

# BEYOND JAPANESE LENSES: REFLECTIONS ON THE KOREAN DIASPORA AND THE HALLYU IN BRAZIL

MÁS ALLÁ DE LAS LENTES JAPONESAS: REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA DIASPORA COREANA Y EL HALLYU EN BRASIL

PARA ALÉM DAS LENTES JAPONESAS: REFLEXÕES SOBRE A DIÁSPORA COREANA E A HALLYU NO BRASIL

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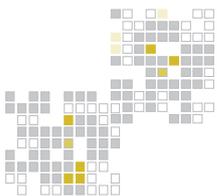
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## ABSTRACT

We propose a reflection about the cultural presence of South Korea in Brazil, pointing out the evidence of our monolithic conception of Asian culture, which had historically been anchored in the imaginary produced by the Japanese experience in our country. The central argument is the growing and recent visibility enjoyed by contemporary Korean culture since the last decade, articulated to the movements of Korean Wave and the Korean community in metropolitan (and virtual) spaces in Brazil, compels us to run from common sense adopting a less monolithic and more informed perspective on Asian cultural presence, beyond Japan, in Brazil.

KEYWORDS: BRAZIL-KOREA RELATIONS; KOREAN DIASPORA; POP CULTURE; KOREAN WAVE.

## RESUMEN

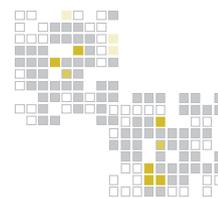
Proponemos una reflexión sobre la presencia cultural de Corea en Brasil, señalando la evidencia de la concepción monolítica de la cultura asiática que históricamente ha estado anclada en el imaginario producido por la experiencia japonesa en el Brasil. El argumento es la creciente y reciente visibilidad que disfruta la cultura coreana contemporánea desde la última década, articulada a los movimientos de Korean Wave y la comunidad coreana en espacios urbanos (y virtuales) en Brasil, nos obliga a adoptar una perspectiva menos monolítica y más informada sobre la presencia cultural asiática, más allá de Japón, en Brasil.

PALABRAS CLAVE: RELACIONES BRASIL-COREA; DIÁSPORA COREANA; CULTURA POP; OLA KOREANA.

## RESUMO

Propomos uma reflexão sobre a presença cultural da Coreia do Sul no Brasil, apontando evidências de uma concepção monolítica sobre a cultura asiática e historicamente ancorada no imaginário produzido pela experiência japonesa no Brasil. O argumento é de que a crescente e recente visibilidade desfrutada pela cultura coreana contemporânea na última década, articulada aos movimentos da Onda Coreana e da comunidade coreana em espaços metropolitanos (e virtuais) no Brasil, obriga-nos a adotar uma perspectiva menos monolítica e mais informada sobre a presença cultural asiática, para além das ideias associadas ao Japão no Brasil.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: RELAÇÃO BRASIL-COREIA; DIÁSPORA COREANA; CULTURA POP; ONDA COREANA.



## 1. Introduction

*Imagine living in Brazil without  
speaking Portuguese  
Having to pay taxes and obey the laws  
Imagine needing to support a wife  
and three more  
Even being Korean, we are called Japanese<sup>1</sup>  
(Samukera LB, Destino SP, 2015)*

This part of the song “Destino SP”, presented at the epigraph, the Brazilian rapper Samukera, who descends from Koreans, presents a unique conception of the aspects that permeate Korean’s recent experience of diaspora in Brazil. In our analysis, the above excerpt is a good illustration of a widespread reality present in the memory of diasporic Koreans living in Brazil. On the first lines, he presents the difficulties of adaptation in another country, the issues concerning the language and the financial sphere, in a perspective of translation and cultural adaptation. In the end, he affirms that Korean people and their descendants often are reinterpreted under Japanese lenses.

Indeed, what Samukera’s verse points out is the existence of common sense on the representations and discourses about Asian culture in the country. This common-sense relies on the idea that the diasporic experience of Japanese people and the visibility of Japanese culture (and, to a lesser extent, Chinese culture) in Brazil are dominant and, therefore, it becomes an Asian referential. The imagery surrounding the Asian culture presented in our country is greatly influenced by a monolithic vision, sedimented over time, that for the most part of Brazilians, the ethnic similarities among Asian people from the Far East are more striking than their historical, political, cultural, and linguistic differences. Of course, certain historical reasons explain it.

