

디지털 시대, 남미 지역의 낮선 문화 수용에 있어 탈식민적 경험의 역할 : 칠레 K팝 팬들에 나타난 대중문화 텍스트의 해석

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The Role of Post-Colonial Experience in the Reception of Unfamiliar Culture in Latin America in the Digital Age: Interpretation of Pop-Cultural Texts by Chilean K-pop Fans

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Americans. These elements of Eurocentrism and chino-ism in Latin America are related to the formation of cultural identity in the region after independence from Spain and are determined by the legacies of socioeconomic status. Living in an imagined Eurocentric

국문요약

본 논문은 중남미에서도 특히 칠레에서 K-pop 팬들이 그들이 미디어를 통해 보는 것들을 기반으로 어떻게 가상 세계를 형성하고 있는지 탐구하고 있다. 팬들은 아시아 대중 문화를 선호하는 것으로 그들의 치노이즘을 인식하고 많은 칠레의 아시아 대중 문화 팬들은 그 자신들을 중남미인이 아닌 서구인으로 인식하고 있다. 중남미에서 유럽중심주의 및 치노이즘의 요소들은 스페인으로부터 독립 이후에 지역에서 문화적 정체성의 형성과 연관되어 있으며 그리고 사회경제적 상황의 유산에 의해 결정된다. 상상의 유럽중심적 사회에서 살면서 팬들은 미디어에 나타나는 대중문화를 통하여 그들 자신의 아시아를 상상한다. 이를 고려하면서 본 논문은 칠레의 K-pop 팬들이 낮선 문화를 통해 만들어지는 상상적 연대를 어떻게 공유하고 주로 소셜 미디어의 영역에서 특히 디지털 사이트 미디어에 대해 어떻게 상상적인 문화적 친밀감을 발전시키는지 보여주려고 한다.

핵심단어(*): K-pop, 치노이즘, 중남미, 대중문화 텍스트

Abstract

This paper explores how fans of K-pop in Latin America, and particularly Chile, form an imaginary society based on what they see in the media. Fans recognize their chino-ism in liking Asian popular culture, and many Chilean Asian pop culture fans identify themselves as Westerners, not Latin

society, fans imagine their own Asia through popular culture shown in the media. Taking this into account, this paper will map out how fans of K-pop in Chile share an imaginary bond created by an unfamiliar culture and develop imaginary cultural intimacy specific to digital site-media, primarily in the realm of social media.

Asians in Chile are often referred to as *chinos* (Chinese), and Chilean society tends to consider fans of Asian popular culture as outsiders—those who like *chinos* are like *chinos*. Fans recognize their *chino-ism* when they like Asian popular culture, and many Chilean Asian pop culture fans identify themselves as Westerners, not Latin Americans. These elements of Eurocentrism and *chino-ism* in Latin America are related to the formation of cultural identity in the region after gaining independence from Spain, and they are determined by the legacy of Latin America's socioeconomic status. While living in an imagined Eurocentric society, fans imagine their own Asia through the popular culture shown in the media. This paper explores how fans of Asian popular culture in Latin America, and particularly Chile, form an imaginary society based on what they see in the media. To do so, in-depth interviews conducted in Santiago from July to November 2019. Based on the results, this paper maps how fans of Asian popular culture in Chile share in imaginary bonds created by an unfamiliar culture and develop imaginary cultural intimacy specific to digital site-media, primarily in the realm of social media.

Introduction

Geographically, Chile is an isolated region surrounded by deserts in the north, the Andes in the east, and the Pacific Ocean in the west. At the time of Spanish rule, Chile had nearly abandoned its land under the rule of the viceroyalty of Peru. But after gaining independence, Chile's victory against its neighbors, Peru and Bolivia, in the Pacific War (1879–1884) allowed the country to achieve a solid foothold in the region. Much later, during the military regime (1973–1990), neoliberal policy was adopted, and Chile's eco-

conomic development became a model approach in Latin America. Chile's political stability, which placed it in contrast to other Latin American countries, helped to secure its position in the region. In addition, relatively smaller Indian population compared to neighboring countries, such as Peru and Bolivia, allowed Chile to establish its European-ness and position it as distinct from these countries, which had strong autochthonous cultures and were not primarily European (Larraín, 2020). Geographical isolation has caused Chileans to know little about foreign cultures and thus excuse their lack of tact and empathy toward other cultures (Min, 2020).

