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Master's Thesis of International Studies

Korean culture consumption in Chile:

Achievements and challenges of the Korean Wave as a
soft power resource

**칠레 속의 한국 문화 소비: 소프트파워 자원으로
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Abstract^①

The Korean Wave is the term used to capture the rising popularity of Korean popular culture and it is also an important resource for Korean cultural diplomacy around the world as it contributes to enhancing Korea's image while becoming an important source of revenue for the country. In Chile, the Korean Wave has gained great traction through the years, but little efforts have been made to determine if it has had any influence in reshaping how Chileans see Asia and Korea. This study argues that the interaction with Korean Wave has successfully contributed to changing the knowledge and preferences of Chileans, shaping their interests in Korea. The Korean Wave has also contributed to reducing the orientalist approach that Chileans have toward Asian countries as it reduces the feeling of otherness that comes from the cultural differences and geographical distance, but alone is not enough to completely erase the stereotyped ideas about Korea and Asia.

Keywords: Korean Wave, Chile, Cultural Diplomacy, Korean Wave, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Interaction

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	1
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. STUDY BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2. PURPOSE OF STUDY	3
1.3. EXPECTED FINDINGS	5
1.4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
CHAPTER 2. CHILE AND THE KOREAN WAVE.....	8
2.1. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND SOFT POWER	8
2.1.1 <i>Approach to diplomatic relations with Latin America and Chile.....</i>	<i>1 1</i>
2.2. THE KOREAN WAVE/HALLYU	1 4
2.2.1 <i>The trajectory of the Korean Wave.....</i>	<i>1 5</i>
2.3. THE KOREAN WAVE IN LATIN AMERICA:.....	1 6
2.3.1 <i>The Korean Wave in Latin America: Chile</i>	<i>1 8</i>
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN	2 2
3.1. DATA COLLECTION	2 2
3.2. METHODOLOGY	2 3
3.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS.....	2 4
3.4. DATA ANALYSIS	2 7
3.5. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY.....	2 9
CHAPTER 4. INFLUENCE OF THE KOREAN WAVE.....	3 1
4.1 PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ASIA AND KOREA	3 2
4.1.1 <i>The Japanese culture influence.....</i>	<i>3 6</i>
4.2. INTERACTION WITH HALLYU.....	4 0
4.2.1 <i>Relationship with Korean popular content</i>	<i>4 0</i>
4.2.2 <i>Differences between Korean and Western popular culture</i>	<i>4 6</i>
4.2.3 <i>Interest and commitment.....</i>	<i>4 8</i>
4.3. CHANGED PERCEPTIONS OF ASIA AND KOREA	5 0
4.3.1 <i>The role of cultural institutions and the Korean Embassy in Chile.....</i>	<i>5 7</i>
4.4. LIFE IN KOREA.....	6 1
4.4.1 <i>Reasons to come to Korea.....</i>	<i>6 1</i>
4.4.2 <i>Living in Korea</i>	<i>6 9</i>
4.5. NOW AND THEN: RISING POPULARITY OF THE KOREAN WAVE.....	7 6
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS	8 2
X. I ABSTRACT (KOREAN)	8 9
X. II INFORMED CONSENT LETTER	9 0

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Study Background

Culture is a powerful element, it provides us with common grounds that help us understand the whys and hows of the societies, along with what makes each of them unique. In a globalized era, the advances in technology and global media have provided the possibility of learning about cultures and societies all around the world, creating the opportunity to achieve cultural exchange between countries of other regions, and providing a space where cultural diplomacy plays an important role to promote and improve a country's image on an international level.

European countries and The United States have given cultural diplomacy a significant part of their foreign policies as a way to advertise their values as a political goal and promote the exchange of ideas, events, and people in a less politically oriented way (Feigenbaum, 2001). In this field, The United States is a big influence, however, the Korean wave or Hallyu has reached an outstanding level of influence around the globe and its cultural industry has steadily grown, reaching different cultural regions, such as the Middle East, Russia, and South America (Kim, 2011).

Cultural diplomacy in Korea has been institutionalized by the government as a top-down approach to enhance national prestige since the early 90s when the government launched a concerted effort to globally engage in the promotion of the Korean culture (Barden, 2019; Kang, 2015) and the liberalization of the cultural market in South Korea began. By the late 90s, the awareness of Korean culture had significant gain traction in Asia, spreading beyond Asian countries in the mid-2000s and gaining

globalized popularity in the mid-2010s, each stage has been acknowledged as the first, second, and third generation of the Korean Wave (Hahm & Song, 2020; Song, 2020). This cultural promotion has been both inside and outside Korean borders, however, this research focuses on the external use of cultural diplomacy and the success of the Korean wave as a resource of Korean cultural soft power.

Regarding the increasing impact of the Korean Wave in Latinamerica, the success of Hallyu has no easy explanation, this is because Latin American countries and Korea do not share the language, and there is no geographical proximity or cultural affinity between them. Also, despite certain commonalities, each of all 33 countries in Latin America are ethnic, culturally, and linguistically diverse (Han, 2017; Min et al., 2019), therefore, the Korean Wave's success varies depending on each country and even if its popularity is increasing, the consumption of Korean cultural products is still small when compared to American products that have a great success globally (Feigenbaum, 2001).

In the particular case of Chile, according to Min (2017), the major media outlets have not given too much attention to one of the most popular expressions of the Korean Wave in Chile: K-pop, and the Chilean society, in general, shows a negative attitude towards the fans of the Korean cultural products due not only to the little attention to Korean culture but also to the lack of knowledge of Asian culture and ethnicities (Min et al., 2019). However, in recent years, there has been increasing notoriety of the Korean cultural products in Chile, reaching the news addressing its popularity in the country (Arros, 2021; León, 2020; Barrios, 2017; Benjamín, 2017), and even the Chilean government declared K-pop fans as the rioters behind the social uprising in October 2019 (Vera, 2019; Go, 2019).

The Korean Government has recognized the Korean Wave as a part of their cultural

diplomacy policies, and even though this phenomenon is rather self-sustained and the major role in its success is the collaboration of private sectors, the Korean Government still expects the Korean Wave to improve the image as a nation in the international stage. Despite these facts, the question remains if the growing influence of the Korean Wave has become an important factor for Chilean youth who have become interested in Korea when exploring possibilities for study, travel, or living abroad.

1.2. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is first, to find how the exposure to South Korean culture is changing the way Chile and Latin America understand and approach Asia as a source of cultural content; secondly, what has been the repercussions in terms of cultural exchange, and, particularly, on the attractiveness as a place to work, study and travel.

Certainly, the current impact of the Korean wave has opened a door to reducing the distance between Eastern and Western cultures. There is an opportunity for Latin America, especially Chile, to improve our cultural and social relations with South Korea by increasing the awareness of Chilean society about Korean culture and society. Although there have been studies regarding the reception of Korean cultural products in Latin America, most of them have been concerned with the transcultural variables that make K-pop appealing in Latin America despite the lack of a shared cultural affinity and language, and address the theorization of K-pop as Latin America as both transcultural and transnational engagement with Latin American societies (Min et al., 2019). There is yet to know if this interaction with Korean pop

culture has any long-term effect on the decision-making of those who become interested in the country. This study contributes to reducing the gap in the knowledge of what the success of the Korean Wave in Chile has done to increase the awareness of Chileans about South Korea.

The main purpose of this research is to describe the ways the interaction with cultural products of the Korean Wave changes the knowledge and preferences of Chileans regarding Korea.

Therefore, the following question must be answered:

In what ways does the interaction with cultural products of the Korean Wave change the knowledge and preferences of Chileans regarding Korea?

Primary Objective:

- Describe in what ways the interaction with cultural products of the Korean Wave changes the knowledge and preferences of Chileans regarding Korea.

Secondary Objectives:

- Report if Chilean consumers of cultural products of the Korean Wave, have changed their plans regarding the choice of higher education, a destination for travel, or living abroad.
- Describe how Chileans have changed their knowledge about Asia and Korea once they started to consume Korean popular culture.
- Determine if Korean popular culture consumption has had any influence on Chileans that decided to live, study or travel to Korea for a long-term stay.

1.3. Expected findings

Regarding the first secondary objective, despite the small reach of the Chilean audience, those who have interacted with Korean cultural products have reported interest in traveling to Korea as a destination for holidays and having in mind the interest of visiting famous places displayed on TV dramas, films, or other graphic content, experiencing the Korean lifestyle in hopes to have a glimpse of how is like to live in a country that has little resemblance to their own culture.

As a hypothesis for the secondary objective, this study proposes that those who have consumed cultural products of the Korean Wave have first experienced a certain degree of confusion or rejection towards the unfamiliar contents of these products due to the lack of knowledge regarding Asian cultures in general and the stigma that Asian cultures still have in Chilean society. However, not all of those who have an indirect interaction with Korean cultural products have the same level of rejection, some of them might even gain some interest in it, this can be true especially due to the huge level of globalization the Korean Wave and some of its most iconic products have reached.

Finally, I argue that for those who have decided to move to Korea for work or seeking higher education, not all of them have a strong interest in the cultural products of the Korean Wave but are aware of its existence and have common knowledge of what it is.

As a general description of what I think I will find is that there has been some level of influence of the Korean cultural products on Chilean youth in terms of preferences, knowledge, and interest in Korea and its culture. The Korean Wave of Hallyu has

been a major resource of cultural diplomacy for Korea to gain soft power and increase the level of attractiveness of the country in a region that does not particularly share many cultural similarities or geographic proximity.

1.4. Analytical Framework

This study uses as framework elements of social exchange theory, by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), which allows explaining how (1) relationship management, (2) the Exchange process, and (3) Social interaction can develop cross-cultural skills; and symbolic interactionism that argues that communication is the way people make sense of their societies.

The social exchange theory suggests that social behavior is the result of a process of exchange between two agents, in simple words, the theory suggests that the reward of an interaction between two parties must be higher than the cost of maintaining the relationship, otherwise those involved might abandon or terminate a relationship. The cost-benefit relationship in a social exchange process is also influenced by the expectations they have about the exchange; these expectations are heavily influenced by past experiences, so as participants interact with the Korean Wave, they decide if the attractiveness of the popular contents brings positive rewards that surpass the costs of engaging with products that do not share similar cultural values or are represented/expressed in unfamiliar ways, such as differences in language, behavior and product consumption. The social exchange theory can contribute to explaining what are the elements of the Korean Wave that make Chilean people interested despite the lack of affinity with the Korean society and how it can defy the preconceived idea about Asia and Korea.

On the other hand, symbolic interactionism's premise is that each society shares certain symbols and people construct the meaning of their societies according to the symbols they share, the social interactions with one another, and the events they share as a group. In societies people act in specific environments according to their subjective meaning, therefore each society has its own set of symbols and subjective meanings that become replicated or modified through repeated actions of each member of society. Chile and Korea define their societies through different symbols and subjectively interpret reality accordingly, these differences might contribute to create unrealistic ideas about the Korean society when elements of Korean culture are interpreted using the symbolic representation of Chileans towards elements of similar nature in the Korean society.

Using both theories, this research argues that the increase in cultural exchange can help societies understand each other differences and learn to connect with a deeper understanding of each of them.

Chapter 2. Chile and the Korean Wave

This research will briefly refer to the Korean employment of cultural diplomacy and soft power. Secondly, it will explain the Korean Wave or Hallyu as a resource of soft power that resulted from the increasing attention that Korea put on cultural diplomacy to achieve global attractiveness or their culture to improve their national image and exploit new ways to gain economic profit. Next, the research will describe the development of the Korean Hallyu in Latinamerica, focusing on the Chilean case, discussing the reception of the Korean pop-cultural products in Chile, and the difficulties that have been encountered due to the cultural differences and lack of knowledge between both countries. Finally, it will describe how the consumption of Korean cultural products has shaped the choices of Chilean youth regarding life choices such as study, travel, and migration.

2.1. Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power

Cultural diplomacy is a component of public diplomacy, and it is understood as a nation-state strategic effort to promote the national interest of a country, by making its cultural resources and achievements known outside its borders to help facilitate cultural transmissions abroad (Cull, 2008; Cho, 2012). It contributes to public diplomacy by supporting foreign policy goals, defying the mainstream perceptions of a country in the international community, developing mutual understanding, and improving the image of a country on an international level (Mark, 2009).

Kang (2015) has mentioned that Korean cultural diplomacy is composed of explicit tactics associated with the top-down strategy to improve the international image, and implicit tactics related to the capacity of building domestic national cultural

industries. Most of the explicit tactics of cultural diplomacy started during the democratic transition of Korea, when President Kim Young-sam launched a concerted effort to promote Korean culture globally (Barden, 2019; Song, 2020) to raise the profile of cultural representations of Korea abroad, acknowledging the value of exporting cultural products (Song, 2020), this later became the general paradigm for Korean cultural diplomacy.

The implicit side of cultural diplomacy is oriented to cultural exchange in the international community, and it has been shaped greatly by the neoliberal turn in cultural policies, framing cultural diplomacy for economic purposes (Kang, 2015; Song, 2020). This neoliberal turn has also led the Korean government to see culture as a vehicle for the legitimization of culture as a source of economic potential (KCTI, 2005; Kim, 2011; Kang 2015). The success of other countries, such as The United States in the promotion of its cultural products (Feigenbaum, 2001; Jin, 2019), and the accidental product placement of Korean goods in Hollywood movies caused an increase in the export of Hyundai cars (Shim, 2006), convinced the government that they should make more efforts in developing a cultural sector. By making the cultural industries part of the national agenda, the line between economically oriented international exchange capacity that comes from the domestic cultural sector and the explicit tactics of cultural diplomacy was blurred (Kang, 2015).

