



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of International Relations

**INTEGRATING HISTORY, INSTITUTIONS, AND SOFT POWER  
TOOLS: SOUTH KOREA'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO  
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND NATION BRANDING**

Banunur ÖZYAPICI

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2025



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## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Banunur ÖZYAPICI has on the date of 15 January 2025 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her Master's Thesis titled "Integrating History, Institutions, and Soft Power Tools: South Korea's Comprehensive Approach to Public Diplomacy And Nation Branding".

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## ETİK BEYAN

Bu çalışmadaki bütün bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde ettiğimi, görsel, işitsel ve yazılı tüm bilgi ve sonuçları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduğumu, kullandığım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığımı, yararlandığım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduğumu, tezimin kaynak gösterilen durumlar dışında özgün olduğunu, **Prof. Dr. Emel Gülden OKTAY** danışmanlığında tarafımdan üretildiğini ve Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Yazım Yönergesine göre yazıldığını beyan ederim.

*Banunur ÖZYAPICI*

*To my dearest family*

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## ABSTRACT

ÖZYAPICI, Banunur. *Integrating History, Institutions, and Soft Power Tools: South Korea's Comprehensive Approach to Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2025.

This thesis examines the Republic of Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies from 1948 onwards, focusing on their role in enhancing the country's global influence. It argues that South Korea is a successful case of utilizing public diplomacy channels to advance its foreign policy objectives both politically and economically. The research explores Korea's historical background, highlighting key cultural and political factors that have shaped its public diplomacy and nation branding practices. It analyses the role of soft power instruments such as cultural diplomacy, media, education, sports diplomacy, and the Korean Wave (Hallyu) in strengthening Korea's international image. Additionally, it examines the institutional framework supporting South Korea's public diplomacy efforts, including the roles of state and non-state actors. The findings indicate that South Korea's success stems from its institutionalized approach that strategically integrates various actors and policies. The study highlights Korea's adaptation to global trends such as digital media, gastro-diplomacy, online gaming, and literature as key components of its evolving soft power strategy. Moreover, it underscores the unique contributions of each presidential administration to Korea's nation branding efforts. South Korea's nation branding and public diplomacy serve as a model for other nations. By integrating soft power, adapting to global trends, and fostering collaboration between government and private sectors, South Korea has positioned itself as a cultural exporter. Its ability to combine cultural assets with historical narratives demonstrates the importance of innovation and adaptability. The South Korean example highlights the significance of a unified institutional framework, sustained investment in cultural and diplomatic initiatives, and the ability to turn challenges into opportunities. South Korea provides insights into how nations can shape their identity and position themselves as influential global players.

### Keywords

Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, South Korea, Hallyu

## ÖZET

ÖZYAPICI, Banunur. *Tarih, Kurumlar ve Yumuşak Güç Araçlarının Entegrasyonu: Güney Kore'nin Kamu Diplomasisi ve Ulusal Markalaşmada Kapsamlı Stratejisi*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2025.

