POP POWER:

Pop Diplomacy for a Global Society

Pop Culture as a tool for Cultural Diplomacy, for constructing a Global Society in the context of International Relations. Case: South Korea and Japan in Peru.

1. POPULAR CULTURE: A World of possibilities

The term *Popular Culture* has always raised many arguments due to the ambiguity of its meaning. Even in the XXI century we have not yet been able to establish a single definition for the term. But if we want to understand the phenomenon of Pop Culture in all its magnitude we need to establish at least a general idea of what it represents.

In fact, there are several definitions for *Popular Culture* and is the variety of definitions the source of the problem since how could we establish which one is right and which one is not? But if there is one thing that we can be sure of is that "Popular culture Is lake pornography, - in, oh, so many ways: we may not be able to define it, bet we know when it when we see it". (Parker, 2011)

The problem of the definition of *Popular Culture* is not new since it has been discussed for several centuries. In fact, since the late eighteenth and during the nineteenth century some intellectuals established the *Popular Culture* as a "quasi-mythical rural folk culture." (Storey, 2009) During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the popular would be considered as *Mass Culture*, as the opposite to *High Culture*, and as Global Culture, among others, depending on the theoretical view from which the subject is approached.

In his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1985), Welsh academic *Raymond Williams* has four different meanings for *Popular Culture*, "something that appeals to many people, an inferior type of work, a work that deliberately tries to gain the favor of the people and a culture made by people for themselves." In turn, the sociologist *John Storey* (2002) adds to these definitions a fifth and sixth ones, which bind the *Popular Culture* with the concepts of hegemony and postmodernism respectively.

Following the first Williams's definition, we could understand *Popular Culture* as the culture that everyone (or many) loves, provided they are the majority. This

conceptualization may seem enough at first glance but leads to a new problem since there are so many things that could appeal to a large audience that the definition becomes too broad and vague. It would be necessary to create a ranking system that allows us to establish how many supporters something requires to be considered popular. That's not practical.

In fact, the difference between *Popular Culture* and *Mass Culture* is often so tenuous that are often confused: "what is popular is related to massiveness or massive crowds. What's massive is not opposed to popular culture, nor is an 'absorber' of it, but the place in which what's popular is interpellated." (Lobeto, 2009) As such, the massiveness should be understood not as an obstacle but as a platform for the dissemination and interpretation of what's popular.

However, the escalation of *Popular Culture* to *Mass Culture* level involves certain risks. The largest of them, confusing the concepts, leads to what is legitimately popular to be moved against the mass product, created by an industry that is due solely to market trends, "the great cultural industry, and therefore its consumer products, are something supposedly 'popular', against other creative endeavors spontaneously produced outside the industry, which supposedly would be seen as 'elitist' or, worse, as the 'real' consumer products conceived under strategies of 'commercial positioning.' "(Pérez, 2010)

For *Storey*, by defining first *High Culture* we could afford to make a distinction, defining *Popular Culture* as everything that's left after deciding what is *High Culture*. But, as he says, the differentiation between the two of them is not clear enough. For several authors, the main difference between them is also a difference between social classes: *High Culture* is linked to the gentry, while *Popular Culture* is related to the lower class and therefore is inferior. However, this difference crumbles in the light of reality since in social life's development there is a constant exchange between the two types of culture and what could be considered a work of *High Culture* can become popular and no longer exclusive, since social classes are not static.

Popular Culture is also defined as *Mass Culture* by several authors due to their close relationship with mass media, making it into "inevitably commercial" and is consumed with an "alienated and alienating passivity". (Storey, 2002) Still, there are plenty of cases where despite lots of publicity many cultural products that fit the description of *massive* fail.

Williams also discusses a fourth definition where *Popular Culture* is the one that comes from the people: "When used in this way, the 'Popular Culture' functions as a rough equivalent of the fourteenth century concept of folk culture." (Bennett, 1986) The problem, as with other definitions, is the difficulty for establishing who are *the people* and what features they must have to be considered as such; as well as the commercial aspect that inevitably surrounds *Popular Culture*.

A fifth definition given by *Storey*, gathers the ideas of political analyst *Antonio Gramsci* on hegemony[1], where *Popular Culture* is "a site of struggle between the 'resistance' of subordinate groups in society and the forces of 'incorporation' that operate in the interests of dominant groups." (2002)

For sociology, says sociologist *Ashley Crossman* (2011), there are two opposed positions on *Popular Culture* related to *gramscian* definition of *Storey*: On one hand, a first approach considers the *Popular Culture* as a tool of the elites (who tend to keep control on mass media) to keep under control the masses, "making them passive and easy to control." The second approach considers that far from being a weapon of domination, *Popular Culture* is a "vehicle for rebellion against the culture of the dominant groups."

Moreover, the academic *John Fiske* argues that *Popular Culture* "is what people do from the products of the culture industries: mass culture is the repertoire, popular culture is what people make in an active form, what really make the consumer goods and consumables consuming practices." (Fiske quoted by Storey, 2002)

The sixth definition of *Popular Culture* refers to the postmodern conception of the term. The difference between High Culture and that one disappears, because as *Storey* states "for some is a reason to celebrate the end of an arbitrary distinctions built on cultural elitism; for others, it is a reason to despair for the final victory of trade over culture." (2002) The dichotomy is now composed of what's authentic (understood as culture) and what's commercial.

Amidst all these definitions the unusual statement of the sociologist *Tony Bennett* in his book *Popular Culture: a Teaching Object* (1980) falls upon us like a bucket of cold water: "The concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a pot of confused and contradictory meanings able to divert the investigation to an unknown number of dead ends." Although it sounds crazy *Bennett* is not wrong, since in two centuries of social sciences we have not been able to reach an agreement on this concept.

