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SOFT GEOPOLITIC POWER OF REPUBLIC OF KOREA

ABSTRACT: In this article , the main geopolitic ways of Republic of Korea were shown widely and with samples. Also , the article explains how has South Korea's soft power captivated the world effectively and its not only results of economic policy of Seoul's public diplomacy but the South Korean government invests Korean pop culture , national kitchen and this phenomenon creates a ripple effect.

Keywords: Soft power , phenomenon, PSY, Gangnam Style , K-pop , BTS ,Squid Game ,social media ,Guinness Book,

How has South Korea's soft power captivated the world, and what does this emerging global phenomenon mean for South Korea? South Korean culture has become popular around the world, from pop culture to its cuisine, and this phenomenon has created a ripple effect that not only brings economic benefits to South Korea, but also boosts the country's reputation abroad. In addition, the South Korean government invests in the country's soft power as an effective tool for Seoul's public diplomacy: "The country was once famous for cars and smartphones, but global audiences have been captivated by its entertainment, and according to creators, it has succeeded." It won't happen overnight." This is an excerpt from a November 2021 New York Times article that explores the development of South Korea's soft power and the country's current high global profile. South Korea culture, especially TV dramas and music, has become popular among fan groups in certain countries and regions, mainly in Asia, since the late 1990s. South Korean singer PSY's group Gangnam Style has gained worldwide popularity, including in Europe and North Korea. It was also popular in the United States, reaching number two on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 2012. Many saw the song's success as a one-off rather than a harbinger of the genre's global influence, but it was South Korea. opened the door to more opportunities for its culture to be recognized outside of Asia. Фappyx, [30.05.2024 12:02]

In recent years, South Korean culture has gained more global attention thanks to the success of K-pop groups such as BTS and Blackpink, the film Parasite, and the Netflix series Squid Game. According to the Guinness Book of World Records released in September 2021, BTS has achieved 23 titles in music and social media. As of the article's publication date, BTS was named "the most streamed group on Spotify, the most followed music group on Instagram, and the most Twitter engagement for a music group." BTS has topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart several times. Meanwhile, Blackpink's music video for "How You Like That" released in June 2020 received 86.4 million views in 24 hours, making it the most anticipated debut. The group also became the first music group to reach 75 million subscribers on YouTube, holding the record for the most subscribers as of June 2022. According to Spotify, one of the largest music streaming

websites, K-pop music streams on Spotify have seen an increase in viewership. 107% in the US and 230% globally as of 2018.

The recent success of South Korean movies and TV series is also sensational. The 2019 dark comedy thriller *Parasite* became the first South Korean film to win the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and win four awards at the 92nd Academy Awards, including Best Picture, best director, best original screenplay, and best international feature film. The South Korean TV show *Squid Game*, released in September 2021, became Netflix's most-watched show of all time, with a total of 1.65 billion hours watched in the first four weeks alone. It became the number one show in at least 90 countries, including South Korea and the United States. A period of interest in South Korean culture has occurred, with listening to K-pop music, watching movies and dramas, bringing additional attention to Korean cuisine, fashion, beauty, and more.

How does the growing interest in South Korean culture affect soft power in the international arena? It is useful to understand the concept of soft power, which is widely discussed in international relations as well as foreign policy debates. Joseph Nye coined the term to describe US global leadership and the means by which it maintained its position in the post-Cold War era, and reintroduced its role for the post-9/11 era. Nye defines soft power as the ability to convince others to do what you want without force or coercion. It involves people or countries outside the country of origin without coercive measures or threats. It differs from hard power - military and economic power - which can be defined as the ability to force others to act against their will. Nye also raised the concept of smart power, which involves blending soft and hard power to create a more holistic and balanced strategy. From the US point of view, "smart power is defined as the development of an integrated strategy, resource base, and toolkit to achieve American goals using hard and soft power." Therefore, the concept of soft power is widely accepted, especially for advanced countries. , including the United States of America, has been implemented through more persuasive means rather than coercive measures as a useful means of securing and maintaining their status and roles.

In addition, soft power is recognized as a useful tool that can expand diplomatic horizons by filling hard power gaps in middle power countries, including South Korea. However, if a state does not have a sufficient basis for hard power, it is difficult to exercise its influence with soft power alone. In this regard, it is noteworthy that South Korea seeks both hard and soft power and integrates them as a middle power country.

South Korea has a history of democratization and economic development in a relatively short period of time after the Korean War (1950-1953). South Korea's hard power is also highlighted. The IMF World Economic Outlook announced that in 2021, South Korea's economy is the tenth largest in the world in terms of nominal gross domestic product (GDP). South Korea ranks sixth out of 142 countries in Global Fire Power's 2022 military power analysis. can contribute to South Korea's soft power and diplomatic capabilities in the region and beyond...