Bu tez, 1948 yılından itibaren Kore Cumhuriyeti'nin kamu diplomasisi ve ulusal markalaşma stratejilerini inceleyerek, bu stratejilerin ülkenin küresel etkisini artırmadaki rolüne odaklanmaktadır. Güney Kore'nin, kamu diplomasisi kanallarını siyasi ve ekonomik hedeflerine ulaşmak için başarılı bir şekilde kullanan bir ülke olduğunu savunmaktadır. Araştırma, Kore'nin tarihini inceleyerek, kamu diplomasisi uygulamalarını şekillendiren temel kültürel ve siyasi faktörleri vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, kültürel diplomasi, medya, eğitim, spor diplomasisi ve Kore Dalgası (Hallyu) gibi yumuşak güç unsurlarının, Kore'nin uluslararası imajını güçlendirmedeki rolünü analiz etmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, devlet ve devlet dışı aktörlerin rollerini içeren Güney Kore'nin kamu diplomasisini destekleyen kurumsal çerçeve de ele alınmaktadır. Tezin bulguları, Güney Kore'nin kamu diplomasisindeki başarısının, çeşitli aktörleri ve politikaları stratejik olarak bütünleştiren kurumsallaşmış yaklaşımından kaynaklandığını göstermektedir. Bu çalışma ayrıca, dijital medya, gastro-diplomasi, çevrimiçi oyunlar ve edebiyat gibi küresel eğilimlere uyum sağlamanın, Kore'nin gelişen yumuşak güç stratejisinin temel bileşenleri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bununla birlikte, her başkanlık döneminin Kore'nin ulusal markalaşma sürecine yaptığı benzersiz katkıları da incelemektedir. Güney Kore'nin ulus markalama ve kamu diplomasisi stratejileri, diğer ülkeler için bir model niteliğindedir. Yumuşak gücü entegre ederek, küresel eğilimlere uyum sağlayarak ve kamu ile özel sektör arasındaki iş birliğini teşvik ederek, Güney Kore kendini bir kültürel ihracatçı olarak konumlandırmıştır. Kültürel unsurları tarihle harmanlayarak, yenilikçiliğin ve uyum sağlamanın önemini göstermektedir. Güney Kore örneği, birleşik bir kurumsal çerçevenin, kültürel ve diplomatik girişimlere yapılan sürekli yatırımların ve zorlukları büyüme ve etki fırsatlarına dönüştürme kapasitesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Kore'nin deneyimi, ülkelerin kimliklerini nasıl şekillendirebileceği ve küresel arenada etkili oyuncular olarak nasıl konumlanabileceği konusunda değerli iç görüler sunmaktadır.

### **Anahtar Sözcükler**

Kamu Diplomasisi, Yumuşak Güç, Güney Kore, Hallyu

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

BCE: Before Common Era

CA: Circa (Around)

CE: Common Era

CI: Competitive Identity

CSIS: Center for Strategic and International Studies

DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

G2P: Government to People

IIS: Interim International Information Service

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IR: International Relations

KCAF: the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation

KOCIS: Korean Culture and Information Service

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OWI: Office of War Information

P2P: People to People

PD: Public Diplomacy

PRC: People's Republic of China

ROK: Republic of Korea

UN: United Nations

UNTCOK: The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea

US: United States

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VOA: Voice of America



## **INTRODUCTION**

The interconnected nature of today's world necessitates changes in international relations, particularly regarding power, culture, and diplomacy. Brand new ideas, such as the notion of soft power, nation branding, and public diplomacy entered the literature of international relations swiftly, reflecting this particular change. Instead of arms race, countries started to compete on the world stage by using soft power instruments and public diplomacy strategies.

Since the beginning of the Twenty First Century, the role of public diplomacy and country branding has continuously increased. In light of the new international order and technological advancements, particularly the widespread availability of the internet and social media, new ways for nations to present and promote themselves have evolved in a different manner. Hence, countries developed different approaches to handle how they were perceived. Therefore, Nation branding is among the most essential approaches of these new strategies along with public diplomacy.

South Korea (hereinafter referred to as the Republic of Korea or Korea) is in the head of the line when we consider one of the most successful examples of a nation branding strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite the country's traumatic history, particularly because of the Korean War in the 1950s and the acquisition of democracy at the end of the 1980s, Korea has become one of the greatest instances of how nation branding may contribute to foster a nation's development and progress.

### **SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE**

This thesis aims to investigate Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies from 1948 onwards with a focus on how these strategies have been employed to enhance Korea's international image and influence. The research covers the history of Korea, highlighting the key cultural and political factors that contributed to the development of its public diplomacy and nation branding practices. Therefore, the thesis analyses the role of soft power sources such as cultural diplomacy, media, education, sports diplomacy, and the Korean Wave (Hallyu) in building Korea's international influence.