But even if it seems impossible to define *Popular Culture*, we might say that it has all the features mentioned above giving us an idea of what we mean when using the term. Since this is usually as relative as everything about the human being, the fact of defining and diagramming it with certainty seems very complex but no less important.

Although we have not yet been able to establish a precise definition, what we know so far about the nature of *Popular Culture* is enough to get us into its current size, i.e., the *Contemporary Popular Culture*, known as *Pop Culture*.

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[1] For Gramsci, the ruling classes manage to impose on the dominated, not by the use of repressive state apparatus, but by the cultural hegemony supported in education, religion and mass media.

2. POP CULTURE IN ASIA

2.1. JAPANESE POP CULTURE: The magical world of Anime

Unlike many contemporary cultures of the modern world, the *Japanese Pop Culture* is one of the few that has been able to best incorporate modernity, to the point of achieving the forefront in many fields, without losing its essence and traditions: "One of the most interesting aspects of Japanese society and culture today is the whole area of popular culture. That really means youth culture. Thus, young people are in the center of some of the lively developments in Japan today. "(Hardacre, 2002)

Japanese Pop Culture, heavily influenced by Western culture (especially the American) has several ways of manifesting itself: movies, music, manga[2], television, fashion and of course the anime[3]. Perhaps these, *anime* and *manga* are the most influential when it comes to *Pop Culture*, not only in Japan but also in the image the world has of that country. Thus, these cultural products are strongly associated with the idea we have in western civilization about Japan and the *Japanese way of live*.

Although there is no doubt of the impact of *Japanese Pop Culture* in the world nowadays, this phenomenon is relatively recent since its popularity triggered from the early 90's, the same decade when internet started to become massive. This was decisive: "Japanese popular culture not only has continued to evolve and flourish at home, but has also attracted a large number of stray followers abroad, giving Japan a new cultural impact on the world that complements its already established economic impact ". (Craig, 2000)

Even if the Japanese economy declined due to the economic crisis experienced late last century, the entertainment industry, strongly linked to Pop Culture and perhaps its main supporter, has managed to not only stay afloat but far exceed expectations. For example, in 2012 Japan became the largest music market in the world, leaving the U.S. relegated to second place. This is due largely to Japanese pop music and pop bands[4]. This great achievement is no accident but the result of a process that took several decades.

We could say that the genesis of Japanese Pop Culture as we know it came after World War II, when Japan began the process of rebuilding and industrialization. It wasn't until the early 80's when *manga* and *anime*, mostly consumed locally, would achieve relevance outside the archipelago until next decade's explosion.

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[2] *Manga* is the japanese comic.
[3] *Anime* is the japanese animation.
[4] According to the anual report from the International Federation of Phonographic Industry (IFPI), in 2012 Japan sold over 4.280 million dollars in CDs, DVDs and digital downloads, while USA only got to 4.130 million dollars.

Although *Japanese Pop Culture* have had a strong Western influence, both *anime* and *manga* have achieved a very characteristic authenticity that attracts millions around the world and have even become raw material for other cultural events such as fashion and *cosplay*[5]. Even though *manga* is considered the basis of *anime* for marking the parameters of style and aesthetic design to be followed by animation, this one is way more successful on a global scale.

The first Japanese animations are from the early twentieth century, being *Katsudō Shashin* (1907), of unknown authorship, the first animated short film (only lasts 4 seconds) done in that country. During that time and even before World War II ended, several works as *The Monkey and the Crab* (1917) of *Seitaro Kitayama*, were made even in difficult circumstances due to the pressures exerted on animation companies by the government leaders: "During the Japanese fascist stage prior to world War II, the entertainers were heavily censored and often restricted to only produce propaganda or simply were not allowed to work." (Poitras, 2001)

Still some great animation works got made, like *Momotarō: Umi no Shinpei* (Momotaro: God of waves) from 1944, the first animated feature film which included voices and sound but propagandistic content that made clear reference to the attack on Pearl Harbor and Japanese air and sea military campaigns. After the war and the economy's collapse, the *anime* production decreased to near extinction and *manga* gained popularity since was cheaper and easier to get.

Throughout this stage, the *anime* had a very similar to *Disney* productions. This changed when artists like the late cartoonist and animator *Osamu Tezuka*, known as *the god of manga*, managed to develop a unique style. Forced largely by low budgets, they managed to make their own productions. *Tezuka* would create great classics of the genre as the popular *Astro Boy* and *The Princess Knight* in early 50's. His work is probably the main reference of anime as is now known: "Once Tezuka started doing animation and established the qualities that have stated their success - long story lines, cinematic storytelling - Japanese demand for more animation never waned." (Brenner, 2007)

But it was not until the early 70's that after a severe economic crisis, the animation industry arise with the emergence of new production houses that expanded the thematic coverage of *anime* and animation styles, making a big difference with Western animation: "Japanese animation is among the best in the world, more sophisticated." (Hardacre and Bestor, 2002)

During the 80's, the *anime* began to be exported to the West but remained within the underground scenes of America and Europe. However, its popularity increased with the release of some of the most popular *anime* series of all time like *Candy Candy*, *Marco* or

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[5] *Cosplay* is the short for *Costume Play*, is a hobby in which participants wear costumes and fashion accessories to represent a specific character or idea that is usually identified with a unique name.

Robotech. Interestingly, many of these series were not identified as Japanese in the West and the widespread belief was that these were made for young audiences since they were cartoons.

At the end of that decade and during the 90's, the greatest works of Japanese animation like *Dragon Ball Z*, *Saint Seiya* or *Pokémon* became popular around the world. But were films like *Akira* or *Ghost in the Shell*, and series like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* or *Cowboy Bebop* which radically changed the perception of the gender. Not only was the original visual and aesthetic proposal but also the wide range of issues that could be addressed within an *anime* that captivated hundreds of fans in the West. Like *manga*, *anime* could include topics for both children and adults.