First, the relationship between Brazil and the Far East until the 1950s was almost exclusively restricted to the socio-cultural field represented by the Japanese migratory flow, which began in the first years of the 20th century (Sakurai, 2000; Dezem, 2005). In the second place, the establishment of a place of speech of this migrant community within Brazilian society during the post-war period was driven by traditional media and, in particular, the open television, coincides with the rise of triumphalist theories of *nihonjinron*<sup>2</sup> in Japan, and in both countries, those discourses served to legitimize developmental and modernizing ideologies in vogue at that time (Oda, 2011; Lesser, 2007). Finally, this trend was reinforced by the pioneering role played by Japan in exporting its pop culture from Japan-Mania<sup>3</sup>, especially manga and anime, during the 1990s, consolidating at the turn of the millennium with its “cool face” and technologic stuff (Iwabuchi, 2002; Napier, 2007; Ortiz, 2000). Together, these factors explain some invisibility and ignorance about Korea’s historical presence and Asian cultural diversity in Brazil.

On the other hand, we must consider that the imaginary of proximity (geographic and cultural) between Japan and Korea and the historical influence of Japanese culture in our country created possibilities of a group of Brazilian society to sympathize with the products of Korean Wave (Joo, 2011; Shim, 2006; Siriyuvasak & Hyunjoon, 2007). It means the pop wave coming from South Korea currently enjoys great visibility in the global

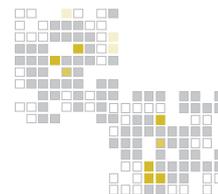
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2 “It is a set of texts, novels, poetry, sociological analysis, marketing writings whose purpose is to discuss Japanese. The central concern of this type of work revolves around the national question and the Japanese identity. It follows from this postulate that Japanese culture would be distinct from all others, its identity undoubtedly demarcating the exceptionality of a people” (Ortiz, 2000, p. 25).

3 Japan-mania refers to Japan’s popularity in exporting its pop-culture - especially manga and anime in the global market. In Brazil, an eager circuit of interest was formed, still in the ‘80s, around the cultural products that make up Japan-Mania. The boom of Japanese cartoons on Brazilian TV in the 90s is one of the indications in this sense.

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1 Videoclipe “Destino SP”. Available on: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2GNGv\\_H9jU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2GNGv_H9jU)



media landscape. Before the worldwide release of Psy's hit Gangnam Style in 2012 which influenced the increase of the consumption of K-pop, the Korean Wave was already taking the first steps in Brazil through mediation promoted by the spaces practiced by Japanese pop culture. Subsequently, this movement transcends these appropriated and unplanned spaces, consolidating a proper and highly productive cultural/musical circuit that has been formed around Korean pop and its correlated products in our country.

The article proposes to reflect on the cultural presence of Korea in Brazil, pointing out evidence of our monolithic conception of Asian culture, which has historically been anchored in the imaginary produced by the Japanese experience in our country. The argument is developed in two sections. In the first one, we present, from a socio-historical perspective, a reflection on the migratory and cultural flows of Korea directed to Brazil. In a second moment, we refer to the issue to discuss the recent movements of Korean Wave, from a look at the formation of an original and highly productive cultural/musical circuit that has been consolidating itself around the Korean pop culture in our country.

Our hypothesis is that the Korean presence in Brazil has been historically and culturally interpreted from a perception based on the Japanese experience due to the significant immigration flows between Brazil and Japan over the last century. The growing and recent visibility enjoyed by contemporary Korean culture since the last decade, articulated to the movements of Korean Wave and the Korean community in urban spaces (and virtual) in our country, compels us to move away from common sense, adopting a less monolithic and more informed perspective on the Korean cultural presence in Brazil.

