

Document : K-pop fans emerge as a powerful force in US protests

Amid ongoing protests in America against racism and police brutality, a global legion of K-pop fans has emerged as an important ally for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

Fans of South Korea's popular music industry have raised funds for BLM and mobilised to overlord social media hashtags used by its opponents, earning appreciation from protesters for their political activism.

Some may have been surprised by their impact, but K-pop observers note fans have long organised support for social and political causes as well as their favourite artists.

This support has, however, also raised questions about systemic racism in the industry and fandom, leading to calls for K-pop to address its own complicated relationship with race.

## Fancams to the rescue

Following the outbreak of protests in the US, sparked by the death of black man George Floyd, the Dallas Police Department asked people to share videos of "illegal activity protests" through the iWatch Dallas app.

K-pop fans worldwide responded by inundating it with fan-recorded videos, known as fancams, and memes of various K-pop artists, in an effort to prevent police from tracking protesters' actions.

Barely a day later, the app was reported to be experiencing technical difficulties though Dallas Police would not say if it was due to the fancams.



## Activity : International social movements, an example of Cultural Globalization

K-pop fans also spammed hashtags used to oppose BLM on social media, such as #AllLivesMatter, #BlueLivesMatter and #WhiteLivesMatter.

Though this made such hashtags trend higher, it also made it harder for their original messages to be seen.

K-pop fans, who have previously been derided online and criticised for "fancam spam", were celebrated as valued allies of the protestors.

### **History of political activism**

To many outside K-pop fandom, this political activism and co-ordination was a surprise.

However, those who follow K-pop closely consider such fans' organisation and impact perfectly natural.

Fans in South Korea and worldwide routinely run well-co-ordinated campaigns to promote their favourite artists and propel them to awards and charts success and greater visibility. These skills are now being applied to the BLM cause.

As Hyunsu Yim, a pop culture reporter for The Korea Herald, has noted in a Twitter thread, this is far from the first time K-pop fans have made a political or social impression.

He illustrated his point with previous examples of activism: donations to a London charity to fund over 35,000 meals; calls for safer roads in Bangladesh; and Chile's government in 2019 blaming K-pop and other "international influences and media" for domestic protests.

Source : Shreyas Reddy, BBC, June 2020

### Questions

- 1) Do some research : what is Black Lives Matter ?
- 2) What have K pop fan done for Black Lives matter ?
- 3) What happens with the cams ?
- 4) Why do K pop fans have specific skills to protest ?
- 5) Why is the involvement of K pop fans alongside Black Lives Matter a form of globalization ?

### Guidelines for the final task

Write a text to explain that globalization is not only an economic phenomenon. You will then post it on the class pad.