In the last decade, Internet has allowed the mass exponential growth of the *anime* industry. Unlike in the past century, fans of the genre known as *otaku*[6], don't depend on local television transmitting their favorite shows or any company obtaining the distribution licenses for the production of DVDs. Internet allows anyone to access almost immediately to their favorite series, although it is true that piracy has damaged the industry in a very severe way.

In the diffusion process of *anime*, fans play a fundamental role. For the most purists of the genre or those unwilling to wait for a dubbed version of their favorite series to be published, there is the *fansub*, consisting of *anime* series subtitled by fans and for fans. Currently there are several *anime* broadcast networks through internet that receive thousands of hits a day and have large catalogs available for free, as we'll discussed later on.

Whether through major events and conventions or its uptake and dissemination through internet; *anime* has managed to bring thousands of foreign fans on everything related to it, like *manga* or *cosplay*, and also what lies behind it, like *Japanese Pop Culture* and even language.

2.1.1. JAPANESE POP CULTURE IN PERU: Anime and the Otaku Community

In Peru, *anime* had an unexpected success since its arrival to local television at the end of the 60's with classics like *Tezuka*'s *Astro Boy* or *The Man of Steel*. Even if initially those series weren't identified as *anime* by the general audience, but simply as animated series.

The genre continued to gain popularity little by little throughout the 70's until the release of *Marco* in 1979. The story of the little Italian boy crossing the Atlantic in search of his

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[6] The term *Otaku* is used in Japan to describe a person obsessed with a particular hobby. In the west the term is used to identify the fans of Japanese Pop Culture which includes *anime*, *manga* and *cosplay*.

mother captivated the audience achieving high ratings and becoming an instant classic. So would *Heidi* and *Candy*.

Over the next decade the country was facing a tough political crisis and the violence of a civil war. The animated series were a good way for children and teenagers at the time to escape reality. In those days, *animes* whose protagonists were giant robots like *Robotech El Vengador* and *Mazinger Z* stood out. Yet, these series which enjoyed so much success among young audiences were still not recognized as Japanese products, "It is interesting to note that in this decade Kung Fu movies became also popular. Due to the similarity of Chinese kanji with the kanji of Japanese Animes the Peruvian audience considered that both productions came from China." (MRTE, 2012)

During the 90's, the situation of *anime* in Peru changed dramatically. The Fandom was still growing slowly but that would all take a whole new dimension with the release of several titles that would achieve a great success here and in the rest of the world. The first of these, *Captain Tsubasa* o *Los Supercampeones*, as it was known in Latin America. This *anime* about the adventures of a kid *Oliver Atom* on its way to become the best soccer player in the world was a delight for thousands of kids who, like *Oliver*, loved the sport.

Later on, would make their debut in Peruvian television series like *Los Caballeros del Zodiaco* (Saint Seiya), with a slightly more complex argument involving many aspects of Greek mythology and heavy action scenes way stronger than what was expected to see in an animated series. Its success was such that, with several years of delay, a film was premiered in some movie theaters in Lima. In fact, that was the first time in a movie theater for the author of this book.

But nothing described above would achieve what *Dragon Ball* did at the time. This *anime* was released back in 1996 with an unprecedented success. Yet, it wasn't until the release of its sequel *Dragon Ball Z* that the fever would break.

The series that mixed adventure, fantasy and action, was initially aired during the afternoons. As it achieved its peak of popularity was moved to the mornings. Although it may sound like an irrelevant fact, this speaks volumes about the impact it had on that generation. In those days, when the bell rang for recess, for those who had the misfortune to study in the mornings, it was a matter of life and death to go as soon as possible to the nearest TV, if there was any around, to see even just a few minutes of that day's episode. All in all, *Dragon Ball Z* reached rating levels far unsurpassed by any other animated series to this day. And this largely explains the expectation that unleashed the announcement of a new film based on that title in early 2013. Anything with the characters of the series on the cover sold like hotcakes and gradually all that was behind the phenomenon would discovered.

Other titles like *Sailor Moon*, *Samurai X* or *Las Guerreras Mágicas* (*Magic Night Rayearth*) helped cement the genre's popularity throughout the country: now fans knew those were

animated series from Japan and were unlike any other. Their audience would include people of all ages and the expectation each new episode of those generated was enough to paralyze all the classrooms throughout Peru.

In those days, in April 1997, *Sugoi magazine* was release, the first publication in Peru dedicated entirely to *manga* and *anime*. It was the *Antezana* brothers, the magazine editors, who organized the first meetings for fans where the most recent episodes of *anime* that were not released in local television were screened. These meetings would be followed by the first theme parties and even a briefly aired television show, *TV Sugoi*.
When television fell short with new *anime* series, *Locomotion Channel* made its appearance through cable, the first in Latin America to air *anime* in its dubbed version for an adult audience. This would be the gateway for that generation to series with more diverse and developed content.

In the early years of the new millennium, Peruvian *otaku* found an inexhaustible source of new material through internet and piracy. Online forums, as we shall see later on, played a determining role by allowing the creation of communication and distribution channels so effective that lead to the development of a system of piracy and publication of new material in record time and a global reach.

In the last decade, the *fandom* achieved great notoriety in the mainstream media and, of course, the Internet community. What once were small parties now became large annual conventions as *OtakuFest* that at each date draws thousands of people and demonstrates that far from being an underground phenomenon, the *otaku* community is a market to be considered.

Now *cosplayers* make appearances in magazines and major newspapers wearing their costumes. The voice actors who participated in *anime* series are greeted like celebrities every time they visit the country and their voices are easily recognized by any fan.

Although in the last two years, interest in *anime* conventions has declined due to the growing popularity of other trends such as *Korean pop*, the premiere of the new movie *Dragon Ball Z: Battle of the Gods* created such expectation that before its release it had already become a box office hit and by November 2013 it already had raised over $1 million just in Peru.

