THE KOREAN WAVE AND ITS INFLUENCES
UNDER KOREAN PERFORMING ARTS ACTIVITIES BAN IN PRC, 2016
BOTH IN CHINA AND SOUTH KOREA

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THE KOREAN WAVE AND ITS INFLUENCES UNDER
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BOTH IN CHINA AND SOUTH KOREA

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DEDICATIONS

Dedicated to Ms. Fang Tian and Professor Jun Yao for your academic support

AND

Dedicated to all the people who helped and supported me, who inspired me and who shared own thoughts and opinions with me, whether or not I interviewed.
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Abstract

In 2016-2017, China’s State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television released a series of control measures to limit further expansion of ‘Korean Wave’ in China. They are the result of the recent escalating political friction between China and South Korea, and ‘Korean Wave’ becomes the victim of political events. This series of measures is commonly known as ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’, which not only changes South Korea’s social development but also alerts China’s cultural industry.

From studying this theme, the primary purpose of this thesis is to explore the complex influences of the political stance over the cultural measure, with a focus on a cultural phenomenon. To achieve this purpose, this thesis discusses from the historical perspective: diplomatic relations between China and South Korea, development of ‘Korean Wave’ in China, and cultural diplomacies on ‘Korean Wave’. After which, details of the interviews of four scholars who directly or indirectly studied cultural exchanges between the two countries, bring unique insights whether cultural measures affected the politics, economy, and culture of the two nations consciously or potentially.

In brief, after the issuance of ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban in PRC,’ the cultural environment in China and South Korea changes enormously. Consequently, policy measures are of great significance for studying cultural phenomena and thinking about industrial development.
Introduction

‘Korean Wave,’ a term created by Chinese media around the year 2000, refers to the sudden, surprising surge in the popularity of South Korean entertainment and cultural products in China. Noticeably, ‘Korean Wave’ has led the cultural communication between China and South Korea for nearly 20 years.

‘Korean Wave’ is a way to export South Korean culture to other countries under the strong support of the South Korean government, which in turn leads to a series of industrial development and competitiveness growth of Korean enterprises in the world. The influence of ‘Korean Wave’ on China can be seen from the rising number of Chinese outbound travelers. Why could these popular products, like dramas and music, take off with such a great success in a country with a different language, economic condition or culture? In general, the reasons can summarize in the following three aspects. First, the media provides an available channel for ‘Korean Wave’ to enter into China and the Internet provides a powerful platform for its development. Since the 1990s, Korean music and Korean culture have appeared in Chinese radio and television programs. After 2006, the convenience brought by the Internet promoted the cultural exchanges between China and South Korea. Through more effective channels accessible on various video websites, Chinese audiences exposed to the information of ‘Korean Wave’. Second, some cultural similarities between the two countries contribute to the identification of the demand points. Specifically, Chinese culture shares a common friendly characteristic with Korean

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culture. Cultural commonality makes it easier for the younger generation in China to accept Korean pop cultures, such as television dramas and music. Third, the South Korean government supports cultural development regarding its policies and budget. South Korea’s cultural industry emphasizes cultural diplomacy with other countries. Detailed descriptions of these aspects give in following sections. Although considerable research studied the phenomenon of ‘Korean Wave’, this thesis mainly focuses on this phenomenon from the perspective of China where the term of ‘Korean Wave’ was first started and coined\(^2\). And, it reveals to what extent Korean Wave affected Chinese cultural and entertainment industries as well as the interests of the Chinese public.

In September 2016, the South Korean government unilaterally agreed to the deployment of a United States missile-defense system, Thaad\(^3\), on its territory to better protect South Korea and the United States militaries in the region from North Korea’s nuclear capabilities. Due to the improper political adventures of the South Korean government, the Chinese government raised strong protests which saw it as a threat to its security\(^4\). To fight back against South Korea’s “unreasonable” action, as seen from some signs that have emerged since September 2016, China gradually targeted some of South Korea’s crucial cultural exports, especially Korean Wave products like Korean dramas and Korean Pop Music, and some peripheral industries driven by ‘Korean Wave’ like tourism and cosmetics. Moreover, on 24\(^{th}\) February 2017, although officials of the State


\(^3\) Thaad is the acronym for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense. South Korea deployed this U.S. high-altitude air defense system on its soils to defense North Korean missile threats expand.

Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television of The People’s Republic of China (SARFT) only conveyed oral instructions from top to down rather than published documents publicly, some Chinese people associated the inaccessibility of all the new South Korean online reality shows in 2017 with the implementation of the Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban.

The implications of the ban are profound. Before this political event, ‘Korean Wave’ reached its peak in China. In recent years, the popularity of South Korean culture among Chinese people makes China become the largest export market for the South Korean entertainment industry\(^5\). Despite the Chinese side never publicly releases a notice as regards restriction of Korean performing arts activities, regulations, and controls to ‘Korean Wave’ may indeed be implemented on a large scale. The so-called ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ is only the most cost-effective means by which China indirectly imposes sanctions against South Korea. There is no doubt that after this political event, the prospects of ‘Korean Wave’ in China are worrisome.

However, with the continuous development of ‘Korean Wave’ in China, more and more people think about the impact of ‘Korean Wave’ on China. ‘The Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban in PRC’ may become a chance for Chinese cultural industry to calm down and think of the future. This opportunity allows the industry to think calmly about how to find a cultural content that suits China’s habits of appreciation, how to discover the originality and how to develop without relying on resources from other countries.

Exploring the influence of cultural policies on cultural phenomena helps to understand the deeper meaning behind the policy and to find a direction for the future development of China’s cultural and entertainment industries.

This paper aims to objectively examine the complex influences of the political stance over the cultural measure, with a focus on a cultural phenomenon. To support these arguments, this article discusses the background of Chinese and South Korean diplomatic relationships and cultural policies over the last two decades. Notably, the first section in this part provides an overview of their relations from a historical perspective. The next section explains the characteristics of ‘The Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban in PRC’. Besides, the researcher highlights influences on cultural policies, focusing on the how the evolution of Korean government’s cultural policies of using ‘Korean Wave’ as diplomatic means, and the situations and influences of ‘Korean Wave’ in China from 1997 to 2007. It also describes the responses and future introspections of the Chinese market.
**Problem Statement**

This research deals with the question of ‘Korean Wave’ and its influences under ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban in PRC, 2016’, both in China and South Korea. The analysis on this topic is chosen for following reasons: nowadays, the generation of Chinese youth, like me, are deeply affected by ‘Korean Wave’. After 2008, the new burst of ‘Korean Wave’ with the explosive growth in overseas exports of Korean products swept the whole Asia, especially China, and reached the peak in recent years. However, because of recent political reasons, the Chinese government took a series of measures for South Korean entertainers to restrict the development of ‘Korean Wave’. Through these measures, the Chinese government hopes to reach political purpose. These measures badly damage ‘Korean Wave’ which is enjoying such a dramatic developing speed in China and which may not recover in a short time. It noted that this ban on South Korean entertainers is a symbol of cultural diplomacy between the two countries.

One of the phenomena that cannot be ignored in the cultural field in the 2000s was the global upsurge of ‘Korean Wave’, which was uncontested and unstoppable. It is destined to fill cultural spaces in East Asia and the world. Within the past five years from 2012 to 2017, the main market of ‘Korean Wave’ increasingly moved from Japan to China. China has a vast market, which is believed to be a great chance to expand influences of ‘Korean Wave’. However, the implementation of ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ blocks the path of development of ‘Korean Wave’ in China. Consequently, it would be academically significant to know the situation of diplomatic relationships, economy industries, and cultural exchanges between the two countries before and after the ban.
And it is beneficial to understand the impact of politics in the cultural field and to observe a framework for marketing cultural exports by examining modes of South Korea’s economy related to ‘Korean Wave’⁶.

There are some potential limitations in this study. Firstly, some sources obtained from interviews with a small number of samples may lead to a subjective conclusion. Secondly, due to things that happened recently and language barrier, it is hard to get relevant specific data like the exact data of decrease in numbers of Chinese tourists. Thirdly, there are no official documentary files available to figure out the details of the reason for the ban. In spite of these, this research aims to interview some relevant persons to figure out the effect in different perspectives.

According to the topic, I think interviews with some relevant people are more appropriate than a case study. This thesis aims to interview two sides. Through Chinese and South Korean interviewees, I found facts on cultural exchanges and diplomatic relationships between the two nations and understood the effects of the ban. A majority of the sources of this thesis are from academic libraries and Google scholar, but some articles about the Chinese aspect come from China’s libraries and China’s academic websites.

The anticipated finding of this research is that a cultural measure indeed largely influences national conditions and changes the order of entertainment industry between the two countries. However, it is a truth that the rise of ‘Korean Wave’ disrupts the

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Chinese entertainment industry, but, meanwhile, it creates a lot of opportunities. Through the reflection of the impact of ‘Korean Wave’ in China, I try to figure out where the future of China's entertainment culture market is. About this question, the conclusion might be open and objective.
Methodology

In this paper, I aim to explore the influences under ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban in PRC’ both in China and South Korea. To examine these influences by analyzing the effects of political, economic and cultural industries, I use two primary qualitative methodologies, both textual analysis, and qualified interviews.