The efforts to develop the cultural industries were followed by each government after Kim Young-sam's by providing financial support to improve the quality to become globally competitive (Song, 2020), and implementing new laws established to develop different segments of the cultural sector, such as filming, music, broadcasting, and others, by 2007, the KCTI (2017) reported 22 different laws to help these developments (Kang, 2015).

During the mid-2000s, the concept of soft power increased its relevance in international relations and foreign policy circles (Hahm & Song, 2020; Kang, 2015) this led to a reconfiguration of cultural diplomacy, where soft power and culture become key elements of the national competitiveness (Kang 2015, MOFAT 2011; Cho 2012), the concept was included and reinforced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and recognized it as a pillar of diplomatic power (MOFAT, 2010).

Soft power is defined by Nye (2004; Nye & Kim, 2013), as the capacity of obtaining benefit by generating a positive attraction that facilitates the accumulation of other forms of power without the use of economic or military means, recognizing three resources: the attractiveness of culture, political values, and its foreign policies. Cultural diplomacy is used as a way of building soft power because its primary function, as an element of public diplomacy, is to contribute to the promotion of national interests and make their cultural resources shared through diplomatic activities that involve exchange programs, the spread of information and cultural activities. This becomes more evident as governments and academics place arts and cultural industries as instruments for the construction of power, favoring the diversification of cultural policies (Zamorano, 2016).

As stated before, for Korea, the spread of their culture outside the country has been promoted by the government since the presidency of Kim Young-sam. These efforts have enabled the country to project its cultural soft power in different regions of the world. Lee (2009), identifies the Korean Wave as a resource of soft power that seems to have become very relevant as it is a phenomenon that has reached significant notoriety in many regions of the world, capable of spreading Korean standards, behavioral codes, consumer preferences, fashion, cuisine and other points (p.135),

having also the capability of bringing the attention of the global audience to Korea.

2.1.1 Approach to diplomatic relations with Latin America and Chile

The relations with Latin American countries date back to the late 1950s, but it was during the administration of presidents Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-Hye in the 2000s when the biggest efforts to improve relations with Latin America were made (Faure, 2017). According to official data (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], n.d), during Lee's presidency, South Korea held 27 bilateral summits with 17 leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean countries and made state visits to Peru and Brazil in 2008; Mexico and Panama in 2020; and Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Colombia in 2012. President Park visited Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Brazil in 2015 and Mexico in 2016 (Faure, 2017).

In economic relations, Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) were signed with Chile, Peru, and Colombia in 2003, 2011, and 2016, respectively. In 2017 South Korea signed an FTA with Central American countries^② and is currently negotiating a trade agreement between Korea-MERCOSUR^③ (MOFA, n.d).

Throughout both Lee and Park administrations, South Korea's aimed to build a reputation as a middle power to enhance its international status and as a strategy for diplomatic diversification. According to Faure (2017; Teo et al., 2016), South Korea's middle power diplomacy was based on economic ties and Official Development Assistance (ODA). Through its historic knowledge as a country that moved from being a recipient to a donor in a short period, South Korea used this

② Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras in March 2017, ratified in four Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras) and is under the ratification process in the Korean National Assembly (MOFAT, 2021).

③ MERCOSUR is composed of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

“development model” as the signature for its niche diplomacy (understood as strategic resource allocation), and the projection of soft power capable of enhancing the network power in the region as a state capable of being a linkage between great and weak powers.

Just as Faure (2017) mentions, South Korea’s middle diplomacy has enhanced the potential between South Korea and Latin America relations, but to realize that potential it is important to increase the awareness of South Korea in Latin America. In terms of visibility, the increase of visits to the region of both Lee and Park administrations, the participation with regional organizations and inter-regional forums, and, the key role of Korean Embassies and Cultural Centers in the region have contributed to increasing the awareness through public and cultural diplomacy. In recent years, despite the ODAs strategy remaining a high priority for President Moon, its administration has removed the concept of middle power or middle power diplomacy, replacing it with public diplomacy as the third pillar of the foreign policy strategy (Faure, 2017).

Little has been written about Korean cultural diplomacy in Latin America. Hernández (2018) focused on the teaching and promotion of the Korean language as an expression of Korean soft power in Mexico. In the same country, Uscaga (2017) describes how the change of strategy of the Korea Foundation managed to capitalize the growing interest in South Korean music and pop culture. This, along with the development of information and communication technologies (ICT), Korea Foundation has managed to expand the promotion of the culture, society, and politics of South Korea in different higher education institutions in Mexico and Latin America.

Pedraza (2014) argues that the Korean cultural diplomacy strategy has been used in

Colombia to position branding the nation and promote the demand for Korean educational and cultural products between 2011 and 2013. She concludes that during the presidency of Lee Myung-Bak, allied with both public and private sectors, the administration strategically used Korean cultural diplomacy to promote their brand as a nation and to increase the demand for Korean products (in both goods and educational) through the expansion of the Korean Wave that, according to the author, has been actively promoted by the government of Korea in Colombia.

In general, South Korean cultural diplomacy has been used in Latin America to increase the awareness of the region about Korea, promote their brand as a nation, and increase the demand for Korean products. As literature has mentioned, the greater efforts to approach Latin America were made by presidents Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye, they had a clear economic orientation and an intent to position themselves as a middle power in the region. The studies mentioned above are helpful to understand how the Korean cultural diplomacy strategy has contributed to promoting Korea's national interests and values in Latin America. However, the research on how these efforts might change the preferences of those who become interested is scarce, this study will enrich this field of study by providing real interviews with Chilean youth interested in South Korea.

This is no different from the Chilean case, Korea and Chile started their diplomatic relations in 1962 and South Korea opened its embassy in Chile back in 1974. According to the Chilean embassy in Korea (n.d), the relationship between these two countries started strengthening during the 90s by promoting values such as democracy, respect for human rights, the promotion of peace, security, and market openness. In 2004, Chile and Korea signed an FTA and it is currently being re-negotiated to upgrade to meet the changing international economic environment

(MOFA, n.d). In the 2021 Foreign Ministers' Meeting between Chile and Korea, ministers Chung Eui-young and Andrés Allamand agreed to strengthen substantive cooperation in diverse areas such as climate change, green hydrogen economy, infrastructure, digital economy, and Antarctic cooperation (MOFA, n.d). Despite these ongoing exchanges, there is no research related to Korean cultural diplomacy in Chile or what if the Korean wave as a soft power resource has had any repercussions on changes in Chilean youth preferences on these matters.

2.2. The Korean Wave/Hallyu

The Korean Wave is a phenomenon that became alive because of the incentives of the Korean government to improve their cultural diplomacy and national image, it was also because of the development of the cultural industries and the interest of the private sector to profit from the cultural products that were consumed abroad. However, the Hallyu was not a creation made by the government, it is rather a term that was appropriated around the 2000s due to its rising success. It became useful to boost their cultural nationalism and as a way to legitimize their efforts in developing the domestic cultural industries (Kang, 2015). Even if the government has had and keeps having an important share of the “making off” of cultural industries in Korea, it was up to the private sector that took the opportunity, and the unexpected increase in popularity of Korean products is due to the likeability of its contents and attractiveness for foreign viewers.

Today, the Korean Wave has the capability for high commercial profit and as a resource to increase the national prestige, therefore both the government and privates

have been developing strategies for its further development and sustainability of it (Cho, 2011).

2.2.1 The trajectory of the Korean Wave

The first generation of the Korean Wave in the late 90s was limited to Asian countries and the most common explanation for it was because of the inter-Asian affinity, since Asian countries, although different, have certain cultural similarities with each other. Unlike today, the main product of consumption was Korean TV dramas watched primarily by middle-aged women, although K-pop did have some popularity back then among Asian teenagers (Song, 2020; Kang, 2015). During the second wave in the early 2000s, the popularity of music increased, and the main consumers became teenagers. This wave showed a major diversity of Korean products, spreading to beauty products, games, and fashion. This stage of the Korean Wave showed a geographical expansion, reaching the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America (Cho, 2011; Nusta Carranza Ko et al., 2014; Song, 2020). The increasing popularity abroad caught the attention of the government, which became more involved in the expansion as it became to be seen as a new source of income through exports and tourism (Jin, 2015 in Song, 2020).

The third generation of the Korean Wave arrived in the mid-2000s, and the main characteristic is the globalized level of achievement it has reached. At this point, the cultural products exported outside of Korea are very diverse, and the consumption of these products is spread to the Western markets, including West European countries and North America. Some products have become globally popular and there is a renewed interest in Korean films and TV dramas, some of them produced with foreign funds and major global media companies such as Netflix (Song, 2020).

The success of some of these products has reached unprecedented levels of attention in the global market, an accomplishment that has increased the awareness of the global audience about Korean culture products. While keeping the uniqueness of Korean culture, many of the cultural products that now have a global audience have borrowed some features of the Western-style for making their products, which has simplified the approach for western audiences (Cho, 2011; Lee, 2021; Song, 2020). The current level of digitalization, along with the massive use of the internet and social media has favored the spread of the third generation of the Korean Wave, (Han, 2017; Min et al., 2019; Nusta Carranza Ko et al., 2014; Song, 2020) and it has made it easier for the consumers across the globe to be in continuous contact with their likes. This is especially true for western countries that due to the lack of geographic proximity can often only rely on digital platforms to interact with Korean cultural products.

2.3. The Korean Wave in Latin America:

In terms of cultural consumption, Latin America has always been influenced by the cultural products of The United States and the colonial influence of European countries, therefore, as a continent in the Western hemisphere, there has been little exposure to Asian cultures in general and even if there are cases of migration of Asian communities in countries like Perú, Brazil or México, the influence of western cultures still weights its place in most of the Latin American countries. Regardless of The U.S position, Jin (2019) has argued that the Korean Wave might have a key role in shifting the cultural map dominated by the United States since the Hallyu has

reached an unprecedented global presence as a non-western cultural export. The capability of shifting the cultural flow is greater than in other countries that have reached an important degree of transnationalism, such as Brazil, Mexico, India, or Japan, whose cultural presence is limited to just a few products. South Korea, on the other hand, has cultural exports in almost all of its cultural forms (Jin, 2019; Jin & Yi, 2020).

Regarding the exportation of Korean cultural products to the region, it started in the early 90s but had little attention from the Latin American audience up until the 2010s, when the Korean Wave reached globalized popularity (Min et al., 2019), with the role of social media and access to the internet playing key roles to reach the Latin American fandom who, due to geographical distance between the region and Korea, often lack the means to travel or attend the concert of their artists (Han, 2017). The consumers of Korean cultural products in Latin America have frequently been described as both transnational and transcultural fandom, the first concept says that the media and cultural products of Korea reach beyond its national boundaries and the second refers to the cross-cultural communication and self-identification capable of expanding the cultural values through this interaction (Han, 2017; Jin, 2019; Min et al., 2019), this means that despite the geographical distance as well as cultural and language differences, Latin Americans have developed intimacy with one form of Korean culture (Min et al., 2019:610).

Although the Korean Wave has had a clear impact globally and there have been studies regarding its impact on a few countries in Latin America, the current literature recognizes that the Korean Wave has not reached massive popularity, and the media coverage is limited.

2.3.1 The Korean Wave in Latin America: Chile

The Hallyu in Chile, usually in its form of pop music (K-pop) has become an unexpected phenomenon in the country (Min et al., 2019), like the rest of Latin America, the major consumption of cultural products comes from The United States, therefore, something outside “western” culture consumption is unfamiliar. As Min (2020) has observed, there is an important divide between Chile and Asia in general, and those interested in not only Korean culture but any Asian culture are often considered ‘weird’ or ‘outsiders’ (Min et al., 2019).

As stated before, the Korean popular culture was not particularly exported to the region until the 2010s, when the Korean Wave reached outstanding notoriety on the international stage, ever since K-pop obtained massive popularity in Latin America and Chile started to engage more actively in K-pop related activities, currently 34 K-pop related festivals have been held in Latinamerica funded or sponsored by the Embassies in these countries. Despite the gain of notoriety in the country and the different -more open- impressions that younger generations can have about Asia in general, Chileans still lack knowledge about the region and often use the term “*chino*” (Chinese) to talk about any country in Asia (Min, 2020).

In Chile, the more traditional ways of cultural diplomacy offered by the Embassy of Korea have little success in drawing attention to its activities unless it is K-pop-related or news about scholarship opportunities offered by the Korean government or higher education establishments. In 2021 only, the embassy has held numerous activities to promote Korean culture, such as Korean art Exhibitions, cooking classes of national cuisine, documentaries, contests, among other activities with apparently little positive reception. On the other hand, K-pop-related activities had the biggest

number of hits, surpassed only by the scholarship offers and the TOPIK announcements.

Regarding the choices for higher education, according to all available data^④ From 1980 to 2020 gathered by the “National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research” (CONICYT, in Spanish), 44.1% of Chilean scholarship winners chose foreign universities for postgraduate education. Excluding Chile, the top 5 countries are: The United States (23.8%), United Kingdom (22.4%), Spain (19%), Australia (8.2%), and France (5.8%); less than 1% of the scholarship recipients have chosen South Korea as a destination. As for all active scholarships up to 2020, the situation does not change much, of all recipients studying abroad (38.4%), South Korea represents less than 1%. Regionally, this number keeps being low, with Asian destinations being still less than 1%.