For over two decades, Japan was the epicenter of *Pop Culture* in Asia. However, during the last five years, its importance has been eclipsed by other cultural power in the region that has managed to conquer even the Japanese archipelago through music.

2.2. KOREAN POP CULTURE: Kpop, the soundtrack of globalization

Until late last century Korea was not a power like Japan neither had the vast territory that China did. To boost their economy, their best alternative was abroad: "Without such a large internal force, it has focused almost entirely on the exterior, nurturing a culture that inherently seeks the global stage." (Arnold, 2012)

The political and economic openness of Korea allowed access to the markets of the region which enabled the rapid development of their industries. In return, for nothing comes for free, they took the risk of allowing the market entry of imported goods. But for the peninsular country risk was not only economic but also cultural: "(…) as South Korea's domestic market continued to gain significance, there was a fear that imported goods were a 'infiltration' of South Korean economic and cultural space." (Leung, 2012)
Although economic liberalization allowed the increase in cultural and entertainment production, imports quickly swept the domestic market. This required a quick response from the Korean government. In 1994, the Presidential Council of Advisors on Science and Technology presented a revealing report on the entertainment industry that would be the seed of today's Korean boom.

The report compared the profits of *Steven Spielberg*'s film *"Jurassic Park*" and overseas sales of 1.5 million cars manufactured by *Hyundai*, South Korea's flagship brand. It was clear that the entertainment industry was not only more profitable than the automotive industry but also could benefit the country's image abroad. That same year the government created the Office of Cultural Industry inside the Ministry of Culture and Sports to promote the development of the sector. The rest is history.

Looking at what *Korean Pop Culture* is today, we could say music and soap operas are the most important its references. In fact, Korean soap operas worked initially as a vehicle for pop music, often included as the soundtrack for these series.

The success of some *dramas*[7] have been such that the image of Korea was catapulted to new levels, as in the case of *Winter Sonata* (2002), the soap opera that turned the world around and raised over $ 2.7 billion for both the writers of the series and the country itself[8]. At that time, Korea was still recovering from the disastrous economic crisis of 1997 and soap operas helped to overcome the consequences of it. Interestingly, *Sonata de Invierno*, as it was known in Latin America, had no great relevance in its country of origin until its Japanese release in 2003.

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[7] The term *Dramas* is used to describe Asian soap operas.
[8] ARNOLD, Wayne. Beyond 'Gangnam Style': Why Korea Is a Pop Culture and Products Powerhouse: "Korean drama "Winter Sonata" has generated revenues of more than $2.7 billion for its writers and the Korean economy. To provide some context, the Harry Potter franchise is estimated to be worth $15 billion."

The *drama* became a boom in the island nation. Even the then Prime Minister *Junichiro Koizumi* said that *Bae Yong-joon*, who starred in the series, was more popular than him in Japan. *Dramas* like *Winter Sonata* opened the door to Korean productions and artists to the Japanese market, the biggest of the region.

In the last 10 years, pop music has become the main broadcaster of Korean culture in the world, conquering the Asian markets, especially the Japanese one. This is interesting since the pop music produced in Korea is based on the Japanese model.

In the early 90's it was clear that popular culture would make a qualitative leap that would turn it into an industry, and that opportunity would come at the hands of what the critic and composer *Yi Konyong* describe as "a national music that overcomes foreign influence, pursues our desire for unification, and is relevant to daily life (...) We will, then, overcome conservatism and exclusivity, pursuing musical democracy by bringing together and unifying all musics ... as our national music." (Konyong cited by Howard, 2002) This national music that *Konyong* was referring is known now as *Kpop*[9].

In 1992 the release of the first single from the band *Seo Taiji & Boys*, "*Nan Arayo (I know)*", revolutionized the music market in Korea. With a unique mix of hip hop and techno, it opened the minds and ears of an audience hungry for something new andtheir own. Although the success of *Seo Taiji* was resounding, *Kpop* was still far from the industry that it is today. That leap would come thanks to *Lee Soo Man*, the founder of *SM Entertainment*, one of the biggest music companies in Korea.

Building on the success that Japanese groups had in Korea at the time, *Lee* surveyed a group of teenagers to learn their preferences and what they expected from a Korean music idol. After a thorough recruitment process and taking into account the results of the market research, in 1996 *SM Entertainment* introduced *H.O.T.*, the first *Kpop* boyband. Success would be immediate. The boy and girl bands would become the most widely used format for music companies.

That's how the Korean wave that invaded Asia for the rest of the decade began. As explains the member of the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), *Haksoon Yim* (2002), "the scope of cultural policy for constructing cultural identity has expanded from cultural heritage and traditional arts during the 1970s to contemporary arts and the cultural life of people during the 1980s to amateur arts and popular culture and cultural industries during the 1990s."

After a decline in the popularity of the genre in the early new millennium, a second Korean wave, in the mid-2000, would finally reconquer the Asian market and even, as if by accident, enter the western market. Supported on new technologies, groups like *BigBang*, *Super Junior*, *DBSK* or *SS501* achieved great popularity not only in Korea but also Latin

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[9] The term *Kpop* comes from *Korean* and *Pop* and it is used to describe contemporary Korean pop music.

America: "While most countries have been decreasing their spending on infrastructure and the arts, the Korean government was the first nation to invest in high-speed broadband after the 1997 financial crisis, creating a multimedia-obsessed nation." (Arnold, 2012)

In 2012, *Kpop* achieved an unprecedented global reach thanks to the hit single *Gangnam Style* by *PSY*. After his video became the most watched in the history of the web portal *Youtube.com*, both the artist and the entire Korean music scene were placed on the spotlight. However, this success would not be considered a fluke. For the journalist *Wayne Arnold*, "Park Jae-sang, or Psy to his friends, and "Gangnam Style" is not an accident, but the result of decades of careful planning, investment and a certain amount of geographical bad luck." (2012)

Indeed, the success of Kpop was not circumstantial, but a snowball that included both the effort of private sector and the Korean government, as the evolution of online media and a strong trend of Internet users around the globe to consume comedy videos.

