

Korea's Public Diplomacy Policy towards Africa: Strategies, Instruments and Its Implications on Economic Linkages with Africa

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한국의 대 아프리카 공공외교: 전략과 방안 그리고 경제 연계에 미치는 영향

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Abstract: Korea-Africa relations date back to the period of independence of African countries. During this time, the ties between Korea and Africa has passed through stagnation, inconsistencies and weak diplomatic exchanges. Recently, Korea began to refocus its efforts towards Africa in order to revitalize their relations. This paper examines Korea's public diplomacy strategies towards Africa and how its various strategies are working in the interest of Korea as well as Africa. The study shows that Korea's renewed interest in Africa is primarily driven by the security threat from North Korea and the need to diversify its market for industrial goods as well as energy sources. The latter motives override Korea's interest in the continent. These motives are not at variance with those pursued by large powers like the US and China in Africa. Furthermore, the paper shows that Korea is employing a mixture of public diplomacy instruments in Africa with varied outcomes. Economic linkages between Korea and Africa are on an upward trajectory since the late 2000s. In order to build sustainable relations, the paper provides a number suggestions with far-reaching implications on Korea's public diplomacy towards Africa in the future.

Key Words : Korea, Africa, Public diplomacy, Actors, Strategies

요약: 아프리카의 독립국가 출현과 함께 한국과 아프리카의 관계는 시작되었지만 외교적 교류는 완성된 모습보다는 불규칙적이며 비정규적 교류가 이어지는 듯한 모습을 보여왔다. 최근 들어 한국정부는 아프리카와의 관계 개선을 위하여 새로운 접근을 시도하고 있다. 본 연구는 한국의 대 아프리카 공공 외교의 여러 전략과 방안들을 살펴보면서 어떻게 한국과 아프리카간의 상호이익에 부합하는지를 분석한다. 한국의 아프리카에 대한 관심은 북

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한의 안보위협과 시장다변화 그리고 미국과 중국 등 강대국과 마찬가지로 아프리카 대륙 차원의 에너지 자원에 대한 관심이라고 볼 수 있다. 그리고 한국이 아프리카에 적용하는 혼합적 공공외교 전략과 방안은 다양한 형태의 결과물을 통해 나타나고 있다. 그 결과 2000년대 말부터 한국과 아프리카의 경제적 연계는 한층 강화되고 있다. 미래에도 지속적인 관계를 유지하기 위하여 본 연구는 한국의 대 아프리카 공공 외교의 활성화를 위하여 연구결과를 바탕으로 여러 방안을 제안하고 있다.

주요어: 한국, 아프리카, 공공외교, 행위자, 방안, 제도적 인프라

1. Introduction

Recent years have seen many countries focus on reinvigorating relationship with Africa. Primarily, advanced countries' interest to invest in African is due to its great potential based on its youngest populace, a fast rate of growing cities and markets, increasingly educated middle class, ample natural resources and diversifying economies in few African states (Gurria, 2017). These countries employ numerous strategies to gain a foothold of Africa. While there are many tools for pursuing bilateral relationships between countries, public diplomacy arguably lies at the heart of initiating relationships between countries which eventually open up the door for economic cooperation in trade and investment. Thus public diplomacy could be one of the most effective strategies for building bilateral relations.

Public diplomacy is a very old tool for establishing relations between countries. But as a soft power tool, the strength of public diplomacy has not been fully exploited in international relations. Major powers had solely concentrated on economic and military prowess – the so called hard power strategies. The centrality of public diplomacy as an international relations strategy was thus re-

awakened at the beginning of 21st century in aftermath of the 9/11 attack that appeared to be a culmination of the growing anti-American sentiments. The events of this period showed that traditional hard power diplomacy was no longer sufficient enough to advance or safeguard a country's national interests abroad or at home. The American interests, security and assets were threatened both locally and abroad among countries that were perceived to be its close allies. By combining public diplomacy with traditional diplomacy, a country is thus able to achieve the goal of enhancing its national image and increasing its influence in a way that is favorable to the global arena (Sam, Jang and Moore, 2012).

Public diplomacy can be seen as an exercise of foreign policy among the changes in international diplomatic models (Cho, 2012). It has been described as “dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy, the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries” (Prabhu and Mohapatra, 2014: 229). The purpose of public diplomacy is therefore to gain support of the foreign publics. Public diplomacy is constituted by governments, enterprises, non-governmental organizations, journalists, immigrants, scholars, experts from industry, politics, culture and citizens. Pammant (2013) also

identifies the contrasting new actors in traditional diplomacy which put to use the soft power tools of culture, traditions, media, technologies, games and economic collaboration.

Korean public diplomacy has short history juxtaposed to those of advanced countries like US which has past experiences in public diplomacy. Its public diplomacy towards Africa aims to develop cooperation in light of the changing development topography, resource security and to achieve political support in United Nations. Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) note that in the nineteenth century, Africa was explored due to its resources; a new “scramble for Africa” surged from 1884 to exploit raw materials and energy reserve sources. Given its vast geographical endowments, Korea has also identified Africa as strategic supplier of resources to meet its energy demands.

Korea began to pursue public diplomacy as a foreign policy in 2010 (Sam, Jang and Moore, 2012). This was in light of recognition that as a middle power it cannot match large and big power countries in traditional diplomacy. Since then Korea has been directing its resources towards building its public diplomacy strategies. It has advanced similar strategy with the aim of establishing sustainable cooperative relations with Africa. Despite Korea’s renewed efforts towards, no studies have comprehensively examined the tools and the effectiveness of its public diplomacy in the continent. To fill this gap, the present study analyzes the actors, resources, instruments and programs that have been involved in Korea’s public diplomacy in Africa. To evaluate the effects on African continent, the paper addresses the extent

to which Korea’s strategies have contributed to the economic growth in Africa. The novelty of this paper lies in taking a comprehensive analysis of Korea’s varied public diplomacy programs in Africa, their efficacy and their departure from other countries’ public diplomacy approach in Africa.