## **2. From the Korean Diaspora: Particularities of the Korea-Brazil Cultural Flow**

The migratory and cultural flows from Korea directed to Brazil present a fundamental peculiarity when compared to the other Asian diasporas in our country, such as Chinese and Japanese: its eminently recent and invisible character in the local media discourses, creating a significant challenge to our investigation. Korean immigration to Brazil began on February 12, 1963<sup>4</sup>, but before this official date, small groups of Koreans arrested in the Korean War (1950-53) came and settled in Brazil. The first immigrants came as agricultural settlers and landed at the port of Santos, in São Paulo. In many cases, immigration was illegal and had a hidden purpose, which was to stay briefly in the new country and then move to the US, where they intended to establish permanent residence (Oliveira & Masiero, 2005).

Despite the attraction to the American Way of Life, as in the Japanese migratory movement (Sakurai, 2000; Lesser, 2007; Dezem, 2005), many Koreans opted to remain in Brazil, especially in large cities, creating their economic activities in the field of industry and clothing trade. The Korean presence in this activity is quite significant until today. It is estimated that about one-third of women's fashion in São Paulo has Korean origin, and about 70% of the Korean community is involved in the purchase, sale, and production of clothing (Yuri, 2010). According to the data provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea (2015), there are 50,000 South Koreans living in Brazil and 98% of them are in São Paulo (Antonio & Araujo, 2019)<sup>5</sup>. Despite having a significant presence in ethnic and cultural terms, Korea has historically been the subject of little visibility, especially in academic

4 At this date, the Korean community at São Paulo celebrates Korean immigration.

5 The North Koreans community is smaller: it is estimated that 29,000 north Koreans are legally living in Brazil, according to the Federal Police (Merguizo, 2010). Although the presence of North Koreans in Brazil and their participation in society is a relevant issue for future research, this article will not address the North Korean community.

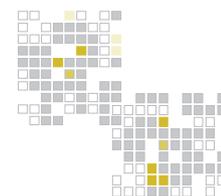
investigations and in local media discourses, a reality that has been gradually changing since the last decade. This topic will be discussed later.

The relationship of community life with religious (mainly protestants), industrial and commercial activities has resulted in the creation of several Korean religious, cultural and sports associations. Among them, we highlight the Brazilian Association of Koreans, a local entity representative of the Korean community in Brazil; the Brazil-Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Brazilian Association of Korean Sportsmen; as well as several Protestant churches, a Catholic church, and a Buddhist temple. Currently, the Korean leadership in Brazil is committed to broadening the integration of immigrants with Brazilian society through greater cultural openness and close contact with local communities. An example is the case of the Conseg - Bom Retiro (Community Safety Council - Bom Retiro), whose presidency is occupied by a Korean naturalized Brazilian. Another example is the Polilogos School, also in the neighborhood of Bom Retiro, built with resources from the community and the Korean government, open to Brazilians and Koreans, offering primary education in both languages. There are also many charitable activities undertaken by both the Brazilian Association of Koreans and the religious entities of the community; These actions represent ways to form partnerships with the native Brazilians and with the country that welcomed the immigrants who arrived from Korea.

Regarding the Korean traditional culture, it can be affirmed that the repertoire brought by immigration until the last decade remained unknown to Brazilian society, being confined to the sphere of sociability concentrated within the migrant communities. Although the Korean presence is part of cities like São Paulo and Curitiba, as well as some cities in the northeast

(as Fortaleza), the “Korean ways of being” and values brought by immigration were not very expressive. In comparison with the Japanese community in Brazil, this lack of expressiveness is even more present (Urbano, 2018). As far as language is concerned, this invisibility is revealed more emphatically, since Hangul was configured until very recently in a language of little appeal and demand with the research centers and universities in our country, compared to the mandarin or Japanese. However, it is possible to point out that the cultural exchanges between Korea and Brazil are in current growth, revealing a flow of interest and investments as a two-ways initiative.