Government-led soft power politics: From economic strategy to public diplomacy and the critical drivers of South Korea's expanding cultural popularity.

Some experts attribute the success of the Korean Wave—the rapid growth of South Korean cultural industries and their exports since the late 1990s—to the organizational support of the South Korean government. Such policies later became mass diplomatic tools. Seoul began to use the cultural industry to stimulate economic growth, and in the 1990s began to establish an active cultural policy.

A famous story goes that when the President's Advisory Council on Science and Technology made a presentation to President Kim Yong-sam on the potential exports of cultural industries, the council referred to Hollywood's creation of Jurassic Park. And that's as much revenue as exporting 1.5 million Hyundai cars overseas." Since then, South Korean governments have introduced and introduced various policies to support cultural industries, focusing mainly on export-oriented economic strategies. For example, in 1998, the Kim Dae Jung administration announced a plan to support the Hallyu industry in 1998, from \$14 million in 2001. expanded to \$84 million in 2018. Roh Moo Hyun's administration increased subsidies for cultural startups." Governments have also invested in such initiatives to improve the cultural industry environment and passed laws to protect domestic cultural markets. For example, in 1999 the Basic Law on Culture Industry, in 2001 on the Establishment of the Culture and Content Agency and in 2002 the Law on the Development of the Online Digital Content Industry were passed. In addition, the Motion Picture Promotion Act of 1995 aimed to protect South Korea's domestic film industry by providing screen quotas.

However, Lee Myung-bak's government changed the direction of cultural policy from an economic-oriented strategy to a strategy of national branding and competitiveness. In particular, the concept of "Global Korea" under the Lee administration included economic, political, ideological, and cultural initiatives aimed at shaping South Korea's national identity as "future-oriented, multicultural, and forward-looking." In the book "Diplomatic White Paper" published in 2010, "soft power" is becoming more and more important; culture has been shown as an indispensable element of the country's competitiveness and an economic resource that produces added value. To adapt to the changing global environment, Korea adopted cultural diplomacy as a new pillar of the country's diplomatic structure. In addition to the growth of soft power in South Korea, the Lee administration led the National Branding Council for Public Diplomacy and cultural policy. shifted focus to the concept of soft power. Many saw this approach as a useful way to engage in economic development and diplomacy. The wave has become increasingly relevant as it embraces other exports such as online games, beauty products, and fashion, and the Korean wave has become an important component of soft power.

President Park Geun-hye has also pledged to strengthen South Korea's cultural policies as one of the main goals of her administration. Capitalizing on the success of PSY's Gangnam Style music video and music, the Park administration increased the budget of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism for various projects, including the construction of a series of huge auditoriums and cultural centers around the world. The emphasis on cultural policy continued under the Moon Jae-in administration. For example, in 2020, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism established a new Hallyu Department within the Ministry - the Korean term for Hallyu ("Korean wave") and new strategies aimed at "diversifying Hallyu" through the development of other industries through Hallyu content and A plan to create a sustainable environment for Hallyu to grow has been announced.

The ministry also declared the current era after Hallyu I, II and III as the "New Hallyu Era" and spearheaded projects aimed at developing and exporting South Korean culture to the world.

With government support, the popularity of South Korean culture and its expansion beyond local audiences and the diaspora grew. The Hallyu phenomenon has been marked by the rapid development of South Korea's cultural industry and mainly as an exporter of products to Asian markets since 1997. As components of the Korean wave, several advanced cultural forms have become popular, including music (K-pop), animation, and digital games, which have gradually penetrated global popular markets. Additional sectors are suggested to be included in the Korean Wave, and Hallyu is described as "the extraordinary popularity of South Korean popular cultural

products and industries." Television dramas, movies, popular music (K-pop) and dance, food, game technology and fashion tourism that started in East Asia have started to conquer the world.

Scholars have generally distinguished three eras in explaining the period from the emergence of the Korean wave to the present day." began, they were popular in other Asian countries, especially in China, Taiwan, and Japan. For example, when China Central Television (CCTV) aired the series "What is Love" in 1997, it ranked second among imported content. In China, the Korean wave, including the term Hallyu, appeared. In the case of Japan, the 2003 broadcast of Winter Sonata became a "megahit" and increased Japan's tourism to South Korea in the early 2000s. The first generation (Hallyu 1.0) was the period in which the popularity of South Korean culture was limited to Asia, including Southeast Asian countries. During this period from 1997 to the mid-2000s, the main content focused on TV dramas that were especially popular among certain fan groups.