Although *Kpop* as a musical genre is considered by many as a fad, the fact that it got to put Korea on the map is undeniable. What many promotional campaigns have failed to achieve for many countries, *Kpop* has.

2.2.1. KOREAN POP CULTURE IN PERU: The biggest fandom in Latin America.

Unlike *anime*, in Peru *Kpop* was mostly ignored by the media. Ten years ago it was unthinkable that a local radio station would play a *Kpop* song. The genre was definitely not then what it is today.

Arguably, the first approximation of the Peruvian public to Korean popular culture occurred, as in Asia, through dramas. Some of these series were broadcast via television networks, as happened with the popular *Stairway to Heaven* (*Cheonguk-eui Gyeodan*) aired in 2006, or *Winter Sonata*. However, most of it was consumed through Internet or the informal market, as it is with *anime*.

By including *Kpop* songs as opening and ending themes, usually ballads, or featuring by *Kpop* idols, *dramas* became the Trojan horse of Korean pop. The poignant melodies were conquering the public, arousing their interest in Korean music despite the fact of not understanding what those songs were talking about, fans could easily relate to the plight of the protagonists in the story, creating an emotional bond with them.

As with *anime*, *fansubs* played a major role on the dissemination of *dramas* in Latin America. Even though Korean *dramas* managed to catch the attention of the Latin audience, the traditional providers of such programs in the region are Mexico and Brazil.

Although there was a section of viewers that accepted the *dramas*, to introduce them aggressively on television represented a huge risk since the consumption patterns had been already configured for decades and change would had required several years and heavy investment that TV stations were just not willing to take.

The same would happen with music. Both video clips of the hottest artists and variety shows in which they appeared, were subtitled by fans and then distributed through Internet, increasing the material available for avid consumers. This is an important detail because, as we shall see, although Latin America has become an important market for Korean record companies, so far the DVDs officially released by these artists do not contain Spanish subtitles.

Throughout this process, there is an interesting parallel between *anime* and *Kpop* since most of the current *Kpop* fans go to know it because of *anime*. When Korean artists achieved success in Japan, some animation houses chose groups like *DBSK* to sing the main themes for series like *One Piece*.

The rapid spread of both *dramas* and Korean pop music led to the formation of a fan community that began timidly in 2004 with *Villa Kpop*, an online group managed by *Aldo Peralta* and *Sonia Tovar*, founders of *Kasoo*, the first *Kpop* store in Peru. This small group would allow fans to share information about their favorite artists and subsequently lead to the creation the first fan clubs.

With the popularization of Internet in the following years and the arrival of *Youtube*, *Kpop* became much more accessible for Peruvian fans. Many *Kpop* fans now came to it by chance. Most of them got to it because a friend told them about it or someone hand them a link.

The Korean pop lover audience was growing strongly but received little or no attention from the media despite the activities and collective achievements of the fan clubs. But at the end of the first decade of the new millennium all suddenly changed: "By 2010, the fever had begun. In February 2012, with the arrival of the first band, JYJ, it was clear that there was an audience eager to see the stars of K-pop live." (La República, 2012)

In August 2011, the humanitarian visit of two of the members of the group *MBLAQ* caused such a sensation among Peruvian fans that Korea laid its eyes on Peru. But it would be *JYJ*, a group on litigation with its former record label, who would take the first step by visiting our country in March next year. The event managed to beat sales records, which caught the attention of even the Korean press. Peru would become the capital of *Kpop* in Latin American.

That same year the arrival of *BigBang*, the Korean band of the moment, was announced. That event would be the litmus test for productions companies to determine whether *Kpop* was really profitable or not since 2012 was very inauspicious for these companies.

The Korean group was one of the most successful proposals that year, surpassing in the box-office the much-hyped show *Lady Gaga* held days later. This was very significant because, unlike American star, *BigBang* songs were never played on local radio stations.

Kpop had established itself not only in the Peruvian music scene, but also in the cultural, without any presence in media or being advertised by the Korean government or record companies. All thanks to the work of fans who accomplished what an entire industry couldn't.

3. POP CULTURE: A new language

Understanding *Pop Culture* in all its dimensions can be very difficult at times and often elicits all sorts of criticism from purists who consider it a marketing product, vain or anything but important. However, its convening power and its ability to transcend the ideological, political and cultural barriers, makes it a valuable tool for communication, a new form of language.

It's funny because language is part of culture and it is as a dissemination tool of it. Culture could also function as a form of language. In fact, the symbols and means can also transmit or channel a message. This doesn't mean we all interpret the same way the interaction of our own culture with another since, as explained, it can be understood differently depending on the cultural background of each person.

Yet, there's no doubt about the communicative ability of *Pop Culture*. Like language, it is constantly evolving, although some purists from both, language and culture, assert that it is rather an involution. On the contrary, it's not a setback but a move towards a more standardized and accessible communication with all the "wrongs" that may bring with it.

And *Pop Culture* plays its part in this process. The popularity of a series, a movie or a song can generate the emergence of new words or new meanings, as happened for example with the famous phrase "it's over 9000", taken from *Dragon Ball Z*[10].
It's interesting how much language and culture, despite being collective in nature (as they have no meaning outside of the community), also have an individual dimension. "Our language and our languages make and mark our own identity throughout life. It structure us and links the members of our group daily." (Vanhoudt, 2005)

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[10] The phrase "it's over 9000" makes reference to a famous scene from the anime *Dragon Ball Z* in which the characters *Goku* and *Vegeta* have a confrontation. While Goku raises his energy level, Vegeta checks on it using an artifact. After realizing the explosive increase on Goku's level of energy he claims "it's over 9000". The phrase became an internet phenomenon when Ophra Winfrey became the victim of an internet joke performed by a web portal 4Chan user.