In Korea, the University of Foreign Studies of Hankook (HUFS) stands out because of the College of Western Languages (Department of Portuguese) that offers a Master’s Degree in Portuguese Language and Literature since 1985. The University of Foreign Studies of Pusan has also offered a degree program in Portuguese since 1987, and a master’s program was created in 2010. In Brazil, a group of teachers, led by Yun Jung Im, created the undergraduate program in Korean Language and Literature at the University of São Paulo (USP), one of the most prestigious Brazilian universities. The proposal received support from various entities, including the Korean Embassy, the Consulate in São Paulo, the Korea Foundation, the Korean Studies Academy, the Korean Studies Center (UCLA) and the Brazilian organizations. In 2006, Korean Language I and II became part of the grade of this course as optional electives that attracted many students of Eastern languages at that university. This initiative is the achievement of a long-standing desire of teachers to create a regular undergraduate course in Korean Studies, which began in 1990 with the extension courses of Korean Language and Culture with the support of the Korean Culture & Arts Foundation. Since



then, the number of students interested in the Korean language and culture has grown over the years, breaking into other specific initiatives scattered in the universities of the country.

The opening of the Korean Cultural Center in 2013 in the city of São Paulo, the year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of Korean immigration in Brazil, represents the moment when the Korean community would establish a more visible dialogue with Brazilian society, regarding the scope of cultural mediation (Urbano, 2018). In the words of director Sei Young Lee, “the inauguration of the Korean Cultural Center in Brazil is an important historical milestone for development in Brazil and Korea’s relationship. Through the exchange and sharing of cultural heritage, the Korean Cultural Center will make the most of the maturing and cultural enrichment between Brazil and Korea”. Another example is the Hallyu Cultural Center, which was inaugurated in São Paulo in 2016, under the coordination of Kim Yoo Na. It aims to promote and disseminate Korean culture to Brazilians. Besides being a multipurpose space, which can receive different types of exhibitions besides dance classes and lectures, the center also has a room where Korean classes and other activities are held. The Center is located in Bom Retiro, a district considered the Brazilian Koreatown, where a large part of the Korean colony of the city of São Paulo lives. The neighborhood - a kind of Mecca for Brazilian consumers of Korean culture - concentrates cafes, shops, restaurants, and markets that sell food and various traditional and Korean pop utilities

In Rio de Janeiro, there are a few initiatives since the dissemination of Korean culture has shown that South Korea’s cultural presence transcends the traditional spaces of São Paulo. It has led Cariocas to discover that the “Asian” presence in Rio de Janeiro is not restricted to the mediation of the Japanese and Chinese communities, already

consolidated in the urban landscape of this city (Urbano, 2018). The first of these initiatives is the Nam Ho Lee Institute, which since 2013 offers regular Korean language classes and promotes lunches, dinners, and other events related to Korean traditional and modern culture. The institute, which is coordinated by Joana Lee, has been quite successful in attracting interested audiences to speak Hangul, Korea’s official language. Besides, in June 2017, a pioneering initiative was announced by the Secretariat of Education, Secretariat for International Relations of the Civil House, public institutes, consulates, and universities, when Hangul classes were offered to the students of the Olga Benário Prestes State College in the neighborhood of Bonsucesso. The classes, which are being offered to students in the first year of high school, on an ongoing basis (up to the third year), aim to prepare the students with the highest performance for an exchange opportunity in Korean universities (Urbano, 2018).

Although Korea’s cultural presence in Brazil has been an object of poor visibility in academic investigations (especially in communication), and in local media representations and discourses, some changes in this scenario invite us to look closely at recent Korea’s media counter-flows in a multipolar world. In the next section, we will look at the Korean Wave movements, which have been embraced as a phenomenon of visibility and pride within the Korean community, the Hallyu’s fans and other consumers interested in Asian culture.

### **3. From the Korean Wave movements in Brazil**

The conjunction between a new external environment joined with the democratization of South Korea and the historical confluence of media liberalization that occurred throughout the 1990s triggered a wave of nationalism in Korean

society that materialized more forcefully in the so-called Korean Wave or “Hallyu” (Joo, 2011, Shim, 2006), that reached its peak at the turn of the millennium. The Korean Wave consists of the popularity reached by South Korean pop and its related products - television dramas (k-dramas), pop music (k-pop) and pop idols (k-idols) - in neighboring Asian countries. The Korean Wave had its heyday in 2002 with the large-scale export of the *Winter Sonata*, a television drama produced by the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) followed by the rapid popularization of its pop music in neighboring countries and the global market. Investing in generic elements and hybridization strategies (Ryoo, 2009; Siriyuvasak & Hyunjoon, 2007) South Korean pop would, therefore, be a more palatable alternative to Asian audiences compared to Japanese pop because it generates a sense of familiarity and cultural proximity, being only Westernized enough to mediate information from the West to Asia.