I roughly divide the thesis into three parts: background discussion, influences, and interview analysis. The basic background and influences about diplomatic relations and cultural measures in China and South Korea mostly came from numerous academic sources. In the first history part, the information introduces the process of diplomatic ties between the two countries, the basic knowledge of ‘Korean Wave’ and ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ as well as some relevant events. In the second influence part, it describes the evolution of cultural policies on ‘Korean Wave’ both in South Korea and China and demonstrates the challenges after the ban. The knowledge came from various academic publications, articles, papers, and journals. Moreover, the background of the ban acquired from scholastic newspapers and reports. Apart from second-hand materials, first-hand data collected through interviewing scholars in cultural fields. Some general data like essential revenue or growth proportion in tourism industry etc. also recorded during the interviews.

Moreover, in the second part of this thesis, qualified interviews are crucial components to directly understand the respondents’ real personal thoughts of the effects on ‘Korean Performing arts activities ban in PRC.’ I interviewed individuals who directly or
indirectly studied cultural exchanges between the two nations. They were interviewed in face-to-face conversations, emails in Beijing and the U.S. I noted the amount of valuable information and feedback through conversations. Their different research backgrounds, business backgrounds, and personal opinions over cultural communications in the two countries are beneficial for me to explore the role of the cultural measure in political diplomacy profoundly and are helpful for me to understand more cultural context and relationships between the two countries.

Limitations of my research methodology, I think, are to find appropriate persons to interview. Contacting the proper person is hard. Luckily, with different scholars’ recommendations, I reached four applicable scholars to interview.
Literature Review

A Successful Asian Reaction to Western Globalization

‘Korean Wave’ is a fast-growing phenomenon that has been studied in some academic research journals. According to Ingyu Oh, the dominant explanation of the cause behind this unique cultural movement, which is the biggest soft power success story of the region, acquiring global adulation with the favor especially for South Korea’s drama culture and pop music, rests on the concept of globalization. And Hyun-key Kim Hogarth shows that ‘Korean Wave’ has even produced a significant impact on the South Korean national economy through exports of its products and increased tourists to the nation.

Indeed, globalization lays the foundation for this seemingly sudden rise. With globalization, the South Korean government seizes the opportunity to transform its entertainment industry to cultural soft power, thereby bringing about the successful transformation of the economy. In some South Korean presidential speeches, Tae Young Kim and Dal Yong Jin illustrate that South Korea could not repay for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the Asian financial crisis of 1997. It needs to find a new economic growth point. After 1997, the South Korean government soon put forward the “culture orientated national development” policy as a national strategy. More

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importantly, when PSY’s ‘Gangnam Style’ became the first music video that hit more than two billion views on YouTube\textsuperscript{10}, technological transformations play a significant role in facilitating ‘Korean Wave’\textsuperscript{11}. From localization to globalization, this transformation provides ‘Korean Wave’ and even the South Korean nation with brand power, economic increase, and cultural hybridity. Jin Dal-Yong summarizes that the South Korean government pursues these cultural policies, primarily because of political and economic imperatives\textsuperscript{12}. Korean Wave penetrates and dominates less-developed entertainment markets in Asia, especially in China, becoming a successful Asian reaction to Western globalization.

**From Cultural Soft Power to see Sino\textsuperscript{13}-South Korea Public Relations**

Since South Korean Ex-President Lee Myung-bak extended the notion of ‘Korean Wave’ as soft power into a way of increasing international leverage in the context of cultural diplomacy, the South Korean government has continuously increased investment in cultural industries and relaxed the cultural policies. In the international arena, its ranking of cultural soft power is on the rise. ‘Korean Wave,’ as part of the cultural output, contains the cultural nucleus and ideology of one country, which is also an excellent carrier for enhancing South Korea’s soft power. On the contrary, although China’s economy is developing rapidly, cultural development has not kept pace. A large part of


Sino-South Korea Relations means bilateral relations between China and South Korea. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Korean_relations
China’s impression left by the world is still a legacy of ancient culture from thousands of years ago, lacking the modern culture that keeps pace with the times. Due to the excessive pursuit of the material needs based on economic growth, to a certain extent, the development of China’s cultural soft power is neglected. Also, China lacks sound cultural construction system and motivation for cultural development. This situation, to a large extent, limits the propaganda of China’s cultural soft power. The differences between China and South Korea in the development of soft power lie in that: South Korea knows how to use its advantages to open up the international market and to propagate national soft power maximally. Although South Korea does not have vast territory and abundant resources like China, it knows how to create national brand utilizing ‘Korean Wave.’

In the context of global trade, grasping the share of export of cultural products, which is, also possesses a channel for promoting cultural soft power. Film and TV programs trade is an integral part of the cultural business, and the number of their import and export to quantify the data shows the level of cultural commodities. Korean drama, as one of ‘Korean Wave’ products, owns its communicability. The open cultural policy and accurate market positioning make the overseas exports of Korean dramas multiply increase, which also makes great contributions to promote South Korean soft power. In recent years, China has a serious trade deficit with South Korea in the export of film and TV programs. Feng points out that such deficits cause a large influx of foreign cultural goods into the local cultural market, which has a serious impact on the original Chinese cultural traditions, values, aesthetic taste and belief. In the future development of

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14 Feng, Zhe. 2012. “The Disappearance of the Cultural Hegemony Center by the "Secondary Flow” of Movie and Television - Taking the Soft Power of Movie and TV Culture as an Example” Contemporary
cultural trade, China should study South Korea’s model of cultural soft power output: adjusting cultural policies, establishing market orientation and relying on traditional culture, to create a Chinese model of soft power output.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries 20 years ago, the South Korean government has attached great importance to cultural exchanges with China. Public diplomacy mediated by culture occupies a significant position in Sino-Korea relations. Its primary form is with the government-led, the government, enterprises and civil groups participated, all-round, and multi-level layout, such as ‘China and South Korea cultural industry seminar,’ ‘Sino-Korean concert,’ as well as ‘South Korea Tourism Day’ etc. However, there are some practical problems like trade friction and national security hidden behind the development of diplomatic relations between the two nations. In particular, due to the recent ‘Thaad,’ the relations between China and South Korea suffered an unprecedented test. The differences between the system and ideology and the asymmetry of cultural influence also offset the common cultural foundation of China and South Korea. With the continuous rise of China, the Korean Peninsula gradually becomes the main battlefield for the game of great powers. The trend of the diplomatic relations between China and South Korea has a profound impact on the changes in the situation on the Korean Peninsula. South Korea, as one of China’s critical maritime neighbors, its strategic significance in foreign affairs is self-evident. Both China and South Korea must actively face and handle these issues. Only in this way can the relations between the two countries sustain a sustained, healthy and rapid development.

Reasons for the Rise of ‘Korean Wave’ in China

Soo Hyun Jang underlines the effect of ‘Korean Wave’ on China from two perspectives: cultural familiarity and cultural synchronization\(^{15}\). With this regard, attention should be paid to the influence of Confucianism. Specifically, both China and South Korea belong to the East Asian Confucian cultural circle. Whether in the aspect of language, value, folklore, or architecture, etc., China profoundly influences South Korea. Consequently, both China and South Korea are the followers of Confucianism. Therefore, South Koreans are very similar to Chinese people regarding emotional expression, values, and ways of thinking. It is exactly this fundamental condition that enables ‘Korean Wave’ to become popular in China and makes it easy for Chinese audiences to accept South Korean dramas or TV programs.

Moreover, the South Korean government encourages and strengthens the cooperation with China. Hahn Jee-Young and Lee Byoung-Kyu show ‘the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the People’s Republic of China (Korea-China FTA)’\(^{16}\). It is an official film co-production treaty designed by policymakers of the two nations to encourage and simulate a range of collaborations, technology transfers, and joint funding initiatives in the industries\(^{17}\).