2. Development of Korean Public Diplomacy

According to Choi (2019), the evolution of Korean public diplomacy can be divided into three stages:

- First phase 1948–1960s: Cooperative relations with nonaligned countries and absence of public diplomacy infrastructure.
- Second phase 1970–1990: Strategy to support for détente and sports diplomacy
- The third phase 2000s until today: Focuses on public diplomacy and endeavors for peace.

When the era of ‘détente’ emerged between East and West, the Korean government (1970s–1980s) focused on domestic economic plans by propping up bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The 1980s is recognized as the “decade of sports diplomacy” due to the 19th Asian Games (1986), the 24th Seoul Olympic Games and Paralympics (1988). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) broadened its areas into culture and publicity. In order to expand public diplomacy infrastructure, the Korean mission to UNESCO was established in 1987. Korea adopted the strategy of support for détente

and paid attention to establishing relations with USSR in 1990 and with China in 1992. To develop influential public diplomacy, Cultural Cooperation Bureau was divided into Cultural Cooperation Divisions 1 and 2 and Public Relations Division. In 1993, five-year Culture Growth Plan was started and established the "Visit Korea" year (1994) to take advantage of "cultural globalization" and to expand and improve "culture industry". Public diplomacy programs were influenced by changes in domestic and international environment. During this period, public diplomacy broadened with particular focus on U.S and European countries and includes the signing of cultural agreements (Choi, 2019). Sourd, Federico and Yoon (2013) elaborate that these agreements included the authorization of the UNESCO Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005. South Korea's public diplomacy has been completely recognized since 2006. Nonetheless, Korean public diplomacy as an official term was embraced in 2010. Public diplomacy programs progressed with the support of legislative branch. In August 2016, the public diplomacy Act passed by National Assembly was implemented. This Act authorized the MOFA to bolster coordination and cooperation with other ministries, and to involve local governments and the private sector. This ultimately paved way for cooperation among public, private and political sectors (Choi, 2017). Nonetheless, even though it seems that every president's period shows interest and rigor in public diplomacy at the start of their era, it manifested less towards the end (CPD, 2017). The political instability during 2016–2017 was a critical juncture for Korean public diplomacy. Kai (2017)

marks them as the most considerable months of "political chaos and turmoil" in South Korean politics.

3. Actors, Strategies and Instruments

The role of public diplomacy is to advance the persona of particular country; it assists the nation to shape a continuing association with other nations based on the building up of confidence among nations (Sam *et al.*, 2012). Auer and Alice (2013) analyzed actors of public diplomacy in accordance to their social level. They identify the actors at micro level such as persons who communicate and act in an organizational role (scholar, politician, creative artist or citizen). At meso level, organizations are identified as complex actors that shape public diplomacy. At macro level, the state itself is an actor of public diplomacy, though it carries out public diplomacy through various agents within the government and alludes to aggregating of all communication efforts of both the state and non-state actors. These actors work in diverse social subsystems ranging from politics and military to education and research and may not agree in their interpretation of the public diplomacy method and their quest for several public diplomacy strategies (Auer and Alice, 2013). According to Cull (2008), public diplomacy in the era of cold war had five perspectives: Listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international news broadcasting. Though nations choose only one kind of diplomacy, Cull argues that if a country can take a

rational balance among the five approaches, each approach gains space and funds and contributes to the whole. Hence it will be epitome kind of public diplomacy. Post-cold war period is considered the new phase for public diplomacy. This shift established more “horizontal structure” and citizens started associating with each other in international networks supported by modern technology (Tago, 2017). Traditional view of public diplomacy is recognized as “government-to-people” contact. But horizontal structure of public diplomacy as new strategy focuses on non-governmental actors.

In reference to Korea, Choi (2019) categorizes the actors of into three groups: the state, local government and the private sector. The state performs the role of the main actor but local governments and private sector, including civil society are “cooperative actors”, which play the role of influencing the former’s decisions. Foreign governments, individuals and private sector are targeted using the tools of public diplomacy like culture, knowledge and policy. Korean public diplomacy tools are used to encourage “education and public relations with Korean nationals”. The personal pursuits of citizens, corporations, NGOs, and media are considered significant outlets of Korea’s public diplomacy. In particular, Krasnyak (2017) observed that Korea’s public diplomacy includes “citizen diplomats” who are the MOFA’s social media followers and program participants. These might be deemed non-state actors, and the objective is to make them knowledgeable, concerned and appreciative of the value of foreign policy.

Gliboa (2008) identifies the instruments of

public diplomacy as advocacy, broadcasting, public relations, cultural diplomacy, exchange of people and national branding. The first two instruments are classified as “immediate and reactive forms”, and news management is an example of these forms. He defines the public relations as proactive, strategic forms of communication aiming to enhance how people perceive of a nation. Foreign visits by presidents or heads of state can be described as an “intermediate public diplomacy instrument”. “Long-term instruments” are essential to building sustainable ties with other nations. In this regard, mutual trust is the essential technique, and cultural diplomacy, people-to-people exchange and national branding are typical forms of long-term public diplomacy. Blog posts, podcasts, Facebook, Twitter as well as other social means of communication on the internet are evolving into the official tools of public diplomacy. National branding is a public diplomacy tool which explains things to citizens of other countries through daily exposure to the media and other means of expression like TV dramas, movies, animations, and magna (Tago, 2017). Payne (2009) argues that people-to-people approach to public diplomacy works well due to the rapid growth in technology and development of new channels and ways of conveying messages. People-to-people approach involves two or more individuals sharing a conversation in an effort to further understand what they share in common, as well as to develop mutual respect on their divergent worldviews. The main logic of people-to-people endeavors is to build and stimulate a continuing association.

Korea has deployed a combination of the above

Table 1. Summary of actors and instruments of Public Diplomacy

Classification of actors according to social level			Classification of instruments			
Micro-level actors	Meso-level actors	Macro-level actor(s)	Strategic and proactive forms	Immediate and reactive forms	Intermediate forms	Long term forms
Politicians, creative artists, scholars	Organizations e.g. Corporations, NGOs	The state through state agencies	Public relations	Advocacy and broadcasting e.g. news management	Foreign visits by presidents or heads of state	Cultural diplomacy, people-to-people exchange and national branding

instruments in its public diplomacy efforts towards Africa. Given the intertwining between its public diplomacy instruments, it is sometime difficult to discuss them in isolation. For example, high profile state visits by Korea government officials to Africa often always culminated in signing of partnership agreements that increase the flow of Korea's ODA to Africa. In this sense, intensified flow of Korea's ODA to Africa finds its lifeline in high profile state visits.