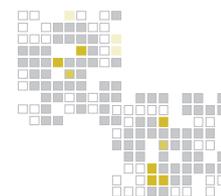
Therefore, it is possible to suggest that at least a decade before the global impact of “Gangnam Style” in 2012, Hallyu had already given its first steps in Brazil. “Gangnam Style” is a phenomenon that has given massive visibility to South Korea’s multi-polar counter-flow and influenced the consumption of Korean pop music on a global scale. Historically, globalization was read from a perspective of “Americanization.” However, the last decades have shown a more complex scenario than this theory. In the conception of Thussu (2007), such flows can be dominant (from the United States and the United Kingdom) or subordinate - also called counter-flows -, which have a strong regional presence. Beyond the regional scope, these media counterflow aim to achieve larger audiences and often compete for space with the hegemonic content. The Korean Wave can be perceived as one of those media counter-flow movements. In this sense, it is interesting to think about how Korean

Wave products had already become an object of consumption and enjoyment of consumers interested in contemporary Asian culture and mediation routes not previously imagined in Brazil. At first, from the unexpected mediation promoted in the spaces practiced by Japanese pop culture already consolidated in Brazil, it was possible to form a solid base of interest around Korean pop. Indeed, it was through the stable Japanese pop fan circuit, in its most varied production (audiovisual and musical), that the conditions of possibilities of Korean pop became the object of consumption and local visibility began to be created, still in the mid-2000s (Urbano, 2018).

The development of Web 2.0<sup>6</sup>, especially online tools such as YouTube, which continues to be essential for the spreading of Korean pop music to markets outside Asia (Jin & Yoon, 2014), was equally determinant for the consolidation of a robust circuit of interest around Korean pop in Brazil. According to YouTube data from a survey provided by the Korean Culture and Information Service [KOCIS] (2011), in 2010, South Korean pop music videos obtained more than six million views in Brazil, making it clear that the consumption of k-pop in the country is significant and is directly related to the emergence of web 2.0. Not only the geographical and cultural proximity between Japan and South Korea has favored Brazilian consumers to sympathize with Korean pop culture, inserting it into their everyday consumption, as the development of new production tools and sharing, was decisive in this process.

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<sup>6</sup> Web 2.0 is the second generation of online services and is characterized by enhancing the ways of publishing, sharing, and organizing information, in addition to expanding the spaces for interaction between participants in the process. Web 2.0 refers not only to a combination of computer techniques, but also to a certain technological period, to a set of new marketing strategies and to computer-mediated communication processes (Primo, 2007).



The groups responsible for translating and subtitling Japanese audiovisual content – fansubs<sup>7</sup> – were essential during the introduction of Korean Wave products into the daily lives of Japanese pop fans in Brazil. Consolidated in the digital environment since the turn of the millennium, some Brazilian fansubs began to subtitle and distribute Korean films and dramas – called k-dramas – on their websites and their distribution platforms from the second half of the 2000s. Professional websites for online distribution of series and films such as DramaFever<sup>8</sup> and Viki<sup>9</sup>, specializing in Korean films and dramas, have emerged to meet the expectations and the growing and specific interest of fans around the Korean audiovisual media. Even Netflix’s site that gets more and more fans and operates as a platform for streaming series and movies through a paid system offers some k-dramas titles, TV shows, and Korean films subtitled in Portuguese to serve the portion of users interested in these productions.