The objective of the thesis is to examine the theoretical frameworks of power and diplomacy, with a strong emphasis on soft power and to apply these frameworks to Korea's public diplomacy efforts. By doing so, it aims to understand how the country has successfully built a national brand and positioned itself as a middle power that uniquely separates itself. By examining how Korea has evolved from a war-torn country to a middle power in the international arena, this research aims to identify the key factors that have been contributed to Korea's successful use of public diplomacy as a tool for nation branding. Therefore, this thesis aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the evolution of Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies by analysing the historical development of these practices and their contributions to the country's emergence as a global middle power,
2. To examine the role of soft power in Korea's public diplomacy efforts with a specific focus on the cultural industry, media, educational policies and sports diplomacy,
3. To assess the institutional framework that supported Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding initiatives including the role of the state and non-state actors,
4. To understand how Korea has adapted to current global trends such as keeping up with the digital media, Gastro Diplomacy of the Korean Food, Online Gaming and Literature to enhance its soft power.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive analysis of how Korea has successfully positioned itself as a unique case in the field of public diplomacy by using its historical experiences and investing in both institutional infrastructure and cultural initiatives.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study holds the significance of offering a detailed examination of Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies from 1948 to the present, with providing a comprehensive historical background of the country. The detailed examination of the history of Korea is crucial for understanding how Korea integrated the history to the cultural elements of the contemporary public diplomacy strategies. Since much of the existing literature focuses primarily on the Korean Wave in this area about Korea's public diplomacy, this research separates itself by expanding the scope and adding education & language policies and sports diplomacy as additional pillars of Korea's public diplomacy

practice. Furthermore, the study addresses contemporary cultural elements of Korea's nation branding tools such as Korean Literature, the online contents of webtoons, Korean gaming industry and Korean Gastrodiplomacy which are underrepresented in the literature. Additionally, this research builds upon the institutional framework of Korea that facilitates these efforts, offering a detailed approach of how state and non-state actors can contribute the nation branding policies. In era where soft power is crucial to make an international influence, these concepts are highly important and valuable contributors to the academic scholarship.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The central research question of this thesis is how South Korea utilized public diplomacy and nation branding to shape its international image and influence. In order to find the answer of this research question the following questions are asked:

- “What is the role of soft power in the 21st century, and how has South Korea leveraged this concept to shape its international image and influence?”
- “What are the key factors behind Korea's success in leveraging public diplomacy for nation building?”
- “How have South Korea's public diplomacy efforts evolved throughout the history?”
- “How do components of education, sports diplomacy, and Hallyu (Korean Wave) contribute to South Korea's global influence and nation branding?”

While answering these questions, both the historical development of Korea and the evolution of public diplomacy strategies during the history are analysed in detail to show the economic development of Korea from the lower levels to the upper levels within the framework of nation branding. Furthermore, the thesis investigates how Korea differentiates itself from other Asian nations, particularly in a region dominated by powerful actors such as Japan and China, by positioning its unique cultural diplomacy and innovative strategies. By leveraging these sources of soft power—cultural industry, media, sports diplomacy, and education—Korea has created a unique case in the region. Despite its tumultuous past, including division, war, financial crisis, and authoritarian regimes, South Korea has managed to establish itself as a leading example of public diplomacy and nation branding in Asia. Furthermore, Korea's successful positioning itself as a “rising middle power” is attributed to the careful and strategic approach that

involved an effective infrastructure as well as investments in monetary resources and institutional frameworks.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This thesis uses the qualitative research methodology to explore Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies, with a strong emphasis on historical, cultural, and institutional dimensions. Given the complex nature of public diplomacy, a qualitative approach allows for comprehensive research of both primary and secondary sources to grasp how these strategies have evolved and how they have been employed to shape Korea's international image and influence.

- 1. Case Study Approach:** The primary research method employed in this thesis is the case study approach, which focuses on Korea as a case study of successful public diplomacy and nation branding. This approach enables the exploration of the unique strategies which were employed by Korea. By focusing on Korea as a case study, this thesis aims to provide insights that can be applied to other countries with similar aspirations. The case study approach also makes it possible to analyse multiple aspects of public diplomacy including the cultural diplomacy, educational policies and sports diplomacy which provides a comprehensive understanding of how these diverse elements work together to contribute Korea's nation branding strategies.
- 2. Document Analysis:** The documentation analysis is used to review primary and secondary sources that are related to Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies including government and institutional reports, academic literature, the analysis of media contents and outputs.
- 3. Historical Analysis:** An important aspect of this research is the examination of Korea's historical development, particularly its experience of division, the Japanese invasion, Korean War, authoritarian regimes, and the financial crisis. This historical analysis will provide a strong basis for understanding how these experiences shaped Korea's approach to public diplomacy.
- 4. Institutional Framework Analysis:** The thesis considers the institutional framework as highly important since it supports Korea's public diplomacy efforts. Analyzing the roles of governmental and non-governmental actors including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Korea Foundation, King Sejong Institute, and the Korea Creative Content

