary, as an alternative configuration of digital political participation among youth is recontextualized to embed political meanings understandable within Indonesian fan communities. The use of *Hangeul* reveals that the foreign language serves as coded communication to bypass state and digital surveillance and functions to conceal youth expression by remaining opaque to external and state observers. To conclude, K-Pop, as a global

cultural phenomenon in Indonesia, serves not only as a cultural practice but also as a potential political vehicle for youth political expression.

Amalia N. Andini (Rotterdam University) : *K-Pop and Youth Activism in Indonesia: A Scoping Review*

The Korean popular culture trend in Indonesia for the past two decades has gone hand in hand with the rising academic interest in K-pop-related publications. Recently, with the increasing political visibility of young people across myriad forms of activism, K-pop fandom is frequently cited as an identity marker of youth solidarity in protests, charitable actions, and boycott movements. However, despite its proliferation, the broader context of this phenomenon remains sparse due to more emphasis on isolated case studies, with publications spanning media studies, political sciences, psychology, and other humanities. In this research, I conduct a scoping review of literature on English and Indonesian journal articles published between 2020 and 2026 to understand the academic discourse surrounding K-pop and youth activism in the country. Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines for Scoping Reviews, I use a Boolean search on Google Scholar and GARUDA with keywords including "k-pop", "youth", "activism", "Indonesia", and their local variations. The collected literature is organized systematically, screened, and discussed along with other experts researching a similar topic to ensure more validity. In so doing, I attempt to gather and provide a more comprehensive overview of the scattered sources, focusing on : What is known about the nature of K-pop and youth activism in Indonesia? What are their strategies? And how are their impacts in bringing social, economic, or political changes ? Doing a scoping review can help identify gaps to inform the future research agenda on this topic. Finally, this synthesis also offers a mapping for the Hallyu wave as a tool for alter-global political expression among young people in the context of Indonesia.

Hugues Sapin (Sorbonne Université) : *La Hallyu, un levier économique et politique à São Paulo ? Transformations et visibilités de la diaspora coréenne dans le quartier du Bom Retiro.*

On trouve au Brésil une population d'ascendance coréenne d'environ 50 000 personnes, concentrée à São Paulo, fruit de circulations migratoires initiées dans les années 1960. Les premières générations s'insérèrent rapidement dans le secteur de la confection de prêt-à-porter féminin autour des boutiques-ateliers du Bom Retiro, faisant de ce quartier du centre-ville un lieu de centralité coréenne à l'échelle locale et nationale. Les difficultés croissantes rencontrées par ce secteur textile à partir des années 2010, aggravées par la pandémie de covid-19, poussent cependant une partie des Coréano-Brésiliens à rechercher de nouvelles sources de revenus.

Le succès rencontré par la Hallyu au Brésil représente en ce sens une opportunité dont la communauté se saisit. Autrefois discrets et tournés vers la diaspora, les épiceries, restaurants et autres commerces de proximité coréens du quartier adaptent leurs pratiques commerciales et se rendent visibles pour attirer une clientèle sans ascendance coréenne. Des établissements commerciaux hybrides se développent et se multiplient, fréquentés à la fois par une clientèle d'origine coréenne et par des Brésiliens intéressés par la consommation de produits importés de Corée du Sud.

Ce mouvement s'accompagne d'une réaffirmation identitaire plus globale de la communauté coréano-brésilienne, dont le statut au sein de la société brésilienne a changé suite à l'extraversion récente de leur pays d'origine. Dans ce contexte, la Hallyu devient un levier mobilisé par la diaspora pour réaliser des aménagements urbains et organiser des événements culturels dans le Bom Retiro, en partenariat avec les autorités municipales et les représentations diplomatiques sud-coréennes.

Ces initiatives rencontrent cependant de fortes oppositions de la part d'autres usagers de ce quartier central marqué par de multiples présences migrantes. Des mouvements contestataires mettant en exergue la multiculturalité intrinsèque du Bom Retiro émergent et dénoncent ces projets d'aménagement à caractère coréen, auxquels ils tentent de s'opposer.

