THESIS

Lili Gombás

2024

BUDAPEST BUSINESS UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS

COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA SCIENCE (BACHELOR)

FULL TIME

SOUTH KOREA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE:

KEY APPROACHES, EXTERNAL INFLUENCES, AND CHALLENGES

Internal supervisor: Dr. György Szondi   by Lili Gombás

Budapest, 2024

Table of contents

NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott .... GOMBÁS LILI .... büntetőjogi felelősségem tudatában
nyilatkozom, hogy a szakdolgozatomban foglalt tények és adatok a valóságnak megfelelnek,
és az abban leírtak a saját, önálló munkám eredményei.

A szakdolgozatban felhasznált adatokat a szerzői jogvédelem figyelembevételével
alkalmaztam.

Ezen szakdolgozat semmilyen része nem került felhasználásra korábban oktatási intézmény
más képzésén diplomaszerzés során.

Tudomásul veszem, hogy a szakdolgozatomat az intézmény plágiumellenőrzésnek veti alá.

Budapest, 2024.év ....12:.... hónap ...05: nap

....
hallgató aláírása

List of figures

1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The research

The purpose of the research is to examine the role and impact of South Korea's public diplomacy in the digital age, with the intention of understanding how it has strengthened the country's global presence and power.

The objective of the research is to unveil how the Republic of Korea and its key diplomatic actors have been utilizing public diplomacy to gain influence and recognition across the globe; to point out what kind of methods, courses of action are being implemented to enhance their international image and impact; to identify what kind of external forces and in what way can have a great impact on South Korea's public and digital public diplomacy   to detect possible limitations and challenges that might be threatening to the diplomatic measures. Focusing on these objectives, the research questions, that are designed to investigate the dimensions of South Korea's public and digital public diplomacy are the following.

The first question is about reaching global success through public diplomacy. The 1st question is: How has South Korea utilized public diplomacy to heighten its global influence and image?

With the help of the second question, a deeper investigation will be able to be carried out to find out what the essential role of South Korea's public and digital public diplomacy are therefore what kind of tactics are being applied. The 2nd question is: What are the key approaches and strategies in South Korea's public diplomacy efforts encompassing both traditional and digital methods?

With the third question the focus is on the external forces and influences that can impact the way how South Korea shape its public diplomacy. The goal is to identify what other countries influence the public and digital public diplomacy of South Korea and how therefore the third question is the following: What kind of external influences has an impact on the way how South Korea shapes its public diplomacy?

The last question is about the most urging challenges of our century therefore the 4th question is: What are the most pressing challenges facing South Korea's public and digital diplomacy initiatives?

The method of research is secondary qualitative research. The data used for writing this paper will be collected from a variety of sources. Information will be acquired from other scholars' academic papers, well-known journals, the websites of key diplomatic entities and organizations etc. I attempted to conduct an in-person interview with a representative from the Korean Cultural Center in Budapest, but my request was declined even though anonymity and confidential handling were offered as well. This limitation influenced the scope of primary data available for writing this dissertation, and thus, secondary sources were relied upon heavily.

The structure of the thesis was designed logically. The first chapter begin with historical overview to get familiar with the country's background then the basis of traditional public diplomacy and digital public diplomacy is discussed. Within the second main chapter the key forms of public diplomacy and the related approaches. The third chapter is about the external influences - the most influential regions and countries are mentioned with a focus on how that region influenced the public and digital public diplomacy of South Korea and vice versa. The last chapter is all about to identify the current and potential challenges that the country's public diplomacy needs to face.

1.2. Review of literature

Since politics has become an integral part of our everyday lives through traditional media such as television, the amount of diplomacy related news has increased as well. Therefore, public diplomacy has emerged as a well-addressed part of it. Public diplomacy is an often misunderstood and misrepresented area of diplomacy as many people are not quite familiar with the term itself. The perception of the public varies. Many confuse it with cultural diplomacy which is another form of diplomacy and a part of public diplomacy itself. One more similar term that can give a ground for confusion is propaganda. Public diplomacy is truly a multidisciplinary field as numerous forms of it can be listed therefore a universal one-sentence long definition cannot really grasp its whole essence.

To better examine the nature of South Korea's public and digital public diplomacy, it is inevitable to provide a discussion of existing literature on the topic. The following literature

review will give a comprehensive inspection of the topic, primarily by listing key theories and studies coming from both local and global scholars.

Etymologically the word *diplomacy* is derived from the Greek "diploun" that means twofold. The traditional approach to diplomacy puts the focus to the professional actions happening between two kinds of politically diverse nation states (Lohmann, 2017). The modern approach has a broader scope taking the challenges and perspectives of the 21st century into consideration. New concepts and approaches evolved as the frequency of interaction among scholars and experts has been growing. After the Cold War the field of diplomacy had to adapt to the new environment which were characterized by increasing number of diplomatic players and the emergence of new digital technologies (Lohmann, 2017).

The concept of diplomacy in the field of international relations is highly disputed because the mainstream principles of international relations often refer to diplomacy as it was studied synonymously with international relations (Constantinou and Sharp, 2016, p. 20).

According to The Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2024) the term '*public diplomacy*' refers to "any kind of government sponsored efforts aimed at communicating directly with foreign publics". On the other hand, a key scholar from the University of Antwerp, Ellen Huijgh stated that public diplomacy is not just a term but also a concept and a practice focusing on the diplomatic interaction between people and political entities both from foreign and domestic audiences (2016, p.437). Public diplomacy as a distinct phrase was first used in the late 19th century in one of the editions of *The Times* where it was an alternate for the term 'civility' (*The Times*, 1856, cited in Huijgh, 2016, p.438).

Since that time a newly extended version came into existence. To properly define then further understand what the new public diplomacy is about, older stereotypes of public diplomacy need to be put aside. The concept of *new public diplomacy* suggests that public diplomacy is segment that cannot be considered as manipulative tool towards foreign publics anymore (Melissen, 2005, p.11). New public diplomacy requires more evolved and distinct skills than those were in the traditional approach.

It is essential to try to draw a fine line between public diplomacy and propaganda as the two concepts are different even though public diplomacy sometimes can be viewed as concept derived from propaganda (Melissen, 2005, p.16.). Propaganda is associated with keywords like deliberate actions and manipulation. Propaganda also more likely to be associated with the traditional theoretical framework of diplomacy.

From a historical point of view the very first case of South Korea's public diplomacy can be linked to the first ambassador to the States back in the late 1880s (Choi, 2019, p.5.). South Korea's efforts and the whole infrastructure of public diplomacy at that time were significantly undeveloped comparing to other nations' (Choi, 2019, p. 9). Later in the 60s and 70s major changes were implemented to create a better chain of institutions for the sake of public diplomacy efforts. For example, a new ministry, the Ministry of Public Affairs, was established in 1963 (Choi, 2019, p.9). The South Korean government has also acquired some influential media outlets, the ones that distributed English newspapers, to win over foreign audiences (Choi, 2019, p.10.).

Between the 70s and the 90s a new kind of period has started; détente was in the middle of the focus. Détente is the improvement of diplomatic relations between two nations where previously some kind of tension was present (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). During these decades South Korea began to create diplomatic ties with People's Republic and China and with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Choi, 2019, p.11). The extension of economic and sport related diplomatic activities have evolved in late 80s by fortifying bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The urge to further boost the domestic infrastructure of public diplomacy was backed by the South Korean government so the Foreign Ministry established the Korea Foundation in 1991 (Choi, 2019, p.11-12). The primary goal of the newly created organization was to "promote international friendship and cooperation and to support Korea's increasingly proactive diplomatic status…" (Choi, 2019, p.12.). Famous initiatives like the Culture Growth Plan and the Visit Korea campaign were introduced afterwards.

A shift from economic diplomacy to culture diplomacy can be observed by the end of the 20th century with cultural exchange programs at the centre of attention. The very first law which was designed with a purpose of regulating public diplomacy activities is The Public Diplomacy Act (Choi, 2019, p.14.). The whole Act can be found at the end of the paper as an appendix.

Soft power and public diplomacy are like the coat and its buttons meaning that no discussion on one of them can happen without mentioning the other. Soft power is the ability to achieve what you want without hard political means (Nye, 2021). Soft power, a term first defined by Joseph Nye in the late 1980s, has since become a defining concept in international relations and foreign policy. Nye first expressed his understanding of global power; Nye made a contrast between the modern "soft" power and more traditional "hard" power, defined as the

use of force or oppression, identifying the positive role of non-coercive means in global influence (Nye, 2004).

Based on Nye's thought (2004), soft power is the capability to influence the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. Unlike hard power, which often comes from military strength, soft power is wielded through cultural, ideological, and diplomatic channels. Soft power translates into diplomatic strength by emphasizing the role of a country's cultural exports, moral values, and political ideals as mechanisms through which a nation impacts the international stage, without resorting to coercive measures. Nye (1990), in fact, in his earlier works proclaims that in a world where global interdependence entails more persuasion than oppression, soft power has emerged as an important factor.

Social media is an emerging trend that is rapidly changing the cultural power scene, as well as the first aspect of soft power, the more traditional non-material source of the soft power toolkit. Against this backdrop, social media has emerged as a potent weapon for both governments and nongovernmental actors to apply their cultural and political influence across the globe (Deng, 2019). Scholars have started investigating the use of these platforms in public diplomacy, a point where soft power and digital technologies meet, as soft power has become more expansive and digital platforms have broadened its scope. As per Gilboa (2008), states will make use of communication as a tool for engaging foreign people and trying to impact their opinions, is very similar to Nye's idea of soft power. Digital tools and platforms have afforded nations an immediate and extensive means of promoting their values, ideals, and culture around the globe in the 21st century.

On the other hand, academics have also emphasized the constraints behind soft power. Soft power can often be context-dependent, and the influence exerted can be weakened when the ones who are the objects of influence feel that the activities of soft power are manipulative or not authentic (Melissen, 2011). In addition, though soft power may enhance a country's global stature, it will not wholly eclipse hard power. The best strategy, as Nye (2011) points out, is a mix of hard and soft power — which he calls "smart power." It acknowledges that countries must use their military and economic might while employing cultural and diplomatic instruments to make themselves more appealing to foreigners.

Same with soft power which emerged in a growing body of literature, not just about the hegemony, but also about the international governance and the relations between the parties involved. Soft power emerged as a tool amongst emerging powers, especially in Asia (Kurlantzick, 2007). A prominent example is China's practice of using its Confucius Institutes throughout the world to enhance the influence of the state through culture. Also, South

Korea's "Korean Wave" (Hallyu), which includes K-pop, Korean cinema, and television, has helped the country gain more influence, further emphasizing the role of cultural diplomacy in soft power (Jin, 2014).

Soft power, defined by Joseph S. Nye, Jr. as the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants by attracting them, in the absence of coercion, is an indispensable tool in the twenty-first-century diplomatic toolbox and should be an integral part of the toolkit of any policymaker. Although it will be challenged due to questions around authenticity and effectiveness, the digitalization of technology and a mix of hard and soft power create an entire ecosystem for global influence. The increasing significance of soft power still attract scholarly attention, and rightly so, as it will increasingly prove to be central to the study of how both states and non-state actors are grappling with the complexity of international relations.