Agency, provides a deeper understanding of how institutional structures contribute to the effectiveness of nation branding.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is organized into three main chapters, each focusing on different aspects of Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding strategies and their development in time. The chapters are structured as follows:

**Chapter 1: The Theoretical Framework:** The first chapter introduces the concept of power in international relations and explores the theoretical frameworks that are relevant to public diplomacy and nation branding. It covers the foundational theories of power including realist, liberal and constructivist approaches and discusses the concept of soft power and its resources. By reviewing different theories, this chapter sets the stage for understanding how soft power differs from hard power and how it has become central in international relations, especially for countries like Korea. This chapter's significance lies in grounding the thesis in the conceptual shift from traditional structures to the importance of culture, values, and diplomacy as a tool of influence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Chapter 2: Korea: An Exploration of History and Public Diplomacy:** This chapter provides a critical and comprehensive historical context of Korea, exploring Korea's transformation from a divided nation to a global middle power with the contribution of public diplomacy and nation branding strategies. It also investigates the role of Korea's evolving diplomatic policies in enhancing its international standing and the ways in which it has used cultural exchanges and media outreach to strengthen its global influence. The chapter discusses each presidential term in detail while providing a historical examination of the relevant conditions in Korea. Each term is analysed through the lens of Public Diplomacy Policies to assess Korea's progress during that time.

**Chapter 3: The Institutional Setup of Public Diplomacy Tools of Korea:** In this chapter, the institutional mechanisms behind Korea's public diplomacy are explored, highlighting the importance of how the governmental and non-governmental organizations in Korea use soft power tools strategically. This chapter focuses on the roles of agencies like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and organizations such as the Korea Foundation. The objective of this section is to show

how institutional framework of Korea supports the soft power through the promotion of cultural assets, educational exchanges and international partnerships. It shows the importance of coordination in institutional setup in leveraging soft power to foster global influence and nation branding, showcasing Korea's commitment to public diplomacy strategy.

**Chapter 4: Soft Power Tools of South Korea:** The chapter illustrates how soft power tools became an integral part of Korea's public diplomacy strategy, especially after the democratization movement and the rapid economic growth. It further explores how these tools, particularly cultural diplomacy, played a key role in reshaping Korea's global image. The rise of Hallyu and Korea's soft power tools are examined in order to show how Korea's soft power utilized cultural diplomacy to navigate its complex historical challenges while establishing its image globally, fostering stronger international relationships and improving its influence in global affairs.

**Romanization Note**

The Korean terms and names used in this thesis have been Romanized according to the Revised Romanization of Korean, which was adopted by the South Korean government in 2000.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **1.1 THE CONCEPT OF “POWER”**

Few concepts in International Relations discipline spark as much debate as the notion of power. While power remains a topic of debate, there's no consensus on its definition or nature. Nevertheless, these ongoing debates not only underscore the absence of a unanimous definition but also lay the groundwork for a comprehensive examination of its various dimensions and the diverse perspectives it encapsulates. According to Laswell and Kaplan (1950, p. 75), power is at the core of international politics studies since international relations are built on the allocation and exercise of power. The term's tendency for vague interpretation in the history of International Relations stems from its frequent application to explain a wide array of major incidents (Gündoğdu, 2021, p. 36).

Scholars like those of Robert A. Dahl (1957), Steven Lukes (1974), Robert O. Keohane & Joseph Nye (1977), Hans Morgenthau (1948), and Kenneth Waltz (1986) all acknowledge that the term "power" in international relations is elusive, abstract, and controversial (Baldwin, 2016, p. 2). There is an ongoing debate among experts who have thought about the issue over how to define, conceptualize, analyse, or assess it (Lukes, 2005). Power's changing nature across time, space, and different systems, along with its relationship to economic, political, and structural conditions, complicates its precise definition and understanding (Ekşi, 2018, p. 43). Power is like the weather, as Joseph Nye so elegantly stated it. Everyone uses it and talks about it, but few people truly comprehend it (Nye, 2004).