Bernardita González Lustig (Central University of Chile) : ***Socio-political Movements and K-global Citizenship: The Case of Kpopers for Boric in Chile***

K-pop fandom is a global phenomenon that has been identified as a group that shows concern and empathy for universal values. In Latin America, including Chile, K-pop fandom's participation in socio-political movements has been increasing. This research aims to determine the influence of K-pop fandom in strengthening global citizenship. Specifically, it focuses on the influence of fandom in socio-political movements, highlighting activism and participatory fandom in Latin America through the case of Kpopers for Boric in Chile.

This research has two objectives. On the one hand, it seeks to determine how K-pop fandom influenced fans to take an active socio-political role, that is, to determine whether membership of the fandom influenced fans, thus strengthening the concept of global citizenship. The second objective is to analyze how fans assumed this active role in Chile. This research follows a qualitative methodology, employing a questionnaire and semi-structured in-depth interviews as methodological tools. We conclude that, thanks to its participatory activism movements, K-pop fandom strengthens global citizenship through the incorporation of its elements (human dignity and respect for human rights), shaping a K-global citizenship.

- **Panel « Hallyu and Youth in the Global South: Consumption, Identification, and Creation in India »**

Susmita Dash (Pondicherry University) : ***State Intervention, Commodification of Beauty and Its Consumption: A Critical study of "Glass skin" phenomena in contemporary India***

The construction of beauty has historically been shaped by changing socio-cultural, political, and economic forces. While earlier beauty ideals in India were influenced by colonial and globalized Western standards, contemporary urban culture is increasingly shaped by Korean beauty practices through the expansion of the Korean Wave (Hallyu). Existing studies on Hallyu primarily focus on media consumption, fandom, and

cultural influence, but limited attention has been given to how K-beauty operates as a political-economic strategy connected to soft power, aesthetic capitalism, and the commodification of beauty in everyday life, within the Indian context.

This study argues that K-beauty, particularly the "*glass skin*" phenomenon, functions not merely as a cultural trend but as a form of aesthetic capitalism in which beauty becomes a site of consumption, aspiration, and identity formation negotiated across class, gender, and age. The research adopts an exploratory mixed-method approach by combining secondary quantitative data on Korean beauty exports and industry expansion with ongoing qualitative fieldwork in Bengaluru, a major metropolitan hub of K-beauty consumption and Korean-inspired beauty spaces in India.

Preliminary findings indicate that the growing popularity of K-beauty in India is closely linked to the interaction between state-supported soft power strategies, global consumer markets, and digital media cultures. Social media significantly contributes to normalizing "*glass skin*" as a desirable beauty ideal, particularly among urban consumers exposed to global consumer culture. The study concludes that K-beauty represents a broader transformation in the political economy of beauty, where aesthetic culture generates economic value, cultural influence, and new forms of aspirational consumption in contemporary India.

Aishwarya Satish (Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology) : ***Intimate Hallyu: Adult Korean Webtoons and the Global Circulation of Digital Desire***

Scholarship on Hallyu has overwhelmingly focused on highly visible cultural industries such as K-pop, television dramas, and cinema, while the global circulation of Korean digital comics has received comparatively limited attention. This paper examines adult Korean webtoons as an emerging yet understudied dimension of the Korean Wave in the Global South. Moving beyond conventional understandings of soft power as state-driven cultural promotion, the study explores how digital platforms facilitate affective attachments to South Korea through narratives of intimacy, romance, sexuality, and contemporary urban life.

Drawing on theories of cultural circulation and media globalization developed by Arjun Appadurai, Koichi Iwabuchi's concept of transnational cultural flows, and affect theory, the paper investigates how adult webtoons travel across South Asia and Southeast Asia through platform infrastructures, fan translations, social media networks, and digital reading communities. Particular attention is paid to the ways readers engage with mediated imaginaries of South Korea and incorporate them into local understandings of gender relations, intimacy, aspiration, and modernity. Rather than viewing audiences as passive recipients of Korean cultural products, the study conceptualizes reception as a process of negotiation, reinterpretation, and cultural translation.

Through an analysis of reader discussions, online communities, and digital circulation practices, the paper argues that adult webtoons function as significant vehicles of cultural influence beyond the domains typically associated with Hallyu. They foster forms of identification that are simultaneously affective, everyday, and transnational, generating alternative pathways through which South Korea is imagined and

experienced by audiences who may never directly encounter the country itself. By foregrounding an often-overlooked sector of Korean cultural industries, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions of soft power, youth culture, and the evolving geographies of Hallyu in the Global South.