4. Institutional Infrastructure of Korea's Public Diplomacy

The Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) deals with the tasks related to diplomacy, treaties, international economy, overseas public and research and conduct of international affairs (Choi (2019)). The American anti-communism program helped to shape the Korean public diplomacy activities. At the initial stage of Korean public diplomacy, diplomatic relations with many countries could not be established due to the absence of public diplomacy infrastructure. Public diplomacy activities focused on culture, cultural exhibitions and student and

sports exchanges including the publications like *Korea Today*, *Korean Arts and Korean Survey*.

Currently, Korea has two main institutions responsible for the execution of its public diplomacy abroad. Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is the main actor in promoting and enhancing relations with reference to Korean Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries, including ODA grants disbursements. On the other hand, Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) is responsible for ODA loans disbursements. EDCF was founded in 1987 to advance economic relations between Korea and developing countries. It operates under the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF), which has given the oversight role over EDCF to Export-Import Bank of Korea. EDCF gives loans primarily to finance Industrial and economic stability in Africa as in other developing countries. This industrial orientation and economic stabilization financing approach draws from Korea's own development experience. On the other hand, KOICA was established in 1991 with the goal of boosting the effectiveness of Korea's ODA to developing countries by implementing Korea government's grant aid and technical assistance. It operates under the MOFAT and focuses on strengthening partnerships and sustain-

able development in developing countries. The MOFAT has made public diplomacy the third pillar of its diplomatic strategy besides the political and economic diplomacy. In 2011 Korea appointed the first ambassador for public policy in recognition of the development of the new period of Korean public diplomacy. The Bureau of Cultural Diplomacy has also experienced different restructuring. Currently, it is known as Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs Bureau comprising of five divisions and one team: Public Diplomacy, UNESCO Cultural Cooperation, Regional Public Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy and Policy, and the People Diplomacy team (Choi, 2019). A legal infrastructure was established by the legislature to ensure the stability and public policy's implementation.

Partnerships with the private sector has been an integral part of Korea's public diplomacy because government institutions do not have sufficient resources, infrastructure and specialization. In this regard, Korea developed a framework to tap the contribution of public-private partnership in its public diplomacy. In particular, it has integrated channels for individuals, corporations, the media and NGOs to support the implementation of public diplomacy (Ahyang, 2016). The MOFAT initiated programs like "Public Diplomacy Scholars Group, All Citizens Are Public Diplomats, and Senior Public Diplomacy Group". For example, the Ministry of foreign affairs has partnered with Lotte Group to distribute Korean movies abroad through Lotte Cinema and Lotte Entertainment subsidiaries. Additionally, Korea Foundation established a structure to assist "Diplomatic NGOs". The main role of these NGOs

in public diplomacy is to communicate directly with people in the outside world. Approximately 750 NGOs were registered with MOFAT in September 2012. To strengthen NGO partnerships, MOFAT holds an annual forum with NGO representatives to share their experiences and activities towards implementation of public policy plans (Sam *et al.*, 2012). On August 10, 2017, the First Master Plan for Korean public diplomacy (2017–2021) was approved by the public diplomacy committee. It explains the current status and challenges for Korean public diplomacy activities. The Korean government has set its vision for public diplomacy as communicating the attractiveness of Korea to the entire world (Choi, 2019).

5. Implementing Korea's Public Diplomacy Strategies and Activities in Africa

Korean public diplomacy policy has played significant role in establishing stronger ties with African countries. The impact of its public diplomacy can be analyzed from the perspective of interests of Korea and African. Bone and Kim (2019) elaborate that South Korea launched a strategy of diplomatic offensive with those countries that had continued to remain impartial during the Korean War in the 1960s. The main objective was to make alliances with neutral countries so that they would back South Korea should dispute escalate again. One of regions where Korea focused on was Africa since many countries in the region attained independence during this period. Park

(2019) recognizes 1950s–60s as the era of early nation building in Africa during which African states aimed at building autonomous and self-sustaining status. Thus in 1961, South Korea formalized its first diplomatic ties with West African countries Benin, Chad, Cameroon, the Ivory Coast and Niger (Power, 2019). Korea's diplomatic links with African can thus be traced back to the independence period.

1) High profile government delegations/State visits

ODA has served as major instrument for Korean public diplomacy in Africa (Hwang, 2014). However, for the most part, ODA is instrumentalized through state visits or through Korea–Africa Forums. There have been four Presidential visits to Africa, including Roh Moo-hyun in 2006, Lee Myung-bak in 2011, and Park Geun-hye in 2016. The recent presidential visits have been a charm offensive on Africa and contrast the limited political contact between Korea and Africa during the five decades after the Korean War, which witnessed only one visit to Africa by a Korean president—Chun Doo-hwan in 1982. Park (2019) notes the era of deepening foreign aid in Africa between 1970s and 1980s as the developmental stage. Throughout this period, Korea–Africa relations have occasionally gone through cycles of stagnation, inconsistencies, weak diplomatic exchanges, and revitalization.

According to Monareng (2016), President Chun Doo-hwan was the first to visit Africa in 1982. He visited Kenya, Nigeria, Gabon and Senegal. The purpose of his visit was to suggest establish-

ing economic bilateral relations between Asia and Africa (*a-a hyeopryeok*), and south–south cooperation based on mutual self-help by shaping a development front. This marked the start of a new era of joint cooperation among developing states. This cooperation was founded on the spirit of colonial rule experienced by many Asian and Africa countries, and their relegation to the periphery. The Korean President and Nigerian counterpart signed agreements on economic, scientific and technical cooperation, which envisioned the exchange of managers, experts and engineers in agriculture, science and technology. The agreement further envisioned the contribution of Korean companies towards Nigerian development and expanding businesses for bilateral interests (Miguel, *et al.*, 2018).