Although these numbers are low, the data excludes the international scholarships offered by the Korean government, such as the Global Korean Scholarship (GKS) and others granted by the Graduate School of Korean Studies, and the Academy of Korean Studies. Except for the GKS which includes undergraduate degrees, these scholarships are oriented toward those who pursue postgraduate education in Korea. Also, the Korean government offers funding for Korean studies in Chilean universities and support for researchers through the “Korean studies Promotion Program” and “Research Program of the Korea Foundation”. All these scholarships

④ CONICYT, through its interactive panel, reports all available data of the scholarships offered by the Chilean government to support both national and foreign postgraduate studies from 1980 to September 2020.

are promoted through the Embassy of Korea in Chile webpage^⑤ And although there is no public record of the number of applicants, it is usually the GKS program the most popular of all published announcements, reaching the top Hits yearly for both graduate and undergraduate degree application process, held in the first and second half of the year, respectively.

For studies in Chile, both the Korea Foundation (KF) and the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) have partnerships with Chilean universities that offer programs about Asian studies or Korean studies. Although these options for funding higher education are available in Chile (Choi, 2020), the Central University of Chile (UCEN) is the only university that offers a master's degree program in Korean studies, however, this program often suffers from the lack of faculty members and specialized and has yet many challenges ahead to consolidate the program in the country.

Regarding destinations to live abroad, in 2018 the National Institute of Statistics (INE, in Spanish) released the second report of the “Registry of Chileans living abroad”, data shows that Asia is next to last among the territories with the least quantity of Chileans living abroad^⑥, last being Africa. As for the top 5 countries where Chileans choose to reside, Argentina is the one that occupies the first place, followed by the United States, Spain, Sweden, and Canada. This report also reveals that of the total of Chileans registered living abroad, 26.8% have a bachelor's degree, but only 9.4% have postgraduate education. It is important to remember that migratory data usually refers to an estimate of people living abroad rather than the

⑤ <https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/cl-es/index.do>

⑥ Original title: “2 Registro de chilenos en el exterior”.

actual number. However, this data helps us understand that Asia is not typically part of the regions where Chileans prefer to live abroad. Regarding the position of South Korea, INE's (2018) study indicates that the countries in Asia with the highest quantity of Chilean residents are Israel, Japan, and China, as for South Korea, the country does not show available data.

Chapter 3. Research Design

This will be an exploratory study of Hallyu in Chile, the data will be collected using interviews with Chilean youth and young adults (18~35), targeting two types of people, (1) Chileans living in Chile who are openly interested in Korean culture, and (2) Chileans who are currently living in Korea studying or as residents. Particularly, the study will focus on people between 18 and 35 interested in Korean pop culture and that have had any experience with Korea beyond the cultural product consumption, such as Chilean scholarship winners, workers, or residents in Korea.

3.1. Data Collection

To achieve the objectives of this study, qualitative interviews will be conducted with a maximum of 10 young adults living in Chile who have self-identified as Korean culture consumers, the interviews will take place between December 20 of 2021, and January 20 of 2022. As for Chileans living in Korea (n=10), interviews will be conducted between February and March of 2020. The participants were between 17 and 35 years of age (N=20). They are all Chilean people who have an interest in Korean culture, have some degree of exposure to it, or have studied, worked, or moved to Korea and were recruited via snowball methods.

To contact the participants in Chile, I reached out to close people who I knew were interested in Korean culture and asked them to introduce me to new people. About those who are currently in Korea, I approached other GKS Chileans for them to introduce me to others who they knew to reside in the country, also, during the

Chilean primary presidential elections in November of 2021, I approached all Chileans who arrived at the Embassy of Chile in Korea to cast their vote and requested their time for interviews. While some of them declined, the vast majority were willing to help with the research, however, since the time for interviews was going to be during March of 2022, some of those who showed interest were not able to participate after all.

3.2. Methodology

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to allow interviewees to express their experiences and approaches to Korean culture beyond structured questions. Due to the current pandemic situation, interviews will be conducted in Zoom or face-to-face depending on context and/or the interviewee's preferences. Each interview will last approximately 1 hour, and the participants will be asked about what cultural products they interact with, as well as their preferences or choices of moving, traveling, or studying in Korea.

Following the hypothesis stated earlier in this research, a deductive approach will be used to answer each one of them. Therefore, and as is usual in qualitative analysis, previously proposed -tentative- categories and codes will be used to analyze the data, leaving space for emergent topics that had not previously been considered, but arose during the review of the material. More details will be explained in the data analysis section.

Table I summarizes everything regarding methodology.

Table I: Methodology Summary

Methodology: Qualitative			
Type of Study: Descriptive analysis			
General Objective: Describe the ways the interaction with cultural products of the Korean Wave changes the knowledge and preferences of Chilean Youth regarding Korea.			
Specific Objectives	Data Collection	Instrument	Analysis
Report if Chilean consumers of cultural products of the Korean Wave, have changed their plans regarding the choice of higher education, a destination for travel, or living abroad.	Semi-structured Interview	Questionnaire	Content Analysis
Describe how Chileans have changed their knowledge about Asia and Korea once they started to consume Korean popular culture.			
Determine if Korean popular culture consumption has had any influence on Chileans that decided to live, study or travel to Korea for a long-term stay.			

Source: Own Elaboration

3.3. Characteristics of the participants

The participants of the interviews belong to one of two groups: Chileans who live in Korea or have lived in the country for more than 6 months and Chileans that live in Chile or currently live in Chile but have been in Korea on a short-term visit. The age of the participants varies between 18 and 33 years old, there are two reasons for this, the first one is that most people who have an idealization of the Korean culture are the youngest people with no economic freedom to spend money on their interests, on the other hand, those who have already graduated from high school or university and are already working, do have the capacity to consider options regarding their interests.

Table two summarizes the characteristics of the participants.

Table II: Characteristics of participants

Cases			
Main Criteria		Location	Total
Declares to be interested in Korean culture	Been in Korea for at least 6 months or more	Currently lives in Korea	7
		Moved back to Chile	3
	Live in Chile	Never Been to Korea	8
		Short term travel	2
Sample size			20

Source: Own Elaboration

In Korea, nine of the participants that live(d) in Korea are in Seoul, while just one interviewee lives near Busan. All GKS students, as it is mandated by the National Institution of International Education (NIIED), spent a year in a city outside the place where their house of studies is. On the other hand, Working Holiday Visa recipients can only apply once for this type of visa, and they are allowed to stay in the country for a year. Independent language students and exchange students normally stay for six months, depending on the duration of the program they come with. The woman living near Busan married a Korean man and moved to Korea six years ago. Lastly, those participants who currently work in South Korea were previously GKS recipients.

During the interviews, the group of participants that showed somewhat communication with the Korean Embassy or Cultural Centers, among these, the King Sejong Institute has had a strong influence, especially among the GKS recipients

(including those who currently work in Korea), all but one of the recipients have studied the Korean language in the King Sejong Institute for several years before thinking to travel to Korea, during their time on the institute, they have also declared to participate on different activities sponsored by the institute along with the Korean Embassy in Chile, such as oratory contests, culture nights, and language fairs. Also, the King Sejong Institute sponsored short trips (10 days) to Korea to learn about the culture and experience the city. The recipients of these travel scholarships are also found in those who have traveled to Korea as tourists but have not lived long-term in the country.

Among this group, other participants interacted with the Korean Embassy for other cultural activities once they became interested in Korea. Table III shows a summary of demographic data regarding those participants who live or lived in Seoul and those who live in Chile.

The participants that currently live in Chile are from Santiago, the capital of that country. Most of the participants of this group are students that are currently doing their undergraduate degree and their interaction with Korean culture is mostly through the internet or by visiting “Patronato” a neighborhood where is possible to find Korean stores such as markets, and coffee shops, skincare, or clothing stores. This is also the area where it is possible to find a few Korean food restaurants, mostly limited to bibimbap, tteokbokki, and jjajangmyeon. While some of the participants have traveled to Korea as tourists, none of them have stayed in the country longer than a few weeks and are currently working in Chile. Like the previous group, among those who live in Chile, it is also possible to find participants that attended the King Sejong Institute to learn Korean and one of them also won a scholarship to experience Korea for ten days, however, most of the traveling has been an

independent effort of the participants to visit Korea.

Table III summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants by age, gender, and occupation.

Table III: Characteristics of participants

Location	Average Age	Gender Distribution		Occupation	
		Female	Male		Total
Currently lives in Korea	28	6	4	GKS (Current)	3
				Work	2
Moved back to Chile				Working Holiday	1
			Language/Exchange Student	4	
Never Been to Korea	23	7	3	Undergraduate student	6
Short term travel				Work	4

Source: Own Elaboration

3.4. Data Analysis

There are several steps taken for data analysis. First was organizing the audio file of the interviews between the two main groups of this research: those who live(d) in Korea and those who live in Chile; these interviews were transcribed to contribute to the analysis of the answers of each interview. Second, these transcriptions were analyzed and reviewed several times to categorize them in the predeterminate codes and to include new categories that were previously ignored or not taken into consideration. Therefore, the categorization of this study is primary deductive because previous research mentioned in this research (mention which?) has offered

light on what the categories might be, but there is room in this research for the inductive approach as it allows this research to capture more insights only visible after the analysis of the data.

To reference the interviewees in this research and to guarantee the protection of their privacy, a pseudonym will be given to all participants regardless of their express consent to use their real identity, this is to ensure the anonymity of those participants who preferred to remain anonymous. To identify each case of study, the following formula will be used:

“(Interview with PSEUDONYM [Years old: Gender], Live(d) in CHILE/KOREA)”

While working on transcriptions and examining the data, categories that were once considered as one item, merged to become a conjoined topic while some categories quickly became subcategories of another. Lastly, one category emerged during the analysis: “Now and then: Rising popularity of Korean culture in Chile”, this category was created after the repetitive mention of how things have changed for those who used to like Korean popular culture before it became “mainstream” in Chile.

Table IV shows the final codification of each category; this table will also guide the order of the results.

**Table IV: Codes
Categorization**

Category	Subcategory	Codes
Previous knowledge	General Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural stereotypes 2. What is taught at school

about Asia and Korea		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Unfamiliarity 4. What they knew about Asia and Korea
	Japanese Popular culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of Asia is through Japan 2. Japanese popular culture
Interaction with Hallyu	Reaction to Korean popular content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reasons of interest 2) Interaction with Korean Culture 3) Perceptions of Korean culture 4) Music, TV Shows, Manhwa <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) What is different from USA/Europe/Latin American Content
	Interest and commitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Activities 2) Level of liking 3) Acquired preferences 4) The role of Government Institutions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The King Sejong Institute ii) Embassy of Korea in Chile iii) Global Korea Scholarship 5) Sources
Perception of Asia and Korea	Renewed opinions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Asia as a region 2) Korea as a country 3) Individual identities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The disintegration of previous beliefs
Life in Korea: imaginary and reality	Living in Korea: From the imaginary to reality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did you come to Korea? 2. Experiences and discoveries 3. Education experience 4. Discrimination 5. Difficulties 6. Leave or stay
Now and then: Rising popularity of Korean culture in Chile	Why are you watching that?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience from those who have liked Korean popular culture for a long time 2. The stigma
	2010~2019	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The boom of K-pop in Chile 2. Changes in the attitude of Chilean people towards Korea
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Popularity

Source: Own Elaboration.

3.5. Limitations of this Study

The biggest limitation of this study is inherent to the qualitative research, this being the impossibility of generalizing the information to explain on a broader scale the

behavior and points of view of the interviewees. Alongside this limitation, the exploratory nature of this research also makes it very difficult to compare the findings with studies of similar characteristics. Lastly, one of the most important limitations of this study is the educational background of the interviewees, the group living in Korea lives in Seoul and the half of them have been awarded as recipients of the Global Korea Scholarship, this reveals that the participants have tertiary education and they might not necessarily reflect the general way of thinking of Chilean society. The other half are either language program students, exchange students, or have a Working Holiday Visa and just like the first half, they all have tertiary education. The same can also be said about those who live in Chile, all the interviewees are either currently studying for their undergraduate degrees at different universities or have already graduated from them. The educational background of all members of the sample is above the average number of years of education in Chile (11,7 years in 2020), therefore they can only represent just a fraction of the population.

Chapter 4. Influence of the Korean Wave

This section explores and articulates the different topics that this research takes into consideration when analyzing the achievements and challenges of the Korean Wave in Chile. First, this study will address the previous knowledge participants had about Asia and Korea to identify later how these interpretations and stereotypes might have been affected as the interviewees became interested in the popular contents of Hallyu, such as music, TV shows, and/or other materials. Second, this research will delve into the relationship between the Korean Wave and what makes it interesting for the participants, comparing it to other contents of popular consumption in Chile, and emphasizing what makes Korean cultural products different.

The third section will quickly summarize how the interaction with the Hallyu has changed the perception of Asia and Korea and will describe the ideas of both groups to consolidate the way the Hallyu has been capable of changing the perception of Korea and Asia while also creating an image of Korea based on their cultural exports. The next section will focus specifically on those Chileans who live or have lived in Korea, reporting the reasons that made them take the decision to come to Korea and the role of governmental institutions to guarantee and maintain interest. Also, it will describe the changes in the previous expectations of what Korea was according to what they used to consume. The analysis will contribute to understanding how living in Korea can change the preconceived ideas that are created through Hallyu.

Lastly, this research will analyze the emergent category: “Now and then: Rising popularity of the Korean Wave in Chile” to describe what changes the participants notice regarding Chileans' interaction with the Korean Wave now and when they first became interested.