If we refer to language, that individual dimension would be the speech which ends up being the main source of enrichment of the first one. Each individual's particular way of communicating offers endless possibilities that, being accepted and used by a group of people, can end up being part of the collective speaking (language).

Let's take slang for example. Have you ever asked yourself where the slang you use every day come from? These terms were not so from public domain. When you create a term or give a new meaning to an existing one to refer to something specific it's usually used with the more immediate social circle or the one in which the term can be used more frequently. The more the term is used the easier it will be spread, especially if it refers to a very common situation or action. The same applies to culture.

From a systemic point of view, speech plays the role of dissipative structure within the system "language". In other words, it is through speech that we interact with another culture, this exchange of codes obtains new information that is taken to the language and ends up by transforming and enriching it. "Speech is essential for language to be established." (Benavides, 2005)

As with language, culture also has a particular dimension on each individual. In a more broad sense, every culture has a popular level, where most interactions and transformations arise. At that level, culture is more affected by trends in society and also has a longer range over society itself, local or global. On the other hand, it also has an particular level in which each of us configures and reconfigures its system of symbols and beliefs, our culture.

What would be the "speech" of culture? To answer this you should first ask yourself: what is the space where you can produce the greatest number of interactions and production of symbols? If we think about it, we'll conclude that *Popular Culture* is that space. Let's reflect on it: How did popular music was created? Where do myths and legends come from? And dances? It is within *Popular Culture* where all these forms of expression appear or at least are discovered.

Of all the dimensions *Popular Culture* can have, the one that can be considered as the spearhead is *Pop Culture*. Being much more accessible since it has the greatest ability to become a mass product, it ends up as the "speech" of culture.
Pop Culture, being accessible and massive, is often the first contact of an individual with a culture different from their own and will not be difficult to understand and assimilate. This interaction with *Pop Culture* transforms the cultural dimension of that person, who then ends up affecting those around him like in a domino effect. How is it that Korean soap operas can be so successful in Peru? In the same way that Mexican *telenovelas* are successful in countries as diverse as the Philippines or Morocco: *Pop Culture* will always be the best way to bring two societies with different cultures closer.

4. POP COSMOPOLITANISM: Cosmopolitan Pop Culture

Although *Cosmopolitanism* is a school of thought which origins date back to ancient Greece, it was until recent decades that, in a context of growing interdependence among countries, has been gaining relevance. Being cosmopolitan is to think of itself as a citizen of the world, where there are no differences or divisions and we are all part of the same community. It's to think we're part of a whole and not a fraction adrift.

There's no doubt this is a systemic vision that complicates the understanding of our role in the global society. Even though for some conservative nationalists this idea could sound outrageous, a betrayal to tradition and country, it's the most logical and reasonable considering that our country would not survive if we held no relations with the rest of the international community. And us too, if we didn't establish relationships with people of different cultures, especially in a multicultural country like Peru. The bonds of dependency that have been generated through treaties, strategic alliances, business or politics are proof that we are not alone in the world and on the other side of the border there are people like us with the same needs.

In this path, as has happened with the language and culture, what was previously thought as "our", now has a much broader and less individualistic meaning in this globalized world. In fact, globalization, according to sociologist *Saskia Sassen*, is defined as "a process that denationalizes what has been constructed as national." (2008) In other words, what was understood before as a country's exclusive now has global dimensions, what was once considered as a certain group's own becomes part of the world heritage.

Pop Culture, fueled, widespread and reconfigured by the media, has been particularly affected by the huge amount of information that flows from one side of the world to the other. The trend is towards a Global Pop Culture that picks up elements of all great cultures, the major media icons, where we could find something from *Hollywood*, *Bollywood* and *Chollywood*[11].

Consumers of this new *Pop Culture* are not interested in intellectual or historical property of what they like to consume as long as they are able to consume it. During the 70's, in the Cold War days, Western culture was forbidden in the U.S.S.R. However, the youngsters managed to get the Beatles records and gathered to listen to them clandestinely. It didn't matter if the music they were enjoying so much was made by "the enemy", it was what the world was listening to and they wanted to be part of the wave too.

Now, with all of the ease media gives us we can enjoy a great cultural buffet in which we can try a little bit of everything. We no longer talk about cosmopolitanism in a political or ideological sense, but also cultural. We can talk now about *Pop Cosmopolitanism*.

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[11] The term *Chollywood* comes from *Cholo* and *Hollywood*, and refers to celebrities and showbiz in Peru.

The term was coined by *Marcelo Suarez-Orozco* and *Desiree B. Qin-Hillard* in their book *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millenium* (2004). *Henry Jenkins*, a professor at the Southern California University and author of several books on *Popular Culture* and media, defines *Pop Cosmopolitan* as "someone whose embrace of global popular media represents an escape route out of the parochialism of her local community." (2006)

We can say that pop cosmopolitans construct their identity from popular demonstrations from anywhere in the world regardless of their origin whenever they feel identified with them. In fact, "the pop cosmopolitans themselves are able to further their own exposure and choose from what the world has to offer (limited to what is on the Internet, of course) in terms of popular culture." (Pradhan, 2010)

Thanks to the hyperlink we can start our virtual tour on a news portal and end up on a website dedicated to Thai cuisine. The variety of content that we find on the Internet is as vast as there are stars in the universe and the volatility of the user's attention while surfing the net is very high. Just a little distraction, a striking image or sound is enough for us to jump from one topic to another. Suddenly, we come across something we've never seen on television or heard on the radio. Many discovered *Kpop* that way. Many others, *anime*.

