

Contours of Fandom Political Engagement

The Case of K-pop Fans in Tulsa Prank and BLM

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Motivation

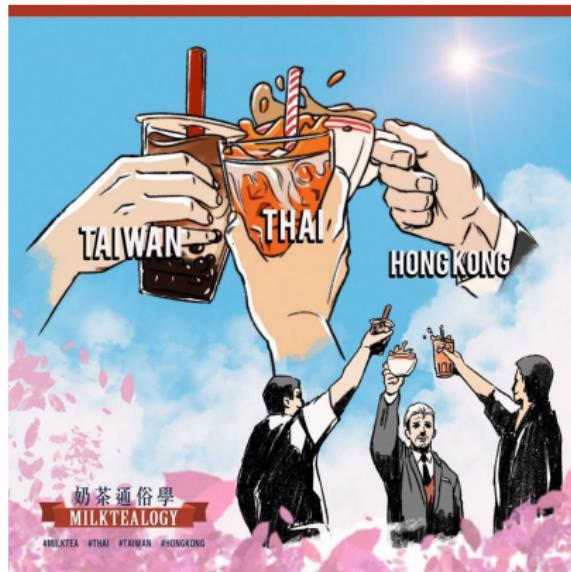


image credit: Asiatic Affairs

- K-pop fandom and youth political activism.
- Milktea Alliance in SE Asia (late 2010)
- Chilean youth protests (2019)
- S. Korean anti-insurrection demonstrations (2024)
- *Does K-pop fandom drive youth political participation?*

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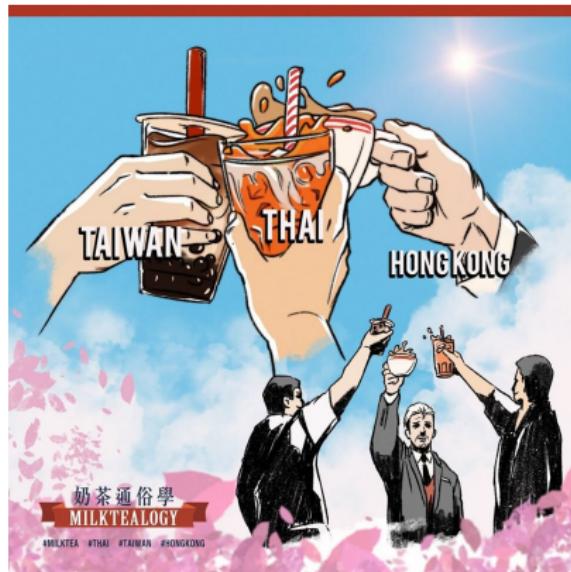


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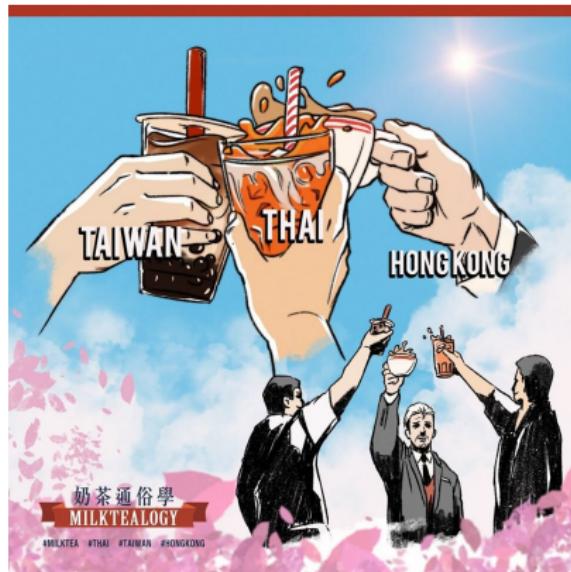