The second state visit by President Roh Moo-hy took place in 2006 (Bone and Kim, 2019). President Roh's visit to Egypt, Nigeria and Algeria and the launch of South Korea's Africa Development Initiative proved successful in furthering Korea's public policy. Korea's Africa Development Initiative was initiated during this visit. Thus during the same period, the Korea–Africa Forum became a significant platform to institutionalize Korea–Africa cooperation in diverse fields (Monareng, 2016). Korea's strategic ambitions to invest in Africa were prompted by gaining access to consumer markets and natural resources. Initially, Korea mainly relied on Asian countries for food and energy supplies. Roh Moo-hy's government particularly emphasized demand for energy, resources and new market for Korea companies as key reasons for diversifying cooperation with Africa. This factor continued to underscore

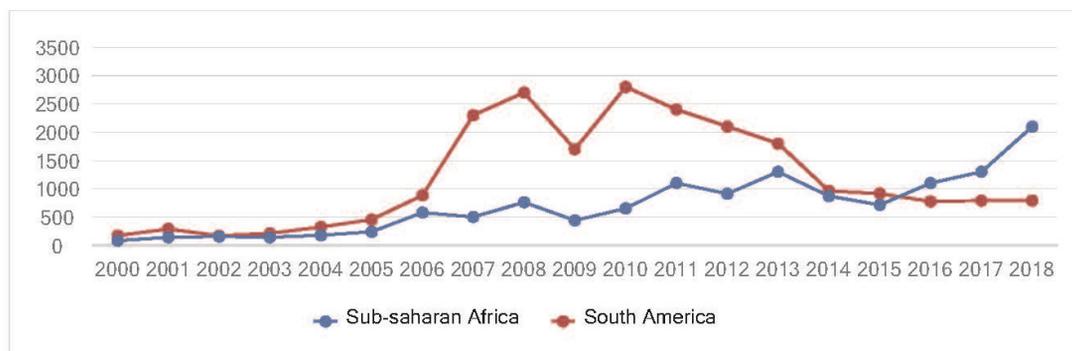


Figure 1. Korea's Exports to Sub-Saharan Africa and South America (in Millions, USD)

Source: Compiled by author from Resource Trade Earth

Table 2. Top 5 African exporters to Korea US and China, 2018

Rank	Korea	US	China
1	South Africa	South Africa	Angola
2	Nigeria	Nigeria	South Africa
3	DR Congo	Angola	Congo Republic
4	Gabon	Cote d'ivoire	Congo DR
5	Equatorial Guinea	Ghana	Gabon

Source: Compiled by author from Resource Trade Earth

Korea's interest in Africa and has been carried forward by successive governments. Looking at Korea's exports to Sub-Saharan Africa relative to South America which has traditionally been Korean export destination outside Asia, it is possible to conclude that Korea has indeed shifted its export market towards Africa in the recent years (Figure 1). It is undeniable that Africa is experiencing changing consumption patterns that is driven by changing demographic patterns, especially Africa's growing middle class. This pattern implies increased demand for advanced industrial products. Thus Korea's focused efforts towards Africa could have been partly driven by the recognition of Africa as a new frontier market.

However, a careful examination of Korea-

Africa trade patterns shows that the bulk of Korea's imports from Africa are natural resources, including oil, metals and mineral products. Korea's interest in Africa can thus be seen to be largely driven by its quest to diversify its energy sources to support Korea's economic development (Kim, 2010). It is striking, for example, that Korea's top five import countries from Africa are resource rich countries (Table 2). The three major oil producers in Africa—Nigeria, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea—and two metals and minerals producers—South Africa and DR Congo—are top-five Sub-Saharan Africa's exporters to Korea. Similarly, two oil producers—Nigeria, Cote d'ivoire and Angola—and two metals and mineral producers—South Africa, and Ghana

Table 3. Top import items for Korea, US and China from Africa (2018)

Rank	Korea	US	China
1	Fossil Fuels	Fossil Fuels	Fossil fuels
2	Metals and minerals	Metals and minerals	Metals and minerals
3	Agricultural products	Agricultural products	Pearls and gemstones
4	Forestry products	Pearls and gemstones	Agricultural products
5	Pearls and gemstones	Forestry products	Forestry products

Source: Compiled by author from Resource Trade Earth

are the chief exporter to US. The trend is repeated in China's case where three main oil producers—Angola, Congo and Gabon— and two metals and mineral producing Countries—South Africa and DR Congo —are among Africa's top-five exporters to China.

In 2018, fossil fuels, metals and minerals were Africa's top-2 import items to Korea, US and China. Other main import items to Korea, US and China from Africa are agricultural products, forestry products, pearls and gemstones (Table 3).

The third presidential visit to Africa was by President Myung-bak Lee in 2011. He visited South Africa Ethiopia, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Lee's strategy was to use economic cooperation to gain access to natural resources in the continent. ODA projects were largely linked to exploration of natural resource, and foreign direct investments encouraged in resource-rich countries (Chang, 2020). However, Lee's visit to Congo and discussion with President Joseph Kabila focused on establishing relations where North Korea had been engaged for many years. His visit to Ethiopia reaffirmed that the focus of Korea's policy in Africa is to enhance both economic and geopolitical cooperation (Bone and Kim, 2019).

The fourth presidential visit took place in 2011, when President Park Geun-hye visited Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Park became the first Korean President to address African heads of state at the African Union. She outlined a vision to strengthen people-to-people ties, diversifying cooperation in manufacturing, energy, infrastructure, e-governance and health care. Park's strategy combined soft power diplomacy with ODA to Africa. She positioned Korea as a long term partner that understands Africa's struggles to the path of sustainable development. According to Park, Korea endeavors to help Africa as a friend that had stood with Korea during its adversity under colonialism and Korean War. These visiting high profile government officials to Africa are often accompanied by South Korea's business leaders who simultaneously meet their African counterparts to learn about the potential areas of partnerships. For example, Park's visit was accompanied by meetings between business leaders from both countries. Moreover, although Park's policy towards Africa seemed to emphasized economic relations, scholars observe that her strategy to host African heads of state including from Mozambique, Ivory coast and Uganda were driven by South Korea's security concerns in relation to

North Korea (Bone and Kim, 2019).