To be a pop cosmopolitan, as *Pradhan* suggests, is an almost indispensable requirement to have access to the Internet, or at least belong to a social circle that has access to that platform and who share similar interests. The Internet is a vast library of *Pop Culture* but more importantly, it is a major international forum. Youngsters and teenagers from all over the world meet there to share information about their favorite bands or to team up for playing online games. Here language barriers are not important, the important thing is to have the same hobbies and, over time, the same cultural patterns.

Jenkins is aware of the enormous potential of the Internet as a meeting platform for young people from around the world, creating a global network; and also how, in the long term, these interactions ultimately affect their perception of the world and themselves. He states that this global network is a force towards adaptation to globalization, and not only shapes this generation but it could lead to a political change in the way people think of themselves, as global citizens, as pop cosmopolitans rather than just Americans. (2005)

But the possibilities that imply the fabulous world of the Internet are not reduced simply to store information or to be in a chat room of global proportions. It is also the largest platform for the production of the most diverse content as well as raw material for this new social category called pop cosmopolitan. *Memes*, for example, are creations from the virtual world that now are part of *Pop Culture* and the everyday language of young people everywhere.

The link between the pop cosmopolitan and internet is indissoluble; however, it gets deeper and deeper as these users establish links with other users through it, especially when we go from being just consumers to produce new content, that is, when we go from users to *prosumers*[12].

A *Kpop* fan depends on the Internet to keep its hobby going, either individually (getting updated on its favorite artists or purchasing music and merchandising) or collectively (participating in activities with other fans, organizing and sharing information on fan clubs). Usually, it is through social networking that fans get to know each other and get organize. On many occasions, fan clubs from around the world make contact and work together without even knowing and several hundred miles between.

Furthermore, although *anime* already has a formal market in Peru (but not as big as the informal one) Internet remains the largest source of consumption, as discussed below. In both cases, fans are not only consumers but also producers and sometimes even publicists. These roles are crucial to the success of a cultural product, regardless of its format. As *Pradhan* says, "(the pop cosmopolitan) are able to participate in the creation of a global popular culture, bringing attention to specific products through its consumption." (2010)

The founder of the web portal *SeoulBeats*, *Ji Young Park*, believes that "social media has definitely had an impact on how accessible and easy it's to find these groups (Kpop)". A social network such as *Youtube* allow us to discover more and more new artists every minute, but sites like *Facebook* and *Twitter* are the ones that allow fans to share their new discoveries and make them viral.

In Latin America there are plenty of sites (especially on *Facebook*) dedicated to *anime*. Not only that, there's also hundreds of pages devoted exclusively to an *anime* series or a character. The Internet almost unlimited capacity to store information allows constant production and reproduction of contents that reinforce the ideas and codes that end being a part of *Pop Cosmopolitanism*. You just need to take a look at *Tumblr* website to understand the magnitude of the impact that pop cultural products have in the world.

Pop Cosmopolitanism is not a culture in itself, but a way of conceiving *the Global Pop Culture*. If you believe that cultural trends (and market ones as both concepts are hopelessly intertwined) could only be created by the cultural producers and promoters, it's way more than that. It's a good example of the ordinary public having the upper hand, sometimes able to achieve what the industry can't.

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[12] The term comes from the words *producer* and *cosumer*. *Prosumers* are the ones that consume and also produce new content on internet. Bloggers are considered *prosumers*.

5. POP DIPLOMACY: Forefront of Foreign Policy

Even though International Relations can be very volatile in today's world, as seen in Ukraine's and Venezuela's political crises, the forms and methods of the old art of diplomacy have not changed much in recent years. However, the foreign ministries of the world do have new tools to do their job.

Manfredi considers *Public Diplomacy* as International Relations vanguard (2013) and that is largely true. As mentioned above, the use of the media in the foreign policy management is relatively new. But if we want to point out a truly modern and contemporary trend, *Pop Diplomacy* can be considered as the spearhead of foreign policy in cultural terms.

In the cases of Japan and Korea we can understand that states nowadays are not able to produce cultural products, they can only manage, regulate or promote them. Their work is but administrative and even if they wanted to reverse the situation, they would face not only economic but also social and legal constrains.

The sole intervention in the process of building or planning *Popular Culture* would delegitimize it as a social construct, but that does not mean that the State cannot do it, just because it would not be right. Even if they tried to participate directly in the cultural production they will most likely fail, not getting results as shocking as those that private sector has achieved through cultural industry or what *prosumers* had through new media like the Internet.

What can the State do then? Trying to build on the success that has a cultural product and declare it as representative of their country's culture. It took several decades before the Japanese government, led at the time by former Prime Minister *Taro Aso*, recognized in *anime* and *Pop Culture* an important ally for the diplomatic work. So much so that in 2008 the popular cartoon character *Doraemon* was appointed as Ambassador of Japanese culture by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Still, neither the Japanese diplomacy and its government have been able to fully exploit the popularity of their own *Pop Culture* in the world.

Korea reacted a little faster. Noticing the growing interest in their dramas and pop music, did not hesitate to include them in its strategic plan to improve the country's image. They consistently support the spreading of *Kpop* to keep alive the idea of a peaceful, modern and cool Korea. They take advantage of the popularity of their dramas and films to draw attention to their culture and generate empathy among foreign audiences.

This new kind of diplomacy that works based on the *Pop Culture* of each country is known as *Pop Diplomacy*. While *Cultural Diplomacy* is focused on individuals and *Public Diplomacy* works from a marketing point of view, *Pop Diplomacy* should be focused on

targeted audiences to enable the country's intensive promotion of their *Pop Culture* in already conquered markets, strengthening a consumer pattern.

In terms of *Pop Diplomacy*, the goal of both, Korea and Japan, is to capture the attention of their target audience (youngsters and teenagers around the world) and not the states because, in the long run, it's that same audience that will not only invest their money in buying Japanese goods or visit Korea on their vacations, but also will feel a predisposition towards anything that comes from those places. Even more if these people are in key positions in the public or private sector.