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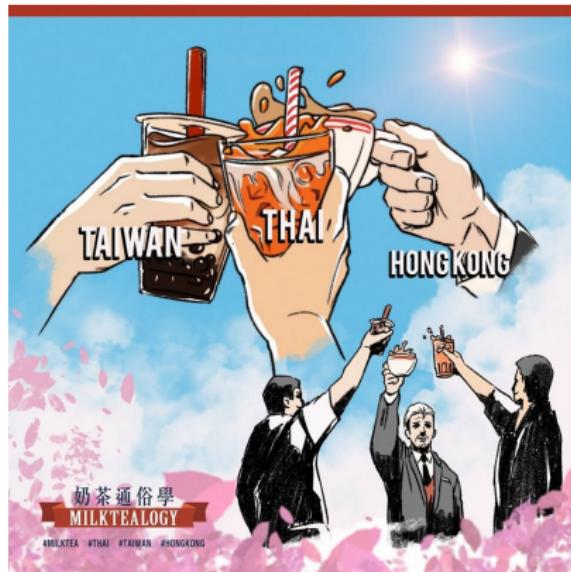


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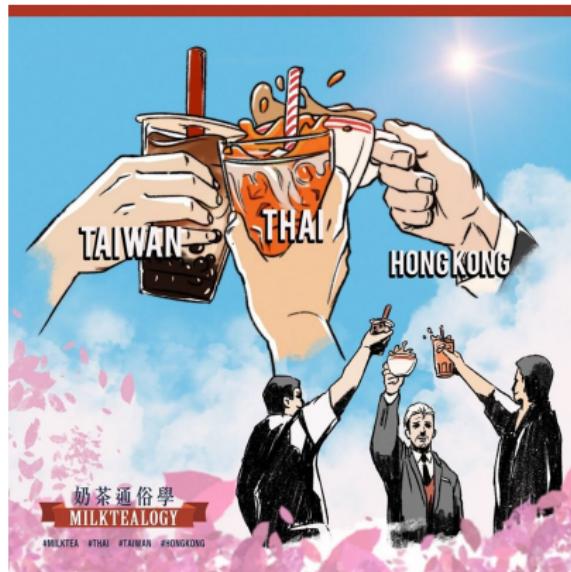
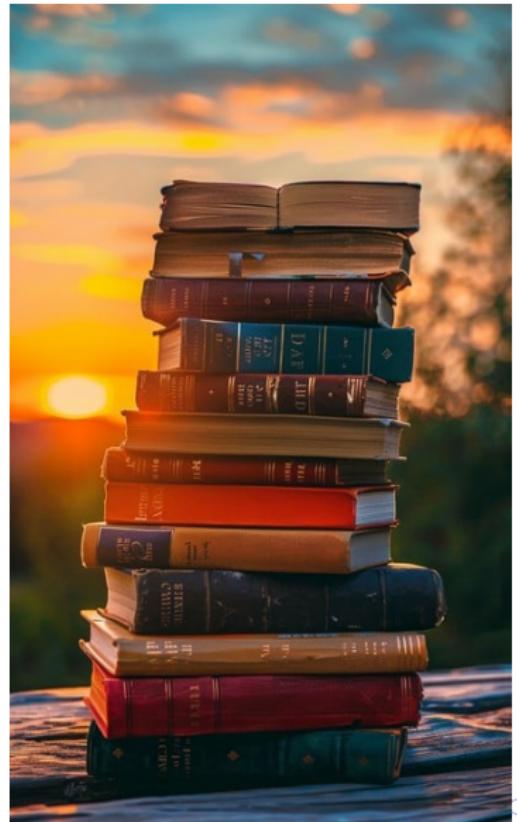