Let's have a look at the soft power in the case of South Korea. The positive impact of soft power can be clearly argued if we just think about the day when the Korean boy band BTS met Joe Biden in the White House back in 2022. The influence of their action was tremendous as they haven't just done a simple visit to meet the president but also spoke up about issues like the anti-Asian hate in the White House press room (Smith, 2022). From a diplomatic perspective BTS's visit can be considered a manifestation of soft power, in line with Nye's idea, as it had a positive impact on the diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea excluding any coercion. The visit also left a huge impression on the people of the States as BTS seized the opportunity to give a special thanks to their fans, called the ARMYs, because many of them gathered around the White House to support the 7-member-group (Smith, 2022).

Cultural diplomacy is also a strongly relevant concept to public diplomacy. If we put public diplomacy together with cultural diplomacy some may think they are similar. However, these two diplomacies have big differences in terms of aims and tools. (Nurhalimah, 2022). Cultural diplomacy is a promotion of a country's achievements related to culture while the emphasis is on establishing connections between local cultural institutions and cultural institutions abroad (Berridge and James, 2003). Cultural diplomacy is increasingly seen with importance as a part of international relations, with cultural assets being used as a way of fostering mutual understanding and influence.

Scholars trace its origins to the concept of public diplomacy—defined by Nye (2004) as a form of "soft power" concerned with attraction rather than coercion. Cultural diplomacy,

as a specific form, uses cultural exchange and dialogue in the service of enhancing relationships between non-state actors (Cull, 2008). This method may encompass the promotion of various aspects of culture, such as art, language, and customs, to promote understanding and help resolve disputes. According to academics, cultural diplomacy provides nations with an opportunity to promote a positive image of themselves internationally while pursuing strategic interests. Schneider (2006), for example, suggests its place in forming lasting bonds that transcend political or economic differences. Globalized mediums, like international festivals, educational exchange programs promote dialogue and cultural re-education.

Furthermore, cultural diplomacy goes hand in hand with nation branding, as with France, South Korea, etc., which promotes their image through culture (Ang et al., 2015). But critics note the obstacles of cultural diplomacy as well. It often needs to be undergirded by the credibility and authenticity of the promoting nation, as some scholars suggest (Snow, 2009, p. 109). Cultural diplomacy loses its effects when it is considered propagandistic or commercializing. Besides, measuring the impact of cultural diplomacy is challenging, as the effects of it are often long-term and intangible (Cull, 2008).

Lastly, cultural diplomacy is an important means of promoting international collaboration as well as soft power projection. It is crippled to a certain extent, but its capacity to forge mutual understanding lays out its importance in global affairs. Both concepts, soft power and cultural diplomacy play a huge role in South Korea's public diplomacy efforts.

Nation branding is a term that can be confused with public diplomacy or even with soft power as the final goal of public diplomacy and nation branding is similar. It is a field where there is a lack of theoretical frameworks with the abundance of true actions (Dinnie, 2008, p.13.). Nation branding can also appear as a controversial area because "it is a highly politicized activity" (Dinnie, 2008, p.13.). Nation branding is now a central aspect of contemporary public diplomacy, allowing nations to sculpt their international image and establish alliances across the globe. Corporate branding strategies, as defined in Anholt (2007), are applied to countries. As a result, South Korea has strategically been using nation branding as a public diplomacy tool to strengthen its international image and overcome geographic and historic barriers (Joo, 2021).

At the centre of nation branding is the idea of soft power, a term first coined by Nye (2004) to refer to power through attraction, deriving from culture, values, and policies. Using its cultural resources — notably, the Korean Wave (Hallyu) encompassing K-pop, K-dramas,

and cinema — South Korean nation branding strategies focus on cultural industries. The cultural exports created a successful centre of attention throughout the rest of the world that has since viewed South Korea as a cultural powerhouse. According to Choi and Kim (2014), Hallyu is a vehicle to promote South Korea's values and associated representations, both of which are imperative to its diplomatic efforts.

South Korea's nation branding efforts do not just stop with Hallyu. Initiatives like the Visit Korea Years campaigns and hosting major international events (e.g., the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics) are part of a wider strategy for positioning South Korea as a modern, innovative, and hospitable state (Kim & Nam, 2016). These efforts are intended to combat negative stereotypes and establish South Korea's distinct status relative to other regional others, especially with its historical and linguistic neighbour, North Korea, with which it is often conflated. As successful as this has been, South Korea struggles in its attempts to brand itself as a national entity. Would you agree that calling upon a few scholars who convey that relying on the Hallyu would generate a narrow and superficial global image, and the country might not be able to highlight the technological and industrial accomplishments (Lee, 2020) which may prove to be counterproductive? In addition to this, historical tensions with its neighbours, e.g., Japan, and geopolitical tensions, make it even more of a challenge to achieve a consistent or universally positive branding (Joo, 2021).

However, nation branding is an important component of South Korea's public diplomacy through which its identity and influence are used to exert power geopolitically. It is the combination of cultural appeal and strategic approaches that contributed to South Korea's successful establishment of a position on the international stage. But to keep its momentum going, it needs a diversified strategy that aligns with its multifaceted strengths and responds to external challenges.

Smart power, which was also popularized by Joseph Nye as well as other significant concepts, criticizes overreliance on hard power (coercion or payment) or attraction (or soft or persuasive power), has gained traction for foreign policy goals. As per Nye (2009), smart power is a combination of hard power and soft power, utilizing military, economic, and cultural resources in a balanced manner to ensure effectiveness.

Smart power was indeed a reaction against the excessive use of hard power, especially at the hands of great powers like the United States and demonstrates its need for flexibility within international relations (Wilson, 2008). While hard power, in the form of military intervention, can deliver tangible results in the short term; in the long term it tends to foster

resentment and resistance. In contrast, soft power cultivates goodwill, but does not easily compel action when such action is desired. Indeed, scholars like Nye (2009) contend that the integration of these strategies facilitates state adaptation to the ever-evolving geopolitical landscape.

There are many case studies of smart power in practice. Wilson (2008) looks at the U.S. approach to counterterrorism, which combines military operations (hard power) with soft power efforts such as cultural exchanges and educational programs. In that sense, South Korea's public diplomacy efforts, viewed through the lens of smart power, represent an integrated effort between their soft power and hard power (Lee & Lim, 2016). This approach allows South Korea to balance powerful neighbour countries like China and Japan without losing global clout.

Yet, smart power is not free from critique either. Scholars contend that the absence of transparent metrics measuring its success makes it challenging to evaluate the success of smart power (Wilson, 2008). More importantly, whether a state can exercise smart power has no bearing on the level of power resources through which the resource-relationship can hold—resources such as institutions and legitimacy of government (Nye, 2009). The challenge for smaller states is the combination of limited hard power capabilities and more innovative utilization of soft power (Lee & Lim, 2016).

Public diplomacy is such a multi-layered and dynamic field that its theory has built on other theories of communication and international relations to illustrate how states connect with foreign publics. This literature review explores the implications of key theories, including the two-step flow of communication (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955), agenda-setting theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), framing theory (Entman, 1993), critical theories (Foucault, 1980; Habermas, 1984), and interdependence theories (Risse-Kappen, 1995), for public diplomacy.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) created the two-step flow of communication theory, which assumes (through introduction - process of mediation) the role of opinion leaders in influencing society. It suggests that mass media messages do not impact the masses directly; however, instead, they go from these influential intermediaries to the masses. Body: A narrative in public diplomacy emphasizes targeting specific individuals, journalists, academics, and social media influential persons who can spread a country's message multi-dimensionally (Gilboa, 2008). As an example, programs such as international visitor

exchanges tend to seek to foster relationships with such opinion leaders as a means of expanding embassy influence.

Since the original agenda-setting theory of McCombs and Shaw (1972), it has been proposed that the media not only influences what people think by determining what issues receive public attention. This is especially relevant in public diplomacy, where governments and international organizations tend to attempt to influence the framing of issues in global media discourse, whether by making themselves the thematic focus of news coverage or portraying an issue in a favorable tonality (Entman, 2008). The use of agenda-setting techniques to reframe issues in the international arena is ubiquitous in areas of public diplomacy, such as climate change or global health campaigns.

While agenda-setting theory looks at what issues are covered, framing theory looks at how information is framed, or presented, and how that shaping influences audience understanding. The idea of frames as interpretive schemas that influence public perception was first introduced by Goffman (1974). Framing has been important in the context of public diplomacy: how you present your culture, policies, and values that resonate with a foreign audience. According to Entman (2004), this effective framing can act to bolster the persuasiveness of a nation's message, especially in antagonistic conditions, dividing public opinion.

Critical theories provide a more questioning lens of public diplomacy, interrogating the state-centric approaches of traditional public diplomacy, and instead, focusing on studies of power, inequality, and marginalization. Foucault (1980) theorizes power as embodied through discourse, which renders public diplomacy as a form of soft power that perpetuates and bolsters already existing power structures. Indeed, such theories might incite critical reflection on the moral consequences of public diplomacy as preliminary practitioners and scholars of the craft are eager to address such consequences in order to enhance fairness on a global scale (Melissen, 2011).

At the same time, many international relations scholars are interested in thinking about interdependence theories (Keohane and Nye, 1977), which address globalized world systems and how to consider the interplay between states. Such theories emphasize interdependence between states in economic, political, and cultural dimensions as a condition that needs to be addressed through cooperative diplomacy. In this regard, public diplomacy is not only a means to pursue unilateral interests but also a means to increase mutual understanding and cooperation.

Digital public diplomacy is an emerging field as digitalization is part of our modern world. Public diplomacy actors and initiatives must adapt to the changing environment. Some think that digital diplomacy is immune from getting criticism because the utilization of digital platforms is much easier and more cost efficient than using traditional methods (Holmes, 2015). Malcolm Gladwell argued that social media as a tool of digital diplomacy cannot lead to significant activism, and it also lacks personal ties; that is why he strongly critiques slacktivism (Morozov, 2010). Slacktivism is the practice of supporting a political cause by means like the social media involving very little effort or commitment (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Traditionally, the term public diplomacy has referred to efforts by governments to communicate in foreign domains to influence international audiences, build relationships, and advance national interests (Melissen, 2005). The emergence of digital technologies, notably the internet and social media, has added a new dimension to public diplomacy, known as digital public diplomacy. This evolution has transformed the way countries communicate with global publics, presenting new challenges and opportunities for governments across the world (Berridge, 2010).

Digital public diplomacy is widely defined as the use of digital platforms and tools to conduct diplomatic activities and build relations with foreign publics (Baker, 2014). The rise of digital technologies has integrated into public diplomacy (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992), enabling real-time communication and direct engagement with global audiences, while also creating a participatory dimension to foreign relations. Such platforms have given way to governments that used to rely on diplomatic channels to influence or interact with foreign citizens and enabled more effective shaping of global narratives (Culbertson & Chen, 2013). This has also been a bonus to countries such as the United States, which leveraged digital tools to spread democracy, human rights, and cultural values (Hanson, 2012) worldwide.