4.1 Previous Knowledge About Asia and Korea

Chile and Latin America are deeply influenced by western cultures and orientalism also takes part in what Chilean society thinks and approaches Eastern cultures. Said (1979), understands orientalism as how western scholars define and create “knowledge” of the East, which is characterized as inferior, uncivilized, and weird, developing a sense of “otherness” that creates the false idea that non-western cultures are radically different and exotic compared to western cultures This is also true in Chile, Min (2020) points out that the Chilean society has failed to completely decolonize from Spain as European traditions are seen as a symbol of cultural value. The superiority of the European race and the inferiority of indigenous people described by Min (2020; Chan & Montt Strabucchi, 2021) is still vividly replicated in Chilean society and it could be the reason for the orientalism displayed towards Asia. The generalization about this region in Chile is widespread, not only do the participants acknowledge their tendency to treat Asia as “one culture”, but they can recognize this pattern in Chilean society.

This generalized view about Asia makes it difficult to approach any oriental culture as they are not a visible or a topic of conversation. Most of the participants recognize that before becoming interested in any Asian culture (Japanese or Korean) they barely knew anything about Asia because the region is not part of the cultures that influence Latin America, such as western cultures. As Min (2020) recalls, for Chilean youth the foreign cultures that have more influence in Chile are western’s, and among them, is the what they receive from The United States the one with the most influence.

“To be honest I didn't know a thing. I knew there was a continent called Asia, and inside of it China and Japan, that's it (...) here everyone is called Chinese. No matter if they are Korean or Japanese” (Interview with Franco [18: M], lives in Chile).

The same experience is shared by most of the participants regardless of their age, Catalina [30, F] who lives in Korea had a similar view about Asia: “For me, Asia was China and Japan”, or Florencia [18: F] who lives in Chile, she said: “I didn't know much about it [Asia] and I was very prejudiced, I had the kind of thoughts that come from what it is said [about Asia] in Chile”.

And:

“I was ignorant. I was one of those people that called every Asian “Chinese”. About Asia, the [Chinese] culture was the one I had the most knowledge about because of the Chinese community in Chile, and the FTAs between Chile and China. I knew more about them than about South Korea, from that country I learned once I began preparing for my trip (...) About Japan, not much since I don't watch anime” (Interview with Leonardo [30: M], lives in Korea).

Josefina, who lives in Chile and has been interested in Asian cultures for over 12 years, also mentions that not only the Chilean is not close to Asia, but there is also no curriculum in schools to teach about it:

“I think the common Chilean is not very close to Asia. In general, the normal Chilean tends to... I don't think “despise” is the word, but to minimize them,

aggregate them all together, do not care about their differences. Besides, there is no curriculum in schools to teach about Asian history. People probably do not even know why in India people speak English, or why Korea has certain similarities with Japan” (Interview with Josefina [30: F], lives in Chile).

Florencia shares a similar thought and tells her experience trying to include Asia in school activities and the reactions of the professors:

“When I was part of the student council in high school, I tried to incorporate Asian music for the Alianzas [School festival], I arranged some sort of K-pop contest for people to compete and the professors were not comfortable with the idea (...) it was frowned upon, looked down on. [Once] In music class, we had to analyze a song and I picked a Japanese one, the professor humiliated me (...) he said “This assignment is too good for the crazy thing you made us listen to” and It was a romantic song” (Interview with Florencia [18:F], lives in Chile).

In Chile, the study programs for social sciences and history created by the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit (2020)^⑦, reveal that the last four years of secondary school focus on Chilean history, geography, and the history of the world. However, when reviewing the guidelines for the history of the world, Asian history is not mentioned and the contents are related to European history, and the World Wars among other contents related to the development of the western world.

^⑦ Unidad de Curriculum y Evaluación in Spanish is a branch of the Ministry of Education in Chile in charge of designing and providing guidelines for educative institutions.

As Asian cultures are seen as “too different” from Chilean society, learning about it is often limited to what is shared in the news or the general knowledge that is often linked to the idea that Asia is exotic, different, and weird. Just like Leonardo mentioned, other participants also think that their previous knowledge about Asia was related to politics and news reports on TV.

The answers of the participants show how Asian cultures are addressed in Chile, looked through the lenses of orientalism, the prejudice, and the stereotypical ideas about the Orient work as a barrier to learning about Asian cultures, as it creates a sense of otherness that makes it difficult to approach because it is seen as too different from what the society consumes from the west. And just like Min (2020) mentions when someone becomes interested, Chilean society responds by frowning upon those who consume Asian popular culture, calling them weird and outsiders.

The interviews with the participants do not only reveal a lack of interest and knowledge about Asia, but it also shows that when thinking about the region, only China and Japan are the countries that come into mind, and despite both being mentioned, Japan is the country they know more about because of the interest that almost all participants share for anime and Japanese culture.

“The only thing I knew about Asia was like general knowledge, what they transmitted on the news. Also, thanks to the Japanese animation because you see it when you are little (...) you learn where they come from and learn how things are done in Japan (...) that’s how the interest in Oriental cultures starts” (Interview with Camilo [30:M], lives in Korea).

4.1.1 The Japanese culture influence

According to Cabañas (2021), the Japanese government has used its popular culture as a resource to strengthen its soft power since the early 2000s. In Chile, during the 1990s the Japanese culture consumption in the country strengthened and was more visible despite being present in Chilean society longer than that (Min, 2020; Cabañas, 2021), and Min's study (2020) about Chilean orientalism, about 90% of the interviewees started to like K-pop after first becoming familiar with Japanese anime and/or manga (p. 3). Her and Cabañas' results resonate positively with the findings of this research, as all but three participants mention that their previous knowledge about Asia was thanks to Japanese animation, and only after they became interested in Korean popular culture.

In Chile, Japanese animation has been around for a long time on both public and private TV networks. "El club de Los Tigrillos" was a TV program aired from 1994 to 2004 on the public TV network "Chilevisión", the content was solely oriented to youth, and it included musical content, contests, cartoons, and anime. Of private networks, "ETC...TV" and "Fox Kids" aired anime almost exclusively, barely varying into any other content. Of them, only "ETC...TV" continues on the air today, and it's programming today includes anime, K-dramas, K-pop news, and E-sports.

"I knew about Japan more than any other Asian culture. I also knew China because of its culture and the things I've seen when I was little. Back then I never saw anything of Korea, but I did grow up watching anime and consuming Japanese culture (...), I fell in love with it and started watching Japanese movies, learning about their culture through YouTube and how

Japan works. I even went to visit the country” (Magnus [30:M], lives in Chile).

Catalina shares a similar experience:

“About China, I knew cultural things, like architecture, history and because there was a Chinese community in Chile, so they were always there. (...) About Japan, I knew more because I grew up watching anime (...) I knew they ate ramen and took off their shoes. I watched a lot of movies with actors and animated. I knew about the samurai, and the mythology they show in anime. So I knew more about Japan because I grew up with it” (Interview with Catalina [30:F], lives in Korea).

The knowledge about China is limited to what is heard about it in the media or the reduced information taught in schools such as their political system, and tourist spots, like the Chinese wall, as they mention, and their interest in Japan began almost exclusively through anime. This, of course, created an interest to learn about Japanese culture and study the language, which is shown in the increasing number of students registered to learn Japanese at centers that teach the language Cabañas (2021), and how the interest in Japanese popular culture created the opportunity in Chile to open stores with Japanese merchandising and some places became spots widely recognized as places where “otakus” can be found socializing, such as “Portal Lyon” and the “Eurocentro”. The popularity of anime and mangas in Chile was also shown in the increasing number of anime-related events being Anime Expo (AEX®) the most popular one.

This interest in Japanese popular culture contributed to the openness to learn about other Asian cultures, this benefited Korean popular culture whose first wave took

place in the 90s and was mostly in Asian countries, for example, Violeta [28: F], who lived in Korea says: “I think I got closer to the Korean culture thanks to the Japanese culture and how I grew up exposed to it. Because I watched so many mono japonés [anime] everything was familiar, the Japanese traditions, that are not the same as Korean but when I watched them [Korean products] I felt like I already knew about it”.

But before Korean popular culture became relevant in Chile, the knowledge about Korea was very limited. Frequently participants say they had no idea about Korea, or that it existed as Asia was understood as China and Japan.

“About Korea nothing, if I’m honest. Nothing. If you talked to me about brands like Hyundai or Daewoo or any other, to me they were all Chinese. To me, everything that sounded Asian was China. The only different thing was Japan because of Anime. But if you talked to me about Korea, I had no idea where they were, or what they do” (Interview with Alejandro [30, M], lives in Korea).

Also:

“Sorry, no. I knew nothing at all... I became interested in Korea way earlier than most here and back then people knew that this part of Asia was China and Japan. We did not even know where it was” (Catalina [30: F], lives in Korea).

Those who did mention knowing something about Korea, their knowledge was related to the Korean War or the division between the two Koreas, as Fernanda [18:F]

who lives in Chile mentions: “I knew Korea exists. There was a North and South Korea, but I did not know the reason they were separated”, same goes for Manuela [30: F], who lives in Korea: “I knew about North Korea, about that history, I knew there were two countries, about Kim Jong-Un, the nuclear missiles threat. I understood it geopolitically”.

Of all the participants, Alicia [22, F] and Sara [31:F] who live(d) in Korea; mention to have learned about Korea at School, Sara says:

“I was in my second year of high school (...) they were teaching us international history and we had to present about wars in the world and I had to talk about the Korean War. Only then did I realize and thought “Wow, next to Japan there is a country called Korea”, so then I prepared my presentation and drew the country and all that stuff”.

The experiences of the participants show that there is little knowledge about Asia in general, relegating the knowledge to the little information shared in the media or the Japanese popular content that was so popular for the 90s kids. Korea is usually not mentioned by them when asked about what they knew about the region before becoming interested in Korean popular culture.

The next section will analyze the interaction of the participants with the Korean Wave. Because it was part of the requirements to participate in this research, all interviewees declare to be or have been interested in Korean culture.

4.2. Interaction with Hallyu

Most participants became interested in the Korean Wave in their late teenage years, between 15 and early 20s years old, and just four of them started in their late 20s. A bit more than half of the interviewees have been consuming Korean popular content for more than five years, averaging 11 years of interest. On the other hand, for those who have been interested in Korean culture for five years or less, the participants between 18~20 have an average of 4 years, while the rest average 3 years of interest.

4.2.1 Relationship with Korean popular content

As mentioned in the previous section, for Chileans is difficult to become interested in Asian cultures as it is seen as weird and too different, and despite the openness of the participants to Korea because of their previous interaction with Japanese popular culture, some of them showed somehow a lack of interest to learn about products of the Korean Wave.

“My little sister was a BTS fan, she was obsessed and kept talking about them and listening to their music all day (...) I did not want to listen to their music at all, maybe because she was just “my little sister” or because it was “Korean” not sure. Back then I was more interested in Japanese culture (...) But then some songs got stuck in my head and the music started to play on the radio. That’s when I realized I liked them, that’s how it started for me (...)” (Interview with Magnus [32: M], lives in Chile).

Many of the participants mention this initial reluctance to learn about other cultures, regardless of their being previously interested in another country’s popular content.

A similar experience is shared by both Florencia [18: F] who lives in Chile and Catalina [30: F], who lives in Korea:

“A friend in high school started saying: “Hey, look at this group, they are like The Backstreet Boys but Korean”. And I was not interested, but she was very persistent and one day sent me an email with a lot of videos to watch (...) That is how it started, I liked the group and then I started to get interested in the language, and the culture. I began to open to more things like watching dramas, the webtoons, all those things (Interview with Catalina).

The only difference between Florencia and Catalina is that for Florencia, it was her neighbor (Fernanda) who introduced her to Korean popular culture. Fernanda has a different introductory experience, she also mentions having had a previous interest in Japanese animation before learning about Korean culture, and her initial approach comes from curiosity about the music being used to create the contents she usually consumes:

“I was watching an edited music video of a show I watched, they used a song that I liked, I searched it to add it to my playlist, found the music video and was very surprised, I found it so different and ever since I “fell into a hole” I have not been able to leave nor want to. I started with BTS and then expanded to other groups” (Interview with Fernanda [20:F], lives in Chile).

While a few people mention a certain initial rejection to start watching or listening to Korean content, most of the participants share a similar story with Fernanda: as

they became in contact with one of the contents of the Hallyu, or another cultural expression, their interest grew enough to explore other contents, such as K-dramas (usually called “doramas” in Chile), manhwas or other cultural elements of Korea. Without distinguishing between those who live in Chile or Korea, most participants mention what Fernanda describes as a “falling into a hole”, some sort of strong interest that grows easily and seems to be capable of sticking around for a long time. Many participants describe their relationship with Korean popular culture as a “loop” where they cannot get out.

“By listening to that group [BTS] on my own I discovered a lot of songs that were of my taste and slowly began to become an obsession (...), two years full involved with K-pop, discovering new groups, getting obsessed with BTS... Then I jumped to the K-dramas (...) I opened to Korean culture through K-pop and also decided to open to the culture of movies and all those programs that come from that country” (Interview with Magnus [32:M], lives in Chile).

This interest seems to come from the characteristics that make Korean pop content different from what the participants are used to seeing in content produced in Latin America, European, or The United States. As participants become more interested in the music, dramas, and/or other types of content that characterize the Korean Wave, they realize that what they like can be the nostalgic feeling that K-pop gives them regarding the popular groups of the 90s like The Backstreet Boys, N’Sync, the Spice Girls or S Club 7, this includes the dancing, the choreographies, and the group dynamics. Manuela [29:F] and Catalina [30:F] share what Josefina [30:F] mentions:

“I think the first thing I liked about K-pop was something that I think happens to our generation, is the nostalgia of the 90s pop (...) the boybands, girl bands that dance to a choreography N’Sync or the Spice Girls or Destiny’s Child, I feel connected to that”.