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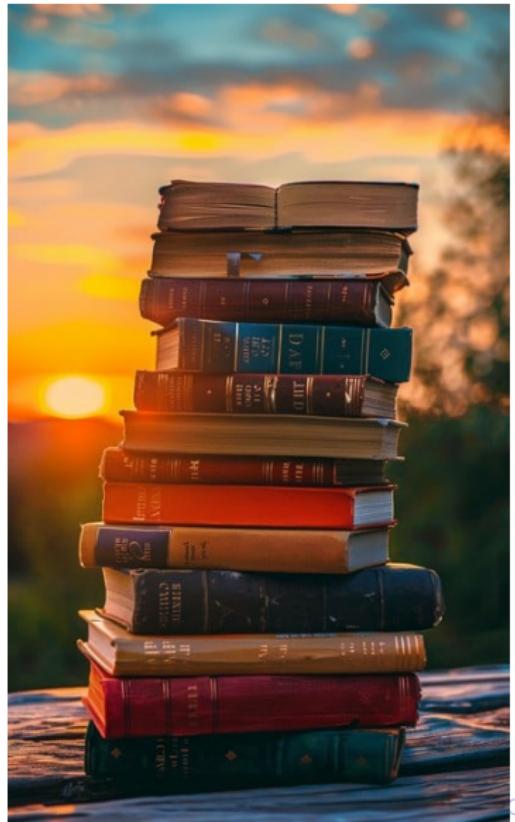
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- Literature treats fans as passive recipients of political messages.
- Few studies examine fan agency in political mobilization.
- Fandom is often seen as progressive, but intra-fandom diversity remains unexplored.



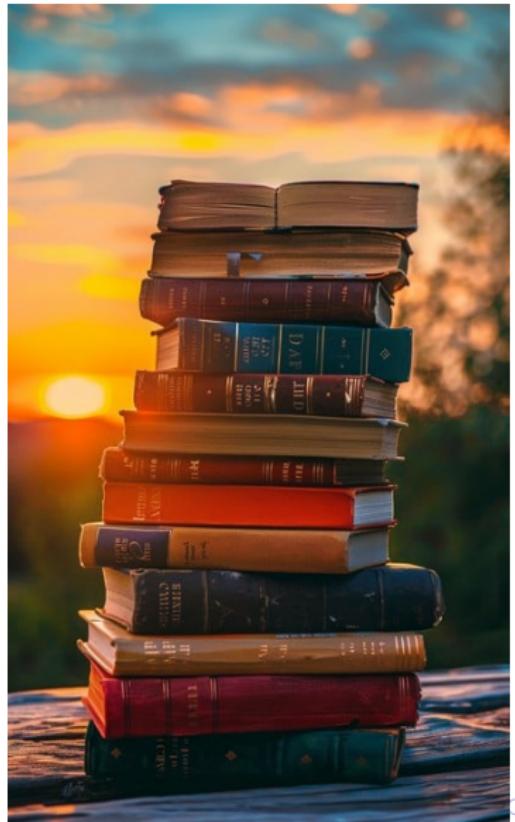
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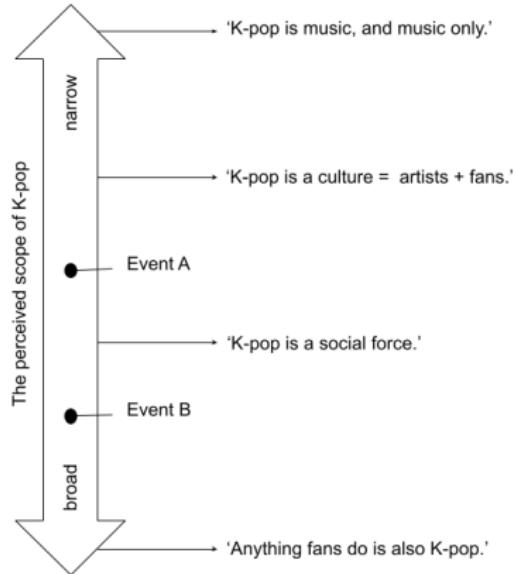