Digital public diplomacy also poses a number of challenges. One important issue is the risk of misinformation and manipulation within the digital space. The rise of fake news and disinformation campaigns has led facto governments to be careful in their digital engagements as their credibility may be placed at risk from high-impact fake news threats (Graham & O'Loughlin, 2013). Furthermore, although digital platforms enable direct engagement with foreign publics, they also make diplomats more vulnerable to new forms of criticism and public scrutiny, with potentially harmful implications for traditional diplomacy (Jiang, 2018).

The blending of classical tools of public diplomacy with approaches adapted to the digital world has been a key issue in the literature of recent years. This means hybrid public diplomacy, combining both approaches, creates a more effective and responsive diplomatic process according to scholars (Kraft, 2019). It is this hybrid form that merges the influence of conventional public diplomacy with the immediacy and engagement of digital instruments to magnify governmental messages and access a broader and more diverse audience. Hybrid public diplomacy works best if it combines both offline and online approaches in an integrated, strategic way (Melissen, 2017). For example, a state might create credibility through traditional media outlets and diplomatic channels while relying on digital platforms for outreach and engagement.

The evolution of digital technologies has introduced significant transformations in the sphere of international relations, particularly in the context of public diplomacy. The internet has opened avenues for participation (and influence!); however, it also brought significant dangers, especially in terms of cybersecurity threats and cyberattacks. These digital vulnerabilities are not only undermining the national security of states but also making it even more challenging to practice public diplomacy, as states are serving their foreign publics through digital platforms due to the growing importance of maintaining their international image (Lindsay, 2013).

Cybersecurity is a significant threat in today's world, as cyber attackers could target government institutions, private corporations, and citizens. Cybersecurity is at the heart of national security, as cyber threats can create instability in the economic and political systems of strategic states (Nye, 2010). Cyber-attacks can lead to friction between states and destabilize international relations. One such example was the series of 2007 cyber-attacks against Estonia, which were widely acknowledged as being perpetrated by Russia and demonstrated how cyber warfare could damage a nation's critical infrastructure and the ability to carry on diplomatic business (Zetter, 2014). Such incidents highlight that cyber threats are directly relevant to public diplomacy, as they can result in the dissemination of misinformation, damage to national reputation, and disruption to diplomatic efforts.

For decades, public diplomacy has involved fostering positive relations through cultural exchange, international broadcasting, and people-to-people communication, but in recent years has come to be conducted through e-diplomacy as well. Governments have new tools for projecting their soft power (Cull, 2008) and influencing foreign public opinion via

social media, websites, and other digital platforms. Digital platforms are increasingly becoming the only option for individuals and organizations, but their growing dependency has led to vulnerability to attacks. On social media, disinformation campaigns can skew public perception and help create a false narrative of diplomacy. For example, the spread of fake news through social media during the 2016 US presidential election has been considered by many as a cyber-attack that disrupted the public diplomacy environment (Tucker et al., 2017). Such attacks make it more difficult for governments to control their diplomatic messaging and, at least, influence foreign publics honestly and transparently.

This cybersecurity problem is not limited to the content of diplomats' messages but extends to the secure channels through which they are sent. Hackers are able to access diplomatic emails and other sensitive communications, resulting in classification information being leaked and eroding trust between countries. Furthermore, this has really added a whole level of complexity to diplomatic relations; governments need to now ensure they can secure their digital infrastructures, adding to what is at stake in terms of their foreign policy interests (Bendiek, 2019). In addition, the merging of public diplomacy and cyber warfare has led to ethical concerns around the use and conduct of digital tools and networks on the international stage. Cyber-attacks could serve as means of severe oppression or it could also be part of a more extensive diplomatic strategy, aimed at shaping global perception or damaging perceived enemy states (Dunn Cavelty, 2013).

2.

THE UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC AND DIGITAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

2.1. The era of global rise and the period before

South Korea's global rise has started to grow rapidly since the early 2000s; however, the foundations of swift advancement were laid down much earlier. The Korean War, which began in 1950 and ended in 1953, had a significant negative impact on the country. South Korea became one of the poorest countries afterwards. The estimated cost of the war damages was astonishingly high, around 42 billion won (Lee, 2001, p. 98.). Calculating even at today's exchange rate, it is roughly equivalent to 11 billion forints. Severe inflation, or the so-called hyperinflation, and economic recession characterized the nation's post-war economic situation.

Reaching the 60s, the country's per capita income was way lower than that of Haiti, or the Republic of India (Kim, 1991). Between the 1950s and 1970s, South Korea performed accelerated development and industrial expansion. This was also the era labelled as the Korean Miracle or the Miracle of the Han River. The term miracle is quite contradictory, as this miracle wasn't accidental at all; it was rather a "man-made" achievement of the period of 1962-1980 (Kim, 1991). The timeframe within South Korea has recovered from all the destructions is the most phenomenal aspect of the miracle. The restoration was faster and more successful than the recovery of Europe after the Second World War (Kim, 1991).

 One of the most important turning points for the country was the Olympics held in 1988 as it symbolized the beginning of the modernized and globalized South Korea. It had a huge positive impact on the society and on the national identity as well (Ok and Choi, 2009). The Seoul Olympics also gave the nation a chance, daresay the biggest chance so far, to promote themselves to the rest of the world. In the year of 1988, South Korea, more specifically Seoul, transformed into a diplomatic powerhouse in the Asian region as sport and sport diplomacy is one of the best tools to refine national diplomacy (Ok and Choi, 2009).

Due to its stable economic expansion ongoing from the sixties, South Korea was mentioned as one of the Four Asian Tigers, which is a group of four nations that showcased extraordinary development and industrialisation (Investopedia, n.d.). The other three nations also, just like South Korea, put themselves onto the map of wealthy nations (Investopedia,

n.d.). Singapore is now one of the most important, if not the most important, financial centres on Earth. The same can be mentioned about Hong Kong as well. Lastly Taiwan is the region that cannot be left out because it became well known for its international manufacturing and its information technology (Investopedia, n.d.).

Just a year after becoming a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, another massive crisis hit the country's economy immensely between 1997 and 1998: the Asian Financial Crisis (Eichengreen, Perkins & Shin, 2012). Thanks to the generous intervention from the International Monetary Fund, South Korea was once again able to overcome the devastating monetary ramifications (IMF, 2022).

Entering the 21st century meant entering the global stage for South Korea. The country reached a level where the rest of the world regarded it as a key player in the global economy. In 2010, the country became a member state of the G20 group that is international government to government forum of 20 nations. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, n.d.)

Large family-owned companies or chaebols, as how Koreans call them, were the strongest foundations for achieving global success. Since their establishment in the 1950s, they received huge help in form of government subsidies that contributed to turning these businesses into the world's largest companies of today. (Le, Kim and Kim, 2016, p.262.) The most notable Korean companies that have now become global giants are Samsung, Hyundai, LG, and LOTTE.

Since the beginning of 2000s, a wide and global spread of Korean culture and cultural products like dramas, movies and pop music could be observed. This process is known as the Korean Wave or Hallyu which means the "phenomenal growth of Korean culture and popular culture" overseas (Roll, 2021).

The country's reputation and popularity have seen an exponential growth in the 2010s and the 2020s. Korean dramas, movies, celebrities, and K-pop has become an integral component of our everyday lives, especially for teenage girls around the world. People can hear or see Korea-related news and viral contents almost every day on popular social media platforms.

2.2. Traditional public diplomacy and its efforts

The Public Diplomacy Acts, that is the first essential legal document, states that the tools for public diplomacy are culture, policy, and knowledge and the actors of public

diplomacy can be either the state, the local governments, or actors from the private sector (Choi, 2019, p.15.). Although the aim of South Korean public diplomacy is predominantly to convince international target audiences to get an understanding of the country, its focus is on the domestic objectives (Choi, 2019, p.15.). It is crucial to mention that the appointed Public Diplomacy Committee has the ultimate power to regulate public diplomacy by creating plans; a master plan, an annual plan, a comprehensive action plan and, overseas plans (Choi, 2019, p.16.).

Creating and facilitating public diplomacy strategies are basically a new thing for South Korea as the country does not have long years of history of public diplomacy planning to look back on. Despite of being a latecomer, South Korea has reached such level of global influence and recognition that other nations can only dream of. Many people around the world are now familiar with the fact that South Korea is now on a global level as specially coined terms like K-pop, K-dramas, K-food became widely recognized by foreigners. K-culture has become a lifestyle among people that turned into fans, fans of South Korea. In the case of South Korea, cultural diplomacy is the most prevalent form of public diplomacy.

Founding Korean Cultural Centers across the globe can be seen as key essential entities promoting South Korea's culture and national image in the designed country. These cultural centers organize cultural and educational programs to do so. One of the biggest Korean Cultural Centers located in Budapest, Hungary.

The Visit Korea Year is a governmental campaign encouraging foreigners to travel to Korea to get to know its culture via tourism. The 2023-24 initiatives of this campaign is to become a leader in global tourism and to boost the national economy. The Visit Korea Committee running other projects as well like the Korea Grand Sale which is a foreign friendly festival promoting shopping or the KOREA TOUR CARD made for using public transportation conveniently (Visit Korea Committee, 2023). The Visit Korea 2022 campaign has turned out be successful; a promotional video of the country gained more than two hundred million views (Korea Tourism Organization, 2023).

To deeply get foreigners delve into the culture of South Korea and to help making their travelling experience smooth, learning the national language can be a decisive point. The King Sejong Institute Foundation is a foundation that advocates learning hangul, the Korean alphabet, and the Korean language. The institution bears name of Sejong the Great because he was the person who created the hangul during his reigning period in 1446 (Wikipedia,2024). Since its foundation there has been 248 institutions established worldwide in the last 17 years (Wikipedia, 2024). Their original YouTube channel has more than 130.000 subscribers (King

Sejong Institute Foundation, 2024). To promote their video contents, famous public figures appear in their videos like Alberto Mondi who is a famous Italian TV personality and public figure who is based in South Korea. BTS, the Korean boyband, also played their part in promoting the language. They created a merch called Learn! KOREAN with BTS which is a set of small-sized exercise 4 books with an intelligent pen. It was a great victory as all the limited set sold out within a short period of time after its launch via Weverse online shop.

There is no official plan published by the government yet regarding what they would like to achieve in the future. Taking nowadays trends into consideration strengthening cultural and educational diplomatic initiatives are likely to remain crucial as well as utilizing soft power via Korean celebrities. Digitalization will also play a vital part of public diplomacy in the future as people's digital dependence grow day by day.

2.3. Digital public diplomacy initiatives

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be regarded as a leader among digital diplomacy advocates in South Korea. Displayed on their website the Ministry's overseas missions include visual contents published on YouTube, proactive SNS supporters overseas, and organizing online events abroad (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, 2024). KOREAZ: All about Korea A to Z is the official social media channel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where digital public diplomacy is on the spotlight. Targeted contents are released "to promote universal values and Korea's vision of Global Pivotal State" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, 2024).