This chapter will investigate the expansion of Asian popular culture in Latin America in order to analyze the identity formation among Chilean fans of anime, manga, and K-pop and their interpretations of these elements of pop culture. It is also worth investigating why the massification of K-pop in Latin America is so strong in a region so far away from Korea and why was SMTOWN Live was held in Chile, and not in Mexico or Brazil, which have larger populations. Centeno (1999) describes the Latin American identity as an imagined community, socially constructed through narrative, myths of origins, symbols, rituals, and collective memory, imagined by [those] who see themselves as part of that group. There is no identity without memory, and history is one way to preserve the memory of a society. However, memory is not the only way to represent (or imagine) the past and prepare for the future; monuments, rituals, literary works, and other cultural activities are also a means of remembering and forgetting (Rosas, Belelli, & Bakjurst, 2000). How do monuments, rituals, literary works, and other cultural activities contribute to generating different memories for different classes, divided memories in the same society, and broken memories in Latin American—especially Chilean—society after gaining independence? In addition, how do they affect the acceptance of unfamiliar cultures, such as Asian popular culture?

For Latin American countries such as Chile, independence from Spain in the late 19th century was not secured by aboriginal indigenous peoples who had previously lived in the region. Rather, independence was gained through the rebellion of Creoles (Criollos in Spanish), who are Spanish descendants born in the New World. Although different in each country, in most cases, settlers in Latin America formed mestizo cultures by eradicating, abolishing, absorbing, or blending various races and cultures. Mignolo (2005)

claims that the population of European or Latin descendants effectively wiped out the Indians and Blacks after gaining independence. Creoles, the protagonists of independence, had a desire to create a new European state on the new continent. Independence was marked by Creoles' desire for political autonomy, and it was not a synonym for revolution. The meaning of independence was different for each race and group. In the process of state formation, there were attempts to create the countries that the elite groups wanted.

As part of its effort to make a white country, the Chilean government began to receive immigrants from Northern Europe, including Germany. It actively recruited some 4,000 Germans to colonize the nearly unoccupied provinces of the southern part of Chile. The German-speaking population of the south-central provinces of Chile has been a source of both national pride due to its economic vigor and concern because of its persistence as a foreign enclave (Young, 1971). To actively attract German immigrants, the Chilean government established an immigration agency in Europe in 1882 that promised land for settler families (Gott, 2007). Traditional criollos and European immigrants formed an oligarchic elite group in Chile, a tradition that continues to this day.

Even today, Europe is considered a part of the heritage of Chile; elementary and secondary school textbooks start with the history of Europe and do not dedicate much space to the history of indigenous peoples in Chile. Likewise, the interview results for this chapter reveal that many Chilean fans identify themselves as Westerners, not as Latin Americans (e.g., a 19-year-old female stated, “as I said before, as a Westerner,” and a 27-year-old male said, “here in West”)

Gott (2007) introduced the concept of “settler colonialism,” saying that “Latin America shares these characteristics [Europeanism and a desire of whitening the country] and clearly falls into the category of ‘settler colonialism’ , even though the colonial powers are no longer present, having been forced out in the course of the nineteenth century” (p. 273). The Peruvian sociologist Quijano (2014) developed the concept of “colonialidad” or “coloniality,” according to which societies retain or assume the pattern of global domination originating from European colonialism in the early sixteenth century, even when they have become nominally independent. The adoption of racist ideas from Europe later in the 19th century served to justify the increase in immigration and

the promotion of further wars of extermination (Gott, 2007). CNN Chile's program Actualidad Central serves as an example of the concept of coloniality in Chile. On September 20, 2015, Actualidad Central aired a special talk show to celebrate Chile's Independence Day, which is celebrated on September 18. The narrator's remarks about Chilean identity reveal the ambiguity of Chilean identity:

there is a feeling of not knowing what the cultural patterns are, without a clear national identity and denying who we are. We never define ourselves as mestizos. We try to erase our indigenous past and build myths about what we are; we are the English in South America, for example . . . (CNN Chile)

How is Chile's Eurocentricity related to Chilean fans' imagining of Asia? This chapter hypothesizes that Latin American, and specifically Chilean fans of Asian popular culture form an imaginary Asia through popular culture representations in the media while living in an imagined Eurocentric society. Asians in Chile are often referred to as *chinos* (Chinese). All fans of Asian popular culture in the country are considered outsiders because of the tendency for Chilean society to believe that those who like *chinos* are like *chinos* (Min, 2020; Min et al., 2019).