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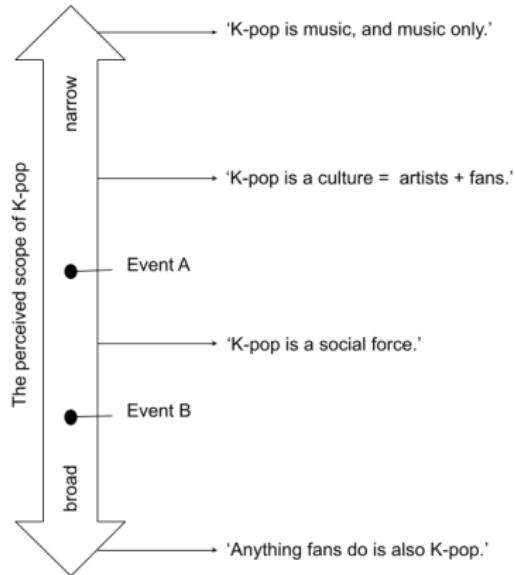


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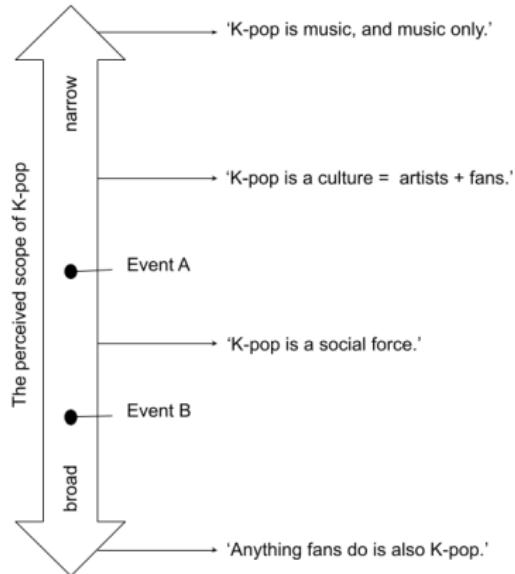
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- Some fans see K-pop strictly as entertainment.
- Others see it as a broader cultural identity that includes political activism.

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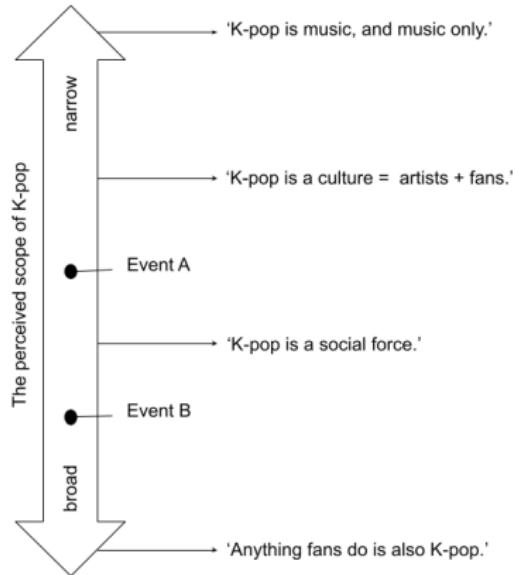
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Two Political Events where the Fandom was Involved

1) Trump Tulsa Rally Prank

2) Mobilizing for BLM

Trump 'played' by K-pop fans and
TikTok users who disrupted Tulsa rally

Claimed tickets to rally were not used, which helped leave
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image credit: The Guardian

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

10 June 2020

Shreya Reddy
BBC Monitoring



K-pop artists' and fans' support for the Black Lives Matter movement has attracted attention

Hypotheses

- H₁:** Fans who perceive K-pop as transcending entertainment are more likely to support fandom political activism than others.
- H₂:** This relationship is weaker for highly partisan events (Tulsa prank vs. BLM).