Others also mention admiring the level of production and budget that both K-pop and K-dramas display and think is a characteristic proper of K-pop that sets them apart from the USA, Latin American, or European productions. This includes the design of music videos, such as choreographies, costume changes, and the mixture of different genres to create an attractive, catchy song. It also includes, for those who watch K-dramas, the clear tones, the aesthetic, and different pace of the development of the plot.

The most important feature that creates interest seems to be that, regardless of what the participants chose to consume and their curiosity about the production or nostalgic features they identify in Korean content, the display of culture itself is what makes participants interested. What is attractive is how different Korean culture and contents are when comparing it to their own, or what they are used to consuming from The USA, Latin America, and/or Europe.

“I liked to see the places in the K-dramas, the historic themes and I started to get interested in cultural things (...) I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn and since I like to watch the shows in the original language, I wanted to learn as a hobby” (Diana, [33:F], lives in Korea).

Also:

“I liked how pretty the culture is in many things, for example, the traditional outfits I think are really pretty. Traditions in Korea, the language I also

thought it's pretty, I like the way it sounds (...) that they are so respectful, the landscapes of Korea, the food (...)" (Interview with Fernanda [20:F], lives in Chile).

The Korean language is pointed out by all participants as something interesting about the contents they consume, just as Koeltzsch (2019) mentions in its study about Korean popular culture in Argentina, the Hallyu does not only allows people to make contact with Korean culture but it is also capable of creating the interest to access to the language and other information about the society. Koeltzsch (2019) mentions that the Argentines part of the study tried to learn basic Korean on their own using the internet, this is also true for Chileans as most of them became interested in the language.

However, at the time the interviews were scheduled, most participants mentioned not being as interested as they used to be and that, even if they do consume music, shows, or other content, they do "not look for it" as they did before, however, is not completely forgotten and it becomes a part of the cultural exports that the participants consume without questioning the origins of it.

"No, not anymore [listen to K-pop as before] I mean I keep listening, sometimes I watch one or two videos, but not like before. Before I was more fixated on K-pop and BTS (...) I used to watch every day, like a fan, I listened to their music but with time is just not like that anymore" (Interview with Fernanda [18:F], lives in Chile).

This is especially true for the participants that live(d) in Korea, most of them describe their interest as something that became just part of their everyday life. Violeta [28:F], who lived in Korea says: “If I am honest, my interest has changed a lot. My experience with... I mean I like Korea, I love the food, I keep all of those things. I eat the food, I am still exposed to the content, but it is not something I look for anymore”. Or Alejandro’s experience: “If I am honest K-pop today to me no... It’s not my priority, I used to be all about Girls Generation, and Super Junior but that’s in the past for me (...) I feel like today’s K-pop lost the touch. I continue listening because I live here, but I don’t look for new things like before” (Interview with Alejandro [30: M], lives in Korea).

Several studies have pointed out that the Korean Wave, just like the Japanese mania before, went through a process of cultural hybridization that allowed these cultures to access other cultural markets (Ariffin et al., 2018), creating a national uniqueness utilized to export in transnational markets (Huang, 2011). This hybridization borrows elements of other cultures to make them more familiar to other countries or regions, this allows Korea to generate large revenues through Korean media exports while achieving the primary mission of promoting a positive image of Korea around the world (Huang, 2011).

Becoming aware of what are the characteristics of the Korean Wave that are attractive to Chileans allows understanding that is not only the way the product is created but also the expression of a different culture that even if it is characterized by the blending between Korean and Western traditions (Ochieng & Kim, 2019), allows Chileans to see the Korean culture and become interested in it.

4.2.2 Differences between Korean and Western popular culture

As Korean cultural products become attractive to Chileans, participants mention that Korean popular culture products have the characteristic of being perceived as fresh, this refers to the components of Korean content that differentiate them from western's.

About music, people find the choreography and performance, as well as the level of loyalty the fans develop to the groups of their liking as the major differences between Korean and western content. Also, there are different ways to interact with what they like, such as interviews, mini shows, videos, or live streaming, this makes the relationship with the artists stronger by making fans feel “part of” something, rather than the “spectator” of something:

“I feel that what K-pop does very well is that, in general, the idols make you feel like you are a “part” of something. On the contrary, what the USA does, you become the spectator of something amazing, you are not part of anything “bigger” (...)” (Magnus [32: M], lives in Chile).

This fascination with the differences between the Korean and Western music industries is not entirely positive. Most participants are very wary about how the industry is the “behind the scenes”, they have strong critical opinions about the pressure the artists are under and how much the industry meddles with their behavior and private lives.

TV Shows, present a beautiful, clean, and utopian reality in many senses. Aesthetically, just like K-pop, it enhances beauty. But not only that, it creates a fake

idea about love and romance that participants usually spot and mention as a flaw of Korean dramas. Although there is some criticism, there is also an admiration for how Korea is portrayed, as respectful, organized, and clean. Hierarchy is often addressed by those who have never been to Korea as something positive and that should be replicated in Chile. There is a perception of collectivism and respect for those older or more experienced that becomes idealized under the Chilean standard of what respect means. This becomes relevant as it breaks the idea of Chileans who moved to Korea and experience different experiences than what they have expected based on this image of what hierarchy, respect, and collectivism means. In “section 4” the perspective of those who moved to Korea about these issues will be explored in more detail.

Korea presents something new, with a few touches of “western” it is capable of creating interest by remaining “loyal” up to some extent to their culture. Participants describe Korean shows as slow-paced, innocent, naive, and pure compared to Westerners. Without renouncing their strong cultural values and beliefs, TV shows are capable of portraying aspects of life like love, family, or sacrifice through their productions (Ariffin et al., 2018). These characteristics are attractive to Chileans as shows are capable of showing a different culture.

Music on the other hand is a whole new world for many of them, the language becomes a key factor to create engagement for some of the participants, saying that what they like is the language, the uniqueness of the performances and that offers freshness to what they expect from artists and videos. There is a huge commitment in monetary terms to create big shocking shows, beautiful videos, great performances,

and an image of the idols that successfully creates attachment to groups and more interest in the idols' lives. It brings a nostalgic feeling in a sense of what 90s groups of westerners brought to the table, such as dances, boy bands, or girl-bands.

4.2.3 Interest and commitment

The continuous interest of the participants raises the question if this rather recent experience with Korean cultural products is capable of creating other instances outside the music and TV shows to engage with Korean culture and up to what point this interest is capable of shaping what the participants think of Korea, and/or if the interaction with the Korean Wave had any influence in concrete actions of the participants.

There is a clear line between those who live in Chile and those who chose to move to Korea and that is the commitment to explore Korea beyond what is shown in popular media.

The youngest batch (18~20 years old) of the interviewees are the undergrad students, usually, Korean product fans are portrayed to have a high tendency to idealize Korea and while some of it is true, important critics are coming from these participants, especially regarding the visibility of LGTB communities in Korea and how discriminatory they picture Korea is regarding this issue. Also, among those who are currently still in their undergraduate studies, only one of them shows deep knowledge and interest in learning about Korea beyond what is shown in K-dramas and through the Idols. Florencia [18:F] is currently studying to become a Journalist, but aside from her professional education, she parallelly learns about Korean history and follows very closely the news in Korea as she is interested in how the country is developing as a nation, despite being very critical of Korean society, she still thinks

of Korea as the first country she would like to visit after and claims that her interest is to pursue a master's degree in the region related to Asian studies.

On the contrary, Fernanda [20:F], Carol [18:F], and Franco [18:M] have no interest in pursuing anything further beyond what they like to consume through K-pop and K-dramas, this is also true for Carlos [26:M] and Magnus [32: M]. While the five of them said to be interested in learning the language at some point and might have learned to read Hangul, they quickly abandoned that idea of going beyond that, unlike Florencia, who wishes to study Korean after learning English, showing that even if it is important for her, she believes that English is more important even to come to Korea.

On the other hand, Macarena [31:F] and Josefina [30:F] both joined The King Sejong Institute to learn Korean because they liked K-pop; Ricardo [29:M] and Carla [23:F] have not had formal education but are still interested in Korea in different aspects. While Ricardo, like Josefina and Maracena, traveled to Korea as tourists on different occasions and would like to go back once again as tourists or for post-graduate education, Carla will soon graduate from engineering and is planning her first travel destination to be Korea, although she is considering a masters in the country, she considers that having a few years of work might be important before considering a master's.

Other people, like Magnus and Fernanda, would consider traveling to Korea as a tourist, but it wouldn't be their first choice as they feel more inclined to know Japanese culture first or European countries.

4.3. Changed perceptions of Asia and Korea

With the growing interaction with Korea, there are new opinions regarding Korea and Asia as discoveries.

As the participants became more involved with Korean popular culture, they experienced changes in what they thought Korean society is, and contributed to disintegrating the idea that Asia shares one same culture and the generalized idea that “everyone is Chinese”. As they interacted with Korean TV shows, movies, music, or other methods of entertainment, they became more aware of the differences between the countries in Asia such as the variety of languages, the similarities, and differences between cultures, and the validation and recognition of those cultures to be something more than “just Chinese”. Regardless of their preferences, the experience of watching and/or listening to Korean cultural products led them to the confirmation of how different Latin America and Asia are, however, this reassurance brought more curiosity and positive interest in learning more about what is what Chile and Latin America share with Asia rather than a feeling of rejection.

“Yes. It has changed a lot [perception of Asia], (...) I first started studying [about Asia] on my own, to interact more with Asia (...), we tend to think that in Asia everyone is the same, everyone has the same customs and although they have common customs, they are not all the same, their way of thinking is very different, their way of seeing life is very different, their form of dressing, of speaking, everything different” (Interview with Alejandro [30: M], lives in Korea).

The thoughts of Alejandro about Asia are shared by the participants regardless of their living in Korea or Chile, as it has been mentioned before, the interaction with Korean cultural products creates a deep sense of loyalty towards what the participants consume, this fact might contribute to the desire of differentiating what is unique of the Korean products they interact with and to recognize, for example, the differences in how the Korean language sounds and it is written. This differentiation between Asian cultures is true for all interviewees, but especially for those who have already interacted with Asian cultures such as the Japanese, this is because the interaction with several cultures can contribute to reinforcing that despite the commonalities, there are key differences between cultures. For those participants with previous experience with Asian cultures, their opinions about Korea itself changed as they became aware that even if they have cultural affinities, their traditions and customs were different from each other.

This new perception of Korea acknowledges the country's history and characteristics of the society, but is not without criticism or pointing out the differences between Chile and Korea.

“I had no idea Korea had so many invasions from other countries and that gives you the cultural context of why people are like they are and how it is shown in dramas. They had an intense history, a lot of wars, and people still overcame it by themselves (...) it proves that people are very resilient, I think is very interesting how despite everything they went through, they are still hard-working people” (Interview with Diana [33:F], lives in Korea)

A similar opinion is shared with other participants, the more they learn about the

culture and its history, the more is appreciated and more they can have their own opinions about it, thinking about what they like, feels odd, or just do not enjoy about the culture.

“Those old-fashioned thoughts [in Korea], like bowing to people when they say “hi” or “goodbye”, when they receive or give something they must position their hands a certain way, or that when they drink with someone older, they must turn not to face them. All those gestures I think were the ones that made me wonder why they do it. In the end, they are both people [interacting], and their asymmetric level should not define the respect they will have, I used to criticize that... Also, how women must dress a certain way or maybe it is judged if they dress differently, I think I am very critical of that even today” (Interview with Carla [23:F], lives in Chile).

Also:

“There are many things that are more similar than what you think. Many believe that Korea is so remote [lejano], but I believe it’s closer and many things are closer between Asia and Latin America than with the North [America]. I feel like family is similar between Korea and Chile (...) the way family ties are made, the responsibility. I feel that there are different things, but also things that are more similar (...) than what we think...

Explains Violeta [28:F], who lived in Korea. However, just as it is for Josefina and Carla, gender roles and expectations become part of the criticism towards Korea, she continues:

“It is easier to be feminist in Chile than in Korea (...) I feel like it’s easier for women in Chile. That’s my only argument favoring Chile because Korea surpasses it in everything else. Personally, I think it is easier to be happier... maybe not happier but I do feel there is less pressure on women in Chile than in Korea. That’s the only thing I do not appreciate about Korean Culture.

Female participants usually mention gender roles as something negative about Korea regardless of experiencing it firsthand or just learning about it through K-dramas or any other content. This critique is replicated by most of the participants, often linking it up with how Korea is seen as a conservative society where gender roles are expected to be followed and replicated.

“In topics like the society I feel they are very retrogressive in the way they discriminate (...) the opinions about sexual minorities or religious, the salary gap between men and women that are normalized (...) or that people work so much every week that they cannot be with their families, or start one (...) in the end people feel trapped in their own society, I do not think that’s development” (Interview with Camilo [30:M], lives in Korea).

He continues:

“The values as a society I do believe Chile is better up to some point because here [Korea] people are very conservative. They just voted a president and he is the most conservative among all candidates, I do not think that is positive at all”.

Even though most participants understand that Korea is a different society than

Chilean, they cannot avoid judging Korean events through Chilean values, it is perceived that Korean society is in a phase different than Chile's, and although most of them acknowledge it, they do not feel comfortable with the rules Korean must follow. This conservatism perception is both political and societal even if the participants do not understand it as a separate matter, it is seen by all participants that mention it as something negative about the Korean society, and for some, it might work as an inhibitor to think of Korea as a place to leave, study or work.

The judgment of values through the Chilean perspective is also true when speaking about hierarchy, the topic that participants cannot agree on, this topic will be analyzed in-depth in the next section.

The curiosity that is created about Korea through its cultural products, leads the participants from both groups to investigate more about Korean society, some of them -the majority- not only learn through what is shown in K-pop or K-dramas but also make their own research through websites dedicated to Korean culture, informative YouTube travel or "living in Korea" channels, Vlogs of influencers that live in Korea and talk about its society on platforms such as Instagram or Tiktok.