However, President Park's policy towards Africa did not elicit much positive reactions. It was planned to be "new South Korean development assistance model," that combines development assistance with public health, food, cultural events alongside visiting services. Nevertheless, the use of vehicles to provide medical services, showcase K-pop movies and serve Korean traditional food was criticized as being a one-time event which ignores the purpose of aid in international terms (People power21, 2016). This was a step backward from Korea's previous commitment to establish an organized development assistance model in line with international norms of aid since it became a member of OECD's Development Assistance Committee in 2010, a period that marked its transformation from aid recipient to aid donor. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 advocates an aid model that goes beyond events and provision of hardware assistance, to one that is aligned with partner countries' systems and development strategy and encourages the partner country's policy initiative and ownership (DAC Report, 2004).

President Moon Jae-in's policy towards Africa could be in its formative stage. However, during the early period of his presidency, Korea's prime minister as well as foreign minister have visited Africa. This signals the commitment to strengthen high level visits to help realize the potential of partnerships between Korea and Africa. Under his leadership, Korea has also hosted "Seoul dialogue" on Africa and Korea-Africa youth forum. Both of these forums were focused on youth, entrepreneurship and technology. Thus Moon

Jae-in's policy towards Africa could be focused on people-to-people exchanges, technology transfer and sharing entrepreneurial experiences.

2) Korea-Africa Forums

The Korea-Africa Forum and KOAFEC are working as significant actors for bilateral collaboration to overcome socio-economic problems in Africa. Korea launched its "Initiative for Africa's Development," in 2006, which marked a turning point in Korea-Africa relations. In fact, the relations between Korea and Africa were never particularly focused on the agenda of development until the initiation of Korea-Africa Forum. This forum provided the impetus for the institutionalization of Korea's public diplomacy towards Africa. Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) became very important agency in advancing support to African countries. The assistance was provided for health, education, development and infrastructure. One output of this was the establishment of a capacity building program through which around 2000 African civil servants would be trained in South Korea. Korea believes in education because it significantly contributed to its development. Infrastructure development was also an important area in its early stages of development. In this sense, Korea's focus on these sectors can be seen as an attempt to diffuse its own development model to Africa. On the other hand, Korea is also mindful of the fact that Africa is in dire need to improve its health sector as well as expand its infrastructure to augment the continent's development efforts.

Strategies at meso-level also gained momentum at this stage of Korea–Africa relations. Korean companies started to increase their investment in Africa. Roh's presidency should be seen as the exemplar of how South Korea could develop its policy towards Africa; over the preceding decades, South Korea has passed through massive economic transformation, while Africa is making progress in economic growth with the assistance from Korea. Obviously, South Korean companies were assisted to enter in African markets (Sam *et al.*, 2012). Samsung Electronics is good example of Korean companies which have established engineering academies in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya. The main objective is to support local people to acquire advanced skills. Africa gains capital, technology transfer and infrastructure from Korea, while Korea gains the market. For example, Samsung's market share in Africa has been on a steady rise. As of 2019, Samsung controlled 33 percent of smart phone market in the continent (IDC, 2019). In this sense, Korea and Africa act in their rational capability to gain mutual interests through Korea–Africa Forum and Korea–Africa Economic Cooperation (KOAFEC) (Monareng, 2016).

The second South Korea–Africa forum was held in 2009, and was attended by African leaders and representatives of African Union (AU). South Korea committed to strengthen cooperation with Africa by making double 2008's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to \$200 million by 2012. By making a priority to establish relations with Africa, Lee visited South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia in 2011. During

his visit to South Africa, he asserted that economic and political cooperation could be strengthened through two G-20 members by developing mechanism for development partnership. The third Korea–Africa Forum (2012), was held in Seoul, co-hosted by MOFA and African Union. The adoption of “Seoul Declaration” and the “African Plan” by the participants was the surety of its enforcement during the years 2013–2015 (MOFA). Bone and Kim (2019) describe as strategic the Park's decision to host African heads of state and to raise the issue of North Korea. Park hosted Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the focus of which was to establish commercial ties, enhance security cooperation and assistance in different areas including education. All these are areas where Uganda and North Korea had been cooperating. After the three successful rounds of the forum in Korea, the fourth Korea–Africa Forum (2016) took place in Addis Ababa, co-hosted by MOFA, the AU and Foreign Ministry of Ethiopia. It came up with the “Blueprint for Comprehensive Cooperation with Africa”. Under this framework, Korea and Africa agreed to accelerate cooperation in the fields of economy, development and peace. Due to the heightened mutual industrial cooperation, the year 2016 is regarded as “year of Africa” in Korea's public diplomacy. African representatives have acknowledged that the Korea–Africa forum has provided an opportunity to strengthen cooperation for bilateral prosperity. This exemplifies the extent to which the forum has succeeded in building a mutually beneficial partnership despite being a relatively new initiative.

3) Official Development Assistance (ODA)

The development of Korea's ODA to Africa from 1987 to 2011 remained low as compared to world total distribution, but steadily increased thus marking a positive sign of discernment towards making better relations. In the early years after it became a donor, Korea directed most of its ODA to adjacent Asian countries with which it shares historical ties. A number of reasons can be alluded to in explaining this pattern. First, Korea's ODA involves the diffusion of its own development experience. Due to their cultural ties, Asian countries were aptly placed to adapt Korea's development model. Secondly, as a new and relatively small donor, Korea's ODA had a large element of tied aid, which made administering it more convenient within the neighboring countries. Today Korea's ODA governance is relatively advanced, and coupled with Africa's growing interest in Korea's development experience, it is plausible that its development experience could be disseminated to the continent with relative ease.