Pop Culture fans in Japan and Korea, at the forefront of their respective areas, consider these cultural products as a reflection of modern nations, with more developed cultures and the most exquisite life styles. What fan would not want to visit the home country that thing he loves so much? It is certainly the dream or goal of *otakus* and *Kpop* fans around the globe.

Although the question governments could ask themselves would be: Can we improve our international relations with other countries based on this?

We now know that the *Pop Culture* encourages intercultural dialogue effectively. But the goal is not only to encourage dialogue, but to articulate a space that allows laying the democratic foundations of the Global Society.

Even if there is a risk of losing certain features of our own culture in the intercultural dialogue, in the long run that loss becomes a gain since we will have learned something new from others: "The third culture can mean the loss of our own but also the extension of the other in a context of reciprocity ". (Patel, Li and Sooknanan, 2011)

Being an *anime* or a *Kpop* fan could mean facing a number of prejudices, from being seen as a social misfit to being labeled as alienated, especially in this part of the world, so conservative, so abandoned. But when states fail to try to establish an atmosphere of peace in an increasingly interdependent society are the simple things in life, like our hobbies, that kindle a light of hope, a place where, regardless of race, gender or country of origin, humans can understand each other.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Talking about *Pop Culture* refers to a series of social, economic and even political issues that are rarely taken into account by minimizing the true scope of the topic. The research undertaken provides a different perspective on this phenomenon and its potential. To draw conclusions is necessary to revisit the objectives that guided the study.

At the beginning of this investigation the main goal was determine the importance of *Pop* Culture for the formation of a global society. This strategy, which surely would have great value if it is raised as such, requires an analysis from different perspectives.

First, the term *Popular Culture* does not yet have a precise definition. As a dimension of human reality, any attempt to classify it is useless. Paradoxically, there seem to be a general consensus on what it represents. It's necessary to be clear that *Popular Culture* and *Pop Culture* are similar but different terms.

Due to the intense process of globalization and technological advances in communications and interconnectivity, *Pop Culture* has acquired a new dimensionality including variables such as *Cosmopolitanism* and the online community.

Thanks to the almost unlimited access granted by Internet to its users, the identity of these as individuals is not only defined by the family, social, historical and religious context in which it grow, but also by the possibility to have access to the Internet, allowing it to have contact with a wide range of manifestations and forms of expression from around the world.

It is as if for a long period of our lives we were almost forced to take a strict diet and all of a sudden we had a feast in front of with all kinds of dishes. The individual will have the option to choose what it likes best, or in terms of identity, what defines it best. That's *Pop Cosmopolitanism*.

Internet is also supporting a new community of users around the world, with very different backgrounds but common preferences, like *Kpop* or *anime*. This new online community is instituted, first, as the new global society; second, it builds and plays a new standardized *Pop Culture*, accessible to any user online.

This new *Cosmopolitan Pop Culture* built in Internet can be considered as what sociologists call the *Third Culture*, a great inclusive culture that combines the qualities of every other culture in the world.

It is important to note that culture is learned and is constantly evolving. While it is true that not all cultures have the opportunity to contribute to the process of formation of this *hypercentral* culture is not exclusive from Internet. The *Third Culture* breaks out from the digital world into the real one and those constant interactions and feedback will ultimately define it as global.

Second, *Pop Culture* is a powerful tool and that is known by the private sector that controls the cultural industry, but is also known by the State, or at least they're trying to keep up with it. The cases of Japan and Korea are the most representative: both feature a *Pop Culture* of global relevance and try to capitalize on its popularity to boost their images inside the international community.

The problem of these countries (and all the rest) is that do not quite recognize the potential of their *Pop Culture* in all its magnitude, nor its *Cultural Diplomacy*. This is due largely to the results of cultural policies only being seen in the long term as well as being difficult to measure. By thinking culture as an expense rather than an investment, many states prefer not to consider it as one of its priorities.

The proposal is to redirect the efforts of *Cultural Diplomacy* toward the use of *Pop Culture* in all its dimensions, not only as an instrument, but as a basis for the construction of a new form of relationship between countries.

Historically, *Pop Culture* has been the product of interactions between popular artists, the audience and the cultural industry. The State comes after to take or set the rules in the market but its capacity will always be overwhelmed by the culture itself, which cannot and should not be controlled.

Third, international relations are very complex. They can be influenced by many factors, especially human. Plans and projections are difficult to sustain. The importance of *Pop Culture* lies in its ability to integrate peoples from the international community regardless of the situation within it. People are interacting with each other and new generations are leaving aside the old ideas of their predecessors to open their minds to a world of possibilities.

The Global Society is appearing as part of a natural process in which states could participate by strengthening ties of friendship and cooperation, but not trying to take advantage of its cultural relevance to expand its domain.

The old nationalism no longer works. Being isolated is impractical. The survival of a State or a community of states will be determined by their ability to integrate themselves with the rest of the globe. Of course, there's no guarantee that this integration process is equitable. In the struggle to impose to one another the strongest or the most popular will win.

Fourth, in theories of International Relations, *Cosmopolitan Constructivism* has the most humanistic vision which suits the best to these modern times we are living in. In the life of the international community, people and ideas should be taken into account. We can no longer conceive a State as an alienated entity above society, but as a representative structure of a human group.

In the past, political and social conflicts, economic crises and cultural and military clashes seemed to burn all bridges between the countries in the international community. Little the bulk of the population understood. It was more a matter of State. It always that way. But when a song came on the radio or it was time for the cartoons on television, none of that mattered.

In those moments when you find out that there is someone on the other side of the world that can barely communicate with you but hears the same music that you do or watches the same series, is when you regain faith and believe again that one day we can all understand each other.

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