Power can be identified as “The capability to exert significant influence or impact, strength, whether physical or mental” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). Like Nye (2011, p. 5) stated, it is “the ability to accomplish or achieve one's interest or the capacity to make or resist the change” (Nye, 2011, p. 5). However, the scope and the studies on power come in a variety of forms. Likewise, the academic discipline of International Relations (IR) reflects this spectrum of usage as well. For instance, power may also be defined as an actor's capacity to influence other actors' behaviours and decisions. (Holsti, 2004, p. 82). Likewise for Robert A. Dahl (1957), power may be explained in much simpler terms. If A has enough influence over B to convince B to do something B would

not do otherwise, then it means that A has power over B. Hans J. Morgenthau (1954) offered an alternative explanation as a response to the discussion of power in his well-known book "*Politics Among Nations*", which was first released in 1948. Thus, according to Morgenthau, "Man's influence over the ideas and behaviours of other men" is what is meant by the term "power" (Morgenthau, 1954). For him, power serves as both the ultimate purpose and the instrument of world politics.

Some scholars of IR define power as the ability to control others with physical and material sources, otherwise known as *hard power*. For quite a while, academics regarded power as a synonym for hard power, which can be referred to as military, and sometimes economic power. Especially the Realist School of IR takes power as the central characteristics of international politics with its meaning as the hard power. For others, it can be compartmentalized as a concept within itself. Since it is a blurry concept, sometimes it can be perceived as authority, violence, and oppression (Gündoğdu, 2021, p. 36). In this regard, it is also critical to understand whose power and to what extent is being discussed. Therefore, while arguing about power, not only the definition but also the extent and domain of it are equally important.

According to K. J. Holsti (cited by Gündoğdu, 2021, p. 38), power consists of three distinct elements: (1) the capacity to influence other variables; (2) possessing the possibilities and capacities that may be employed to have an influencing behaviour; and (3) answering to others' influencing behaviour. In brief, there are primarily two conceptualizations in the International Relations literature concerning the definition and nature of power. The first conceptualization, which is the simplest and the classical way, is to see power as a source and a capacity (Yaylacı, 2020, p. 49). According to this definition, power is a state's maximum possible materialistic capability, particularly its military capability, as well as its economic and social capability (ibid). The realist theory of international relations is improved based on this definition of power. Because the international system is anarchic, governments rely on the notion of power. According to the Realist School of International Relations, governments either maximize their strength, which includes their military and economy, or they maximize their security to avoid danger or oppose pressure.

The second conceptualization of power considers power as a causality that emerges in the relations between actors, rather than seeing power as a possession (Yaylacı, 2020, p. 53). Despite being formed on Max Weber's writings; the reasoning of Robert Dahl may be regarded to form the basis of this understanding of power as a relation (ibid). This perspective underlines the fact that power cannot depend exclusively on material resources. Military and economic resources are still essential, but they cannot be the main determinants of power. Power is also controlled by culture, philosophy, politics, norms, values, regulations, and the law at the same time. Liberal and constructivist theories, as well as Critical IR Theory itself, embrace this interpretation in contrast to Realist theories.

### 1.1.1 HARD POWER

It is possible to define power as the capacity to influence others' actions. However, the methods for doing so may differ. States can use their hard power resources to accomplish their objectives. Therefore, it is possible to define hard power as the use of coercion, intimidation, and military force by one actor against another to achieve desired political targets and to influence the behaviours of others. Hard power includes all types of threats directed against the other actor, as well as all forms of deterrence and coercion techniques that can be deployed. Joseph Nye defines this side of power as the ability to use the carrots or 'inducements and sticks or 'threats' (Nye, 2020, p. 24). Although while economic threats are not typically classified as hard power, they have the same effect on an actor in terms of forcing it to change its behaviour.

