

Pandemic to “Fandomic:” The Revival of Fandom Publics in the Digital Space of Latin American K-Pop Fandom

Hyunsuk JANG

The coronavirus has changed our daily lives dramatically, driving us to spend time in the virus-free digital world, providing an imagined community in which we can be reborn. In this study, I highlight an interesting intersection of three phenomena in virtual spaces: the culturally hybrid content of the Korean Wave, or Hallyu; participatory culture of fandom; and a new kind of public defined by emotion. I show how Hallyu fandom becomes a fandom public using digital media by exploring the voluntary practices of Chilean fans in the production of the 2018 KBS Music Bank World Tour in Chile. Chilean K-pop fans form a Latin American fandom community in a digital space where they act as a fandom public based on affective intimacy, thereby influencing wider society. This finding offers insights to determine the capabilities of Hallyu fandom as a public.

Keywords: Cultural hybridity, affective intimacy, affinity space, Latin American fandom, fandom public

Introduction

In June 2020, an article was published in a Dallas, US newspaper (Hallock 2020), describing how young Americans who hated Trump’s discriminatory policies had responded to a police request for citizens to report videos of illegal demonstrations by inundating the National Police Agency’s official website with a K-pop video, interrupting the site’s connectivity. American K-pop fans collectively expressed their feelings with a K-pop dance video. In March 2019, a

Hyunsuk Jang (jangpd2415@naver.com) is an adjunct professor at Sungkyunkwan University and a producer for KBS (Korean Broadcasting System)

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