In short, ‘Korean Wave,’ as a cultural phenomenon, occupies a crucial position in

\(^{15}\) Jang, Soo Hyun. “The Korean Wave and Its Implications for the Korea-China Relationship.” 97–113
connection with Sino-South Korean cultural industries. And it also facilitates exports, exchanges, and collaborations as well as competitions between various South Korean and Chinese enterprises.
Looking Backward

To entirely and fully understand the humanistic and cultural relationships between China and South Korea, and to genuinely comprehend the interviewees’ thoughts, some basic backgrounds should take into consideration:

HISTORY:

Sino-South Korean Relations in the Twentieth Century

China and South Korea are two close neighbors in Eastern Asia. Since ancient times, cultural exchanges between these two countries have continued constantly, and have promoted the common prosperity of both countries’ culture and economy. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Korean Peninsula became the Japanese colony, and China embarked on a difficult road of an anti-feudal and anti-colonial road. In this process, the normal human communication between these two countries was interrupted, because they were both devoted to the war against Japanese colonists. After Japan surrendered in 1945, China was engaged in the war of liberation led by the Communist Party and the Korean peninsula became the forefront of the confrontation between the camps of socialism and capitalism. After the war in North Korea in 1953, the communication between China and South Korea was cut off by the ‘iron curtain’ of the Cold War, accompanied by the disappearance of the cultural exchange between these two countries. In the late 1960s, South Korea gradually stabilized its domestic political situation and embarked on a path of rapid economic development. At the end of the 1970s, China also embarked on the road of reform and opening-up, vigorously
developing its economy. The current developing track for China and South Korea emerged at that time, and the same development demands brought opportunities for the cooperation between these two countries. In the 1980s, South Korea was among the middle-developed countries and won the attention of the world due to the completion of political and democratic reform. Because of ‘Han-Jiang Miracle’\(^\text{18}\), South Korea was full of confidence to seek a broader and more independent stage actively. At that time, China was also energetically exploring the road of reform and opening-up and was extremely interested in Sino-Korean economic cooperation. With the collapse of the Cold War system, finally, China and South Korea formally established diplomatic relations in 1992, marking the restart of cultural exchanges between the two countries.

**An Overview after The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations**

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between each other, both countries have achieved rapid development of bilateral cooperation in various fields. In the economic area, China and South Korea, featured by a strong complementarity, soon became inseparable industrial partners. In the early stage of cooperation, China learned economic development experiences and attracted investment from South Korea; meanwhile, South Korean companies obtained cheap labors from China, thus ensuring the constant industrial upgrading. In the 21\(^\text{st}\) century, the importance of viewing China as a consumer market has become increasingly evident. Moreover, Korean enterprises have further developed their markets in China, leading to a closer and closer industrial cooperation between China and South Korea. The industrial cooperation between China and South

\(^{18}\) “Han-Jiang Miracle”: the miracle explains the rapid rise of South Korea in the decades, specifically, the rapid development in economy, society, and technology. Through export-oriented industrialization, the government helped South Korean people out of poverty.
Korea has become closer and closer. In 2015, the bilateral trade between China and South Korea exceeded 227 billion dollars\(^\text{19}\). For South Korea, China has become the largest trading partner, the most significant export market, the most significant source of imports and the most significant overseas investment target country. The trade volume between these two countries was higher than the sum of the trade between Korea and the United States, Korea and Japan and Korea and Europe, while the contribution of exports to China to Korea’s GDP was double that of exports to the United States\(^\text{20}\). Apparently, South Korea is far more economically dependent on China than its allies. For China, in 2014, South Korea surpassed Japan to become China’s second-largest trading partner. Besides, South Korea is a vital source of investment for China. The strong momentum of the economic cooperation between China and South Korea has promoted the construction of their cooperation mechanism. In 2014, China and South Korea signed a free trade agreement, beginning a direct currency exchange. At the same time, both nations’ tourism developed rapidly. In 2014, the number of Korean visitors to China was 4.18 million\(^\text{21}\), more than 7% of the total population of Korea. In 2015, the number of Chinese visitors to South Korea reached 13.2 million. In South Korea where there are only 50 million people, Chinese tourists can be seen everywhere in main business districts or attractions, and it is not a surprise to hear Korean merchants speaking Mandarin. However, South Korea is an important military alliance of the United States in Northeast Asia. At present, China and South Korea encounter insurmountable bottlenecks in the


field of security cooperation. At the same time, under the influence of political events, a series of cultural policies regulating the development of ‘Korean Wave’ in China have also triggered a crisis in the cultural communication between the two countries.

**The Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban in PRC, 2016**

A series of undesired consequences appears soon after former South Korea’s Park Geun-hye government agreed to allow the deployment of a United States missile-defense system, Thaad\(^22\), in the Southeast of Korea against ‘North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile threat.’ The nation suffered a national hunger strike protest and sharp fall in share prices of corporations. Moreover, its largest trading partner China expressed colossal anger.

This warning puts the South Korean government under a great panic. They fear that the Chinese government would take ‘revenge’ via trading sanctions. And perhaps it is a coincidence that although Beijing did not directly order the ban on bilateral cultural exchanges in writing, the development of ‘Korean Wave’ in China fell after September 2016 due to the continuous tension between the two countries in their political relations. For example, two famous Korean actors, Kim Woo-bin and Bea Suzy had to postpone an appearance in their China’s fan meetings; and some popular Korean bands canceled their participation in Chinese TV programs\(^23\). Furthermore, varying degrees of substantial shrink could also be seen in the stock prices of South Korea’s three major entertainment managing agencies, namely SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment and JYP

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\(^{22}\) Thaad is the acronym for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, the United States anti-missile system.

entertainment, while the market value of South Korea’s largest entertainment industry maker, CJ E&M, slid by 8.6 percent\(^\text{24}\).

In the year of 2017, many Chinese Internet users found that they were not allowed to watch all of 2017 South Korean TV programs on some copyright video sites. What’s more, it reported\(^\text{25}\) that some officers of the SARFT talked with the management teams of the main program producing companies, issuing oral instructions that not only required the prohibition of the usage of Korean contents but also called for the ban on cooperation and co-production with South Korean partners. Chinese and foreign media reported that for the first time it was confirmed that Chinese authorities issued a specific policy through the meeting, which may be related to a new form of ‘The Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban.’


INFLUENCES

Cultural Diplomacies on ‘Korean Wave’

Cultural exchange is an easy-to-push area in Sino-South Korean relations, and also a path to resolve political and security cooperation issues through facilitating mutual understanding and appreciation. In this context, the Chinese and Korean governments have been committed to promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries since the establishment of their diplomatic relations and have reached a series of agreements and policies\(^\text{26}\), with a particular focus on cultural exchanges of ‘Korean Wave.’

Agreements on Cultural Exchanges between China and South Korea

During the visit of South Korean President Kim Young-sam to China in March 1994, the Chinese and South Korean governments signed the agreement\(^\text{27}\) on Cultural Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the People’s Republic of China. This agreement became the basis for cultural exchanges between China and South Korea. In 1998 when South Korean President Kim Dae-jung visited China, the leaders of the two countries issued a ‘Joint Communique’\(^\text{28}\), stating that the two governments should promote mutual understanding and carry out various cultural folk exchanges.


When the President of South Korea Roh Mu-hyun visited China in 2003, the leaders of the two countries signed a ‘Joint Statement’\textsuperscript{29}, which affirmed the achievements of the ‘2002 China-South Korea Exchange Year’ activities and highlighted the decision to strengthen cultural exchanges and cultural, industrial cooperation between the two countries. In 2005, China’s President Hu Jintao visited South Korea and issued a ‘Joint Declaration’\textsuperscript{30} with the president of South Korea to affirm the actual results of the implementation of ‘2003 China-South Korea Joint Statement’. Once again it stressed the further expansion of communications between the two countries in culture, tourism and other areas. Although after 2005 ‘Korean Wave’ faces some challenges in China, in 2008, to improve relations between the two countries, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak interviewed China and issued a ‘Joint Statement’\textsuperscript{31} with the President of China, once again pointing out that China and South Korea need to strengthen cultural communication further and to carry out a variety of exchange programs. In the same year, China’s President Hu Jintao paid a visit to South Korea, and he emphasized the necessity to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, to promote cultural exchanges, to drive communications between artistic circles and friendly cities of the two countries, and to support exchanges between the two nations in entertainment activities.

In 2013, when the President of South Korea Park Geun-hye interviewed China, the

leaders of China and South Korea issued a ‘Joint Communique for Future’\textsuperscript{32}. This communique pointed out that cultural exchanges became the new trend of exchanges between China and South Korea, and also announced that the two governments would continue to actively promote mutual exchanges and cooperation in culture, traditional arts, and other fields, to further improve public diplomacy cooperation and various forms of communications. In 2014, China’s President Xi Jinping visited South Korea. During his stay in South Korea, Xi Jinping pointed out that China and South Korea should further drive the project of ‘Cultural Ties’ and enhance cooperation in the field of cultural exchanges, and for the first time stressed the need to animate the ‘Two-Way Communication’\textsuperscript{33} in the two countries.

**Cultural Policies about ‘Korean Wave’**

‘Korean Wave’ is regarded as a way of public and cultural diplomacy for governments to expand an industrial, transnational, cultural flow with Korean values. With the entry of Korean popular culture into China in the early 21\textsuperscript{st} century, it illustrated that ‘Korean Wave’ as a set of soft-power resources may have a significant potential impact on tourism, culture, entertainment, economy and other national interests through governmental, cultural policies.