The online presence of diplomatic actors is inevitable in today's world. To target broader segments of global audiences effectively hence strong online identity and representation on different social media sites is a must.
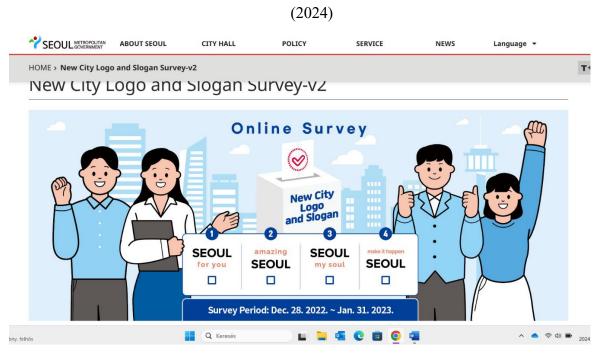
The Korean Culture and Information Service known as KOCIS is a digital public diplomacy advocate. The main mission of the organization is to "promote global cultural exchange and spreads news on Korea" (Korea.net, n.d.). Though diverse content is covered from news about international cooperation to diplomatic summit talks on their website, all the contents available only in Korean. To facilitate easy navigation, the official website of different Korean Cultural Centers can be directly accessed as they appear on the middle of the main page thus lead is generated for the overseas centers.

As a recent, 2022-2023, successful case study of digital public diplomacy efforts, The City Logo and Slogan Survey can be discussed that was well-tailored for global audiences.

The government of Seoul Metropolitan city launched an online survey recently to find a new slogan for the city that can be appealing to foreign tourists. There were four options to choose from as **Figure 1** shows. It is a good case of social engagement as people was included in the decision-making processing. In the survey it was also asked why you think the logo you chose is the ideal one; incorporating such question ensured that the government could truly create a logo and a slogan truly resonating with what most voters feel and think.

Figure 1.

The poster of the online survey on the official website of Seoul Metropolitan Government (2024)

According to their official statement the government of the Seoul "commenced a project to develop a new city logo and slogan with the aim of enhancing city competitiveness and taking a leap as a global city" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2024). Seoul my soul was the winner slogan which embodies the tourists do have an emotional connection to the dynamics and culture of the city; seen in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2.

The new logo of Seoul city; English and Korean version (Design Compass, 2023)

Including a heart emoji in the logo design can be considered as a strategic choice that symbolizes warmth and love thus creating a cheerfully inviting image. The Korean version of the logo is not based on the Korean equivalent to "Seoul my soul"; it has actually the same pronunciation as the English one because the English term is written down using the Korean alphabet. From a Korean learner point of view, it was a great decision as foreigners can read it easily even if someone is at a beginner level, making it more attractive overall to foreigners. Seoul Metropolitan City is also actively present on social platforms like on Instagram where they have more than half a million followers (Seoul Metropolitan Government, n.d.). The new city logo and slogan campaign can be regarded a great example of city diplomacy or even as a city-specific nation branding as involving the public in the whole process is form of applying soft power in a way that the participation indicates transparency and dedication to develop a positive global image of Seoul in the eyes of the foreigners and in the eyes of the residents as well.

As the number of digital public diplomacy measures grows rapidly, a huge demand for creating virtual initiatives by using metaverse or artificially intelligence is there too. It is observable that the Korean entertainment industry, so far, could make the best out of metaverse and virtual reality especially during the coronavirus pandemic when companies couldn't organize in person concerts; the only possible way was to create a concert experience utilizing virtual reality. For example, the Korean girl group Aespa has triumphantly created a virtual venue for their fans called Kwangya (The USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2022). Another success story is when the boy band BTS organized several pay-per-view live stream concerts online between 2020 and 2022 which attracted millions of people.

2.4. Achievements and influence on global image

To discuss and assess the success South Korea has gained so far, rankings based on real, measurable data are needed to be taken into consideration.

According to U.S. News & World Report, the overall ranking of South Korea was 18th last year. The ranking based on several factors like cultural influence, power, quality of life, social purpose, movers and open for business etc. (n.d.). Based on the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index South Korea placed 24th in 2023 (Ipsos, 2023). There is an indicator called the Economic Complexity Index, called ECI, which measures how much potential a country has or could have rather than calculating with rigid numbers like the Gross Domestic Product,

known as GDP, which can give a data that can be later misinterpreted. In the ECI ranking of the year 2022, South Korea achieved a notable 4th place (Observatory of Economic Complexity, n.d.).

During the last few years, South Korea received a lot of positive attention thanks to great exploitation of cultural soft power; music and dramas as cultural products dominated the international market especially in the United States. Just to mention a few: Squid Games, BTS, Parasite, Blackpink and Stray Kids are the most well-known cultural products of the Asian country that took the world by storm. The success of the Korean Wave resulted in opening the government's eyes to the fact that this is a field that indeed requires a smooth handling and financial support to thrive (Kim, 2022, p.126.). Under the leadership of Lee Myung-bak the concept of "Global Korea" became a real reachable vision as the focus was on nation branding hence strengthen national identity and to boost the competitiveness of the country (Kim, 2022, p.126.). The most recent generation of Korean Wave, known as Hallyu 3.0, is all about the over-the-top streaming platforms like Netflix (Kim, 2022, p.129.). The growing number of brave participants who are willing to test their Korean language skills under the Korean Language Proficiency Test, called TOPIK, also shows the growth of soft power.

South Korea is fully aligned with what Joseph Nye argued about soft power stating that soft power is a mix of three things which is a must to be successful: the culture itself, its domestic values, and international policies (Kim, 2022, p.133.). In the case of South Korea, the first condition is the strongest and most evident as K-culture became a phenomenon worldwide; the second one is fulfilled too as economic development of the nation is impressive; as for the last requirement South Korea can secure a more substantial role in the future by stretching its foreign policy agenda planning (Kim, 2022, p.133.). According to Kim it is still challenging to use soft power as a problem solver tool thus employing soft power rather to create a niche which contributes to the country's foreign policy would be advisable (2022, p.133.).

Diplomatic White Paper is document published annually by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs summarizing the global landscape and the diplomatic activities of the given year prioritizing foreign policy, public diplomacy efforts, and detailed discussion on diplomacy outcomes with specific regions. The most recent paper available is for the year of 2022. As soon as the new administration with President Yoon Suk Yeol at the front took the lead, a new project called "*A New Leap Forward of Korea, A Thriving Nation of the People*" came into existence including more than a hundred of policy waiting for implementation. (Ministry of

Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.28.). Almost 10% of the policies are related to diplomacy with a mission to make South Korea a "global pivotal state contributing to freedom, peace, and prosperity" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.28.). The Minister of Foreign Affairs had a meeting with Péter Szijjártó in 2022 where the two ministers agreed that there is a ground for developing bilateral relations and for collaborating on the global stage. Furthermore, the Korean party also acclaimed the resilient operations of Korean companies in Hungary while the minister Szijjártó appreciated the steady stream, of investments coming from South Korea contributing to the economy of Hungary. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.121.).

Additionally, the *Diplomatic White Paper* declare that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is dedicated to increase the participation of people in a manner that citizens' feedback will be gathered through the *Diplomacy Together with the People* project. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.292.). Educational diplomacy initiatives were also implemented like the launch of *Public Academy for Diplomacy* aiming to broaden the people's understanding of diplomacy and *The Diplomacy School for Youth* program targeting high school students to get useful insights on diplomacy and global issues. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.296-297.).

Digital public diplomacy efforts of MOFA seemed to pay off as they actively communicated with people on social media platforms and the number of people who visited the official website reached 4.8 million (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.297.). Various contents like the *Live MOFA* with 178 episodes were designed to show that there is real communication between MOFA and the public (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA], 2022, p.297.)

3.
KEY APPROACHES

3.1. Cultural diplomacy

Culture diplomacy is the most exploited form of public and digital public diplomacy of South Korea as a huge dependency on K-culture products like idols and actors can be identified (Pardee Atlas, n.d.). This huge reliance on public figures is coming from the fact these Korean celebrities turned into superstars during the last few years thanks to soft power.

Top- tier A-listers like BTS, Blackpink, and Stray Kids are now global phenomena as everything they do become viral and trending. Idols like them can also be seen as manipulative tools of the Korean soft power as their fans will follow and pay attention to everything, they do without thinking first whether it is a good thing or not.

The endless commercialization of the K-pop industry has been facing backlash for years and is a ground for criticism according to experts. Overall, it can be regarded as a bad practice for putting cultural authenticity aside. It can also lead to doubt whether selling and exploiting idols as market products are really the best way to reach global influence. Considering that some of the K-pop fans are minors, seeing their beloved idols with a flawless, almost too-perfect appearance can create a distorted image which later can raise unrealistic expectations and lead to body image issues or self-esteem problems (ICDS, n.d.). More serious mental issues like considering suicide can surface. In the last 10 years many beloved idols like Sulli or Jonghyun chose to end their lives because they were under so much pressure despite their appearance of having a perfect life. Seeing this, teenagers could think that if their favourite idol, whose life must have been perfect, killed themselves then they should follow their steps too. Bullying idols in online communities for making a small humanlike mistake is unfortunately a common thing in South Korea. Bullying and suicide among ordinary high schoolers became nationwide issues that are being neglected and overlooked even until this day.

3.2. Educational diplomacy

The main mission of South Korea's public diplomacy is to spread their culture abroad to attract foreigners; one of the most fundamental elements of a nation's culture is the language. Language is the basic as we need to communicate with others in every area of life therefore understanding people in the country where we are is essential. The other perspective is that speaking a foreign language can help us deeply appreciate the culture of that nation as well. That is why Korean public diplomacy places great emphasis on language-related programs as part of educational diplomacy. A program that is known for attracting a lot of foreigners is the government sponsored Global Korea Scholarship program known as GKS or KGSP. This program is designed for international students who would like to study in Korean universities (NIIED, n.d.). Students aiming for undergraduate courses and students who would like to make a master's degree or doctoral degree are all welcome. Accepted students are obliged to have a Korean language course for a year before they start attending university;

students who fail to reach a certain level of language during that period will be denied from entering university therefore they will lose their scholarship and will be sent home (MOFA, n.d.). The competition is intense as the quotas of the countries and the acceptance rate are relatively low and the conditions are difficult to be met. For example, Hungary can only send a total of seven students according to the program guidelines of 2024 (MOFA, 2024). A possible interpretation of including a compulsory language course is that South Korea would like to make sure that the incoming international students get a deep understanding of the Korean culture. As the costs of the entire program is covered by the Korean government, it can be inferred that this a reasonable request from South Korea in exchange of receiving full funding for tuition fees and a monthly allowance.

3.3. Sports diplomacy

In 2018 South Korea was the host country of the Olympic Winter Games. PyeongChang's vision for organizing the large-scale event was fresh and unique, as it offered horizons that the world had yet to experience; the initial plans were said to be "one of the most compact in Olympic history" (Olympic Game, 2018). It had a rather positive impact on the diplomatic relations between South and North as North Korea agreed to send athletes to the games. After the unexpected announcement controversies came to light as some countries, such as France, Germany, and Australia, threatened to skip this year's Winter Games mentioning security concerns as a reason (Wikipedia, 2024). Despite the concerns that surfaced before everything went smooth. According to Statista 1.92 billion people watched the games (2024).