The second generation of the Korean wave (Hallyu 2.0) had different characteristics from the previous era: diversity of popular content, geographical expansion, diversity of fan groups, artists and fans through social networking services (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) interaction between people, the use of popular video websites such as YouTube, and the export of cultural products and related goods have greatly increased." In particular, South Korean pop groups have gained a lot of attention from a global audience during this period. K-pop is a genre in its own right. regarded as a genre, it incorporates aspects of hip-hop, rock, pop, ballads, rhythm and blues, and electronic music and skillful choreography, and has spread to other continents beyond Asia.

During this period, K-pop groups held concerts not only in Asia, but also in Europe, including Great Britain, France and other countries. This shows the rapid growth of networks and cultural influence outside of Asia, which has opened up new markets for the South Korean content industry.

The third generation (Hallyu 3.0) represents the period that began in the mid-2010s. Hallyu 3.0 differs from previous generations in expanding markets, content production mechanisms, active use of various social media networks, and over-the-top (OTT) media service platforms. In particular, the geographical boundaries have expanded further and spread to the United States, Great Britain and France" - particularly the Western Hemisphere. According to the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), within the third generation, South Korean exports , the content industry has grown in general, including not only music and movies, but also publications, cartoons, animation and other video games, which have made up the largest part of this export content in the past five years. South Korean movies and dramas are now on the air. Global OTT streaming services such as Netflix are contributing to the recognition of South Korean content, along with new types of production mechanisms, including direct investment in South Korean content and dramas. The Squid Game, for example, was a Netflix original series in 2021 and was recently greenlit for a new season after its phenomenal success. Another aspect of this generation is the global fandom for K-pop groups. It has become a major factor in what has made BTS the best pop group in the world." Using social media for promotion has become commonplace, but the members of BTS communicate with their fans by sharing their daily lives. actively used social networks, which contributes to the formation of a loyal fan base.

Hallyu's popularity is not only economically beneficial for South Korea and its economy, but also increases the interest of international audiences in South Korea. In addition, the popularization of South Korean culture leads people to move, that is, to visit Korea for tourism and to learn the Korean language. For example, the number of people interested in learning Korean is increasing worldwide, as evidenced by the number of applicants taking the Korean Language Proficiency Test (TOPIK). However, the government's active cultural policy has not always been positively

evaluated. There are criticisms that the South Korean government uses popularity to promote economic interests and help build a national image, rather than supporting cultural development. Most importantly, Korea's soft power to "attract" people from different cultures cannot be imposed on others, no matter how much organizational support and physical resources are provided by the government. In this context, it is more realistic that the Korean wave was in some ways unexpected and not deliberately planned for success. Nevertheless, government support is aimed at raising global awareness of the value of the cultural industry and transforming the cultural ecosystem. The role of the Korean government as the main driving force behind the current popularity of South Korean soft power cannot be denied, but there are limitations in understanding the overall success of South Korean soft power based on this factor alone.

South Korea's Soft Power Competitiveness: The Convergence of Experience, Creativity, and Digital Technologies

In general, the success of the Korean wave can be seen as the result of a historical convergence of politics, economy and culture.

In this context, there are three important aspects that focus global attention on South Korea's soft power. First, South Korea's historical past as a rapidly developing economy and successful democracy is an important factor in the prosperity and expansion of its culture. Despite the devastating Korean War, South Korea became a middle power in just half a century. It is currently the tenth largest economy in the world, with a per capita income of over US\$30,000. In 1996, South Korea became the twenty-ninth member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and in 2010, the twenty-fourth member of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Since the G20 was founded in 2008, this group. Due to its economic growth, South Korea has global brands such as Samsung, Hyundai and Kia, and is a leader in the digital economy and information and communication technology (ICT). At the same time, democratization of the country through direct elections and peaceful transition between different political parties is a crucial element in stabilizing its political system and social environment. South Korea's democratic institutions and rapid economic growth serve to attract other countries, particularly developing countries, as a success story of hard power achievement and middle power status in the liberal international order.

Second, the development of creative content will lead to the competitiveness of South Korea's soft power. This aspect is related to South Korea's historical background and competitive characteristics in limited domestic markets. Historically, South Korea's modernization has been accomplished in a short period of time, and globalization has also been achieved quickly.

This condensed experience has transformed South Korean culture into a blend of traditional, modern, and global values, leading to creative content that appeals to international audiences. at the same time, South Korea's advanced social system and urban culture in dramas can have a positive impact on audiences in developing countries."