In 2001, the statement of ‘Korean Wave’ was mentioned for the first time in an official public speech given by South Korean President Kim Dae-jung gave in the Third


Conference of Tourism Promotion\textsuperscript{34}. His policy showed that the Korean government’s initial willingness for ‘Korean Wave’ relied strongly relied on neoliberal market logic. The government expanded the cultural budget from 0.9 billion in 1999 to 1.0 billion in 2000, more than 1% of the national budget\textsuperscript{35}. This attitude drives the restructuring of the national industrial structure in favor of service industries.

Similar to his predecessor, President Roh Mu-Hyun also referenced ‘Korean Wave’ in his cultural policy, highlighting the role of ‘Korean Wave’ in cultural exchanges between South Korea and China. He emphasized the necessity that it was necessary to understand this cultural phenomenon and the possibility of mutual cultural exchange and cultural diversity through this cultural phenomenon. Also, he expressed that ‘Korean Wave’ represented the mutual friendship between the two countries.

In 2007, the newly elected South Korean President Lee Myung-bak extended the notion of ‘Korean Wave’ into a way of increasing international leverage in the context of cultural diplomacy. He designed a series of cultural policies for strengthening the cultural soft power and became the pioneer that started to combine ‘Korean Wave’ with soft power\textsuperscript{36}. The goal of his cultural policy stressed the importance of using ‘Korean Wave’ as a core mechanism of soft power and linked it to the concept of cultural diplomacy through improving national competitiveness.


\textsuperscript{36} Kim, Tae Young, and Dal Yong Jin. 2016. “Cultural Policy in the Korean Wave: An Analysis of Cultural Diplomacy Embedded in Presidential Speeches.”
After Park Geun-hye elected as the new president, ‘cultural enrichment’ became the keyword of her major policy tasks. She emphasized the role of ‘Korean Wave’ in the context of technologies, converging it with the notion of ‘Creative Economy.’ For example, the widespread enthusiasm for ‘Korean Wave’ disseminates rapidly across the globe with the assistance of social media, especially in Eastern Asia. When the cultural values of Korean products are brought together with technologies, there is an increasing number of possibilities for creativity economy. The combination of various cultural contents with new technologies contributes the success of K-POP in YouTube.

**Development of ‘Korean Wave’ in China**

The implementation of China’s reform and opening-up policy since 1978 was followed by the entry of an increasing number of foreign films and television programs into China. Since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between China and South Korea in 1992, the world has witnessed the rapidly growing rate of Korean investment in China. In recent years, China has also become South Korea’s largest destination of foreign direct investment. To a certain extent, these results should be attributed to the expansion of ‘Korean Wave’.

Chinese people started to be familiar with South Korea after the emergence of ‘Korean Wave.’ The survey of ‘Korean Image’ conducted by some Chinese people showed that Korean TV dramas are the most important channel for Chinese to understand South

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Korea. 69.4% of the respondents knew Korea mainly through TV dramas; those respondents who watched more than 10 Korean dramas accounted for 32.8% of the interviewees, but only 4.3% of the interviewees had not watched Korean TV dramas.\footnote{Kim Du-ji, Wang Xiaoling. 2015. \textit{China - Korea Cultural Exchanges: Status, Meanings and Questions}. Beijing: Current Affairs Press. P109}

Originally, the first crowd chasing ‘Korean Wave’ is the Chinese Millennials born in the eastern part of China’s developed cities, and they are also the first generation growing up under the impact of Korean popular culture. After ‘Korean Wave’ poured into China, this innovative and new cultural phenomenon brought them a huge cultural impact. Korean television dramas and shows are one of the important information channels for them to understand South Korea. Nowadays, these 20-year-old Millennials call ‘Korean Wave’ as a highly commercialized popular culture.

Compared with government-led official cultural exchanges, ‘Korean Wave’ seems to be a kind of civil artistic exchanges which shared much larger proportion in the two nations’ communication. This kind of communication has more extensive and far-reaching impact on cultural, social, economic and political relations between China and South Korea. Since it landed in China in the late 1990s, ‘Korean Wave’ has experienced the following stages of development and changes in different periods.

1. The period from the late 1990s to roughly the year of 2005 was the ‘Korean Wave Friendship Period,’ or rather, the ‘Imported Korean Wave Period.’ During this period, South Korea’s music, TV dramas, movies and other popular culture came into China, triggering Chinese people’s love in Korean cultural products and even more Korean goods.
2. In 2005, the ‘Imported Korean Wave Period’ reached its peak, but the Chinese society gradually showed tired sentiment in South Korea. From 2005 to 2007, there were some negative voices of ‘Korean Wave’ begun to appear in China, but the impact of ‘Korean Wave’ on Chinese pop culture did not stop. At that time, China entered the ‘Boycott Korean Wave period,’ and also the ‘Copy Korean Wave Period.’ In particular, some Chinese cultural practitioners called for boycotting ‘Korean Wave’ products but also copied ‘Korean Wave’ products.

3. At the beginning of 2008, ‘Korean Wave’ once again entered into China through the Internet. Television variety shows, as the representative of ‘Copy Korean Wave,’ increasingly emerged in large quantities, attracting Chinese capital into Korean cultural industry, making the beginning of the ‘Sino-Korean Co-production Period.’

‘Korean Wave Friendship Period’ and ‘Imported Korean Wave Period’

Speaking of ‘Korean Wave,’ Korean pop music, the first products that landed in China, should come to the mind firstly. After entering into China in the late 1990s, Korean pop music initially impacted China’s young people. For example, in September 1996, China’s international radio introduced Korean music. Since then, there were more and more Chinese singers that covered Korean pop music. For instance, Sun Yue, a famous Chinese singer, covered one song called ‘Happy Guide’ sang by the Korean music group ‘Cool Dragon’; another Chinese singer, Sun Nan, covered South Korean singer Shin Seung-hun’s song ‘I Believe.’ These songs obtained huge sensation at that time in China and inspired Chinese people’s strong interest in Korean music. In 2000, the Korean pop music group ‘H.O.T.’ held a concert in Beijing, attracting more than 13,000 fans. This
concert also resulted in an unprecedented occasion where it was hard to get one ticket. Notable, 40 million records of this music group were sold out in China. What’s more, another Korean singer, Jang Nara, sold her first album in the quantity of one million records in China. Subsequently, China’s vast consumer market obtained increasing attention from Korean singers and entertainment companies. Then, Korea’s pop music transferred their primary market to China, and many music groups, like ‘Girls’ Generation,’ ‘Super-Junior,’ ‘EXO,’ etc. held their fan meetings or concerts in China. After 2000, the unique training system of Korean entertainment agencies actively absorbed many young talented Chinese, so that an increasing number of young Chinese people joined these companies as entertainment trainees to pursue their ‘star dreams.’

Although ‘Korean Wave’ opened the door of China’s popular entertainment market with Korean pop music, before the year of 2005, Korean TV dramas were the most dominant Korean elements in China and had the more extensive impact on China’s popular culture. In 1997, ‘What is Love?’ was broadcast on CCTV, setting a high rating of 4.3%. This data was the second highest rating since China played international TV series. From then on, Korean TV dramas have accessed to Chinese views.

As the prices were relatively low and the ratings were relatively high, a large number of Korean TV series were introduced by China’s television stations after 2000 and became the mainstream in China’s screens. TV series like ‘Endless Love,’ ‘Ms. Mermaid,’ or

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‘Cannot take My Eyes Off You’ all occupied the top ratings. In 2002, for example, Chinese mainland television stations played a total of 67 Korean dramas. By 2004, even China Central Television Station imported three Korean dramas, and the total number of Korean dramas introduced by major Chinese television stations reached 107. In 2005, Hunan Satellite TV (HNTV) broadcasted a Korean TV drama named ‘Dae Jang Geum,’ promoting ‘Korean drama craze’ to reach its new climax. Specifically, ‘Dae Jang Geum’ obtained the largest number of audiences of overseas TV shows in China (180 million) and the highest rating (47%)41. Evidently, this drama extended the influence of ‘Korean Wave’ to a greater situation. Also, in 2005, Sina.com, one of the Chinese websites, conducted a questionnaire survey of Korean TV series, involving more than 26,000 respondents per day. The impact of Korean TV dramas on China’s TV screens was reported to be far higher than that of Japan, the United States, as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan42.

‘Boycott Korean Wave period’ and ‘Copy Korean Wave Period’

The hit of ‘Dae Jang Geum’ marked the peak of TV series imported from Korea and thereby intensified the strong interest of Chinese people in Korean products. Almost all South Korea’s export industries paid off in this situation, and ‘Korean Drama Wave’ became a hero in the promotion of South Korea’s exports to China.