Susrita Das (University of Copenhagen, Danemark) : ***Eating K-pop, consuming "Korea": Transcultural fandoms and the affective lives of Hallyu fans in India***

The past decade has witnessed heightened engagement with Korean cultural products in India, attributed majorly to the success of *Hallyu*, and, simultaneously, the sustained efforts of a subcultural force, the transnational *Hallyu* fandom in the country. While a growing body of scholarship has addressed this phenomenon, one "K" product has largely escaped scholarly attention, despite quietly taking root in the socio-cultural fabric of several Indian cities in recent years, all while realizing a liminal space of possibility in youth cultures. This product is "Korean" food.

In order to address this gap and examine the entanglements between *Hallyu*, food consumption, and youth subcultures, this paper, as part of my broader doctoral research on *Hallyu* fandoms and "K"-food in India, asks three questions : (1) how do fans' engagement with "Korean" food culture, be it eating, performing, and sharing, function as practices of belonging within transnational youth cultures shaped by *Hallyu*? (2) in what ways do the consumption of "Korean" food allow fans to construct (pop)cosmopolitan selves and articulate desires for global modernity, even as these aspirations are challenged by classed and gendered realities? and, finally, (3) how do spaces like K-pop themed cafés curate aesthetic experiences (ex. through décor, playlists, menus, fan archives, etc.) that enable fan consumers to purchase and display "Korean" tastes, by way of investments in social mobility and distinction within fandom's hierarchical knowledge community?

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, fan interviews, and case studies of popular eateries in Delhi, Kolkata, and Siliguri, cities in India characterized by unequal levels of urbanization yet competing numbers of *Hallyu*-themed cafés, eateries, and fandom communities, this study suggests that eating "Korean" is not merely an act of consumption, but an embodied form of world-making. For fan consumers, food can therefore become more than sustenance or trend, by emerging into a medium for performing alternative selves and intimate publics, while simultaneously exposing the faultlines of access, authenticity, and exclusion. Nonetheless, by foregrounding aesthetic consumption and aspirational desire, the paper hopes to contribute to scholarship on transcultural fandom in the Global South by demonstrating that *Hallyu*'s influence is not merely symbolic but materially embedded in transnational youth cultures. The study strives to locate food-centered fan practices as critical sites for understanding how youth in the Global South navigate precarity, aspiration, and belonging through the sensory politics of taste.

- **Panel « Hallyu and Youth in the Global South: Consumption, Identification, and Creation in Latin America »**

Erica Vogel (Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, California) : *Ununly Global Buzz: Creating, Documenting, and Consuming the rise of K-pop in Mexico City*

This presentation explores the rise of Korean pop music (K-pop) in Mexico City as a venue through which people with unequal privileges establish connections and imagine themselves as producers, consumers and experts of global trends. It looks at how fans, the media, and Korean state entities understand and cultivate their identities, relationships and sense of place through their shared mediation of the global, transnational and discursive fields that constitute the global buzz around K-pop and increasing connections between Asia and Latin America. I discuss the activities of HallyuMex, a fan club preparing a flashmob event at the request of the Korean government, K-pop dance cover groups practicing in front of reflective windows of buildings near Mexican monuments, and reactions to a reality TV show between Arirang TV and Televisa. I argue the transnational circulation of the *story* of the rising popularity of K-pop in Mexico— and the ways people see themselves as contributing to that story—largely fuels the intensification of what I call global buzz, or people's desire to circulate and co-consume media products and information related to a distant place. Like globalization, buzz is unruly and many who tried to control it met with various levels of failure. I discuss how while entertainment companies and the Korean state profit from the unpaid affective labor of fans, Mexican fans also create new mobilities with their participation thereby challenging globalization as US-centered and showing ways Asian cultural products create value, identity and meaning as they bypass the United States.

Jessica L. Quijano Herrera (Universidad pedagógica de El Salvador) : *Hallyu among Salvadoran Youth: Cultural Consumption, Symbolic Images of Korea, and Recommendation Intentions*

This paper examines how the Korean Wave (Hallyu) shapes perceptions of South Korea among young audiences in El Salvador, an underexplored Central American context within the Global South. While previous studies have documented Hallyu fandoms in countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Brazil, less is known about how Korean cultural consumption influences symbolic country images and future-oriented recommendations in Central America.