In addition, the competitiveness of domestic cultural markets is the driving force behind the production of creative content that can be consumed in global markets." The situation has improved somewhat due to the various platforms that broadcast K-dramas, but due to their limited number, it is competitive to secure channels and advertisements. K -as for pop popularity, there is an obvious uniqueness in explaining the creative content of K-pop style, for example, unique and addictive melodies that combine different genres, well-executed choreography, modern appearance of singers, postmodern scenes, However, , because the number of singers who can debut and become successful is very limited, so it's also very competitive to break into

this industry." Arguably, the high level of singing and choreography stems from this limited market and competitive process; Thus, due to the limited domestic market, this kind of competitiveness encourages the development of creative content aimed at a wider international audience, which offers greater opportunities.

Finally, it is difficult to talk about the spread of South Korean soft power without discussing the development of digital technologies, especially the changing media environment and the development of networks. For example, the expansion of digital satellite broadcasting helped South Korean television programs become popular in China, Japan, and Taiwan during the Hallyu I era.

As the number of satellite broadcasts in neighboring countries increased, a diverse and large number of broadcast content was required. This changing media environment has given the K-drama market an opportunity to cross into other countries. YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have helped K-pop expand globally and offer cost-effective platforms. Such outlets allow the global fandom to interact with artists in real time; That way, the fandom can spread even further. This has significantly contributed to the geographical expansion of South Korea's soft power. Even in Europe and the United States, which have historically had relatively high cultural barriers, social media has become a vehicle for expanding the Korean wave and, consequently, soft power.

Geopolitical scientist Joseph Nye explains that a country cannot develop with soft power alone, but a well-balanced level of hard and soft power can provide a country with significant opportunities for growth and prosperity. Development of such resources requires sound policy making. Nye also explains that there are three sources of soft power: a country's culture, its domestic values, and legitimate international politics. They can be found in the example of South Korea. First, South Korean culture—K-pop and its worldwide spread—shows the influence of soft power. Second, in terms of domestic values, South Korea presents a "remarkable success story" alongside its economic development and great political success in becoming a vibrant democracy. As the third pillar of soft power, Nye points out, "Korea can be great at showing what success means through its international policies."

In this context, he suggests that South Korea could expand its foreign policy agenda beyond security to include climate change, human rights, and the fight against pandemics. Therefore, South Korea can assume a more important international role in terms of the production of global public goods - a situation that will benefit both the country and the world community.

The growing influence of soft power offers hope that South Korea will have the impetus to overcome its unique and emerging geopolitical challenges. Great powers—China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea's ally, the United States—geographically and geopolitically surround the Korean Peninsula. The dynamic of their relationship has created and continues to create political, economic and security challenges for South Korea regionally and globally. In particular, current events such as the intensification of US-China strategic competition and Russia's invasion of Ukraine require complex calculations from South Korean politicians and test the country's diplomatic capabilities. Most importantly, North Korea poses a security threat through the continued development of its nuclear weapons programs, which serves as an obstacle to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and undermines the ultimate goal of reunification. In the context of increasing competition among states to protect their national interests, soft power can create opportunities to improve the situation. For example, cultural exchanges in the private sector can help improve bilateral relations between South Korea and neighboring countries. In addition, global interest in South Korean soft power may also influence North Korean public opinion. There have been many reports of North Koreans being punished for carrying pen drives

containing South Korean dramas, movies and music that have been smuggled into the country. However, it is still difficult to directly influence a particular country or resolve disputes through soft power.

Conclusion

Thus, South Korea should consider creating some space through soft power to complement its foreign policy. Soft power can help expand Seoul's diplomatic space by ensuring national competitiveness and active influence on the global agenda. South Korea should try to create leadership opportunities on certain global issues and help spread international norms. South Korea's soft power influence may help facilitate such processes. South Korea can contribute to global cooperation through its accumulated soft power by providing leadership in three areas: development and cooperation; emerging technologies; human rights. South Korea's soft power has developed, and the country's global influence can contribute to highlighting and recognizing the value of global public goods. BTS members gave a speech on the Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations General Assembly, while Blackpink spoke about climate change at the UN Climate Change Conference Summit. To this extent, the voices of these artists are influential in the international community. It also reflects the current state of South Korea's soft power. In this sense, soft power can be considered to complement hard power constraints, particularly those related to South Korea's diplomatic and foreign policy issues, which are mainly related to geopolitical factors. Recently, the Yoon Suk-yeol government has addressed the goal of becoming a major global power, "focusing on the promotion of freedom, peace and prosperity based on Southern liberal democratic values and, above all, cooperation." It has been and should be. Next regardless of the location of administrations in the political drama, South Korea remains the direction it is taking, and in this context it is necessary to develop and promote soft power. For the stability of the liberal international order, politicians should try to create policies. Public goods through leading international standards for the dissemination of these goods, norms and values beyond the Korean Peninsula. South Korea can contribute to the creation of public goods through its active participation and leadership in various global agendas. His commitment to the international community will eventually pay off. South Korea's soft power plays a positive and important role in this process.

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