In late 2005, however, Chinese film and television industries began to challenge ‘Korean Wave.’ In Shanghai TV Festival 2005, many Chinese TV practitioners questioned the

imbalanced trade of the Korean film and television drama market. On the other hand, a large number of Chinese audiences had some aesthetic fatigue on the majority of Korean dramas that followed single storylines within a short period. Under the combined effects of these factors, after 2006, the heat of Korean dramas began to subside in China and the phenomenon of broadcasting Korean dramas by TV stations in the prime time reduced greatly. After 2006, SARFT promulgated policies that restricted the import of Korean dramas and cut down the broadcast volume of these dramas 43. Korea International Trade Agency issued ‘cultural content industry export status and promotion program,’ pointing out that the growth rate of export of cultural content industry was 60.9% in 2003, but dropped to 13.1% in 2007 44. From 2006 to 2008, the ebb of ‘Korean Wave’ means that Chinese people reduced their close attention to South Korea, and Korean culture’s impact on China weakened in this period.

After 2006, the scale of imported Korean Wave based on TV series shrunk, but the influence of ‘Korean Wave’ on the consumption habits and aesthetic taste of Chinese people still sustained. China’s cultural and entertainment industries continued to absorb Korean technologies and art elements. The participation of Korean technical personnel or artists in the producing process became a more and more common phenomenon. China’s young people joined Korean entertainment companies to receive professional education and training for their star dreams, and some of them indeed achieved success. Since 1997, after nearly a decade of being exposed to the influence of ‘Korean Wave,’ China’s related

industries tried to participate in the production of ‘Korean Wave’ in a new way, that is, ‘Copy Korean Wave.’ This phenomenon is characterized by modifying successful Korean products and equipping them with Chinese features. In this period, Chinese enterprises bought the copyright of Korean cultural products and then properly recomposed them. Though SARFT prohibited imports of Korean TV dramas\textsuperscript{45}, it was too difficult for the administrative system to completely stop the introduction of Korean cultural products into China’s TV stations. Therefore, a lot of ‘copy Korean products’ emerged. Since 2013, Chinese TV stations purchased most of the Korean variety shows. Moreover, in 2014, reproduced Chinese versions of Korean variety shows dominated the screens, marking the mature stage of the ‘Copy Korean Wave Period.’ The higher rating shows were: ‘I am a singer’ by HNTV, ‘Running Man’ by ZJTV, and ‘2 Days & 1 Night’ by SHTV, etc. After Chinese enterprises or television stations bought the copyrights of these Korean programs, they often cooperated with Korean producing teams and reproduced the programs to better meet and adapt to Chinese audiences’ watching tastes.

‘Sino-Korean Co-production Period’

Since 2006, although China’s television stations reduced the imports from Korea and Korean dramas experienced a period of low tide in China, around the year of 2010, the popularity of the Interment enabled ‘Korean Wave’ to usher a new climax.

In 2013, two Korean dramas, ‘The Heirs’ and ‘My Love from the Star’, simultaneously broadcasted in China through the Internet, enthusiastically pursued by Chinese Internet users.

users. Then, the actor of ‘The Heirs,’ Lee Mino, was invited to participate in the Chinese Spring Festival Gala. And the actor of ‘My Love from the Star’, Kim Soo Hyun, has also become the hottest Chinese television advertising spokesperson. As of 2014, the video-on-demand of ‘My Love from the Star’ to Chinese video sites received 1.3 billion. What’s more, this TV drama has also brought a video site, IQIYI, into the spotlight. These video sites began to work more actively with the Korean entertainment industry to produce more programs.

Meanwhile, around 2014, Chinese cultural enterprises began to buy Korean cultural content enterprises massively. For instance, Sohu, Tencent, and other Chinese enterprises have become the primary shareholders of Korean cultural content enterprises. Also, IQIYI, YouKu, and other video sites established a cooperative relationship with the Korean side under the vast Chinese and Korean cultural content manufacturing industry and even tried to co-produce some films and television works.

To be specific, Tencent invested 500 million US dollars stakes in CJ Games, South Korea’s third-largest game company, in 2014. In the same year, Alibaba set up a subsidiary in South Korea to engage in entertainment, games, electricity and other business. According to the statistics of Korea Creative Content Agency, the proportion of Chinese investment in the content manufacturing industry in Korea in 2014, mainly the field of games, variety shows, advertisements, and films, increased by 180% over that of 2013. The success of ‘Imported Korean Wave’ and ‘Copy Korean Wave’ revealed the

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competitiveness of Korean cultural industry. Consumption of Korean Wave products began to drive Chinese capital backflow into Korea’s domestic industries.

‘Post-Korean Wave’ era

After Moon Jae-in, the new President of South Korea, took power in May 2017, the relations between the two countries stepped into another mitigating process. According to several media reports, the Chinese and South Korean governments tried to ease and resume their exchanges and cooperation in all fields, typically the Korean entertainment industry which brought a powerful impact on China. Since November 2017, after a series of conferences and communications that have benefited Sino-South Korean diplomatic relations, a new prelude to warmness was opened for the relations between China and South Korea. Moon Jae-in, the President of South Korea, officially visited China on December 13th, making a catalytic contribution to warming of the relationships between the two nations. At the same time, recovery noticed in the communication that had stagnated for a year in various fields between China and South Korea. Chinese tourists traveling to South Korea has started to recover. Notable, there is an increasing number of apparent signs of the warmer relations between the two countries.

In economic terms, Sino-South Korea routes, which canceled due to Thaad, will also put the resumption of flights on schedule⁴⁷. After ‘The Ban,’ ‘Korean Wave’ entered into the ‘Post-Korean Wave’ era in China. However, today, major Chinese video sites have

already invested more funds and layout in the domestic dramas and platforms that have more insurance concerning policies. Many excellent Chinese dramas constantly diluted the influence and the share of Korean dramas and shows on the network. The Sino-South Korean cultural communications in the ‘Post-Korean Wave’ era are not as smooth as before. If ‘Korean Wave’ wants to make a comeback, it will make some challenges in the future.
Interviews

The purpose of meetings is to get more personal thoughts and information by those interviewees, either Chinese or Korean scholar, and to analyze the way that cultural policies impacted on political issues and countries’ relationships. Each thought of interviews separates into three parts: economy, culture, and politics. I interviewed four interviewees anonymously with their approval. It would be more comfortable for them who felt sensitive to discuss the political event they explained. I made up interviewees’ names.

The First Interviewee, Jun Yao

The first interviewee, Professor Jun Yao, comes from Peking University, who mainly studied Sino-South Korean foreign exchanges. I interviewed Professor Yao in person when I was in Beijing.

Economy

Professor Yao explained that, since the 1990s, South Korea’s electronics industry had become the leading industry, and the shipbuilding and automotive industries developed rapidly. At that time, South Korea entered the ranks of the newly industrialized countries. In 1996, per capita income of South Korea exceeded 10,000 U.S. dollars, and the industrial structure changed during the process. Material needs stabilized and cultural needs rose sharply. In 1997, the Asian financial crisis hit South Korean heavily, which mainly due to the slow pace of South Korea’s internal structural adjustment during the
economic transition. After the disaster of Asian financial crisis, South Korea set the new economic growth point into the cultural industry, focusing on increasing the share of the cultural sector in the GNP. It was the beginning of the well-known ‘Korean Wave.’ Also, because heavy industries like automobiles and shipbuilding, were unable to meet domestic demand and were in the latter position of Japan’s, South Korean government decided to develop cultural output. There were many benefits to growing artistic output, such as not being subject to various export restrictions, and facilitating cultural exchanges and cooperation.

Professor Yao believed that ‘Korean Wave’ became a new economic growth point for South Korea’s economy in the past 20 years. He indicated that in 2014, the year of the peak of ‘Korean Wave’ in China, the added value of Korean cultural industries reached more than 37 billion won (10,000 won equals 9 U.S. dollars), accounted for 2.54% of total GDP. In 2015, ‘Korean Wave’ drove the most effective economic effect in the gaming industry, followed by tourism. ‘Korean Wave’ not only created foreign currency earnings for the country but also enhanced South Korea’s national soft power. However, since September 2016, the regular geopolitical events brought bilateral relations to a low ebb. The boom of ‘Korean Wave’ in China also went down sharply. It seems that ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ only involves entertainment industry, but, in fact, this policy has a great influence on the Korean economy. He explained that the percentage of South Korean cultural industry outputs accounted for about 70% of total exports, of which half exported to China. The ban led to South Korea’s stock fall for days. Besides, after the ban released, the number of Chinese travel customers dropped
dramatically, resulted in Korean duty-free shops suffered trillions of won in losses.

Professor Yao noted that nowadays, there are not enough tools that China can use to conduct geopolitical games. Most of China’s foreign economic cooperation is based on mutual benefits and cannot randomly utilize economic sanction strategy. However, South Korea is an exception, which around 40% of surpluses of exports are from China. And a considerable part of the popularity of Korean pop products belongs to the rewards receiving from the political friendships between China and South Korea. However, the recent political event must inevitably result in an ‘economic closed-door situation’ of South Korea.

Culture

Professor Yao elaborated that China and South Korea had a relatively high degree of cultural match. For a long time, under the influence of the Confucian moderate culture and Buddhist culture, China and South Korea have a common culture. Some Korean dramas and Korean pop music show a strong cultural identity among some Chinese audiences due to their internal values. It is the reason why ‘Korean Wave’ has been popular in China for around 20 years and it is also the reason that Chinese is more receptive to the ‘Korean Wave’ output.