KOICA has remained a remarkable actor in promoting and enhancing relations in reference to Korean ODA to Africa, including ODA grants disbursements in addition to ODA loans disbursements made by EDCF (Monareng, 2016). Through Korea's Initiative for Africa's Development (2006), ODA is supporting infrastructure, health and education. Additionally, Korea aims to secure private investment by helping to build an investment-friendly environment in the region. This is a vital area for unlocking their development cooperation since major barriers such as lack of in-

formation and difficulties in financing investment have been obstacles to Korean trade and investment in Africa. For instance in 2017, Korea's total trade with Africa is only 1.5% of Korea's trade volume (Kang, 2017: 1). Assessing Korea's economic engagement in Africa, Darracq and Neville (2014: 6) observe that the Korean government plays a pivotal role in "actively lobbying African governments on behalf of Korean companies in order to secure favorable government tenders." Thus ODA has become one of the most important tools to entice Africa towards working with Korea. In 2006, Korea's ODA to Africa was miniature relative to its Southeast Asian partners (Figure 2). However, in 2018, Korea's total ODA to Africa surpassed that of Southeast Asia, which has been Korea's main development cooperation partner. The ODA to Sub-Saharan Africa (South of Sahara) has also remained significantly higher than Korea's ODA to the North of Sahara.

4) Exchange diplomacy

Exchange diplomacy is an instruments of long term diplomacy. The two most common forms of exchange diplomacy are educational and cultural exchanges. Both of these strategies are aimed at promoting of mutual understanding and fostering international goodwill through interpersonal contact (Bettie, 2019). The distinguishing feature of exchange diplomacy is that, while most other forms of diplomacy largely involves the presentation of image and information, exchanges is directly centered on the "human factor", and thus the participants are paramount. Given the centrality of human element in these forms of diplo-

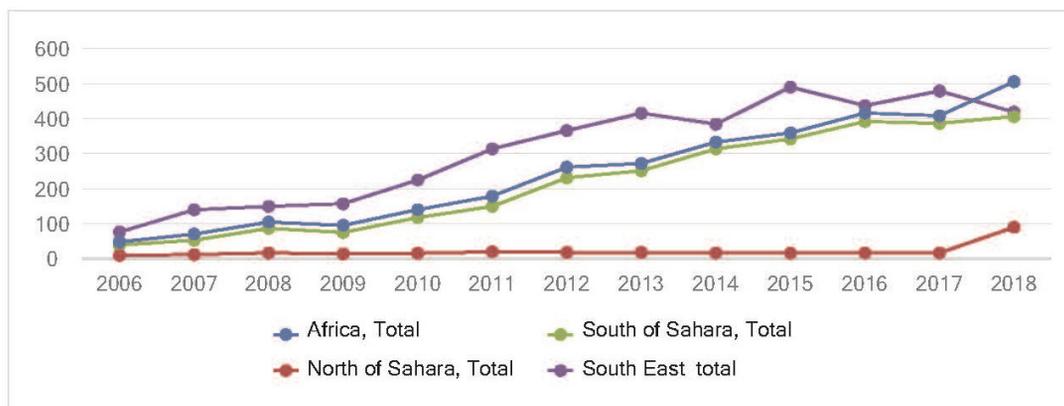


Figure 2. Korea's ODA to Africa and Southeast Asia

Data source: Compiled by author from OECD statistics

*North of Sahara comprises of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia

macy, they are prone to barriers from cultural differences. Yet these differences are what it aims to overcome by appealing to the other publics and creating an attraction. Unlike propaganda which involves deliberate manipulation of information to achieve a desired end, exchanges are two-way form of public diplomacy, which opens up the space for dialogue and interchange of alternative points of view to create mutual understanding (Scott-Smith, 2009). Open communication at the grassroots can create meaningful and durable relationships and the development of trust. Korea has put to use both forms of diplomacy in Africa,

(1) People-to-people exchanges

People-to-people exchange is an old form of public diplomacy and has been a cornerstone of many countries' foreign policy. For example, since the beginning of 21st century, China has set up people-to-people diplomacy with the US, the EU, the UK, France and Russia. In 2012, China and the EU established a high-level dialogue for peo-

ple-to-people exchange, establishing people-to-people exchanges as the third pillar of China-EU relations. In fact, in the US-China relations, state-to-state ties began with people-to-people exchanges more than 50 years ago, which led to the normalization of US-China relations. Walker and Gainer (2014) opine that countries that invest in people-to-people diplomacy are better positioned to benefit from information economy. Due to advances in communications technologies, countries should strive to tap the role of citizens in diplomacy especially through international exchanges in areas of entrepreneurship, science and technology.

Korea has many forms of people-to-people exchanges targeting developing countries. These include Korea overseas diplomatic missions, institutions of higher learning, private companies and NGOs. In 2009, for instance, Korea launched World Friends Korea, an umbrella body integrating various overseas volunteer programs that were previously provided by different agencies,

including KOICA Volunteer Group, IT Volunteer Group, Korean Oriental Medicine Overseas Medical Volunteer Group, among others. These groups share Korea's development experiences in areas where Korea has comparative advantage, such as public administration, education, agriculture, health and industrial energy. "Youth Mid-term Volunteer Program", a KOICA program was started in Africa and consists of groups of university students sent to different areas to take part in educational and public welfare services. Through this programs, Korea contributes for economic and social growth in Africa¹⁾. For example, KOICA provided assistance to build a vocational training institute in Uganda, hence extending practical industrial capacity and employment (Monareng, 2016). To contribute towards fostering long term and sustainable relationships with partner countries, volunteers are expected to share the knowledge and experiences they gain from overseas, including foreign language skills.

Education exchanges and higher education scholarships have also traditionally played an important role in furthering people-to-people exchanges. Study abroad students and educators help to develop and sustain relationships with people from host countries through cultural immersion and education (Akli, 2012). Korean study programs give opportunities to international scholars to experience Korea. The Global Korean Scholarship (GKS) is one such distinctive initiative and provides opportunities for Africans. The aim is to train students in academics, enable them experience Korean culture and prepare them to contribute to the transformation of their countries. The GKS aligns its exchange program with the

interests of MOFAT in strengthening Korea's effort in ODA policy (Ayhan, 2016). Korea is also expanding the scope of its people-to-people exchanges with Africa. For example, it has developed new forms of foreign scholarships, educational exchange and vocational programs. In line with this, the Korea Public Diplomacy Scholars Group gives teaching and funding to foreign professors to have experience in Korea (Sam *et al.*, 2012). The Korean Studies Center on the other hand works like an international organization to advance Korean language and culture in Africa. The incorporation of Korean Studies within public institutions in Africa mirrors the establishment of Chinese Confucius Institutes at universities throughout the continent. This possibility of promoting Korean studies in Africa is helped by internationalization efforts currently pursued by African Universities, and a shift in Africa's foreign policy to focus on East Asian countries rather than Europe and the US (Wasamba, 2014). To educate the Korean student on African culture and language, Korea invites African scholars to teach a widely spoken African language- "Kiswahili" at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (Ayhan, 2016).