3.4. Promoting historical and cultural heritage

The culture of South Korea is very rich; it is full of diverse cultural traditions, historical sites, and heroic figures. Currently 16 UNESCO World Heritage Sites are recognized nationwide (Wikipedia, n.d.). Although most of them is cultural heritage, two are natural sites. One of them is in Jeju which is a favoured travel destination both for locals and foreigners. Jongmyo is a royal ancestral shrine, that is on the list as a cultural and historical site, which was built in the late 14th century (Wikipedia, n.d.). It has a great significance as the jongmyo jeryeak did a performance at the shrine regularly. Promoting this ancient type of Confucian rituals reached Hungary as there was a special night when the theatre lovers could hear the Jongmyo Jeryeak ritual music performance live at Erkel Theatre in 2023. That night

was a great opportunity for diplomatic small talks because ambassadors of the different countries based in Hungary were invited to the event. Mózes Csoma, the Hungarian Ambassador of South Korea and his family honoured the event by accepting the invitation while the South Korean Ambassador of Hungary was also present.

Legendary heroic figures like King Sejong and General Yi Sun-sin play a big role in promoting culture. Admiral Yi Sun-sin was a military general who claimed victories against Japanese troops in the 16th century Joseon (Google Arts & Culture, n.d.). Thanks to his achievements Admiral Yi became a national historical hero in the eyes of Korean people. Yi Sun-sin symbolizes power and strength therefore promoting him and other legendary figures is also a key aspect of the Korean cultural diplomacy. The statue of General Yi is standing at one of the most popular areas in Seoul hence thousands of foreign visitors can admire his greatness. The noble image of the General Yi also well-represented in the Korean media. A bunch of dramas display him as an epitome of patriotism like The Admiral: Roaring Currents. The biggest name is possibly King Sejong who was previously mentioned as the father of the world's most scientifically created language. The global impact of him is tremendous: one of the most globally renowned Korean language institutes, King Sejong Institute also bears his name. Owing to this now thousands of foreigners attending Korean language classes in every corner of the world can get to know his legacy.

4.
EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

4.1. Obstacles

Since the success of public diplomacy depends on the perception of the foreign publics a lot of unexpected things can happen acting later as an obstacle to achieve the goal (Merickova, 2013). The decision-makers should possess foreseeing abilities to be predict what will happen and to be ready for any obstacles that is waiting on the way. The obstacles can be either internal or external; the way how it can and will be fixed hugely depends on this factor. As public diplomacy is aimed to influence international publics, the changing opinions of the targeted publics can be regarded as an obstacle (Merickova, 2013). Not investigating the sociological aspects of public diplomacy deeply enough might lead to fail our mission of influencing the attitudes and opinions of people through public diplomacy (Merickova, 2013).

Thus, key diplomatic players shall delve deep into the field of sociology to get a grasp of how people's attitude and thoughts can change. Analysing the cultural norms and habits of our targeted groups can be beneficial in a way to reach our diplomatic goals as soon as possible. Public diplomacy is rather a marathon than a sprint thus precise planning is needed to get the desired impacts. Precise planning propose that actors need to think out of the box; taking possible obstacles into consideration must be a part of the planning process just like marketers use the SWOT analysis to analyse the threats. The threat for the success of public diplomacy is not thinking about the potential obstacles in advance.

4.2. The influence of North Korea

However obstacles can prevent to reach the goals of public diplomacy, the influence of another country can also affect the way how public diplomacy is shaped. For South Korea North Korea is surely a nation that cannot be left out from the list of influential countries.

North Korea's intense utilization of nuclear power is at the centre of attention for a long time now even though their total military power is far less threatening than of other great powers like the United States of America (UNAV, no date). As security is the number one thing for South Korea developing diverse strategies that can prevent the escalation of the existing nuclear crisis is crucial (UNAV, no date). Thanks to the successful sport diplomacy strategies of South Korea and to the fact that sport is a universal language which brings people together, North Korea promised to stop developing their nuclear arsenal after they attended the 2018 Winter Games in PyeongChang (UNAV, no date)

The global spread of K-cultural products reached even North Korea where intranet is the only functioning network. The residents of North Korean started to watch K-dramas produced by their southern neighbours with a risk of knowing that severe punishment will be given to them once they caught red-handed. Hence a paradox is identifiable: the greater the success of South Korea's soft power, the more severe North Korea's hard power becomes. In the eyes of North Korea South Korea is the biggest threat to their communist regime. The usage of hard power against North Korea who is the master of its exploitation seems quite inefficient (UNAV, no date). South Korea employing soft power in a way that other countries are well-informed and concerned about the crisis therefore their assistance are also requested (UNAV, no date). South Korea would like to threaten its neighbour by displaying the combined power of Western countries to force a drastic beneficial change out of North Korea. The application of soft power in diplomatic strategies might prompt real power through soft

tools. Having good diplomatic relations with the "friends" of North Korea is advantageous for South Korea to prevent creating more tension.

As part of their two-track diplomacy, South Korea declared its intention to cooperate with North Korea using primarily the common areas of soft power such as sports and culture (UNAV, no date). As soon as North Korea agreed to participate in the 2018 Winter Games which is, from a diplomatic perspective, beneficial for South Korea, other influential countries started to raise their concerns towards the event. Trying to balance between the West and North Korea is not easy for South Korea, neither finding the perfect harmony in the process of doing so. One step towards North Korea can mean a step back from the West or the other way around. Looking for the golden mean to maintain amicable diplomatic relations with everyone might be one of the most complex tasks for the South Korean leadership.

The proper agenda-setting in South Korea should be considered a fundamentally strong pillar as well. The political agenda of the South Korean government must protect the country's political system and the borders to ensure the safety of the South Korean population (UNAV, no date).

The main point of the South Korean strategy is to influence the people of North Korean rather than its state apparatus as its own people can shake the whole country up. (UNAV, no date). Furthermore, South Korea implemented a bunch of policies to help North Korean defectors to have a normal life in South Korea (UNAV, no date). The reason behind why South Korea offers a great amount of help to this group of people is might not be evident at first glance. If a North Korean defector becomes a good citizen of South Korea who shows respect towards his or her new environment, the defector could raise their voice to talk about the devastating situation and the daily struggle of North Koreans. (UNAV, no date). Such a voice could be influential in the eyes of the global publics and a threat for the political system of North Korea.

During the last couple of years an endless war of provocation is ongoing between South Korea and North Korea. For example, if North Korea run a missile test near the Demilitarized Zone, then South Korea sends balloons full of papers, saying bad things about its neighbours, to the borders of North Korea. Whenever a provocation like this happens South Korea is eager to emphasize that they would like to maintain a peaceful with North Korea despite what happened earlier. South Korea speaking up at international events to strengthen their willingness to strengthen the bonds with North Korea is indeed a public diplomacy effort.

South Korea turns to soft power tools when it comes to its national identity. Creating a distinct image different from North Korea is a must since the two countries were one nation a long time ago. No peace treaty was signed after the Korean war, so their relationship is everything but great even until this day.

Both can think that they are the real Korea preserving the traditional values of the ancient Korea hence a strong independent identity is needed not to be confused with the other. The perception of public can vary as somebody think about North Korea first and another think about South Korea at first when they hear the word "Korea". This association with the word "Korea" is hugely shaped by the media landscape of a country. As in the main news channels of Hungary feature North Korea more often than South Korea then one might think that the regular viewers of Hungarian people associate the word "Korea" with North Korea while South Korea remains just the connotation.

4.3. The influence of China and Japan

People's Republic of China is also a neighbouring country whose political system is more similar to North Korea than to South Korea. The fact that China is one of the most significant partners in trade for South Korea prognosticate that this external influence and dependence have a huge impact on South Korea's public diplomacy. There is an economic interdependence between South Korea and China, so Klaus Knorr's iconic words seem relevant that "power arises from an asymmetrical interdependence" (1977). The interdependence relation does not mean that the stronger party can always influence the weaker (Wagner, 1988).

This year it was reported that South Korea is shifting away from the economic dependence while the Chinese government keep calling for cooperation (Asia Times, 2024). The case is that South Korea have an approximately 18 billion dollars deficit with China; that is why the United States became again South Korea's top trade partner (Asia Times, 2024). South Korea is planning to further loosen the dynamics of trade as their Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy planning to reduce the dependence by half by 2030 (Asia Times,2024).

From a security aspect, China is a crucial region in East Asia so building a strong trust alliance with them is urging. South Korea renewed its security partnerships in Asia with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and with the Philippines (Defense Forum, 2024). The South Korean President indicated to tighten its bond with NATO as North Korea makes

destabilizing moves in the region (Defense Forum, 2024). South Korea signed a high-level comprehensive strategic partnership with ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific Defense Forum.

The impact of cultural exchange between the two nation is visible. The form of their cultural exchange is mainly about culture and the characteristic of this process is constantly under change (Hong, 2019). The rapid growth of bilateral relations can be regarded as a "motive force of the development of cultural exchanges in the internet era" (Hong, 2019).

To observe the socio-cultural factors, it is evident that the culture of South Korea and China is similar therefore there is a mutual demand for the others' products. China's "Belt and Road" initiative and other cultural diplomacy efforts also have great impact on the way how South Korea does diplomacy. Earlier it was proposed that the huge deficit South Korea has with China affects the Korean public diplomacy rather negatively. To improve their diplomatic relationship the two nations should organize a conference event where round table dialogues can happen to discuss current issues to find solutions that can be implemented later.

The Korean Wave or Hallyu hit China hard as well as the rest of the world. The population of China began its Korean craze in the beginning of the 1990s when the most popular K-dramas of that time were exported (Jang, 2012). Due to the high television ratings, the demand for more in China increased significantly thus more products were exported to China (Jang, 2012). The whole fame of Hallyu had a positive impact on the perception of South Kore among Chinese people as the public identified cultural familiarity as a mutual connecting point (Jang, 2012).

As China is a huge market with a potential of more than one billion customer, the south Korean music industry, as a soft power tool, had to change in a way to break into that huge market. One of the most transparent soft tools is that many famous Korean idol group has a Chinese member for example Ningning in Aespa or Yuqi in (G)I-dle. Having a Chinese member in a top viral girl band means that the group can became a viral topic in China as while generating more profit and getting more international recognition. Owing to its big market size, China seems to be a potential target market for the South Korean music industry.

In terms of Japan, the level of influence is superb and their relational dynamics .is adventurous too Looking back at the history of the two nations can help understand the reasons. In the beginning of the 20th century there was a colonial relation between Japan and Korea as Japan was in charge after a victorious annexation. Probably this was the starting point of the rivalry which is, since then, became a vital part of the South Korean narrative in different public diplomacy programs. The occupation made a deep impression on the Korean population which can still be regarded as a national wound (Nurhalimah, 2022).

The almost aggressive utilization of soft power in South Korea is way to show the world that South Korea is quite different from Japan. The connection between them is indeed unique as Japan can also be successful when it comes to the exploitation of soft power instruments in cultural diplomacy. The global reputation of anime is true evidence testifying that Japan is also on a mission to create their own identity.