The security of Korea reported through these sources of information is very interesting for the participants, as Macarena [31:F], who lives in Chile mentions: "It impresses me that they use their purses and bags to save spots in coffee shops, in Chile you cannot do that, everything will be gone by the time you are back". This characteristic of Korea is something that all participants find attractive and all those who live(d) in the country repeatedly mention and point out that one of their favorite things about Korea, even if they already informed themselves about how security was going to be like before moving to the country, they are still shocked to realize

how different from Chile is.

But the characteristic of Korea that is liked the most is the appropriation and valuing of their own culture and traditions, as Magnus [32:M], who lives in Chile mentions: “I feel that there is a sense of respect to their own culture, although I’ve seen that there are dramas and show that criticize their own culture, it is more than just “criticize to criticize” I feel they show me what is wrong without telling me it’s wrong, I feel like I have to make that choice” (Interview with Magnus [32:M], lives in Chile).

The ownership and pride they take in their own culture is something very striking to Chileans, the use of the spaces in their cities, the interaction with elements of their own culture like museums, and history, and how they build their national identity.

“On the weekends, in their free time, they go visit cultural places, that’s very interesting because in Chile it doesn’t happen (...) the ones that visit are the tourist, not nationals. It caught my attention that here people wear their hanboks and go to the palace and I don’t know, go visit museums on the weekends, it’s very attractive and I don’t see that in Chile (Interview with Diana [33:F], lives in Korea).

Also:

“The image I had was, well it is a country that was invaded by Chinese, had war with North Korea and the Japanese colonialism. So it’s a country with nationalist values that grew stronger because they wanted to protect their culture, their race (...). I realized that K-pop is also a cultural value for the government, they promote their culture through it, I also noticed that they use it a lot to promote touristic places in Seoul” (Interview with Leonardo

[30:M], lives in Korea)

The participants are attracted to this characteristic of Korean society because they do not find the same meaning in their own culture. While Korean society seems to be proud of its history, culture, traditions, and the resilience of its people, Chilean society's identity is broken. The rejection of the mestizo nature of Latin America, and the praising of what is European are part of the reasons why Chilean society cannot find value in their own culture. Furthermore, the military dictatorship (1973~1990) led by Augusto Pinochet shattered, even more, the national identity of the country. Dividing it between those who supported the new regime and those who did not, those who did not adjust suffered severe repression and persecution in the name of creating a "homogeneous society" that was never achieved. Unlike the Korean experience, in the 1970s' Chile was not successful at creating a national identity, therefore the value for their own culture is not uniform and is usually unacknowledged.

The interest and admiration towards the affection and respect Korean society show for their own culture is something that Chileans envy as something they cannot have:

"I feel that the harshness of Korean history, especially when considering what the Japanese occupation meant, the Korean War... this created a national identity that was very crude that you can see, this caught my attention because compared to Chile... Chile in my opinion has yet to make peace with itself about what is the memory they want to have. Korea has that very clear" (Interview with Ricardo [30:M], lives in Chile).

The interaction with the Hallyu also contributed to creating a new interest in Asia, expanding the knowledge about the countries in the region, to recognize the cultural differences between countries. This was particularly beneficial for Korea, as the cultural export of their products led Chilean society to differentiate what was once just “one culture”, increasing awareness of what is unique to Korean society, history, and culture. Even if the knowledge about Korea is not without critics, the opinions and experiences of the participants are thought to be positive despite the cultural differences that can be very shocking for Chileans. The gained knowledge has both reality and an imaginary conception of what Korea truly is, but it is undeniable that for the participants of this study, the influence of the Korean Wave led to learning more about Asia in general and Korea in particular.

4.3.1 The role of cultural institutions and the Korean Embassy in Chile

The King Sejong Institute (KSI) in Santiago is part of the Foundation that carries the same name, is a public institution that works under the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Korea and whose objective is to teach the Korean language and extend Korean culture to foreigners. This institution becomes relevant to the investigation as it has been mentioned as a key element for the participants who attend classes to learn the Korean language and culture. Of all 20 participants, six of them studied Korean at this Institute, while five of them mentioned the institution to be an important space to keep themselves interested in Korea, of these five participants, three currently reside in Korea and one lived in Korea to study the language.

Besides being the institution that allowed them to learn about Korea, it also became a space to meet other people with the same interests, reinforcing their own.

“The students [of Sejong Institute] and I gathered every now and then to party in a Korean style. We bought Korean snacks and soju. We cooked and did Karaoke too (...)” (Interview with Camilo [30:M], lives in Korea).

The KSI was also a hotspot to learn more about opportunities offered by the institute itself or the Korean government through scholarships, all four participants that lived in Korea, plus Macarena [28:F], who lives in Chile, that attended the KSI were awarded different scholarships during their time of studies there. Regarding the scholarships, five of the KSI students won a scholarship to visit Korea for 10 days to experience Seoul, visit traditional spots and learn more about the Korean culture, this is a guided program that the participants. As Alejandro [30:M], who currently lives in Korea mentions: “In 2014 I won a scholarship from the King Sejong Institute for a short cultural trip. I came [to Korea] for like 10 days to travel Korea, I was taken all over Seoul, historical places... as a tourist”.

Although in different years, this experience is the same for all recipients but this scholarship is not the only scholarship the KSI offered, other participants had the chance to study Korean in Chile and/or Korea while being sponsored by the KSI, in fact, students like Catalina [30:F], who lives in Korea and is also a recipient of KSI and GKS scholarships, points out that if it weren't because of the scholarships, she would have not come to Korea for a long stay.

As mentioned before, the KSI was a place where students did not only study Korea but also created a community and learned about different opportunities offered by the Korean government. Among these opportunities, the Global Korea Scholarship by the National Institution for International Education (NIIED) also works as an

important element to studying in Korea as five out of the 10 participants that live(d) in the country arrived through this scholarship, of these five recipients, four of them attended the King Sejong Institute and claim to have learned about the GKS thanks to the Institute.

“At first I studied Hangul on my own and when I could not continue because the grammar was too hard I joined the King Sejong Institute in Santiago, there I learned about all the scholarships and all the programs from Korea” (Interview with Alejandro [30:M], who lives in Korea.

Also:

“Inside of the King Sejong Institute, where I studied Korean, there was a rumor that this scholarship to study masters [GKS] existed. That’s how I learned about it (...)” (Interview with Camilo [31:M], lives in Korea).

While the King Sejong Institute offered a place to learn Korean and to build community among those interested in Korean culture, it also succeeded in providing opportunities for the participants to experience Korea through Scholarships, events, and contests related to Korean culture, it also contributed to the diffusion of information about scholarships and programs offered by the Korean Embassy in Chile. These KSI former students mention many activities that were organized by the institution to spread the Korean culture, such as language fairs, speaking contests, cultural content related to Korean cuisine, music, and others.

“We did some activities together with the Sejong Institute [and the Korean Embassy]. They did a gastronomic fair and the TV showed up, like the KBS

and there was some sort of competition, I was there volunteering (...) With Sejong, we also did language fairs (...)” (Interview with Violeta [28:F], lived in Korea).

The influence of institutions like KSI or the Embassy became important to these participants, but it is not a common experience for all of them. These four participants might have felt a great influence coming from these institutions and while other GKS recipients are somewhat related to the Embassy because the application for the scholarship is done through it, their interaction is limited to that particular event. However, two other participants have been in cultural events sponsored by the Embassy. Diana [33:F] went in 2019 to compete in a Chile-Korea fusion cuisine contest not long after she became interested in Korean culture:

“There [at the Embassy] I got closer to the events the Korean Embassy prepares, there I met people that were very interested in the Korean culture and started to do a little bit more of research [About Korea]” (Interview with Diana [33:F], lives in Korea).

Sara [31:F], on the other hand, had a different experience as she visited the Korean Embassy only once in 2013 to join an event related to K-pop, her experience was not good, and decided not to attend another event from the Embassy as the event was too crowded and not prepared to receive a large number of visitants.

These institutions might contribute to maintaining and/or increasing the popularity of the Korean Wave in Chile; however, it is important to note that it was the interaction with the products of the Hallyu that made the participants interested in

the Korean culture to the point of becoming interested in learning the language or to travel to Korea. Therefore, while the role of the institutions succeeded in keeping the participants interested in the Korean culture, it was the products of the Korean Wave that made these institutions attractive to the participants.

This does not mean that the Korean institutions create only positive outcomes, one of example of this is the scandal of 2016 at the Korean Embassy, when the ambassador was accused of raping a 12-year-old girl and sexually harassing underage girls (Jun, 2016). Although this was a major scandal in 2016, only one of the participants referred to it during the interviews.

It is indisputable that for the group that lives in Korea that their interest in the country was strong enough to move there (details of the reason for these choices will be fully explored in section 4), but these choices were not necessarily made because of the opportunities given by Korean institutions. Other participants were led by curiosity or easy access to opportunities, whatever the reason is, the interest in Korean popular culture seems to have worked as an important trigger to choose to invest in learning more about this culture.

In the upcoming pages, this research will focus specifically on those Chileans that chose Korea as a place to live, how their experience changed the image they had built about Korea, and their motivations to move to the country.

4.4. Life in Korea

4.4.1 Reasons to come to Korea

The main reason why the participants chose to come to Korea is for higher education. Of all 10 participants that chose to live in Korea, five of them came to Korea through

the Global Korea Scholarship program pursuing a Master's degree and one did as an exchange student from one of the top universities in Chile. The other four participants came for different reasons, Diana and Violeta came to study Korean, Leonardo applied for a Working Holiday, lastly, Sara met her husband (Korean) in Chile 10 years ago and moved to Korea with him 6 years ago.

For the first reason, Natalia, Camilo, and Alejandro, despite being interested in the Korean culture, made their choice of moving to Korea thinking about their higher education. Both describe the decision process as an opportunity for personal and professional development. To Camilo, the challenge of practicing a new language was one of the key reasons for him to choose Korea, but it was not his first choice. At first, he thought of Chinese or Japanese but concluded that the Korean language was easier to learn and the scholarship was also a good incentive.

Alejandro's choice was a bit different, the main reason to choose Korea was that of all the programs he researched about, Yonsei's university was the one that fit the most for his professional interests, he carefully considered all his options, including Canada, The United States, and Germany and checked the university rankings to make sure he was making the right decision.

“(…) If you say: "I studied in the USA or Canada" is like wow, but to say "I studied in Korea" the response is "Why, not China or Japan?" that was a big "but" for me. So, I did more research to be certain of my idea (….) Korea was still the best choice, because of the scholarships. In Korea (….) I knew with whom I could do my thesis. Yonsei was the best Asian university in my area so I took it" (Interview with Alejandro [30:M], lives in Korea).

Catalina and Manuela's motives are related to personal matters. For Catalina, the reason was that after spending years studying Korean in Chile as a hobby, she needed to justify her choice of studying the language for so long. She studied in the Korean School and at The King Sejong Institute, in both institutions she was a scholarship recipient that allowed her to study Korean.

“To me, it became necessary to have a reason to have spent so much time studying [Korean] for so many years, so I set myself the goal to go to Korea and study (...), I had a friend that was a recipient of the GKS and for me, if I did not win the scholarship back then I would not have come... maybe as a tourist, but to study it was the scholarship or nothing” (Interview with Catalina [30: F], lives in Korea).

Manuela's first visit to Korea was thanks to a Working Holiday back in 2017, among all existing working holidays, she picked Korea because she wanted to challenge herself and did not want to pick the working holiday visas that are common for Chileans, such as Australia, Canada or European countries because they shared too many similarities with Chilean culture. She picked Korea thinking the culture was reasonably different from hers according to what she had seen in K-dramas. Once in Korea she learned about the GKS program and decided to apply because she wanted to stay longer in Korea, and because she was dating a Korean man at the time.

“I search for countries to go to [on a Working Holiday Visa], I didn't want to go to countries that people always go to because I wanted to challenge myself (...), so I looked for the options and I saw Korea (...) [While on the

Working Holiday] I met a lot of GKS recipients and among them, there was a Chilean girl. I was looking for ways to come back to Korea because at the time I was in a relationship with a Korean man, I liked the country a lot, and was not sure about what to do with my life, so I applied to see if won the scholarship or not, there was this topic [for research] that I liked a lot and if I studied a Master's on it, it could be easier to find a job" (Interview with Manuela [29: F], lives in Korea).

Even though the reasons to come to Korea for GKS recipients are diverse, they all have in common the interest in pursuing higher education and personal growth. Looking at Korea as a challenge shows that the participants acknowledge the differences between their culture and Korean culture, but did not consider it to be so different that they would be unable to adapt to a new environment. Alejandro's decision shows, to his eyes, that Chilean society considers that western-based education is thought to be better than the one that can be found in Asia. And inside the region, Chinese or Japanese education has a higher position than pursuing education in Korea. Alejandro's choice took into careful consideration the way his choice was going to be seen in the job market. Also, it is important to note that Korea is a non-conventional choice for all participants living in Korea, most of them mentioned during the interview knowing that European or North American universities might be more renowned when compared to Asian universities. Despite that, they decided to move to Korea.

Global Korea Scholarship started in 1967 and it is designed to help improve Korea's image among foreign students and scholars (Markessinis, 2009) while also enhancing Korea's status in ODA in education, according to Bader (2016) the GKS

program also contributes to supporting the promotion of Korea's strategic foreign policies and will contribute to promoting Korea's image inside and outside Korea by providing foreigners with the possibility of enjoying a positive experience of Korea while receiving degrees from a Korean university, the GKS program also is positioned at the center of the people-to-people diplomacy where students are no longer just targets to address the government needs but to be conscious of their needs to make the public diplomacy embedded to it effectively.