(2) Official diplomatic exchanges

People-to-people exchange programs such as volunteer programs initiated by Korea towards Africa might help Korea to cultivate mutual understanding and trust. However, the long term effect on of people-to-people exchanges between Korea and African has not been analyzed. Moreover, unlike China which uses two-track diplomacy combining both bilateral and multilateral

Table 4. Korea's top-10 and bottom-10 FDI recipients in Africa

Top 10 FDI recipients in Africa, 2003-2013			Bottom 10 FDI recipients in Africa, 2003-2013		
Country	FDI in US Dollar, Millions	% total Korea FDI outflows to Africa	Country	FDI in US Dollar, Millions	% total Korea FDI outflows to Africa
Madagascar**	1288.348	63.87	Burundi	0	0
Libya*	185.36	9.18	Cape Verde	0	0
Nigeria*	98.89	4.90	Togo	0	0
South Africa*	93.70	4.64	Swaziland	0	0
Equatorial Guinea	81.57	4.04	Seychelles	0	0
Ghana*	67.24	3.33	Sao Tome and Principe	0	0
Mauritius	62.83	3.11	Namibia	0	0
Egypt*	55.80	2.77	Mauritania	0	0
Mozambique**	22.99	1.14	Malawi	0	0
Niger	14.80	0.73	Lesotho	0	0

Source: OECD <https://stats.oecd.org>

NB: (*) Countries with established diplomatic mission in Korea; (**) Countries with Korean diplomatic mission

platforms, and which have increased mutual understanding between China and the rest of the world, Korea's public diplomacy to Africa has been concentrated on bilateral platforms. This means that they need to be augmented with formal soft power strategies such as official diplomatic exchanges, including the establishment of Korea diplomatic missions in more countries in Africa (Monareng, 2016: 8). Similarly, Africa sends government officials on benchmarking missions to Korea, but these exchanges are short term. Therefore it is prudent that African countries also establish their diplomatic missions in Korea to facilitate regular and sustainable exchanges.

Evidence shows that investment relations between Korea and Africa are stronger in countries that have either established their diplomatic missions in Korea or those in which Korea has its diplomatic missions (Table 4). Among top ten recipients of Korea's FDI, eight are countries that

have either established their diplomatic missions in Korea or have Korea's diplomatic missions, except Mauritius and Niger. On the contrary, none of the bottom-10 recipients of Korea's FDI have established diplomatic missions in Korea or have Korean diplomatic missions.

(3) Cultural exchanges (Culture and media diplomacy)

Cultural exchanges or cultural diplomacy has been the latest tool that Korea is endeavoring to use to brand itself in Africa. The government of Korea has spent ponderously to export *Hallyu* and establish its image in the world as a developed, democratic state (Tago, 2017). "Korean Wave"/*Hallyu* includes from Korea TV dramas, movies, popular music and dance. K-pop (Korean pop music), TV dramas and movies are significant sources of *hallyu* (Sourd, Federico and Yoon, 2013). In Africa, Kenyan Christian TV station

(2009) – “Good News Broadcasting” (GBS) was the first channel to provide the slot to air all popular K-dramas like *Lee San: The Wind of the Palace*, *Smile again*, *The Great Conqueror*, *Wish Upon a Star*, *Good Job*”. Tanzania’s most popular channel ITV has shown the Korean dramas by following this trend. Similarly, Ghanaian channel TV3, TV Africa, and Zimbabwe’s national broadcaster ZBC TV are also examples in this regard²⁾. The Korean movies, music and dance are becoming popular among Africans. This is partly because Korean drum tradition has similar attitude like African and therefore appeals to their emotions (Ochieng and KIM, 2019: 399).

The media can support exchange of information and culture, thus narrowing the gap between people. Korea’s use of mediascape in Africa is however limited in comparison to larger countries like the US and China which have gained a tremendous foothold in the continent through the media. The Hollywood movies which are major conveyers of American values have been a formidable cause of America’s influence in Africa. China has also heavily invested in its own media in Africa, with state media agency present in around 28 countries in the continent (Siu, 2019). From 2012 China has been reporting to and covering Africa through China Radio International, Xinhua, China Global Television Network in 2016 (formerly CCTV) and China Daily’s Africa Edition. More recently, there has been an intensified interaction between Chinese and African local media personnel, which creates room for covering each other’s perspectives. It is also extending its role in Africa film industry. For example, China–Africa International film festival – a shared fes-

tival – was launched in 2007 to create a new China–Africa narrative. Even the Western media have accelerated their efforts to engage the youthful population in Africa. The BBC has enlarged significantly in the region in the last couple of years by launching new language services online in attempt to disseminate western ideologies.

Chang (2019) however points out that Africa is not monolithic entity. As a result, *Hallyu* does not have the same media–scape impacts in some African states. For example, in South Africa, Korean screen products and pop music is specially discerned along racial lines. Nevertheless, as a tool “Korean Wave” has also proved beneficial in enhancing relations with other countries. During President Lee’s era – “complex diplomacy” and “value diplomacy” – were pursued as the key policy goals to advance cultural diplomacy in addition to improving national image and national brand (Jang and Paik, 2012). Even though Korea was initially reluctant to deploy *hallyu* in Africa because of the presumption of cultural distance between Korea and Africa, recent studies show that Korean cultural products have gained traction in Africa especially among the youth (Ochieng and Kim, 2019: 381). The government of Korea has therefore been actively promoting cultural events in Africa through its embassies abroad. In Nigeria, for example, Korea established Korean cultural center in 2010 to foster cultural exchange between the two countries. The initiative provides programs on Korean culture, sports and education, as well as showcasing Korea to Nigerians. In collaboration with Korean embassy in Nigeria, the center holds annual K–pop competition in different parts of the country. In 2016 during President