The advent of the South Korean popular culture can be dated back to the 2000s. Entering the Japanese market was prosperous; Japanese people loved the products of Hallyu. The mutual love for K-culture products gave an opportunity for both countries to address their long-standing not friendly diplomatic relation (Nurhalimah, 2022).

The rise of Japanese pop music proposes a future challenge for South Korea in case of receiving global attention. The Japanese entertainment industry can mean a threat to the South Korean industry as pivotal K-pop related music events already have a strong tie with Japan. The Mnet Asian Music Awards, known as MAMA, is one of the most influential music events for the South Korean music industry as a huge amount of people following what is happening there each year. Even though it is a prestigious event made for K-pop stars, the event is held in Japan which is, from one angle, not quite advantageous for the public diplomacy of South Korea. The event gives a boost for the tourism of Japan as global fans of K-pop enter their borders. Japan to take further advantage of the global stage sends their representative groups to attend the show. Last year in 2023 Yoshiki, who received an award as Japanese rock legend, did a breathtaking performance with rising K-pop stars together. On the other hand, the musical performance brought the music lovers of Japan and South Korea together to enjoy the fusion of diverse musical colour.

4.4. Reciprocal Western influence

The United States is a close ally of South Korea. The military alliance between them started around the middle of the 20th century when U.S. forces were actively present at the Southern part of the Korean Peninsula in the early 50s (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). This was the period when the Demilitarized Zone were established along the 38th parallel and when a mutual defense treaty was signed between the U.S. and South Korea (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). The government of the United States played an essential role in the recovery of South Kore after the 1997-98 Financial Crisis because without the monetary help coming from the States, South Korea might have never recovered well.

The area of cultural diplomacy is the biggest field where the American influence is obvious. Today's biggest overseas market of the Korean Wave is the United States of America hence there is a reciprocal, mutual influence between the two parties. The impact of the Korean soft power is visible in the States, just think about the example I mentioned earlier in the Introduction part when BTS visited President Joe Biden in the White House.

The dominance of K-pop acts on the American music charts is a result of the South Korean soft power. K-pop solo singers and groups claimed the No. 1. spot for a several time on the Billboard Top 10 and on the Billboard 200 Chart (USC Center on Public Diplomacy, n.d.). For the first time the MAMA awards show, that is a 3-day-long show, held one day's show at the Dolby Theatre. This step shows how big and influential is the American market for South Korea.

As a European citizen the impact of the Korean culture affected the society of influence tremendously. The number of Korean service facilities is increasing constantly in the heart of Budapest. It can be due to the increasing number of Korean workers coming to the country or the growing demand for K-culture among the younger generation. The growing presence of Korea all over Europe or in Hungary is observable even for a person who is not quite familiar with their cultural aspects.

Operating the largest Korean Cultural Center of Europe, Budapest is now full of cultural events and programs related to South Korea. The annual Korean Film Festival became vital part of the city dynamics as it attracts larger number of the Korean population living in Hungary and Hungarian fans every year.

The presence of Korean Air is significant because it boosts the tourism of Hungary and the tourism of South Korea as well. Frequent direct flights between Budapest and Incheon are a big contributor to the success of Korean soft power and public diplomacy.

2024 is an outstanding year in terms of cultural exchange programs. The Mokkoji Festival took place in the Budapest Park bringing famous Korean girl and boy groups closer to the Hungarian fans. Emphasizing the fact that there might be a closer relation between the Hungarian and Korean language was remembered as Sunmi, a famous Koreans solo singer, surprised everyone when she talked in Hungarian on stage to her Hungarian fans. Events like this can be categorized as a testimony of positive diplomacy.

The year 2019 is when the horrible accident of the cruise Hableány took place. The news shocked both the Hungarian and the Korean public as most of the people on the cruise were citizens of South Korea (Hungary Today, 2024). The disaster affected the Korean inbound market but not as immensely as people thought as a modest increase in the number of

visitors from South Korea was reported (Turizmus.com, n.d.). The Korean media focused on the grief of the victims' families rather than to emphasize the responsibility of Hungary. Seeing the full dedication of Hungary to help the victims' families and to continue the search for more survivor President Moon Jae In expressed gratitude in a hope for further diplomatic cooperation between the two countries. The general perception of Hungary did not get worse after the incident thanks to the successful crisis diplomacy practices that Hungary performed and friendly diplomatic relation between the two countries prior to the disaster.

Handling crisis with putting the interests of the other party before ours paid off well in the case of the Hableány crash therefore Hungary could turn into a unfortunate event into an fruitful diplomatic opportunity that later helped a lot in increasing economic and cultural cooperation between Hungary and South Korea.

5.
PRESSING CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

5.1. Cybersecurity challenges

South Korea has a tech-savvy population that implies that the public is confidently using digital devices and platforms daily. South Korea is in the top ranks for the speed of internet and smartphone ownership as almost 95% of the population own one (Robertson, 2017) therefore their digital infrastructure is not something to worry about.

Cybersecurity threats is one of the biggest challenges, if not the biggest, that no country can totally prevent from happening no matter how digitally advanced they are. The risk of experiencing cyberattacks is bigger than ever. In a result a new field of diplomacy is emerging cyber diplomacy. The main mission of cyber diplomacy is to ensure national security (IE University, n.d.). South Korea's diplomatic actors and institutions are highly exposed to this threat. As tool of extorting pressure North Korea uses national hackers to hack the systems of South Korean defence companies (Reuters, 2024). To minimalize the damages of the North Korean cyberwarfare, South Korea should set cyber diplomacy agendas up.

The fight against propaganda and fake news, that can be part of a cyberattack, is also a concerning area that shouldn't be looked over in digital public diplomacy as misinformation can affect the perception and opinion of the target group.

5.2. Rising ethical dilemmas

As South Korea engages in public diplomacy to improve its global image and promote its culture and values, it faces ethical challenges that can damage its credibility and effectiveness on the global stage. These ethical dilemmas can be complex and multi-layered, including issues of transparency, soft power and the ethics of digital public diplomacy. A significant ethical challenge can be the manipulation or distortion of historical narratives. South Korea employs historical memory as a weapon in its public diplomacy to strengthen its status on the world stage. Selective story selection or distortion of the past raises ethical questions. The dispute with Japan over issues of forced labour is a prominent example. The way South Korea incorporate these issues in its public diplomacy campaigns poses an ethical challenge.

Another ethical dilemma emerges in the domain of soft power. South Korea is known for its cultural diplomacy which is all about the promotion of K-pop and other K-culture exports. Though these cultural exports South Korea's reputation can be seen as a forward-looking, cutting-edge country. Promoting K-pop artists might put immense pressure on their lives and well-being, especially in terms of their private lives. Proving the ethical concern behind this exploitation of the K-pop industry is the fact that the entertainment industry is extremely demanding and can be detrimental to the mental well-being of the idols. Issues like this might also be damaging to South Korea's reputation as a global player. The ethical dilemmas that arise from the usage of digital diplomacy are also greatly prevalent in South Korea. Digital platforms and social media sites facilitate enhancements in engagement with international audiences but introduce ethical dilemmas surrounding privacy and the manipulation of public opinion. The South Korean government, like other governments, has used social media to interact with foreign publics, advocate policies, and improve its image overseas. Drawing an ethical line when a sponsored message by the state starts to seem like propaganda is quite difficult therefore ethical lines can easily be blurred.

The issue of inclusivity and representation mean another ethical challenge for South Korea's public diplomacy. While South Korea represents modernity and rapid technological development, there is an ethical issue how these elements are presented in the media.

If South Korea's public diplomacy seeks to create an idealized image of the country, it risks ignoring important ethical issues. This raises an ethical question of whether South Korea should create a more truthful account of its social problems risking that displaying social problems could be bad for its global image.

5.3. Current issues

Current issues happening in the world of politics impacts the world of diplomacy in almost every scenario. That is why it is relevant to discuss what happened in South Korea yesterday, on the 3rd of December. President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law during a TV broadcast. He argued that it is a necessary step to make sure that the Republic of Korea remains a free democracy; he further accused his Opposition of sympathizing with North Korea as a reason behind his decision (CNN, 2024) After a few hours of total chaos, the members of the Parliament voted for the termination of the President's declaration hence the martial law got lifted. The Korean public and the whole world is confused about what has just happened and why. Other Western nations are following the events with concern as they don't understand how this could happen in a country where diplomacy had so strong pillars. The public now demand the resignation of the President. As soon as the emergency law was announced the economy and the value of the South Korean stock market started to plunge in a pace it has never seen before. The President's unexpected decision poses a lot of confusion in diplomacy too; no one can predict how this issue will affect the country's diplomatic relation with North Korea and with other Western nations.

5.4. Possible future challenges

Political divide of South Korea, as the world could see it a few days ago, can be an emerging issue in the future for the country's public diplomacy. If there is a gap between political parties that is normal and can be fixed later but in case there is no bridge or not even a brick can be found, namely a common mutual ground, then it could severely hurt the image of South Korea and deeply affect its diplomatic relations with other nations.

The current tension and provocation with their north neighbours are also a possible threat for the future. The President's announcement of martial law was the last drop in the drop as someone might think. The fast and sudden move of President Yoon was a testimony of lack, lack of consideration regarding how the announcement will affect the inter-Korean relationship or even lack of thinking in advance what the world, especially other democracies, will think of the country. Hackers and their attacks will also grow to a bigger problem not just for South Korea but for all the developed countries.

The growing number of foreigners who permanently live in the country can arise a future challenge in public diplomacy. Although the incoming foreigners might be good for the tourism and for the culture as being a multinational country can bring more color and life to

the dynamics of the country, it can be a challenge to make public diplomacy successful. Addressing people, who came from different backgrounds, as a part of a campaign can give a headache to the key actors of public diplomacy. Targeting people whose culture are so different is challenging too.

However biggest change is always the unknown. As our global modernized world is changing rapidly nobody can know for sure that what will the challenges of tomorrow. It is possible that every potential challenge listed here won't be reality or maybe every word will come true. It all depends on the future and the future is shaped by the present hence preparing for the worst and addressing issues in the present now can be the key to prevent the unknown from happening.

6.
CONCLUSION

South Korea's strategic approach to public diplomacy, which integrates both traditional and digital methods, has been highly successful in reinforcing and strengthening its national and global image on an unprecedented scale. South Korea has secured a prominent place on the global stage through cultural diplomacy, soft power, and digital power. South Korea is exploiting soft power and its tools like K-pop in its public diplomacy efforts. There are few countries that can tap into their domains of soft power as successfully as South Korea; the nation seems to have unearthed a special recipe for success in this regard. Moving forward, digital public diplomacy as well as traditional public diplomacy will likely to remain key elements of South Korea's strategy to enhance its global influence.

Cultural diplomacy, as a main aspect of South Korea's public diplomacy initiatives, contributes significantly to both its traditional and digital efforts. The promotion of K-culture has become the most successful part of their public diplomacy. For countries such as North Korea, sports diplomacy has effectively enabled greater engagement in an environment where diplomatic relations are dissimilar. Economic diplomacy, especially with the People's republic of China, will be needed to adjust in the years ahead if ongoing dissatisfaction continue.