Chilean fans identify as *chinos* do not typically consume Chinese media, and their interest is generally limited to Japanese anime, manga, and Korean pop music, known as K-pop. As in previous studies (Min, 2020; Min et al., 2019), most of the interviewees in the present study became aware of K-pop through Japanese anime and manga, and while these fans love and consume popular Asian culture, very few have ever visited Asia. After gaining independence from Spain, various external cultures, such as North American pop culture, Japanese anime and manga, and Korean pop cultures continued to flow into Chile and were met with both acceptance and rejection. Whenever unfamiliar cultures entered Chilean society, in general, they were not welcomed. This chapter will describe how fans of Asian popular culture in Chile share an imaginary space and create bonds through an unfamiliar culture. It also explores the development of imaginary cultural intimacy specific to digital site-media, primarily in the realm of social media.

Methodology

To reveal the influence of unsuccessful de-colonization, the existence of a class in a democratic society, and imagery about Europe and Asia in Chilean media, this study conducted in-depth interviews from July through December 2019. Prior to these interviews, analog data visualization was carried out in October 2018 during the 10th International Conference on Korean Studies, held at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. The audience who participated in the Conference wrote their answers in post-it during the conference. The question was about why they think Chilean people use the term *chino* and whether they also use the term. In total, 95 people (57 students, 4 professors, and 34 members of the general public) replied to the analog data visualization. For the in-depth interviews, 36 self-identified interviewees aged 18–29 were chosen using the snowball method. The interviewees were divided into two groups—upper middle class and lower middle class—based on their socioeconomic status.

The Past in the Present: Eurocentrism and Chino-ism

Anderson (1983) states in his famous book, *Imagined Communities*, “those born in the new continent were destined to be subordinates of those born in Europe for one reason only: they were irremediably *criollos*” (p. 57). The Creoles confronted the centralism of the old continent and model their own Chilean aristocracy in their country of birth. They sought to embody the enterprising spirit of those conquerors who sought a better future in the new continent, and they created a mixed [European and Chilean] aristocracy with traditional values, liberal ideas, and a lack of aristocratic titles (Edwards, 1928). Hall (2016) describes the European presence in Caribbean cultural identity as the legacy of colonialism, racism, power, and exclusion. Like Africa becoming an “imagined community” to which people feel a sense of belonging, as Hall (2016) states, for the founders of Latin American countries, Europe was the homeland of their identity and a utopian model to follow.

Fans of Asian popular culture do not consider an inability to tell different Asian people apart to be racism. Rather, they think they are more open-minded than average Chilean people because they like Asian culture. The way Chilean fans see Asia seems similar to

the way they see their neighboring countries, where whites are not dominant. To the question of why people use the term *chinos*, a 20-year-old female states:

Because they are all the same. That's why more than anything, I also called them [Asians] *chinos* until I realized that the eyes and physical features are different. But the majority of the people still call them *chinos* . . . One goes to the Chinese restaurant and sees Chinese people, then some will bother them, calling them *chinos*. It is as if someone [were to ask] me if I was Peruvian.

This interviewee referenced eyes and revealed how Chileans think about Peru, which has a relatively larger indigenous population than Chile, implying that people who are not white are subordinate.

The first Asians in Latin America were Chinese coolies (a derogatory meaning of laborers) in Mexico in the 17th century (Chou, 2004). Whether out of ignorance or confusion, the Spaniards called them *chinos* (Chou, 2004). Despite Spain's insecure position in Europe and its cultural assimilation of Arabs, the country's imagining about Asia was not different from the othering of non-Western cultures in other Western countries. Spain, as neither a colonizer of nor colonized by Asia at that time, had an external orientation toward China (Prado-Fonts, 2018). The trafficking of Chinese coolies was expanded to Central and South America, and a Chinese community began to emerge in the northern part of Chile after the territories of Tarapacá and Antofagasta were taken from Peru and Bolivia in 1883 (Chou, 2004). Chileans did as the Mexicans and Spanish conquerors had and regarded the *chinos* with an Orientalist view (Chou, 2004). Even today, for those who like Asian culture as well as those who do not know or care about Asian culture, all Asians are *chinos*: traditional coolies with slanted eyes. (Min, 2020). Another 20-year-old female fan described the derogatory meaning of the term *chinos*:

Because they [Asians] are different, that is, because they are physically different. They are all with *ojos chinitos* [Chinese eyes] . . . They are also different in attitudes. They work hard, like the saying *trabajar como chinos* [to work like the Chinese]. I think all these show a closed mind.

The saying *trabajar como chinos* can be interpreted as stemming from the view of chi-

nos as slaves, a cheap but hard-working labor force.