Park's visit to Africa, events dubbed "K-culture in Ethiopia"³⁾ and "K-Culture in Kenya"⁴⁾ were used as a platforms to introduce K-pop songs, traditional martial art and Korean movies to the people in those countries. These events provide opportunities for Africans not only to experience Korean culture, but more importantly, to promote a favorable image of Korea abroad.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Korea has recently reinvigorated strategic co-operation with Africa. Since 2006 government has developed a keen interest in fostering relations with Africa. Korea's public diplomacy towards Africa has thus been developing through many forums, platforms and initiatives. This runs contrary to the previous years when Korea mainly focused on Southeast Asia and South America. The increased attention to Africa has been primarily driven by Korea's need to diversify its energy sources and the market for its industrial products. In particular, the geographic and industrial structure of Africa and Korea are complementary. Africa is endowed with natural resources, but lacks capital and technology to fully exploit and utilize its endowments. Korea on the other hand lacks resources, but has capital and technological know-how. The tropical disease burden in Africa, courtesy of its geography implies Africa needs aid and medical technology which Korea has. This study found that Korea's demand for energy security overrides its other objectives in Africa. Evidence shows that a large share of

Korea's exports from Africa are energy, minerals and metals. The geographic distribution of its aid has also helped Korea to diversify its export market away from Asia and South America. This objective is not divergent from that of US and China whose trade relations are mainly concentrated in resource rich countries in Africa. Korea's pursuit of friendly relations with Africa has also been defined by its security concerns, albeit to a small extent. In this regard, Korea pursued relations with countries deemed friendly to North Korea with the aim of isolating the latter and helping South Korea to stamp out its influence at the global stage. This strategy also mirrors that of the US which has developed strategic relations with African countries that help to secure its security interests abroad.

In endeavor to foster relations with Africa, Korea government has used a number of public diplomacy strategies and instruments. These strategies appear to be working to the benefit of both Korea and Africa. For example, since it re-launched its public diplomacy towards Africa, Korea's ODA to Africa has significantly increased, surpassing that of its tradition partner-Southeast Asia-in 2018. Trade between Korea and Africa is also on the rise. As an example, trade between Korea and Africa is strongest in countries that either have Korea's diplomatic missions or those that have established their diplomatic missions in Korea. Korea's cooperation with Africa is also enabling the continent to leapfrog in terms of technology transfer to their African counterparts.

Korea's focus on soft power strategy is in sync with its realization that as a "shrimp" among "sharks", it cannot sufficiently rely on economic

and military ability to stretch out its global influence, Korea is limited in terms of economic resources, but rich in culture, history and experience. It is the only country that has successfully transformed in short period from an ODA recipient to an ODA donor country. Many countries in Africa thus look up to Korea for comparative analysis. Korea also needs to focus on ODA and United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO) to contribute to global peace and economic development (Kim, 2010). To this end, it can contribute towards peace and stability in fragile states in Africa and create stable environments conducive for economic growth. Cultural exchange is suitable instrument for establishing long terms relations. It is in the rational behavior of nations to understand and familiarize themselves with the cultural identification of one another in order to promote mutual understanding and interests, while paving way to maximize the benefits. The more Korea and Africa share or lean towards sharing common cultural traits or experiences through cultural exchange, the less are the likelihood of non-compliance or cheating (Monareng, 2016). Moreover, the success of public diplomacy is dependent upon socialization with the counterpart. In this regard, Korea and Africa can intensify cooperation through cultural events, and cultural institutions like language centers and the media. In the case of Korea, it should intensify the promotion of Korean Wave in Africa. There is also room to expand people-to-people exchanges in the area of academia, professionals and entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, Korea should also adopt different ways of public diplomacy from other states because Africa is less familiar with

Korea in respect of its culture and geography (Ayhan, 2016). One of the best strategies is to cooperate with Africa to improve their economies. In this way, Korea would build constructive cooperative relations with Africa while also advancing its global status as a responsible nation promoting shared prosperity for mankind. On the other hand, African countries need to align their economic policies to boost critical sectors such as education, health and food security with ODA they receive from Korea (Kim, 2011). It is equally important that Korea and Africa increase the frequency of high level state visits in both directions. This will attract increased media coverage of Korea-Africa development partnership and become a source of inspiration to further cooperation. To avoid the danger of implementing strategies from an “outsider” perspective which has been the characteristic of Africa’s Western allies, it is pivotal that Korea considers local demand through mutual independent standpoint. It will be particularly in the interest of Korea to continue research development to gain deeper insights of the localities, culture and market conditions in African societies.

There are many areas of mutual interest where Korea and the US could work together in Africa. Both the US and Korea governments are active promoters of entrepreneurship for economic growth. The two countries can work together with African governments and private sector actors to develop policies that promote entrepreneurship and create employment opportunities for the African youth. In the area of technology, Africa has a youthful population that is increasingly attracted to technology and techno-entrepren-

eurship. Korea and the US have some of the world's leading hi – tech companies and are global leaders in digital economy. The two countries can form a formidable alliance to lead technology transfer and increased access to the internet in Africa.

Korea's public diplomacy also suffers some shortcomings. First, Korea needs to streamline its ODA governance to consolidate its impact and increase its visibility in partner countries. In the current governance structure different ministries are in charge of ODA grants and loans (Kim, 2017). This diminishes the effectiveness of its ODA in Africa given the small size of its aid. The main drawback with approach to Africa is that it is dis-integrated; different ministries undertake isolated projects independently, and they fail to collate their actions at government level. The drawback of this strategy is that it is difficult to accumulate experiences due to lack of follow up. Second, Korea's public diplomacy has no strong ideological underpinning like the US and China. The latter two powers' pursuit of public diplomacy through cultural exchanges hinges on strong beliefs in their cultural hegemony and thus ideological competition (Mulvad, 2019). This fortifies their allocation of resources and effort to disseminate their ideologies through social and cultural institutions, including schools and the media. In addition, Korea's public diplomacy lacks continuity and long term vision (Felicia, 2016). For the most part, its public policy changes with every new government, which happens every five years. This disrupts the long term effect of its public policy.

Anmerkungen

- 1) www.koica.go.kr.
- 2) www.daehandrama.com
- 3) www.korea.net/NewsFocus
- 4) www.en.yna.co.kr

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