Data and Methods

Data

- **Online Survey (N=920)**: U.S.-based K-pop fans.
- **Interviews (N=110)**: Semi-structured interviews.
- **Key Variables (Survey)**:

Methods: Ordered Logit (survey)

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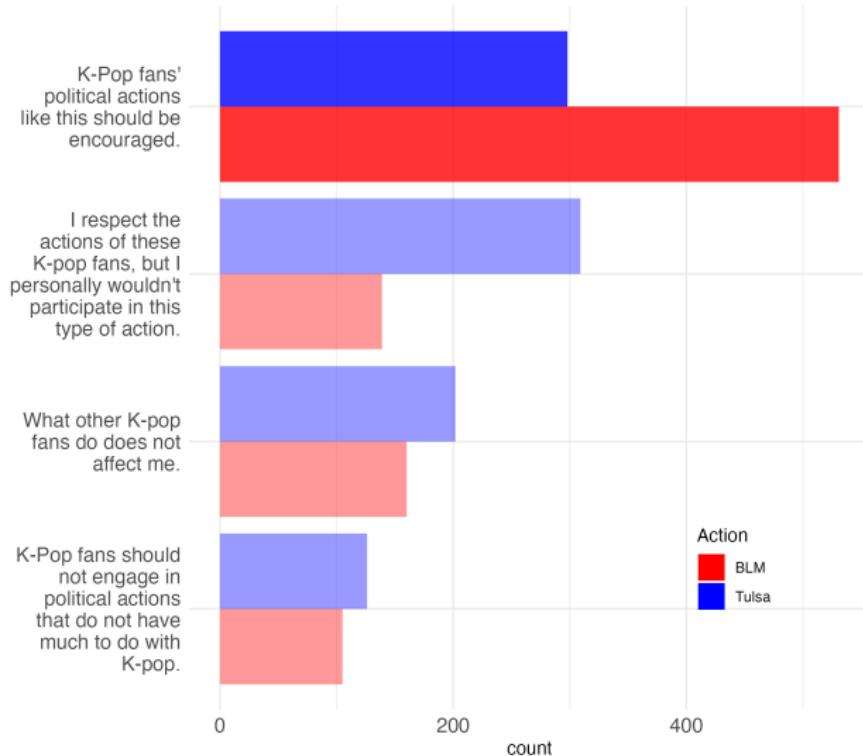
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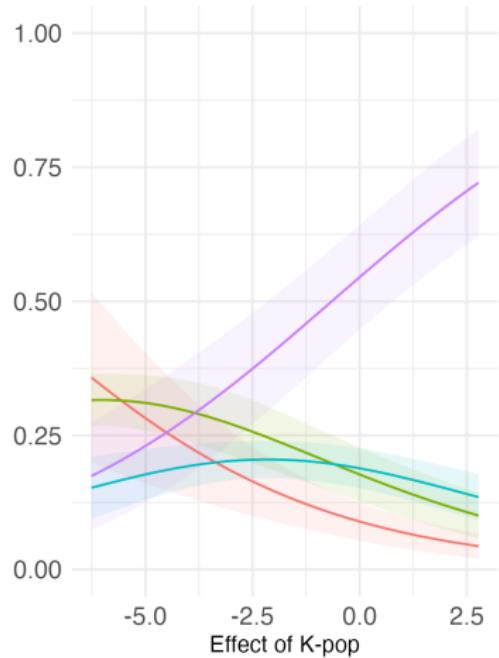
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A Glance at the Survey Data