During analog visualization of the data, one respondent stated that the use of the term *chino* in Chile “is like firmly establishing a distance between ‘we’ and ‘others’ ” (a student). According to Herzog (1998), during Spanish colonization,

Spanish law did not define “insiders” and “outsiders” or distinguish them from each other. However, the existence of differences in membership status was expressed in some laws and administrative rulings that denied foreigners certain privileges implicitly granted only to members of the community. (p. 47)

This colonial tradition remains today. A 27-year female interviewee defined high class in Chile as “a mix between European ethnicity and one closer to it: blond and light eyes. There is also another type of aristocracy, which is from the Chilean colonial last name.” Ongoing “othering” has been found in relationships between colonizers and colonized, and even in situations without colonization. The West has othered Spain, Spain has othered Latin American criollos (Creoles), and the Creole governors have othered aboriginal culture, any non-white people, and, sometimes, even themselves.

Chinoism in the Digital Media Era

From the 1950s when television was first introduced to Chile, American culture began to spread among Chilean audiences. It was the first foreign culture introduced to Chile. In his book *Meeting with the Yankee: North Americanization and Sociocultural Change in Chile 1898–1930*, Rinke (2004) claims that there were two phases of the cultural Americanization of Chile, the first occurring between approximately 1900 and 1930 and the second occurring between 1970 and 1990. From the beginning, North American cultures were associated with a combination of attractiveness and strangeness (or repudiation). Both acceptance and rejection still remain, but it seems that Chileans no longer consider American culture as foreign. A 28-year-old female said, “I think we are a bad copy of the United States.” Only one respondent (a 28-year-old male) clearly said Chile is Latin American. Even though a 23-year old male answered that Chile is part of the West, he

contradicted himself by separating Chile and the West:

the greeting that they [Asians] have is different from the Western one . . . a bit the same, but although here in Chile and in the West, we tend to Westernize everything that comes from Asia to approach to the people [to greet each other, for example], I think.

Japanese anime began to air on Chilean television in the 1990s, and since the spread of the Internet, younger generations who watched Japanese anime on TV began to look for manga. When Japanese anime and manga were first introduced, there were many opinions about the impact of the violence in this media on kids and adolescents, and teachers prohibited children from watching anime (Cornejo Huerta & Jimenez Huerta, 2006)

K-pop became popular beginning in the early 2000s, and a strong youth fanbase has been growing since 2010. In Chilean society, K-pop has been accepted, although it is an even more unfamiliar and strange culture than anime and manga due to the shorter bilateral relationship than with Japan (Min, 2020; Min et al., 2019). Asian cultures are viewed in Chile differs from the way North American cultures are viewed because of geographic and cultural distance as well as racial prejudice. The interviewees understood Asian popular culture as mainly comprised of anime, manga, and K-pop. Only one interviewee replied that he had started listening to Chinese pop. After all, whether Japanese anime, manga, or K-pop, all Asian popular culture are part of *chino* to the fans. The difference between Japanese anime and manga and K-pop is that Japanese culture started in the analog era, during the 1990s, and has been steadily growing in popularity ever since, while K-pop expanded more rapidly and widely in the Internet era. A priori, the globalized consumption of Asian popular culture began from ignorance. Our interview results show that, at the beginning, consumers of Asian popular culture did not know the origin of what they were consuming. They began to obtain greater knowledge during the process of differentiation with respect to North American popular culture. A 26-year-old male fan put it this way:

I listened to songs. I got on YouTube and found Super Junior. I knew that they were a

K-pop band, but I had no idea who they were or who the members were. In 2014, the people I followed started to post on Tumblr and Twitter a lot about a group called EXO. I started to inform myself and began to like K-pop.

The interviews revealed that the diffusion of different types of understandings of Asian culture was generated by globalization. The interviewees for this study were of the generation born after Chile's economic development and were raised with TV and the Internet. Thus, they had more opportunities to connect with foreign cultures than older generations:

When I was a kid, my family had a computer at home, and we had a Super Nintendo emulator. I watched the video games and liked them. Video games caught my attention. ... Later, I found strategic games like Final Fantasy, and I became a fan of that. I used to think about why those games are like that. After the video game, I found Japanese anime, which I could see when I bought a CD or DVD. I've been able to be closer to Asian popular culture since then (a 23-year old male).

The interviewee went on to talk about the prejudice against watching a large amount of anime:

My parents watched anime, so when I was a kid, I watched what they watched. After I hadn't watched anime for a while, when I entered middle school, I thought maybe I could watch them again. I have never had any prejudice about the subject; therefore, I could watch them (29-year-old male).