As for k-pop music, the introduction came via anime songs, Japanese animation soundtracks that consisted of the first means by which the idols of k-pop music would become known in Brazil. When k-pop artists entered the Japanese market in the early 2000s, as a strategy for the

diffusion of Korean Wave in neighboring and regional markets, they came to appear on the soundtracks of some Japanese TV productions, such as the animes and doramas. One of the most significant examples in this sense is that of the South Korean singer BoA, who sang one of the closing songs of the anime *InuYasha* in 2002, a Japanese production that was relatively successful in Brazil. Due to Korean artists’ presence in anime songs, as a marketing strategy used by South Korean entertainment companies, some Brazilian fans of j-pop music began to insert k-pop music into their daily musical consumption (Urbano, 2018).

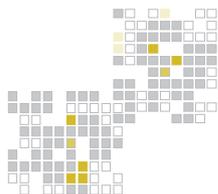
Once they found that there was a solid base of interest around Korean pop in a broad rise in Brazil, festivals and live shows with k-pop idols began to happen in the country. In September 2011, it all began with MBLAQ’s visit to São Paulo to judge a worldwide k-pop cover competition named the “KPOP Cover Dance Festival<sup>10</sup>”. This event was significant for Brazilian society to begin to understand the breadth of Korean Wave in Brazil (Gutierre, 2013). First, it was evidenced that there was already a broad base of covers of this musical style in the country. Secondly, the significant number of people who sought to attend this event to meet the members of the MBLAQ boyband caused something unexpected. According to Vinco & Mazur (2016), the “KPOP Cover Dance Festival” was held in a small theater, hoping that only a few people would appear, but more than four thousand people crowded the venue at Paulista Avenue in São Paulo, hoping,

7 The presence and circulation of Asian TV dramas in Brazil was the result of the ease provided by digital media, linked to the creativity of the fans. Thus, since the beginning, the distribution of Asian audiovisual content had been guided by the logic “from fan to fan” (Madureira, Monteiro & Urbano, 2014). It is also important to note that the activity of the fansub groups occurs free of charge.

8 The website DramaFever was discontinued in October 2018. The streaming platform had hundreds Asian audiovisual productions (especially South Korean) and operated on a “freemium” model.

9 Available on <https://www.viki.com>.

10 This event was hosted by the “Cover Dance Festival - K Pop Roadshow 40120” from the South Korean channel MBC.



sometimes to no avail, to gain entrance. “The Avenue was full of fans who came from all over the country, but only a few managed to compose the small number (of 500 fans) that participated in what would be the first official Hallyu Wave event in Brazil” (Venco & Mazur, 2016, p. 5).

The first live show with k-pop idols in Brazil happened in December of 2011 when the United Cube Concert brought in groups of entertainment company Cube Entertainment - B2ST, 4 Minute and solo singer G.Na – “which were received by more than 300 fans at the airport and 5,000 fans at Espaço das Américas, where the gig was held in the city of São Paulo” (Venco & Mazur, 2016, p. 05). After the United Cube Concert, the solo concert of Junsu, a member of the boy band JYJ, was held in São Paulo in September 2012. Important groups in the South Korean pop scene such as Super Junior (in 2013) and BTS (in 2014, 2015 and 2017) also performed in Brazil, thus demonstrating that the country has been entering the map of South Korean entertainment, mainly driven by the articulation and mediation of Brazilian fans (Seixlack, 2013, Essinger, 2017). Many of these fans act as mediators through Brazilian productions that have emerged in the wake of their purpose to mediate the coming of k-pop idols and hold events and parties related to contemporary Korean culture in Brazil.

As a result, a series of other events dedicated explicitly to Korean pop culture began to emerge, thus moving from the spaces practiced by Japanese pop culture, where it was anchored until then<sup>11</sup>. We could cite, among them, the

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11 The traditional events and fan conventions (which began in the 1990s in Brazil) comprise one of the spaces practiced by Japanese pop

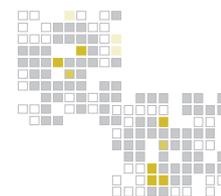
KDT (K-Pop Dance Tournament), organized by the Brazilian producer K.O. Entertainment since 2012. The KDT promotes cover of k-pop songs and karaoke battles. This event, which is held in São Paulo, is significant for greater visibility and emphasis on the practices developed by fans of Korean pop in the country. Among the various practices that take place in the Korean pop circuit in Brazil (such as maintenance of websites, blogs, Fanpages, Youtube channels, from staff participation or in the promotion of events, parties, or concerts, among others), the cover stands out among the others, approaching to the status that cosplay practice and animekê<sup>12</sup> have in the Japanese pop fan circuit.