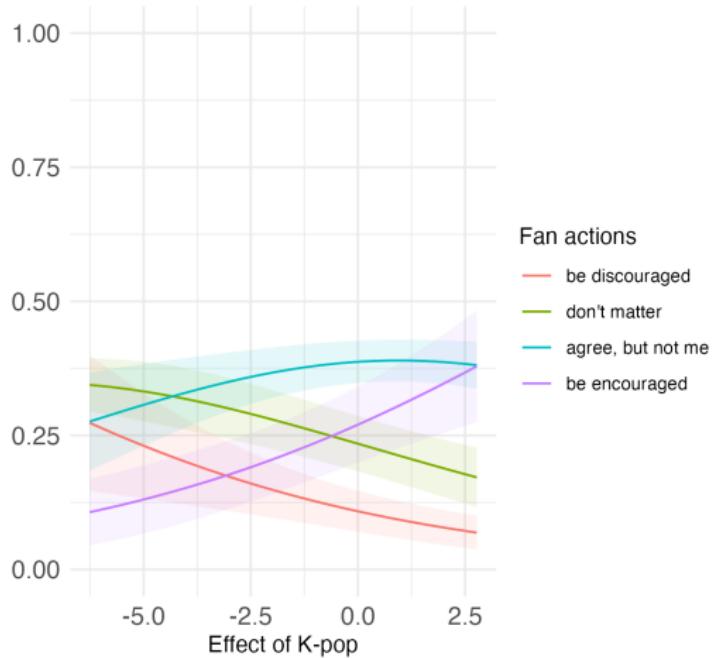


Marginal Effects

A. BLM



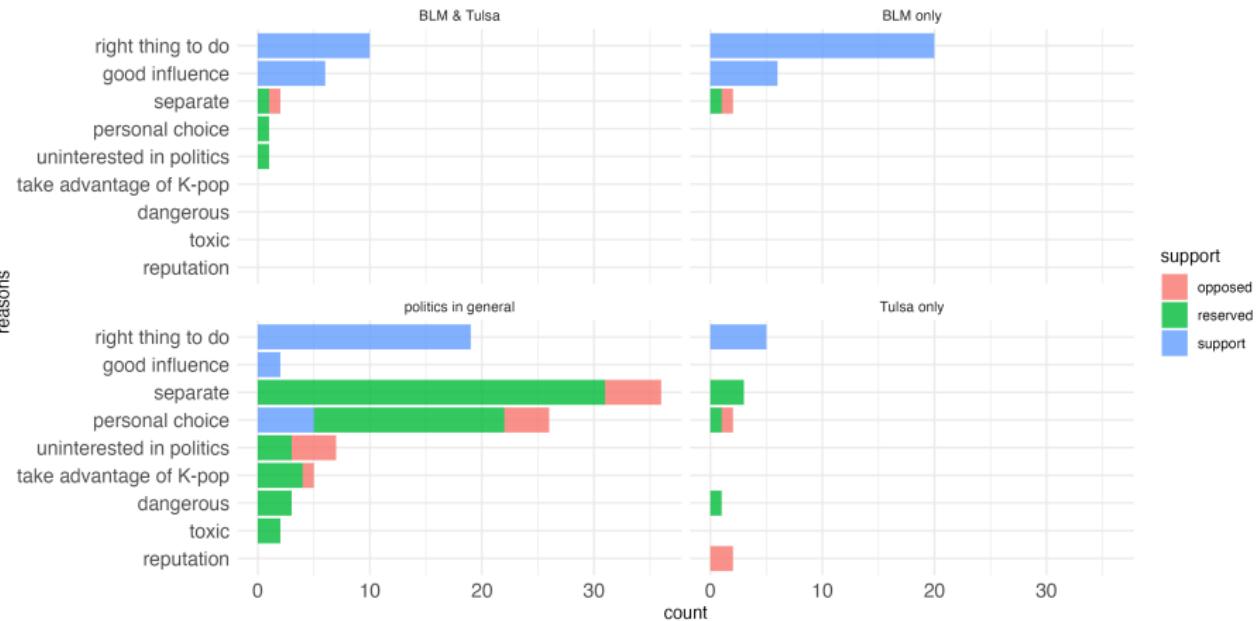
B. Tulsa



Fan actions

- be discouraged
- don't matter
- agree, but not me
- be encouraged

Interview Findings



Conclusion

- Fan perceptions of K-pop shape attitudes toward activism.
- Political engagement is **not** universally accepted within fandom, though the support is generally quite strong
- Higher partisanship (i.e., more 'political') ⇒ lower endorsement of activism.