A significant part of the symbolic-dramatic matrix of popular culture has been appropriated by the cultural mass media industry, and it is possible to infer cultural expressions in reverse. That is, non-workers have been appropriating the symbolic-dramatic matrix of popular culture; the formats of technical reproduction of culture in the context of an industrial society; as well as diffusion, production, and circulation strategies subverting its use and consumption as a mechanism of cultural domination. In Chile, there exists a tradition of recognizing Indian folk as pop culture. In the 20th century, new paradigms and concepts, such as popular culture versus traditional culture, guided the research on

these practices. At the beginning of the 21st century, popular culture has been revalued as intangible cultural heritage, a category recognized by UNESCO in 2003 as a way to understand these types of knowledge and traditions in connection with local communities and their territories (Rivero, Belleli, and Bakhurst, 2000). Donoso (2016) claims that the concept of folklore has been understood as the culture of the low-class, as mestizo popular culture, and as non-academic.

The exotic is fascinating in itself, and so not knowing the language is not a big problem. The interviewees considered the language barrier to be difficult, but it has a positive effect, creating interest among fans in expanding their comprehension of other cultures. Additionally, thanks to more widespread access to the Internet, it is believed that this barrier has become increasingly smaller and will continue to do so until the language barrier no longer represents a problem.. A 25-year-old female fan stated that the cultural barrier eclipses the language barrier:

When people do not know it, they see it as a problem, but the truth is that globalization and digital media have facilitated our lives in an incredible way. When a song of my favorite artist comes out, I can find the translations immediately on the Internet. I can read the lyrics while listening to music. I think the cultural barrier is bigger than the language barrier.

A previous study (Min et al., 2019) concluded that the socioeconomic status of most K-pop fans was not high. Therefore, this study selected students from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, and the University of Santiago, Chile (USACH), among others, to participate. PUC and UAI are politically conservative elite universities, and the USACH is politically progressive. Interestingly, in the case of K-pop fans, the socioeconomic status of the two groups is similar, with most students belonging to the lower middle class. The difference was that the PUC and UAI interviewees stated that the most influential foreign cultures among young Chileans are American, Anglo-Saxon, Western, or Gringo cultures, although some of the interviewees stated that the influence of Asian culture, specifically Korean and Japanese culture, had been growing. In contrast, the USACH respondents stated that the most influential foreign cultures among Chilean youth today are mostly Korean and Japanese cultures and,

to a lesser extent, American culture.

Conclusion

Berg and Borsò (2006) claim that, in Latin America, the so-called cultures of the margin and oblique perspectives on the history of Europe. It is necessary to significantly include cultures that have been historically marginalized..

Chilean fans of Asian popular culture form an imaginary society through their consumption of popular culture as well as elements of Eurocentrism and chino-ism. Asian popular culture permits fans of different classes to access other worlds, where one's socioeconomic status is not a legacy. Fans share their bonds in imaginary spaces, where they create a virtual fandom and develop imaginary cultural intimacy. Collective memory functions as a way to form an identity in a social group, both in the sense that it supports the integration of this identity and in that it represents the interests linked to this identity in the past. Cultural contact play in the processes of transculturation and migration and in the colonial and post-colonial effects on the production, dissemination, and appropriation of unfamiliar knowledge and culture in Latin America.

In Chilean fans' imaginations, if Europe is the past, which has been left behind in the analog era of colonization, then Asia is the present, brought in by the age of digital globalization. In the 19th century, independence from Spain resulted in a class-based society run by elite Creole oligarchic groups after Chile gained independence. In the 20th century, the rise of neoliberalism during Augusto Pinochet's military regime strengthened social segregation. However, economic development has opened the possibility for many people to access the outside world through the Internet, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

All Asians are called chinos. People who like Asian popular culture are also called chinos, even though most fans of Asian popular culture consume Japanese anime and manga and/or K-pop, not Chinese popular culture. However, they distinguish between the derogative and affectionate meanings of the term.

When the first Asian people known in Latin America arrived on the continent, Latin

Americans indifferently followed the lead of the Spanish conquerors and called the Chinese workers coolies. Indian folkore has been understood to be popular culture, and any non-whites have not been welcomed into the imaginary European Latin America. Perhaps these factors are the reason why Asian popular culture is not acceptable in most of Chilean society. However, fans of Asian popular culture are broadening their horizons and building an imaginary society in the virtual world where they nurture imaginary cultural intimacy.

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