There are serious uphill challenges that await South Korea because of its unfavourable geopolitical location. Far-reaching diplomatic tensions, disputes, and changing economic agendas in the neighbouring region will continue to remain important obstacles.

As of today, internal political instability might pose an urgent threat that needs to be addressed to prevent the unknown from happening that might jeopardize the country's diplomatic initiatives or damage its global reputation.

7.
LIST OF REFERENCES

Ang, I., Isar, Y. R., & Mar, P. (2015). *Cultural diplomacy: Beyond the national interest?* International Journal of Cultural Policy, 21(4), 365–381.

Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity: The new brand management for nations, cities, and regions.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Antwi-Boateng, O. and Al Mazrouei, K.A.M., 2021. The challenges of digital diplomacy in the era of globalization: The case of the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Communication*, 15. Available at: http://ijoc.org.

Asan Institute for Policy Studies. (n.d.). *Asan Institute for Policy Studies*. Available at: https://en.asaninst.org/ [Accessed 3 December 2024].

Asia Times (2024) 'S. Korean trade diplomacy trending away from China', *Asia Times*. Available at: https://asiatimes.com/2024/03/s-korean-trade-diplomacy-trending-away-from-china/ (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

Author, no date. Malcolm Gladwell's *Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted* essay. *AIthor*. Available at: https://aithor.com/essay-examples/malcolm-gladwells-small-change-why-the-revolution-will-not-be-tweeted-essay [Accessed 5 December 2024].

Backstage, 2024. *The TikTok algorithm explained*. Available at: https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/tik-tok-algorithm-explained-75091/ [Accessed 6 December 2024].

Baker, C. (2014). Digital diplomacy: Theories and practices. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 15-33.

Bendiek, A. (2019). The intersection of cyber diplomacy and public diplomacy: The importance of cybersecurity in digital diplomacy. *Journal of Digital Diplomacy*, 1(1), 22-38.

Berridge G.R. & James A. (2003), '*A Dictionary of Diplomacy: Second Edition*'. New York: Palgrave MacMillian p. 62

Berridge, G. R. (2010). *Diplomacy: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Cambridge University Press (n.d.) *Detente*. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/detente (Accessed: 1 December 2024).

Choi, J., & Kim, Y. (2014). The Korean Wave: A source of legitimacy for Korea's cultural diplomacy. *The International Communication Gazette*, 76(4-5), 422–435.

Choi, K.-J., 2017. *The Republic of Korea's Public Diplomacy Strategy: History and Current Status*. Los Angeles: Figuerora Press. pp. 9-16 Available at: https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/The%20Republic%20of%20Korea%27s%20Public%20Diplomacy%20Strategy%20Web%20Ready_2.3.19.pdf [Accessed 2 November 2024].

CNN (2024) 'South Korea martial law explainer', *CNN*, 3 December. Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/03/asia/south-korea-martial-law-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

Constantinou, C.M., Sharp, P.. (2016). 'Theoretical perspectives in diplomacy', in Constantinou, C.M., Kerr, P. and Sharp, P. (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Ltd, p 20.

Council on Foreign Relations (n.d.) *US-South Korea Alliance*. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-south-korea-alliance (Accessed: 6 December 2024).

Culbertson, H. M., & Chen, Y. (2013). Digital diplomacy: Theory and practice. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 1157–1173.

Cull, N. J. (2008). Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 31–54.

Cull, N. J. (2008). *Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories*. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616(1), 31-54.

Defense Forum (2024) 'South Korea enhances regional security role', *IP Defense Forum*. Available at: https://ipdefenseforum.com/2024/11/south-korea-enhances-regional-security-role/ (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

Deng, X. (2019). *Digital diplomacy and soft power: The role of social media in international relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Design Compass. (2023). *Seoul my soul*. Available at: https://designcompass.org/en/2023/08/17/seoul-my-soul/ (Accessed: 2 December 2024).

Dunn Cavelty, M. (2013). Cybersecurity and public diplomacy: A difficult relationship. *International Journal of Public Diplomacy and Communication*, 2(3), 257-276.

East Asia Foundation. (n.d.). *East Asia Foundation*. LinkedIn. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/company/east-asia-foudation [Accessed 3 December 2024].

Eichengreen, B., Perkins, D.H., & Shin, K., 2012. *From Miracle to Maturity: The Growth of the Korean Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Entman, R.M. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and US foreign policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Entman, R.M. (2008). *The agenda-setting function of mass media. American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(4), pp. 301-311.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Gallarotti, Giulio M., "Soft Power: What it is, Why it's Important, and the Conditions Under Which it Can Be Effectively Used" (2011). Division II Faculty Publications. Paper 57. http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/div2facpubs/57

Gilboa, E. (2008). *Searching for a theory of public diplomacy*. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), pp. 55-77.

Gilboa, E. (2008). *The Public Diplomacy of the United States: What Are We Doing and Where Are We Going?* Journal of International Communication, 14(2), pp. 134-152.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Google Arts & Culture, n.d. *Yi Sun-sin*. [online] Available at: https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/yi-sun-sin/m01gprx?hl=en [Accessed 4 Dec. 2024].

Graham, T., & O'Loughlin, B. (2013). The digital public sphere. *New Media & Society*, 15(5), 782–797.

Hanson, F. (2012). *The information revolution and world politics*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

HelpGuide.org. (n.d.). *Nonverbal communication: How to improve communication with body language*. HelpGuide. Retrieved from https://www.helpguide.org/relationships/communication/nonverbal-communication

History.com Editors. (2020, January 13). *George Bush vomits on Prime Minister of Japan*. History. Retrieved from https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/george-bush-vomits-on-prime-minister-of-japan

Holmes, M., 2015. Digital diplomacy and international change management. In: C. Bjola and M. Holmes, eds. *Digital diplomacy: theory and practice*. London: Routledge

Hong, S. (2019) 'The Impact of Cultural Exchange between China and South Korea on the Relations between the Two Countries in the Internet Era', *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 631, 052016. Available at: https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1757-899X/631/5/052016/pdf (Accessed: 5 December 2024).

Huijgh, E. (2016). 'Public diplomacy', in Constantinou, C.M., Kerr, P. and Sharp, P. (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 437-438.

Hungary Today (2024) *Hableány Trial: Hearing Begins in Danube Ship Collision Case*. Available at: https://hungarytoday.hu/hableany-trial-danube-ship-collision-boat-accident-hearing/ (Accessed: 6 December 2024).

ICDS. (n.d.). *The capitalist control of K-pop: The idol as a product*. International Centre for Defence and Security. Available at: https://icds.ee/en/the-capitalist-control-of-k-pop-the-idol-as-a-product/ [Accessed 3 Dec. 2024].

IE University, n.d. *Cyber diplomacy and cybersecurity: Guardians of the digital realm*. Available at: https://www.ie.edu/uncover-ie/cyber-diplomacy-and-cybersecurity-guardians-of-the-digital-realm/ [Accessed 6 December 2024].

Instagram, n.d. *Insights overview*. Available at: https://help.instagram.com/788388387972460?helpref=faq_content [Accessed 6 December 2024].

International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2002. *Korean Crisis and Recovery*. [online] Available at: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/nft/seminar/2002/korean/ [Accessed 11 November 2024].

Investopedia (n.d.) *Four Asian Tigers*. Available at: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/four-asian-tigers.asp(Accessed: 23 November 2024).

Ipsos. (2023). *Nation Brands Index 2023*. Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/en

Jang, S.H. (2012) 'The Korean Wave and Its Implications for the Korea-China Relationship', *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 19(2), pp. 97-113.

Jiang, F. (2018). Digital diplomacy and the challenges of public trust. *Global Media Journal*, 16(31), 33-45.

Jin, D.Y. (2014). *K-pop and the globalization of South Korean culture*. In J. M. Wills & M. K. Armstrong (eds.), *Globalization and Popular Music in South Korea: Sounding Out K-pop*. Routledge, pp. 17-35.

Joo, Y. M. (2021). South Korea's nation branding: Successes and challenges. *Asian Journal of Public Affairs*, 12(1), 20–35.

Katz, E. and Lazarsfeld, P.F. (1955). *Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

K-DOC, 2024. *Korea is disappearing except Seoul... Korea, in the crisis of local extinction | Undercover Korea*. [video] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRjaHZ8jkr4 [Accessed 6 December 2024].

Keohane, R.O. and Nye, J.S. (1977). *Power and interdependence: World politics in transition*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Kim, H. (2022). *Challenges and Opportunities of Korea's Foreign Policy as a Developed Country* (Policy Analysis 22-01). Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP). Available at: http://www.kiep.go.kr.

Kim, K.S., 1991. *The Korean Miracle (1962-1980) Revisited: Myths and Realities in Strategy and Development*. [online] Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40203791 [Accessed 29 November 2024].

Kim, M. (2022) 'The Growth of South Korean Soft Power and Its Geopolitical Implications', *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, October, pp 126-133.

Kim, S., & Nam, S. (2016). Nation branding and the Winter Olympics: The case of PyeongChang 2018. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 12(2), 135–146.

King Sejong Institute Foundation, 2024. *King Sejong Institute Foundation YouTube Channel*. [online] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/@kingsejonginstitutefoundation/videos [Accessed 1 December 2024].

Klaus Knorr, "International Economic Leverage and Its Uses," in Klaus Knorr and Frank Trager, eds., *Economic Issues and National Security* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1977), p.102.

Korea Foundation, 2024, *Korea Foundation official website* https://www.kf.or.kr/kfEng/main.do , [Accessed 3 December 2024].

Korea Tourism Organization, 2023. *Korea Tourism Organization Announces Global Success for Korea Tourism Promotional Clips: 225 Million Views and Counting*. [online] Available at: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20231205427950/en/Korea-Tourism-Organization-Announces-Global-Success-for-Korea-Tourism-Promotional-Clips-225-Million-Views-and-Counting/ [Accessed 1 December 2024].

Korea.net. (n.d.). *Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS)*. Available at: https://www.korea.net/AboutUs/KOCIS [Accessed 2 Dec. 2024].

Kraft, P. (2019). Hybrid diplomacy: Merging public and digital diplomacy. *Journal of Global Affairs*, 10(2), 121–137.

Kurlantzick, J. (2007). *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World*. Yale University Press.

Le, P. C. L., Kim, J. I., & Kim, K. (2016). The Growth of Korean Companies and Their Contributions to the Miracle of the Han River. *International Journal of Multimedia and Ubiquitous Engineering*, 11(5), pp. 253-266. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.14257/ijmue.2016.11.5.23 (Accessed: 25 November 2024).

Lee, G., & Lim, S. (2016). South Korea's soft power strategy: Smart power and public diplomacy. *Korean Journal of International Studies*, 14(1), 21–40.

Lee, J. (2020). Diversifying South Korea's national image: Beyond Hallyu. *Korean Journal of International Studies*, 18(3), 345–362.

Lee, J.W., 2001. The impact of the Korean War on the Korean economy. *International Journal of Korean Studies*, Spring/Summer, pp.1–21.

Lindsay, J. R. (2013). *Stuxnet and the future of cyber warfare*. Journal of International Affairs, 66(1), 77-92.

