

## **Keep Your Enemies Closer: Protecting Korea's Pop Culture in China**

Roald Maliangkay  
*The Australian National University*

Since the late 1990s, when Korean pop stars began to perform to large sold-out stadiums in China, Korean media executives have begun to regularly negotiate with Chinese administrators. Although at first these negotiations were primarily concerned with artists' permission to perform, as the popularity of artists and groups grew, the widespread breach of the Copyright Act in China urged the Korean government to increase its appeals to its neighbour for more effective countermeasures. Foreign products are subjected to stringent censorship and high import tariffs, but piracy in China remains rampant. Since China's digital music market is set to grow considerably over the next decade, this also implies an increase in the licit but illegal exchange of media files. Korean companies have been frustrated by the speed with which counterfeit copies of their products flood the markets, but they are nonetheless increasing their activities in China. In this paper I examine what measures the parties involved are taking in order to fight piracy, and what recent developments tell us about the soft power the Korean Wave allegedly yields (or not).