However, Professor Yao feels that the most notable issue in ‘the ban storm’ was not the affected list of 42 stars and 53 TV series, but the general Chinese audiences’ public psychological response to the event. Some Korean artists participated in Chinese variety
shows not only failed to get the public supports, but also even unanimously questioned by the Chinese netizens. Professor Yao believed that the reason of this situation was that ‘Korean Wave’ made massive cultural inroads into China and it became a common phenomenon that Korean stars came to China to earn large amounts of money. However, it has long caused over-exploitation of resources and made the Chinese public’s aesthetic fatigue for Korean stars.

Politics

In politics, Professor Yao notes that China and South Korea have different cultural and policy ideas. Since 1997, South Korean has taken the strategy of ‘culture orientated national development,’ but China’s cultural market was characterized by ‘regulation.’

In detail, South Korea attached great importance to maintain its national character and to emphasize the development of the cultural industry. Especially after President Kim Dae-Jun took power, he put forth a series of plans to promote Korean culture. In international activities to help Korean films and shows, it was easy to see the participation of the Korean government. The government not only funded the sponsorship but also, if necessary, the departments were on the forefront to involve in the planning and promotion activities. In contrast, although China has many different types of cultural industries, a large number of cultural products does not have many vitalities. The primary purpose of many Chinese films and television dramas was to strengthen the building of spiritual civilization and people’s ideological and ethical standards, with strong political overtones. Many of these products were not attractive to Chinese audiences. Young
Chinese audiences had fewer choices for Chinese TV dramas, while the share of Korean dramas was increasing. To better protect domestic films and TV shows production, the Chinese government had to take control and restrictive measures to counter the imported products. Professor Yao believes that this behavior reflected the lack of confidence in popular culture. As long as self-confidence in culture field, then restrictions or non-restrictions on the cultural policy would be not significant for a country.

The Second Interviewee, Seok Lee

Dr. Lee teaches at the University of Pennsylvania, and his teaching interest is in the cultural studies of modern and contemporary Korea. I interviewed Dr. Lee in person in his office at the University of Pennsylvania.

Economy

Dr. Lee mentioned that before the 1990s, it just took 30 years for South Korea to enter into the ranks of medium-sized developed countries; and after experienced Asian financial crisis, it quickly got out of the slump. To a large extent, South Korea can achieve such a result because it chose an appropriate development model that suited itself, in which the ‘government’ played a crucial role in the whole process.

Dr. Lee stated that the export-oriented economy is one of the critical reasons for the rapid economic growth in South Korea. He believed that in the 1980s, South Korea pursued an export-led strategy of ‘trade-oriented national development.’ After Asian financial crisis, the government put forward the ‘culture orientated national development’ strategy. It was
another mode of export-oriented economy. The share of labor-intensive products in export products has been declining, which the proportion of capital-intensive products has been increasing.

He emphasized that with ‘Korean Wave’ emerged in China, the uppermost economic impact was on the tourism and beauty industries. For example, ‘Gangnam Style’ has been popular around the world. Its most practical effect was improved service industry. ‘Gangnam,’ a place sung in the lyrics, also become the preferred South Korean tourist destination, attracting more than 10 million foreign tourists to visit. However, the recent severe situation in the two countries hard hit the service industry. He explained that the market size of Korean duty-free shops in 2016 was 12.27 trillion won. Chinese tourists’ purchase share accounted for about 70% of the total, so the amount of consumption was roughly 8.6 trillion won. Chinese customers entered duty-free shops usually bought beauty products. If such a grim situation stalemated or the number of Chinese tourists halved for one year, then the sales of duty-free shops in South Korea will reduce 4.3 trillion won. Recently, there were some duty-free shops in Jeju Island encountered collapse crisis.

Culture

During the interview, I put forth a question: ‘Can Korean Wave be regarded as a bridge between China and South Korea in cultural exchanges?’ For this question, Dr. Lee thought it was tricky to answer. He did not think that ‘Korean Wave’ could be regarded as a bridge between China and South Korea. He believed that the term, ‘bridge,’ was a
two-way concept. ‘Korean Wave’ largely exported to China, but there were less ‘Chinese Wave’ imported into South Korea. What’s more, he also talked that a large part of Chinese viewers had anti-Korean sentiments. They felt not satisfied with this phenomenon because it threatened Chinese popular culture. They thought Korean dramas were a terrible cultural invasion, which South Korean cultural sectors packed and sold Chinese culture to China, made Chinese feel the culture of two countries were similar. Dr. Lee personally believed that in fact, China and South Korea did have cultural intercommunity and they both inherited Confucius culture. There was a single choice in Chinese TV series, but Korean variety shows had various creative decisions. For current predicament, a simple boycott of Korean dramas could not bring a revival of Chinese TV series, but the department should find their internal reasons. He thought that a bridge not only could be a bridge between the two countries but also could be a barrier in the two sides.

Moreover, he recalled that before the 1990s, when he was a kid, Japanese culture and Hong Kong films swept South Korea. Since the 1990s, however, the South Korean government adopted the strategy of ‘culture orientated national development,’ and Korean popular culture largely imitated and localized Japanese culture. Meanwhile, as far as he knows, many Chinese television programs also imitated Korean programs recently. This seemingly a cycle of phenomena showed that the future of China’s entertainment industry could not merely copy each other. The government should grasp the sector to promote the integration of art resources. Only by forming an industrial system can Chinese entertainment industry give full play to the competitiveness of artistic creation.
Politics

For this political event, Dr. Lee believed that it was nominal. Naturally, the future longtime relationship between China and South Korea will be quite right, because the discussion is better than fight even though the form of dialogue might be cold. The reason why ‘Korean Wave’ has been popular in China, as well as why South Korean celebrities are famous in China is that South Korea’s market is too small and too competitive, but China has a vast entertainment market. South Korean government, entertainment companies encouraged their artists to get money in China, and considered entertainment industry should go out. However, the so-called ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ indeed hit the Korean entertainment industry. For the future relations between the two countries and the development of ‘Korean Wave,’ he believed that Korean government’s cultural sectors should start with rebuilding the trust of the Chinese public and gradually recover the Chinese public’s favor for Korean entertainment and repair the rifts of the past. Only in this way can ‘Korean Wave’ find a foothold again in China.

The Third Interviewee, Yong Ma

Professor Ma comes from the Renmin University of China, who has a substantial experience of studying in South Korea, mainly studied political communication and political psychology. I interviewed Professor Ma in person in his office at the Renmin University of China.

Economy
As to how ‘Korean Wave’ and ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ affect the economic relations between China and South Korea, especially how they affect economic situation of South Korea, Professor Ma elucidated his point of views from the reasons behind these phenomena. He described that after Asian financial crisis in 1997, South Korea emphasized the ‘culture orientated national development’ strategy, and set the focus of economic growth on the cultural industry. However, there is an overall problem with the cultural industries in Asia: the products cannot export to the mainstream markets in Europe and the United States, because of the language, customs, values and other differences. Even Japan has the best cultural industry in Asia; it is also not capable of exporting to Europe and the United States. Therefore, neighboring China became Korean enterprises’ first choice, which has a large market. In 2015, about 50% of South Korean cultural products exported to China. Now that recent political, geopolitical event affected relations between the two countries, then the Chinese government took more restrictive measures with the most reliant field on China’s market in the Korean economy. The cultural industry became the primary goal. Facts have proved that such measures caused undue economic pressure on the Korean side.

In the meantime, Professor Ma also mentioned the influence of ‘the ban’ on South Korea’s tourism and cosmetics industries. The upsurge of Korean tourism caused by ‘Korean Wave’ made a tremendous contribution to the Korean economy. In 2015, South Korea ranked the first destination country for Chinese tourists, but since 2016, Chinese authorities successively intensified domestic tourism development and reduced the number of outbound Chinese tourists to South Korea. In some places like Jeju Island, the
number of Chinese tourists sharply dropped. It was a measure of soft weaponization of tourists. Followed by manufacturing, especially Korean cosmetics, since the deployment of Thaad in South Korea in September 2016, China’s customs strengthened inspections of cosmetic ingredients imported from South Korea. More than half of the customer base of Korean cosmetics industry were Chinese consumers. Deteriorating relations between China and South Korea made the market concerning the long-term development of this industry. Cosmetics stocks heavily sold, and share prices also fell.

Regarding the future development of economic relations between the two sides, Professor Ma believed that although China-South Korea relations faced some difficulties in 2016, better communication between the two parties is the solution. What’s more, how to promote the relation return to the right stable track as soon as possible, and how to strengthen the foundation for cultural communication between the two countries is a matter of concern for all government departments in China and South Korea.