Lohmann, S. (2017). *Understanding diplomacy in the 21st century*. Working Paper, Project "Diplomacy in the 21st Century", No. 11, March 2017.

McCombs, M.E. and Shaw, D.L. (1972). *The agenda-setting function of mass media*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), pp. 176-187.

Melissen, J. (2005), 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice', in J. Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan p.11

Melissen, J. (2011). *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Melissen, J. (2017). Hybrid diplomacy and the diplomatic practitioner. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 12(1), 1-20.

Merickova, L., 2013. *Obstacles to public diplomacy*. [PDF] Cultural Diplomacy. Available at: https://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2013-12-annual/Obstacles_To_Public_Diplomacy_Laura_Merickova.pdf [Accessed 5 December 2024].

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), 2022, *Diplomatic White Paper*. Available at: https://www.mofa.go.kr/upload/ebook/2022_whitepaper_en/index.html [Accessed 3 December 2024], pp 28,121,296-297.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Republic of Korea, no date. *2022 Korean Government Scholarship Program Guidelines for International Students*. Available at: https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/az-en/brd/m_8242/view.do?seq=761453 (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea (MOFA), n.d. *Overview of Korea's G20 Participation*. [online] Available at: https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_5470/contents.do#:~:text=At%20the%20Pittsburgh%20Summit%2C%20the,G20%20summit%20in%20November%202010.[Accessed 29 November 2024].

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, 2024. *Digital Public Diplomacy at Overseas Missions*. [online] Available at: https://down.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_25759/contents.do [Accessed 1 December 2024].

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, 2024. *KOREAZ*. [online] Available at: https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_25757/contents.do [Accessed 1 December 2024].

Modern Diplomacy, 2024. A review of China's restrictions and surveillance of foreign social media platforms. *Modern Diplomacy*, 7 November. Available at:

https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/11/07/a-review-of-chinas-restrictions-and-surveillance-of-foreign-social-media-platforms/ [Accessed 6 December 2024].

Morozov, E., 2010. On slacktivism. *The New Yorker*, [online] 25 October. Available at: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/25/on-slacktivism [Accessed 5 December 2024].

National Institute for International Education (NIIED), no date. *Homepage*. Available at: http://www.niied.go.kr/user/nd35203.do (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

Nurhalimah, S.T. (2022) *South Korean Diplomacy Efforts in Japan through the Korean Wave (Upaya Diplomasi Korea Selatan di Jepang melalui Korean Wave)*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364342824_South_Korean_Diplomacy_Efforts_in_Japan_through_the_Korean_Wave_Upaya_Diplomasi_Korea_Selatan_di_Jepang_melalui_Korean_Wave (Accessed: 6 December 2024).

Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics.* Public Affairs.

Nye, J. S. (2010). *Cyber power*. Harvard University Press.

Nye, J.S. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Basic Books.

Nye, J.S. (2011). *The Future of Power*. Public Affairs.

Nye, J.S. (2021) 'Soft power: the evolution of a concept', *Journal of Political Power*, DOI: 10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572.

Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC). (n.d.). *Economic Complexity Index (ECI) rankings*. Available at: https://oec.world/en/rankings/eci/hs6/hs96?tab=ranking (Accessed 2 December 2024).

Ok, G. and Choi, B.A., 2009. *Catalytic function of 1988 Seoul Olympics: Modernization and globalization of Korean society. Asian Journal of Kinesiology*, [online] 11(3), pp.11–20. Available at: https://www.ajkinesiol.org/upload/pdf/ajk-11-3-11.pdf [Accessed 24 November 2024].

Olympic Games, 2018. *PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games*. Available at: https://olympics.com/en/olympic-games/pyeongchang-2018 (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

Pardee Atlas. (n.d.). *Rise of Cultural Diplomacy in East Asia*. The Pardee Atlas Journal of Global Affairs. Available at: https://sites.bu.edu/pardeeatlas/advancing-human-progress-initiative/rise-of-cultural-diplomacy-in-east-asia/ [Accessed 3 Dec. 2024].

PBS NewsHour (2023) *Why South Korea is a soft power superpower*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrvrDTPtqg4 (Accessed: 6 December 2024).

Reuters, 2024. North Korea hacking teams hack South Korea defense contractors, police. *Reuters*, 23 April. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/technology/cybersecurity/north-korea-hacking-teams-hack-south-korea-defence-contractors-police-2024-04-23/ [Accessed 6 December 2024].

Robertson, J. (2017, May 31). *Korea's Digital Diplomacy: The Most Technologically Advanced Avoider?* USC Center on Public Diplomacy. https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/korea%E2%80%99s-digital-diplomacy-most-technologically-advanced-avoider

Roll, M., 2021. *Korean Wave (Hallyu): The Rise of Korea's Cultural Economy & Pop Culture*. [online] Available at: https://martinroll.com/resources/articles/asia/korean-wave-hallyu-the-rise-of-koreas-cultural-economy-pop-culture/[Accessed 29 November 2024].

Schneider, C. P. (2006). Culture communicates: US diplomacy that works. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 7(1), 27–35.

Seoul Metropolitan Government. (2024). *New city logo and slogan survey*. Available at: https://english.seoul.go.kr/new-city-logo-and-slogan-survey-v2/ (Accessed: 2 December 2024).

Seoul Metropolitan Government. (n.d.). *Seoul_official [Instagram page]*. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/seoul_official/ (Accessed: 2 December 2024).

Shah, M.M., 2023. *Seoul-ful branding: Global lessons from Korean success.* [online] LinkedIn. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/seoul-ful-branding-global-lessons-from-korean-success-shah-mohammed-m-zuccc#:~:text=The%20Korean%20Brand%20Phenomenon&text=In%202023%2C%20the%20combined%20value,%2412%20billion%20in%20global%20revenue [Accessed 4 Dec. 2024].

Signitzer, B., & Coombs, T. (1992). Public diplomacy and international relations. *Journal of International Communication*, 2(1), 1-11.

SK On Hungary. (n.d.). *Rólunk*. SK On Hungary. Retrieved December 4, 2024, from https://skonhungary.com/hu/rolunk/

Slacktivism (n.d.) *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slacktivism (Accessed: 10 December 2024).

Smith, D., 2022. BTS-mania sweeps the White House as boy band speaks on anti-Asian hate. *The Guardian*, 1 June. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/may/31/bts-white-house-visit-anti-asian-american-hate-crimes [Accessed 26 October 2024].

Snow, N. (2009). *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy.* Routledge.

Statista, 2024. *Global audience of the Winter Olympic Games 2018*. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/531768/global-audience-of-the-winter-olympic-games/#:~:text=The%202018%20Olympic%20Winter%20Games,cumulative%20audience%20of%201.92%20billion (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2024). *Public diplomacy*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [Online] Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/public-diplomacy [Accessed 26 October 2024].

The USC Center on Public Diplomacy. (2022). *Metaverse diplomacy: Borrowing aespa's "Kwangya" public space*. Available at: https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/metaverse-diplomacy-borrowing-aespa%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Ckwangya%E2%80%9D-public-space (Accessed: 2 December 2024).

Tucker, J. A., et al. (2017). *Disinformation, digital diplomacy, and political warfare. The Journal of Politics*, 79(4), 1213-1225.

Turizmus.com (n.d.) *Boat Accident Affects Korean Inbound Market*. Available at: https://turizmus.com/cikk/archiv/boat-accident-affects-korean-inbound-market (Accessed: 6 December 2024).

U.S. News & World Report. (n.d.). *South Korea: Best countries*. Available at: https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/south-korea (Accessed: 2 December 2024)

UNAV, no date. South Korea's soft power strategies to deal with North Korea's threat. *Global Affairs*, [online] Available at: https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/detalle/-/blogs/south-korea-s-soft-power-strategies-to-deal-with-north-korea-s-threat [Accessed 5 December 2024].

USC Center on Public Diplomacy (n.d.) *South Korea's Soft Power Impact in the United States: Exploring the Influence of K-Culture*. Available at: https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/research_project/south-korea%E2%80%99s-soft-power-impact-united-states-exploring-influence-k-culture (Accessed: 6 December 2024).

Visit Korea Committee, 2023. Visit Korea Year 2023-2024. [online] Available at: https://vkc.or.kr/en/main-project/visit-korea-year-2023-2024/ [Accessed 1 December 2024].

Wagner, R. H. (1988) 'Economic Interdependence, Bargaining Power, and Political Influence', *International Organization*, 42(3), pp. 461-483. The MIT Press.

Wikipedia (n.d.) *Jongmyo*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jongmyo (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

Wikipedia (n.d.) *List of World Heritage Sites in South Korea*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_in_South_Korea (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). *HYBE Corporation*. Wikipedia. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybe_Corporation [Accessed 3 December 2024].

Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). *Kakao*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved December 6, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kakao

Wikipedia, 2024. *2018 Winter Olympics*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_Winter_Olympics (Accessed: 4 December 2024).

Wikipedia, 2024. *King Sejong Institute*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Sejong_Institute [Accessed 1 December 2024].

Wikipedia. (2024). *Samsung SDI*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samsung_SDI [Accessed 4 Dec. 2024].

Wilson, E. J. (2008). Hard power, soft power, smart power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 110–124.

Yavaş, İ.M. and Civelekoğlu, İ., 2024. *The impact of economic diplomacy on South Korea: A perspective on the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War era.* [online] Available at: https://doi.org/10.62101/iticudisticaretdergisi.1522831 [Accessed 4 Dec. 2024] pp.63-67.

Zetter, K. (2014). *The vulnerabilities of cyber warfare: The 2007 cyber attacks on Estonia*. *International Security*, 39(3), 18-32.

8.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: The 2016 Public Diplomacy Act (Choi, 2019) excerpt

ARTICLE 1 (Purpose)

The purpose of this Act is to contribute to improving the Republic of Korea's image and prestige in the international community by establishing a foundation to strengthen public diplomacy and to enhance the efficiency thereof by providing for matters necessary for public diplomacy activities.

ARTICLE 2 (Definition)

"Public diplomacy" in this Act is defined as diplomacy activities through which the State enhances foreign nationals' understanding of and confidence in the Republic of Korea directly or in cooperation with local governments or the private sector through culture, knowledge, policies, etc.

ARTICLE 3 (Basic Principles of Public Diplomacy)

(1) Public diplomacy shall be pursued by harmoniously reflecting the universal values of mankind and the intrinsic characteristics of the Republic of Korea.

(2) Public diplomacy policy shall focus on the promotion of sustainable and friendly cooperation for amicable relations with the international community.

(3) No public diplomacy activities shall be disproportionately concentrated in any specific region or country.

ARTICLE 4 (Responsibility of State)

(1) The State shall establish and pursue comprehensive and systematic strategies and policies to strengthen public diplomacy and enhance the efficiency thereof.

(2) The State shall formulate an administrative and financial support plan necessary for establishing and executing strategies and policies under paragraph (1).

(3) The State shall make necessary endeavors such as establishing a platform for cooperation with local governments and the private sector in order to efficiently conduct public diplomacy.

(4) The State shall make necessary endeavours such as in education and public relations in order to form social consensus on the importance of public diplomacy and to promote the people's participation in public diplomacy.