Out of the GKS program is Alicia, the exchange student, she mentions she has been interested in Korea because of the "boom" that Korean culture had in Chile, she learned about Korea at school and became to watch dramas and shows about Korea because of its popularity.

"To be honest I had no particular interest in Korea but to learn about different cultures, and it turned out that Korea had this boom of popularity and that is how I started to become interested, I studied their history and how things work (...) I came as a student exchange because my university has a lot of offers destinations to do an exchange and I chose Korea (Interview with Alicia [22:F], lived in Korea).

Violeta, Diana, and Leonardo's choices were made out of curiosity about the culture and/or the language. For the two women, the way the Korean language sounds is very attractive, it is thought to "it looks and sounds pretty" as they became more interested, they decided to learn the language. While Violeta chose the King Sejong Institute, Diana chose to hire a personal teacher as a previous step to moving to Korea

to continue studying the language.

“Naturally, I became close to those who did not speak German very well at school [while living in Germany], I met two Korean girls and I became very interested in Hangul when I saw them write it, that was the first thing to catch my attention about Korea (...) To be honest, at first, I wanted to study Japanese but it was too expensive and at the time [2010], to study Korean was very cheap” (Interview with Violeta [28, F], Lived in Korea)

Although Violeta’s first trip to Korea was as a tourist in 2013, the following two times were sponsored by the Korean government through the Embassy. The first time was also in 2013, she won a short scholarship that paid for her travel to participate in a forum representing Chile, and the second time was to study Korean for 10 months at Sogang University.

“The first time I went on a holiday to Korea was in 2013, I was there for like a month. The second time I went was in 2013 too, I won a short scholarship [from KSI] to participate in representing Chile on a forum, that was paid by the Korean Embassy, and the last time was between 2017 and 2018, I stayed there 10 months: 2 semesters at Sogang to study Korean” (Interview with Violeta [28: F], lived in Korea).

According to Violeta’s experience, at age 19 her interest in Korea was strong enough to travel by her own means at first and kept her interest as she participated in representing Chile in Korea. Also, her interest remained fairly the same as she won

a scholarship to study Korean four years after her first independent visit.

Diana and Leonardo's interest to travel to Korea is rather recent compared to the experiences of the other participants. Diana only started watching K-dramas during the COVID pandemic outbreak in 2019 as her work as a travel agent became telecommuting. The new setting for her job allowed her to participate in a fusion cuisine event organized by the Korean Embassy, where she met other people that reinforced her interest to the point of wanting to move to Korea to learn about the culture through a language learning program at Yonsei University. Unlike the other participants related to education, Diana is self-funding her studies.

“A few years ago I started to watch K-dramas, and listen to Korean music, and about a year and a half ago, I participated in a contest organized by the Korean Embassy, it was about fusion cuisine. After that, I became closer to the events of the Embassy, met other participants that loved Korean culture, and started to do more research, after that, I became interested in learning the language and now I am here (Interview with Diana [33: F], lives in Korea)

Leonardo's interest also started during the COVID outbreak; he moved to Korea in 2021 with a Working Holiday Visa. The reason behind his decision was his curiosity regarding Asia and his wish to debunk myths and stereotypes about the countries he visits. The news he received about Korea and its society pictured the country as an oasis, technological, with good and competitive universities as well as beautiful landscapes. For him, it was about experiencing “the other side of Korea” the one that is not shown in the Korean pop culture, his motivation was also about his curiosity about the Korean Wave phenomenon.

“During the pandemic in 2020, I was bored of my routine at work, I wanted to leave the country and the Working Holiday Visa was the easiest way to do so (...) I have always been curious about Asia, I think of myself as a traveler, and I like debunking myths and stereotypes. When I saw that Korea was presented as something like an oasis, very technological, competitive, good universities and beautiful postcards... when I see something look too perfect I imagine it has to have another side and I like to discover it (...) (Interview with Leonardo [30: M], live in Korea).

Lastly, Sara’s choice was a practical one, his husband is a firefighter in Korea, and in Chile, a firefighter is not a considered a profession but voluntary work, there is no income coming from working as a firefighter in Chile and if they had chosen to stay in Chile, the efforts to become a firefighter in Korea would be useless in the country. That’s the reason they chose to move and live in Korea.

“I moved to Korea in 2017 (...) because I married a Korean man and we had to make the choice of which country to live in. I am a foreign trade technician so I can work anywhere, but he is a firefighter and in Chile that is not a profession so... he was going to move to Chile to have nothing. It was more responsible to just move to Korea” (Interview with Sara [31: F]. Lives in Korea).

Of all ten participants, only three were not related in any way to the Korean Embassy or Korean institutes such as The King Sejong Institute of the Korean School in Chile.

For those that were involved, as mentioned in the previous section, the King Sejong Institute, in particular, was important to maintaining the interest of the participants in Korea. Also, their interests and reasons to move to Korea show a clear linkage with elements of the Korean Wave as curiosity and the continuous engagement with Korean cultural products made Korea a possible option to move and experience the country for a prolonged time frame. Even if it is as a someone who did not consume Korean products, like Leonardo, who was attracted by the popularity Korea is getting internationally and in Chile. Therefore, it is possible to say that Korean popular culture has influenced the decision to travel to Korea, this is expressed in the reasons that participants gave about choosing Korea as a destination for a long-term stay, this influence not only led to carrying out actions to move to Korea but also achieved to be able to position Korea as a place to pursue higher education despite the generalized idea that Western universities are the best choice to do so. Hallyu alone might have not been enough to encourage these types of decisions if Korean education was not as highly rated as it is globally, these decisions can be affected by different factors but the Korean Wave contributes to putting South Korea in the spotlight to be considered not only for high education but as an intriguing place to explore a new culture and language.

4.4.2 Living in Korea

The image of the Korean society changes for those participants that moved to Korea and experienced the society as it is, breaking stereotypes and adjusting previous conceptions of what the society is in reality. These changes can contribute to understanding society better than what comes from the products for international consumption. The experiences of the participants that live(d) in Korea and how their

real experiences changed positively or negatively their conception of Korea to understand what might be the achievements and challenges of the Korean Wave.

Korean pop culture consumption can change the way people see Korea based on how it is portrayed, according to Ariffin et al., (2018) Korean drama distinguishes from Western popular dramas as K-dramas captivate the audience by bringing the audience to remain realistic by focusing on human nature (p.13), and another study about how the Korean Wave affects the perception of Korea in Africa (Ochieng & Kim, 2019) mentions that the Confucius values, family love, and respect for the elderly are appealing to East African audiences, creating a positive attitude towards Korea. As we mentioned in previous sections, this is also true for the Chilean public, however, those who move to Korea for a long-term experience in the culture discover that what they might think does not fit accurately with their expectations.

When analyzing how the Hallyu was able to change the perception of Korea the participants living in either Chile or Korea built a rather positive image of Korean society. This is also true for the participants that live(d) in Korea despite not being able to see what they have expected when imagining Korea through the lenses of K-dramas or Kpop. Korea provided mostly positive experiences about the society and their participation in it. Leaving aside the social life of the participants that due to COVID might not have been the best experience as interaction and the chances of meeting new people, especially Koreans interested in talking with foreigners were limited no matter the reason to visit the country. The aspects of Korea that participants emphasized without exceptions were security and efficiency.

Security is similar to the imaginary both Chileans and Koreans have built about through K-dramas or K-pop but it takes a different meaning when experiencing it first hand as Chileans mention to quickly adjust and adapt to the sense of security

that living in Korea provides.

“I like a lot living here and something that I did not realize is the impact that security has on your quality of life and that is something that one realizes being here and it is wow, you applaud it a thousand times, compared to Chile you live more peacefully” (Interview with Manuela [29:F], lives in Korea).

Security becomes a concern and something participants miss when going back to Chile:

“Here [Chile] I live thinking all day I am going to be robbed, [I walk] with my phone hidden. I am afraid of going out with my laptop and it is sad because I know here they will rob me and in Korea, I would have never thought of it. Here I lose the sight of my phone for a second and I think it got stolen and I feel like its almost my fault” (Interview with Alicia [22:F], lived in Korea).

Another experience that affects positively the image and experience of living in Korea is the efficiency of how things work in general, but transportation and the delivery system are emphasized as remarkable aspects of Korean society, as moving through the city becomes smart and cheap, and delivery reliable. Other aspects are also important, such as the preservation of the Korean culture and the active engagement of Koreans with their own traditions as it has been mentioned in the previous section, the Korean cuisine, the nightlife, and many activities in the city for entertainment are also part of what Chileans find remarkable of living in Korea.

On the other hand, Korean hierarchy and the respect for the elderly reinforce the

negative aspects that participants living in Chile and Korea build around the society. As mentioned before, there is a conflict between what Chileans expect it to be and what truly is. The interviewees that live in Chile see the Korean hierarchy as something positive, while those who live(d) in Korea have a different opinion on the matter. This might be because, as mentioned in Section 3, those who live in Chile interpret the Korean hierarchy through the lenses of Chilean values, and the ones that are in Korea experience it as it truly is, not fitting what they expected it to be.

“There is something about honorifics and the different levels of formality that go from casual, formal to very formal. This does not exist in Chile (...), people only speak on an informal level: “Tú”, or “Usted” for politeness [formal] but is not usually respected. I like that there are specific words to address a superior and something made to point the line between formal and informal, and the respect to someone older only because of the wisdom of having more years alive” (Interview with Florencia [18:F], lives in Chile).

Also:

“They were very respectful [in K-dramas]; they had things related to honor when talking to or treating older people, or people who were of different status in the hierarchy, they treat very differently. What for them means respect made me want to learn a lot about this culture, ever since I watched a lot of dramas and kept watching” (Interview with Carla [23:F], lives in Chile).

Those who have experienced Korean society find it difficult to understand the hierarchy in Korean -Confucian- terms, as it is different from what Chilean society

understands, more related to individualism and self-reliance. Both Korean and Chilean societies seek respect, but the way they understand what this word means is where the difference is. Chilean participants that live in Korea seem to understand this hierarchy as something static and indisputable. In this context, the eldest or someone higher in a particular hierarchical setting is owed obedience.

“There is also this idea that you have to respect someone just because they are older than you or have a higher position than you, this makes no sense to me because in Chile there is respect for authority, respect for the elderly, it exists but that does not mean, like in here, that wherever you go they will always be right, you will always have to obey, you cannot contradict them. That is hard for me and is one of the reasons I wouldn’t like to work for a Korean company” (Interview with Manuela [29:F], lives in Korea)

In Chile, the hierarchy is something you can find in relationships such as parents-kids, bosses-employee, and teacher-student relationships, and respect is what is most expected. Respect in these hierarchical situations is related to who has more experience/knowledge about a determined subject, but it can be easily lost if there are no signs of reciprocal behavior.

“I think that in my country at least, you are more independent from others, of course, children respect adults but once you reached some point that stays behind (...), I do not respect anyone that does not respect me. But in Korea, in Japan or other Asian countries, the concept of respect is never lost, not if your old or young” (Interview with Magnus [32:M], lives in Chile).

The answers of interviewees that live in Chile seem to understand respect as acts of kindness, such as holding the door for the person that comes behind you or giving the seat [on a bus, or the subway] to the elderly, the disabled, or pregnant women. To be kind and conscious towards another person, and this is what they think they will see when thinking of a hierarchical society such as Korea where the elderly and people in higher positions must be respected.

“The elderly... we fall into stereotypes again. We are taught that Asia has high respect for the elderly, and their ancestors. They bow to them, respect the advice and the greeting hierarchy, the soju glass. There is some respect for them but that respect should be represented in public policies too (Interview with Leonardo [30:M], lives in Korea).

Leonardo, a Journalist, approached the subject as a governmental issue; Catalina, on the other hand, describes it as a lack of consideration for the other person in public spaces, she thinks that in Korea, respect is inverted when compared to Chile.

“I feel like in Chile, in interpersonal relations, there is no being “rude” to another person in your relationships with people you are close with, it is like you can just be yourself and that’s it, even with your professors you can just speak informally to them [tutear], there is trust so is not expected from you to act a certain way. But in public, you have to be polite, give the seat, wait for people to go down [bus or subway] before you go up, those things. In Korea is the other way around, in public nothing is expected from you”

(Interview with Catalina [30:F], lives in Korea).

The perception of hierarchy drastically changes for those who live(d) in Korea compared to those who live in Chile, who have the tendency of admiring what they believe happens in Korea. The dissonance between both groups becomes especially clear for those who have worked for Korean companies: Natalia, Alejandro, Leonardo, Violeta, and Camilo.

These participants realize that the boss-employee relationship portrayed in Korean dramas can be very accurate as the higher hierarchical position of the boss appears to invest them with an authority that is not seen in work environments in Chile.

“There can be a hierarchy, but I don’t like the way they have to relate with each other. At the company, you see the boss, not to me because I told him not to yell at me, but he does it to the others, he does not talk and why? Because he is the boss and that I don’t like because people do not understand each other by screaming” (Interview with Alejandro [30:M], lives in Korea).

Alejandro, Camilo, and Leonardo describe their relations at work in a similar way, as foreigners they get to become spectators of how Korean work culture is without becoming part of it. This was not Natalia’s experience, who describes her relationship with her bosses as very difficult as she was treated the same way as her Korean co-workers.

“At my first work my boss used to say that I knew nothing, that I did everything wrong, it was all humiliation, he even told me that I did not speak

English and he is Korean (...) he treated everyone like that, to a female Korean co-worker he told her that she would earn the same if she worked in McDonald's, it was very cruel (...). In Chile, my boss taught me new things but in Korea I learned I was worth nothing (...)" (Interview with Natalia [32:F], lived in Korea).