Culture

For culture, first of all, Professor Ma praised South Korea’s cultural market system. He thought that the entertainment industry in South Korea was a war of money and numbers based on marketization. He mentioned that in 2014, a TV series from Korean SBS Television Station sold each episode’s copyright for around 280,000 U.S. dollars to a Chinese video website, which became the highest selling price of Korean TV series in China. The development of Korean TV series was entirely based on marketization, created scripts collectively and carefully selected cast members. With stylish music,
costumes and scenery, these well-made TV series fully reflected the rigorous working attitude of Koreans. At the same time, Koreans gave full play to Confucian morality. The theme of the drama usually revolved around the topic of affection, success and individual endeavor. On the contrary, in recent years, the most prominent problem of China’s television series was the copy, no any originality. Without original works, there was no vitality. It is the reason why Chinese dramas are difficult to be indeed promoted. And some production teams, to save money and labors, usually presented the scenery in the TV series in a simple way like matting images. This also caused more criticisms of Chinese TV dramas.

Second, he believed that ‘the ban’ has positive impacts on the development of Chinese entertainment industry. ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’ was only verbally transmitted, but there were no real substantive documents promulgated. The effect was not truly forbidden Korean stars because it did not make any sense. Its real role was to promote the development of China’s domestic entertainment and culture industries by making less development possible of ‘Korean Wave.’ In detail, Chinese film and television industries hoped to go abroad and exported soft power. This was of great help to improve the image of China and to facilitating the positive attitude of other countries to China and to promoting the export of Chinese products. However, for China’s future cultural entertainment output, except the United States and Japan (Japan is mainly animation), the biggest rival is South Korea. It said that ‘Korean Wave’ will be the first threshold for competition in overseas markets after China’s entertainment industry has grown. Therefore, as for the opponent who is about to face, it is the most important not to
let it become.

**Politics**

Professor Ma believed that the essence of banning ‘Korean Wave’ did not exist in itself. It was just a measure to contain South Korea’s deployment of Thaad. Meanwhile, he never considered that the boycott of one thing could achieve the effect of total boycott, which was merely a measure of attitude. If this ban was regarded as a diplomatic policy, it was entirely a means for China to demonstrate its subtle attitude. Whether it is useful or not, or how influential it is, it can be another consideration.

The significances of this regulation and control of ‘Korean Wave’ lied in the following: first, the excessive emergence of ‘Korean Wave’ in China squeezed the Chinese domestic market, which to a certain extent caused a disorderly market towards profits. Second, the possibility of political reasons might exist. What needs to explain was that the restriction of ‘Korean Wave’ was only a means, but at present Chinese cultural industry may need a more reasonable operating system and government policy encouragement. For example, Professor Ma said that Chinese cultural industry, especially the film and television industries, needed a rating system. The film rating system was conducive to the establishment of new industry standards, promoting the integration of resources, and improving products’ quality. This system could refer to that of South Korea. Also, it was necessary to properly handle the relationships between the government and the enterprises, in particular, putting the government’s promotion factor in a reasonable position. However, due to the imperfect system of the film and television industries in
China and the monopoly of resources and the right to speak of a few large companies, there was a significant obstacle to establishing the rating system. Thus, how to guide a healthy development of domestic film and television industries and how to build a sophisticated market mechanism for the cultural sector are worthy of all practitioners to ponder.

The Fourth Interviewee, Sam Kim

Professor Kim is a retired professional research scholar from Columbia University, who mainly researched Korean foreign relations and politics and Chinese foreign policy. I interviewed Professor Lee by email.

Economy

Professor Kim gave a pertinent comment to the economic influence on ‘Korean Wave’ and the recent geopolitical events. He mentioned a recent article from New York Times that: as for the new President of South Korea Moon Jae-in, Chinese government’s efforts to strongly boycott the purchase of popular South Korean commodities as punishment for the deployment of Thaad have already taken a toll. China was by far the most leading trading partner of South Korea. The bilateral trade between the two countries was even larger than South Korea’s trade with the United States and Japan combined.

He also mentioned that the Hyundai Research Institute had found that Thaad dispute was likely to have cost South Korea 7.5 billion U.S. dollars so far this year, affected 0.5% hit

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to South Korea’s gross domestic product. China lost 880 million dollars, just accounted for only 0.01% drop of China’s G.D.P... South Korean car sales dropped significantly in China. Lotte, the retailer, recently had to auction 112 stores in China after consumers abandoned it. South Korean movies and cosmetics have also suffered.

However, since Moon Jae-in, the new President of South Korea, officially visited China in December 2017, the standoff between the two countries appeared to have been resolved. After eight months stopped tourists’ routes to South Korea, a group of 32 Chinese tourists arrived in South Korea in December. It was the first Chinese mainland tour to South Korea since March 2017, which was a direct result of South Korea’s efforts to mend fences. In the meantime, Professor Kim borrowed one sentence from People’s Daily, the official Communist Party newspaper, ‘Only by properly solving the issue of the Thaad can bring the Sino-Korean relations back onto the right track.’

Culture

For the cultural content, Professor Kim did not mention too much. He just talked about the dramatic drop in imports from South Korea, including many ‘Korean Wave’ products. In addition, he recalled that during the first large-scale regulation and control of ‘Korean Wave’ in 2006, then-China’s President Hu Jintao made an official state visited Seoul and held a friendly and private meeting with then-South Korea’s President Roh Moo-hyun. At that time, he was asked by President Roh what he missed most of South Korea, and President Hu responded: ‘I really miss watching South Korean historical drama series Dae Jang Geum (a 2003 Korean television series).’ From this, we can see that ‘Korean
“Wave” has a considerable influence on China.

Politics

About the political, Professor Kim discussed that in the second half of 2016, China has been railing against South Korea and calling for boycotts of South Korean products, because Seoul decided to allow the United States to deploy an anti-missile system, which Beijing feared that the system threatened China’s security. But recently, the situation eased since the new President of South Korea Moon came to power. Beijing changed its course from an earlier hardline transform to a basically ‘never mind’ easing attitude. It was because that Chinese leader Xi decided to change his hostility that lasted for 18 months and restored normal relationships and even friendship. Including U.S. President Trump’s official visit to China in November could be seen as a preemptive response to easing tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, the newly empowered Korean President Moon’s official visit to China could also be regarded as a friendly action that tried to solve the issue that China considered the missile defense system was the purpose of the United States to ‘contain’ China. In the meantime, Professor Kim believed that Thadd event should not hijack the relationships between the two nation.

Concerning the trend of Sino-Korea cultural exchanges under the ease of relations, Professor Kim cautiously expressed his views. He thought that South Korean government was quite clear about the consequences of the deployment of Thaad and there was a strong dependence on China’s market in South Korea’s economy which they also knew very well. The development of Korean cultural industry played a substantial leading role
in the development of other sectors. As for China’s foreign policy toward South Korea, the Chinese government should still make every effort to win the friendly relation because harmony made the two countries prosper but disharmony made the two nations defeat.
Analysis

The theme of this essay appears to be an in-depth discussion of the impact of a cultural phenomenon, but it involves many economic, cultural and policy issues. The four interviewees discussed their views on ‘Korean Wave’ and on China’s policies for Korean cultural industries, covering a wide range of topics including economic, cultural and political issues. By collecting the respondents’ opinions, the interviews attempted to record the impact of ‘Korean Wave’ on China’s cultural and entertainment industries in the recent 20 years and a comprehensive understanding of the cultural exchanges between China and South Korea that have been affected by geopolitical events in recent months. Through face-to-face interviews, this approach allowed ones to view the impact of ‘Korean Wave’ on all aspects and to introspect the Chinese culture and entertainment industries.

The four interviewees have different backgrounds in academic research, but all based on the field of relations between the two nations. We can see that although they were all talking about economic, cultural and political aspects, they all have different perspectives. In addition, we can also see the far-reaching impact of policies on a country, whether economic market or cultural market. Among the respondents, I individually interviewed two Chinese scholars and two Korean scholars, hoping to analyze the issue from different perspectives and nations.

In the industrial section, both Chinese respondents analyzed the reasons of the impact from the historical point of view. As can be seen from their interviews, the popularity of
‘Korean Wave’ in China started in the late 1990s. Since then, South Korea has started to develop its cultural industry vigorously and regarded artistic output as an important national strategy. And South Korean is so, in addition to enhancing national self-confidence and superiority, but more importantly, it needs to take this as a promoter of opening up the global market. History is built on the narrative of the development, while these narratives describe and define the reality through multidimensional changes in history. In other words, economic changes have both historical achievements and historical changes. However, regarding culture and politics, both Chinese scholars mentioned the issue of ‘system’, that is China's unique regulatory, cultural management system. They agree that the advanced cultural mechanism of ‘Korean Wave’ deserved to be studied by Chinese cultural industry and also deserved Chinese cultural industry introspect its inadequacies of developing the system. ‘The Ban’ is just a different diplomatic means, but behind this means, what Chinese audiences need to see is how to use and learn the advanced cultural mechanism of other countries and achieve national cultural self-confidence in the future.