The night parties (and matinees) dedicated to k-pop music offer another lens through which we can understand the emergence of a solid cultural/musical circuit around Korean pop in Brazil (Urbano, 2018). One of them is All the K, a celebration held since 2016 by the company JW8 Entertainment, a Brazilian company headed by Johnny Wang, a Brazilian descendant of the second generation of Koreans, and who proposes to promote concerts, parties and events related to South Korean pop music in Brazil and Latin

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culture, which has incorporated products and practices concerning Korean pop culture in its landscape of recent years consumption and experience. An example that deserves attention is Anime Friends, which since its 2011 edition, has a k-pop cover competition called “K-pop Cover Challenge”. This same event, since 2015, has been holding k-pop artists’ performances (with CROSSGENE in 2015 and K.A.R.D in 2017).

12 The cosplay practice consists of dressing like an anime, manga, video games, or any entertainment media character. The animekê consists of singing anime songs, as in a karaoke. Both practices are present in the fan events and conventions related to oriental pop culture, its rightful place of anchorage, having numerous competitions dedicated to these segments.



America. All the K comes to offer the experience of an official oriental party of the Korean pop circuit, given its itinerant proposal, with editions recurring editions in some capitals of the country, such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Salvador and Goiânia. However, other night parties and matinees held locally have also been appearing on a large scale in this circuit. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, there is the K-now party, promoted since 2015 by Meet K-pop. This party has even become part of the fan's agenda. Other events promoted by the same producer, such as Hallyu fan meetings held at Quinta da Boa Vista<sup>13</sup> (in what would be a Rio version of the São Paulo Cultural Center space for fans), reveals how interest in Korean culture is on an upward curve in our country.

#### 4. Closing Remarks

*As far as I've come, look at where you are:*

*Who would say? That someday a bastard  
would become a spokesperson*

*Nothing is what it seems to be,  
it's a fact I carry in me*

*I will be counter-flowing the  
stereotype from start to finish*

*Have you ever wondered that Korea would  
rhyme?<sup>14</sup>*

(Samukera LB, Ah ih shi, 2017)

As we have presented throughout this article, the imaginary of Asian culture built in our

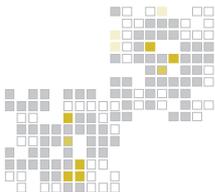
country was historically influenced by a strong shared sense around the Japanese experience and Japan-Mania movements in Brazil. Although these movements made possible the subsequent emergence of the Korean Wave in Brazil, it fails to explain the extent of interest that contemporary Korean culture has achieved in the last decade in our country, as the verses of Samukera above also denote.

The consolidation of a robust cultural/musical circuit around Korean Wave products in our country, as we approached in this article, compels us to adopt a less monolithic and informed perspective on the Asian cultural presence beyond Japan in Brazil. Currently, South Korea is Brazil's seventh-largest trading partner, with Brazil being South Korea's trading partner in Latin America. Also, both countries have recently ended their dictatorial regimes and underwent intense political and economic restructuring. These vicissitudes and similarities, albeit indirectly, helped to promote the cultural contact that a Brazilian group has been experiencing with the movements of the Korean community and Korean Wave in Brazil.

In conclusion, we must reinforce the argument that guided our reflection in this article, that is, the increasing and recent visibility enjoyed by contemporary Korean culture since the last decade, articulated to the movements of fans and the Korean community in metropolitan spaces, also virtual ones, in our country inevitably leads us away from common sense, adopting a less monolithic and more informed perspective on Asian cultural presence, beyond Japan, in Brazil.

<sup>13</sup> Historical public park is known in the city of Rio de Janeiro, which has become one of the most prominent spaces practiced in the Korean pop circuit in its Rio version.

<sup>14</sup> Videoclipe "Ah ih shi". Available on: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMEWVhRc\\_9M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMEWVhRc_9M)



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