The work culture and the differences in what to be respectful of the elderly mean in Chile and Korea are the most common comments among the participants, but these are not the only negative opinions about Korean society. The high levels of alcoholism displayed in both K-dramas and in reality, the impoverishment of the elderly reflected on street vendors, the stereotypes between men and women that are expected to be followed, the high depression and suicide rates perceived by the participants, and the normalization of it are part of the negative aspects that are reinforced or appear after living in Korea for a long time. However, these traits of Korean society are not enough to think living in Korea is a bad experience, these aspects of society are often listed as things they dislike but are a small fraction of what living in Korea means. Participants living here, excluding Sara who moved because of her marriage, would like to live in Korea for a long time but not forever, often mentioning having an interest in moving to other countries or going back to Chile at one point in life.

4.5. Now and Then: Rising popularity of the Korean Wave

The main objective of this section is to understand how Chilean society sees Korea

today and what are the common opinions of those who are not directly related to Korean cultural products. When asking the questions related to this topic, participants were prone to make comparisons between the thoughts and opinions of people about Asia or Korea when they started to like Asian cultural content and what is happening in Chilean society today, their answers share a similar idea: Korean cultural contents are more accepted today by the general public than before.

With some exceptions, interviewees perceived a rather negative opinion about their interests in Japanese and/or Korean popular content during their early years of interest, this is true regardless of the number of years interested in Korean or other Asian cultures. Associated with the Chilean orientalism described by Min (2020), Chilean society can be very judgemental of the orient and its cultures and can be reluctant to interact with the Korean cultural products. As has been described before, more often than not, participants mentioned different levels of criticism when talking about their interests with other people. The pejorative way others referred to anything Asian did not discourage them from continuing or expanding their interests, but it did mark the way Chilean society thought about Asia during the early years of their interest in either Korean or other Asian popular cultures.

“At that time [2011] it was different than today because now is consumed on a massive scale, at that time we were just a few that listen to the music [K-pop], they looked at us weird, called us *otaku* (...)” (Interview with Alejandro [30:M], lives in Korea).

However, this way of thinking seems to be changing as participants perceive that

Chileans are experiencing a different approach to Asia thanks to the Korean massification of the Korean culture consumption in Chile.

“I feel like it’s being normalized. I see my nephews at school and [K-pop] is what is most popular. Before it was One Direction and now is BTS and BLACKPINK (...) you see advertisements on the subway saying “Happy Birthday BTS Member”, I work at Presidente Riesco [upscale district], where older people live and I still see all those ads (...) [even if] it is not their target, but its everywhere” (Interview with Violeta [28:F]. lived in Korea).

The participants that have been interested in Korea for more than 10 years are the ones that perceive this change easier than those whose interest is still new, For these participants, the popularity of Korean popular culture is only recent and it has achieved a level of acceptance among Chilean society that was beyond their expectations. Globalization and the increased access to the internet can be a big contributor to the current reach Korean popular content has not only in Chile but globally. In the early 2000s and up until around 2010~2011, these participants mention to have experienced difficulties accessing the contents they liked because of the lack of translations from Korean to Spanish, or Korean to English, and that today it is easier to access information about K-pop or other contests like K-dramas.

“I used to watch one or two dramas, but at that time Korean [pop] culture was not as popular as it is now, to watch a drama you had to get into these websites with bad subtitles that you couldn’t understand. It was not like it is now, at that time there was not much information about K-pop, I watched

Korean stuff that aired in the US, and not even there it was popular, I am talking about around 10 years ago (...)" (Interview with Sara [31:F], lives in Korea).

This increment in the popularity of the Korean popular content might also be related to the "freshness" and rather different content Korean products offer to a country that is heavily dominated by USA's industry and their policies to export their popular content to other nations. As mentioned in Section 2, Korean popular content is reported to be enjoyed because of the curiosity that awakens among their consumers, but it is also because of the unfamiliarity of the language, the differences in traditions and customs, and the overall introduction to these characteristics delivered in enjoyable and interesting formats that include certain elements of western culture content production, but does not resemble completely to what its exported from The United States.

"Something I really liked about K-pop was that it's a product that can only be Korean (...), but I feel like that now it's very *gringo* [From the US], that logic of just being famous and that I do not like at all (...)" (Interview with Carlos [26:M], lives in Chile).

Also:

"I liked that [K-pop] was different because if I want to listen to people singing in English I just listen to pop. There is nothing wrong that BTS singing in English if that's what they want, but it lost its appeal to me (...). Today I listen to Korean singers that sing in Korean with some words in English, but they still keep what is the base of K-pop to me: a different

language, other rhythms, and fresh in some way (...)" (Interview with Magnus [32:M], lives in Chile).

Chileans interested in Korean popular content persistently mention that to them, this type of content they enjoy because it is different because is not something that comes from what they are used to consuming, such as Reggaeton as Latin American content or Hollywood that comes from the US. They are very conscious of the differences between the characteristics of what comes from the West and what is from the East. Despite the changes that the participants with more years of engaging with Korean popular culture detect, the youngest batch of the participants (between 18~20 years old), those who are starting their undergraduate still were ridiculed and criticized because of their likes in high school, as mentioned in section one. While those experiences might still be the general rule in Chilean society, there is a change in the way Korean culture is perceived and integrated in Chile, as it claims a spot on what is considered mainstream consumption.

The rising popularity of the Korean culture in Chile is an undeniable achievement for Cultural diplomacy, as its goal is to make known cultural resources and national achievements outside their borders, facilitating the transmissions abroad (Cull, 2008). In Chile, South Korea might not be as known as the United States or Europe, but it has certainly gradually kept more people interested in their popular culture, and since products like K-dramas or K-pop are created using Korean traditions and symbols, it makes the country more recognizable for a country that more often than not tends to think of Asia as a place that shares only one culture, with no diversity.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

The Korean Wave has served as a resource for cultural diplomacy in Chile. Through the consumption of K-pop, K-dramas, and other expressions of Korean culture, it has been able to become part of the repertoire of entertainment content Chileans consume. This does not dramatically increase the awareness of Korean society and its customs, but together with the Japanese culture has contributed to reducing the common thought of Asia as just one culture, with no distinction between its countries, cultures, and beliefs.

The cultural popular content that is consumed the most coming from Japan are the animations and, unlike Korean dramas and music that are performed by human actors, anime is represented by drawn characters that even if they can reflect aspects of Japanese society, it does not seem to have the same feeling of “reality” that Korean cultural products provide. This perception of watching what Korean society looks and acts like is capable of creating both real and unrealistic ideas about Korean society, K-dramas are reported by the participants to be capable of representing Korean society up to some extent, but it is also mentioned to create inaccurate expectations of what Korean society is, and when participants directly interact with Korean society when traveling or living abroad, discover that the representation of what Korea is, is not as what they have imagined. This has both positive and negative results, as we have mentioned in previous sections, the participants that moved to Korea to live, work, and/or study have a rather positive evaluation of what living in Korea is even after seeing their expectations broken.

Most of the participants living in Korea chose to move to pursue higher education or

learn the language, others moved for more personal reasons or curiosity, and although the Korean pop-culture might not be the reason to come to Korea, it has certainly contributed to create interest in the country to the point of creating the interest of exploring and learning about the country when most of the participants did not know much about the country before they started interacting with the Hallyu. The experience of living in South Korea contributes to maintain a positive image by reinforcing the highly valued aspects shown in the cultural contents and providing with a unique experience to the participants, such as the sense of security or the appreciation of Koreans to their own culture. However, it is also capable of changing the previously created conceptions about Korean values, this is clearly shown in how the concept respect tends to be drastically reevaluated by Chileans that live in Korea as they realize that they their interpretation of what respect means in Chile is very different from what Koreans understand as being respectful towards someone else. The dissonance between what Chileans think will find in Korea and the reality makes them become more critical of those things who once they thought they liked about the Korean society. Chileans who have not experience this romanticize certain aspects of the society.

Nevertheless, the curiosity and interest that Korean cultural products create in the country seem to have been increasing over the years as products like BTS, the movie Parasite or the Squid Games become popular not only in Chile but globally. This interest also led participants to learn and try other aspects of the Korean culture, the most important one being the curiosity about Korean food and Skincare as they are frequently mentioned by participants as elements of the Korean culture that they are interested to try out (and often do).

It is important to consider the influence of the King Sejong Institute and to a lesser extent, the Embassy of Korea in Chile. The language institute and the opportunities to travel to Korea to study were important for half of the participants who moved to Korea to study and later on, stay working in Korea. Without these opportunities given to the participants, it might have been difficult to create a prolonged interest in moving to Korea, as participants also considered other opportunities to continue their studies in higher education. While the Embassy also makes efforts to attract people to consume more Korean culture through food, K-pop, or Korean art fairs, their reach does not seem to be as strong as The King Sejong Institute and bad actions can also create negative perceptions not only about the Embassy but also about Korea in general. This suggests that these types of institutions can play a role in developing long-term interests in Korea and its culture. Also, the invitation from the Korean government or institutions to experience Korea can contribute to creating diffusion about their culture on a smaller scale, as scholarship recipients or people to travel to learn about Korea inform and spread information about Korea to their closest circles, this can also contribute to increase curiosity and to be more open to learning about other cultures.

The changes in knowledge about Korea, the rupture of the belief that Asia is just one culture, the interest, and curiosity that grows about Korean culture, and the efforts of institutions to make the interest in Korea long-term can be considered achievements of the Korean Wave as a resource for Cultural diplomacy as they increase the awareness of Chilean society about Korea and successfully contributes to creating a good image of the country abroad. The biggest achievement might be to be called “mainstream” by the participants that have a long time consuming Korean cultural products, but since this is a qualitative study and because of the small nature of the

size of the sample, further research about the topic might be necessary to accurately say that Korean culture has become big enough in Chile to become part of what the society consumes on a regular “normal” level.

Although the Korean Wave as a resource for cultural diplomacy achieved many things, there are still other challenges that it must continue to face. While this study has found that the Korean popular culture contributed to increasing the knowledge about Korea and Asia in general, the Chilean orientalism described by Min (2020) is still problematic as it might prevent Chileans to go beyond what they are willing to consume more than what becomes a trend of the Korean popular culture. Another important point made by participants was the feeling that Korea is not ready for the popularity that is achieving globally as the experience of visiting Korea can be a challenge due to lack of proper guidance to visit touristic places or accessibility of information and others.

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APPENDIX

X. I Abstract (Korean)

한류는 한국 대중문화의 상승하는 인기를 포착하기 위해 사용되는 용어이며, 한국의 이미지를 높이는 동시에 국가의 중요한 수입원이 되는데 기여하기 때문에 전 세계적으로 한국 문화 외교의 중요한 자원이기도 하다.

칠레에서 한류는 해를 거듭하면서 큰 견인력을 얻었지만, 한류 열풍이 칠레인들이 아시아와 한국을 바라보는 시각을 새롭게 형성하는데 어떤 영향을 미쳤는지 판단하려는 노력은 거의 없었다. 본 연구는 한류와의 교류가 칠레인들의 지식과 선호도를 변화시키고, 한국에 대한 관심을 형성하며, 한국을 여행하거나 고등교육을 추구하는 곳으로 보기 시작하는데 성공적으로 기여했다고 주장한다. 한류는 문화적 차이와 지리적 거리로 인해 오는 발생하는 줄여주기 때문에 칠레인들이 아시아 국가들에 대해 가지고 있는 동양주의적 접근을 줄이는 데에도 기여했다. 그러나 한국과 아시아에 대한 틀에 박힌 생각들을 지우기에는 혼자서는 충분하지 않다.

X. II Informed consent letter

Yo _____, RUT _____
declaro que se me ha explicado que mi participación en el estudio sobre “Consumo de cultura coreana en Chile: Logros y Desafíos de la Ola Coreana como recurso de la diplomacia cultural” (Título Original: “**Korean Culture Consumption in Chile: Achievements and Challenges of the Korean Wave as a resource for cultural diplomacy**”), consistirá en responder una entrevista que pretende aportar al conocimiento, comprendiendo que mi participación es una valiosa contribución.

Acepto la solicitud de que la entrevista sea grabada en formato de audio para su posterior transcripción y análisis, a los cuales podrá tener acceso parte del equipo docente de la carrera de Estudios Internacionales de la Universidad Nacional de Seúl, que guía la investigación.

Declaro que se me ha informado ampliamente sobre los posibles beneficios, riesgos y molestias derivados de mi participación en el estudio, y que se me ha asegurado que la información que entregue estará protegida por el anonimato y la confidencialidad.

La Investigadora Responsable del estudio, Javiera Quijada Venegas, se ha comprometido a responder cualquier pregunta y aclarar cualquier duda que les plantee acerca de los procedimientos que se llevarán a cabo o cualquier otro asunto relacionado con la investigación.

Asimismo, las entrevistadoras me han dado seguridad de que no se me identificará en ninguna oportunidad en el estudio y que los datos relacionados con mi privacidad serán manejados en forma confidencial. En caso de que el producto de este trabajo se requiera mostrar al público externo (publicaciones, congresos y otras presentaciones), se solicitará previamente mi autorización.

Por lo tanto, como participante, acepto la invitación en forma libre y voluntaria, y declaro estar informado de que los resultados de esta investigación tendrán como producto un informe, para ser presentado como parte de la Tesis de Magister de la Investigadora.

He leído esta hoja de Consentimiento y acepto participar en este estudio según las condiciones establecidas.

Santiago, a _____ de _____ de 2022

Firma Participantes

Firma Investigadora