The study draws on a survey of 158 attendees at the 2025 K-pop World Festival in San Salvador. Using a quantitative exploratory design, it analyzes the relationship between Korean cultural consumption, the symbolic image of South Korea, and intentions to recommend the country as a cultural and educational destination. The instrument measured consumption of K-pop, K-dramas, entertainment programs, music videos, and Korean food, as well as perceptions of Korea's cultural appeal, innovation, and educational attractiveness.

The findings show that cultural consumption is significantly associated with a positive symbolic image of South Korea and with intentions to recommend the country. When symbolic country image is incorporated into the models, it emerges as the strongest

predictor of both cultural and educational recommendation. These results suggest that Hallyu operates not merely as entertainment, but as an affective and symbolic bridge through which distant audiences construct favorable imaginaries of Korea without direct experience of the country.

By providing localized evidence from El Salvador, the paper expands discussions of Hallyu reception beyond the most frequently studied Latin American contexts and highlights the role of youth cultural consumption in the circulation of South Korean soft power across the Global South.

Janice Tapia Silva (Universidad Central de Chile) : ***Creating Queer Spaces for Overflowing Affection: Ethnographic Perspectives on the Chilean K-pop Fandom***

Since the arrival of K-pop in Chile around 2010, a committed fan community has taken shape, sustained by practices mobilized through affective bonds and forms of care by and for the fandom. These practices give rise to a participatory culture grounded in expressive engagement, affiliation to shared meanings, collaborative problem-solving, and the articulation of collective goals. In doing so, they challenge dominant assumptions that frame K-pop fans as passive and irrational recipients of strategies deployed by the South Korean entertainment industry.

Drawing on Queer Theory and Youth Studies, this research proposes a queering of fandom practices (such as cupsleeve events, fanart, idol shipping fantasies, dance covers, and more). For this purpose, I understand "queer" not as a fixed identity but as an ongoing process that involves a political and epistemological positioning oriented toward the subversion of normative frameworks.

Through a situated ethnographic approach focused on in-person activities within the Chilean fandom (combining participant observation and in-depth interviews) this research explores how fans enact pleasurable practices driven by the desire to imagine and collectively produce forms of the common. These practices enable participants to contest binary orders such as man/woman, emotional/rational, and adult/youth.

From this perspective, fan desire is not merely the reproduction of consumption patterns, but rather a transformative force that sustains the queer creation of alternative worlds, affects, and relationalities beyond the regulatory boundaries of the present.

This study contributes to making visible how the local appropriation of Korean popular culture enables the articulation of alternative forms of coexistence and encounter, allowing fans to negotiate experiences of otherness and to express their affects within safe and "queer" spaces.

Dinorah Lizeth Contreras Aragón (Independent researcher) and Karina Juárez Morales (Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México) : ***The Arrival of Hallyu and Its Impact on Mexican-South Korean Political and Cultural Relations: A History Told by and For Fans***

On May 6th, 2026, the well-known South Korean K-pop band BTS waved to Mexican ARMYs (BTS's fandom) from the presidential balcony of the National Palace. On this site, Mexico's current president, Claudia Sheinbaum, conducts her official activities. This balcony is one of the most iconic symbols of Mexican national identity, as it hosts "El Grito," an annual civic ritual commemorating Mexican Independence Day on the 15th of September. The presence of South Korea's most prominent media ambassadors at this venue is no coincidence: It is the result of a historical trajectory in which the aforementioned Asian nation has sought to strengthen economic and commercial relations with Mexico. How did we arrive at this pivotal moment ? This paper aims to reflect on the arrival of Hallyu in Mexico in the early 2000s and its current impact on new generations of consumers across three distinct yet intertwined spheres: political, media, and sociocultural. Crucially, this history is told through the autoethnographic perspective of two fans. We consider various actors within this process : nation-states, entertainment industries, and the collaborative labor of fans. We approach this proposal from the field of cultural studies, examining the interwoven power relations between institutions and the subject (the fan), as well as the exercise of fan agency in the consumption and circulation of cultural products linked to the Korean Wave in Mexico.