Two other South Korean interviewees in their interviews both mentioned the role of the government in the development of ‘Korean Wave’ and the function of government in the resolution of regional disputes. The role of the government is considered ‘necessary’ and ‘decisive’ in the development of the event. At the beginning of the 21st century, the rise of ‘Korean Wave’ in China was due to the Korean government’s strategy of ‘rejuvenating the country with culture’. South Korea’s cultural industry has strong radiation and a driving role in the development of other industries. Attached to China’s huge market,
South Korea’s import and export economy rapidly developed. However, recent political events, as well as the strict control of the Chinese government over Korean goods, have also caused considerable losses to the Korean economy. Finally, the two governments have to correctly handle diplomatic relations for the sake of regional peace and stability. This effect is two-way. From two South Korean respondents, we can understand their views on the role of government in cultural exchanges and in maintaining the stability of bilateral relations.

All interviewees positively gave their personal views. Typically, because of Asian people’s natural reticence, they reserved a lot when it came to some sensitivities. They can talk a lot about the retrospective of the boom of ‘Korean Wave’, issues of cultural exchanges between the two countries, and the future of the cultural and entertainment industries in both nations. However, once the topic turned to the system or the essence of international cultural issues under the influence of the entire geopolitical events, it was hard to get their real opinions. They tended to skip the questions or answered briefly to ask me to find relative references. It was worth noting that they merely described ‘Korean Wave’ with understatement and did not think that such a phenomenon could have a broad space for development in the future. There are many reasons for that. First, South Korea is a country existed in the middle of big countries. From ancient times to nowadays, such a country has nothing to say about politics, history or culture. Second, academia considers ‘Korean Wave’ only can exist as a subculture, which is not enough to affect the mainstream of Chinese people. Because the country itself is also limited in strength, thus ‘Korean Wave’ will not be as threatening to China’s mainstream cultural system as
Western culture does.

Economic and cultural industries are excellent contents, and this paper cannot cover all aspects. In short, for South Korea, its cultural export policy created the conditions for the development of ‘Korean Wave’, and ‘Korean Wave’ created the initiatives for South Korea’s economic development in the past 20 years, to boost the country’s brand value. However, the ban, as a form of cultural sanction, indirectly led to the effect of economic sanctions on South Korea. Not only caused a series of chain effects like a sharp drop in advertising revenue but also suppressed the industrial upgrading in South Korea’s economy. For China, although ‘Korean Wave’ brought advanced cultural development models, the ‘Korean Wave’ also gradually destroyed the cultural confidence of the entertainment and cultural industries in China. However, the ban sounded the alarm for China’s entertainment and cultural industries. How to develop culture, the most important soft power among the comprehensive national strength, is extremely urgent. It is an opportunity for the Chinese culture industry to change its way of thinking and its mode of development to achieve the leap from a wealthy culture nation to a dominant culture nation.
Conclusion

You may escape an untoward act of God, but never escape the evil of your own --- it might be the lesson South Korea’s government learned from this sensitive issue. The purpose of this paper is to explore cultural phenomena so that the researcher can examine the possibility of involvement and influence degree of cultural measures as a diplomatic means in political activities. It is not only a simple question of influence, but also a question of relationships between culture and politics, culture and economy, and politics and economy. From 1997 to 2017, ‘Korean Wave’ has experienced opportunities and volatilities in China. By researching, interviewing, and writing for this topic, the researcher has learned more about the interrelationships between things, especially discussed the political, economic and cultural contents with the interviewees. The cultural policy changes the course of a country’s economy and changes the cultural dialogue between the two countries. Art and culture might be the most vulnerable under the influences of policies and politics.

Challenges under the Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban

Concerns are growing in South Korea due to the decrease in the degree of China’s affection for its famous cultural exports with the rising tensions between the two countries over Seoul’s planned deployment of a US anti-ballistic missile system. Issuance of the Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban produced a series of incidental effects, especially on the commercial industry. For example, South Korea’s tourism and retail sectors met a chill since the number of Chinese tourists dramatically reduced.

Airline operators cut some routes between China and South Korea and also stopped selling tickets for flights between famous tourist cities in the two countries after Seoul’s announce fo the plan to deploy Thaad, regardless of Beijing’s objections. China toughened visa rules for Korean businessman. Tourism businesses feared about the potential impact of this politic issue.

For China, companies that relied on South Korea’s copyrights, artists and culture for a long time are affected. In recent years, a large number of China’s mainland dramas adapted from South Korean copyright, and variety shows reproduced from original South Korean programs. It is a pity that ‘the ban’ does not promote the governance of the original Chinese domestic variety shows. When direct purchasing has a policy risk, the trend of plagiarism can hardly stop. In fact, the popularity of ‘Korean Wave’ in China has always meant that there are problems in Chinese people’s values. Even without ‘Korean Wave,’ there is something wrong in Chinese people’s values. ‘The ban’ may be a channel that not only ensures maximization of the value of communication but also attracts more attention to Chinese national culture. In this light, improving innovation capability may open up a new world for entertainment and culture industries in China.

Many academic studies are discussing ‘Korean Wave’, and there are many reports cover the issue itself. Therefore, there is no need to describe it again. I respect ‘Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban’, as cultural, regulatory measure, but whether I support or not, it has to be judged as it stands. Through the interviews, I found that the event

introspected the status quo of China’s current entertainment industry. This question often overlooked in research and academic discussions. It is interesting to explore how does China-Korea entertainment communicate and how to promote the development of China’s cultural industry in the future.

**Reflections about the Future of China’s Entertainment Industry**

‘Korean Wave’ serves as a useful window to promote cultural communication and development in the two countries. The massive penetration of Korean culture and products into the Chinese market, however, has to sound an alarm for the future of China’s entertainment industry. China’s online video websites are full of South Korean dramas; China’s variety shows rely heavily on Korean production teams; and Korean pop music spreads widely in China’s communities, etc. In the face of this foreign phenomenon, China’s entertainment industry and practitioners should reflect about their future. The Korean Performing Arts Activities Ban gives them an opportunity to think about how China’s entertainment should develop in the future and how ‘Chinese Wave’ could promote without the help of ‘Korean Wave’. The current situation may either lead to cultural reflection or hinder cultural development.

Undoubtedly, there are still some obstacles to overcome. Recently, it is still difficult to lift this ban; also, some significant issues, to a large extent, are no critical progress, especially the future development of China’s pop entertainment industry. Under this ban, the contents of ‘Korean Wave’ exported to China are restricted and South Korean copyright TV programs could not be imported into China, forced to quit the Chinese
market. This situation resulted in an unconstrained environment in the market where China’s TV production teams could arbitrarily copy South Korean shows without buying copyrights. Many Chinese shows lacking in first ability start to borrow or even copy Korean shows through this loophole so that the case of copyright infringement might increase. And it is also worth thinking that whether Korean pop culture becomes the most prominent victim of a recent fraying of the relations between the two countries.

Cooperation and communication between these two countries, especially non-governmental exchanges between scholars, in fact, have more powerful and bright prospects. It expected that there are more breakthrough exchanges among experts at various levels in Chinese and South Korean cultural fields and that the political impact on cultural exchanges is improved.

Controlling ‘Korean Wave’ products is only the input of ideology, but the most important thing is how to achieve cultural self-confidence and self-protection, which is very significant for national cohesion and cultural influence. I quite agree with Professor Ma’s points of view: We should promote the development of the domestic entertainment industry by minimizing the profits and development of ‘Korean Wave’. Before, China was not only materially impoverished but mentally extremely poor. A majority of Chinese have an extravagant complex on the products of developed countries. Introduction of ‘Korean Wave’ was excellent to adapt to this trend. However, with the rise of China’s economy, China’s native cultural and entertainment industries were also on the rise. Of course, the development of the cultural industry requires many conditions: money, creativity, technology, philosophy, etc. They are all indispensable, but the core
competitiveness of the cultural industry, except money, is creativity. For a long time, China’s entertainment and cultural industries are often be regarded as ‘take-inism’, that is, bringing the principle. Many Chinese-made shows simply changed the name of the original Korean shows, which has not changed in nature, and most of them still retain the routines of original variety production. Even more worth pondering is that a large number of Chinese domestic variety plagiarism has started a sharp surge since the emergence of ‘the ban’. Since China has a certain degree of financial strength, why not relies on the market approach to learn advanced production techniques and concepts from South Korea but copies Korea’s originality? Focusing on industries to promote artistic resources integration and forming an industrial system. Only by this way can we give full play to the competitiveness of artistic creation. The government should cooperate with entertainment agencies and make unified plans. While regulating the art market and protecting the intellectual property rights of original creators, it helps China’s cultural and entertainment industries to open up overseas markets. Similarly, how to guide the healthy development of the domestic cultural trade, so that makes more art companies, artists and even viewers have the right to speak to enhance market judgment and appreciation and to improve the harsh and unclear censorship system are worthy of art practitioners to ponder. Policy refinement and mature market mechanism need the government to control.
References


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