Within International Relations, different schools of thought offer diverse perspectives on the concept of power. This chapter seeks to elucidate upon these theories, specifically focusing on their interpretations of Soft Power and Public Diplomacy. By examining these theories, a deeper understanding of these concepts can be fostered. While the formal inception of the International Relations discipline is generally acknowledged to be the Westphalian Peace of 1648, it is viable to trace its roots further back in history.

Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War* (431-404 BC) is a foundational work in International Relations, frequently referenced for its analysis of power and balance of power. For Thucydides, power dynamics are a natural part of human behavior, guiding actions and interactions (Schmidt, 2007, p. 45). He argues that the war resulted from Sparta's response to Athens' growing strength, illustrating how shifts in power provoke conflict

(Thucydides, 1968). His statement, “The powerful have always dominated the powerless... This is inherent to human nature...” (Sancak, 2015, p. 8), highlights the enduring relevance of his ideas in understanding contemporary international relations, where classical concepts like balance of power remain significant.

Machiavelli advocates for the accumulation of power to ensure state survival, while Hobbes describes a natural state of war where power is essential for self-preservation (Field, 2014; Karaduman, 2020). Morgenthau and Carr further develop these ideas, highlighting the perpetual nature of the struggle for power, rooted in human nature (Morgenthau, 1954). Realist theories view power as central to state interactions, with E.H. Carr categorizing it into military, economic, and opinion-based forms (Carr, 1946). Waltz's Structural Realism shifts the focus to the structure of the international system, arguing that states seek power for survival in an anarchic world (Waltz, 1979).

Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism suggests that states continuously strive to increase their power to ensure security, driven by the anarchic and unpredictable nature of international politics (Mearsheimer, 2001). Although hard power provides a compelling framework, critics point out its limitations in addressing the multifaceted nature of contemporary global affairs, paving the way for the concept of soft power, as articulated by Nye.

Liberal and Neoliberal theories present a different perspective on power compared to Realism, emphasizing the importance of cooperation, economic ties, and the role of non-state actors in international relations. These theories argue that power is not solely derived from military strength but also from the ability to build interdependent relationships, where mutual cooperation can enhance stability and influence. The notion of interdependence highlights how states, through economic and social connections, can exert power without relying on coercion or force (Keohane & Nye, 2012).

By incorporating these perspectives, the discussion of power extends beyond the traditional hard power framework, setting the stage for the exploration of soft power and its increasing relevance in contemporary international relations.

## **1.2 SOFT POWER**

Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane made a highly important contribution to the field of International Relations with their pioneering work, *Power and Interdependence* (2011).

In their book, Keohane and Nye explore mainly the aspects that are often overlooked by Political Realism. The assumptions of Political Realism include that states are coherent and dominant actors in world politics; force is a usable and effective instrument, particularly coercive force; and there is a hierarchy of issues in world politics, divided into *High Politics*—primarily concerning military security—and *Low Politics*, which encompasses economic and social affairs (Nye & Keohane, 2011, p. 19). The Realist perspective depicts a world where each state seeks to protect itself from perceived or actual threats, lacking the possibility of a political integration and where states are the sole actors, survival depending on acquiring power within a stable and balanced system.

Keohane and Nye (2011, p. 20) argue that by challenging the assumptions of Political Realism embodied within the "Traditional View", it becomes possible to picture a world in which actors beyond nation states exist without a strict hierarchical order, and in which hard power is not the only effective instrument. In essence, a world bound by complex interdependence. According to this perspective, complex interdependence is characterized by three main features: (1) the presence of various channels that unite societies, encompassing informal relations between government elites, nongovernmental elites, and transnational organizations; (2) the absence of a hierarchical structure among issues; and (3) the ineffectiveness of military force in resolving disagreements such as economic issues between governments.

One of the early definitions of interdependence was "a situation in which the actions of one state directly affect other states" (Rosecrance 1977, p. 426). However, for Keohane and Nye it is much more than a connection between states. It is a mutual dependence and influence between the actors that stems from the exchange of money, goods, people, and information (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 8). To illustrate this, if the first characteristic of complex interdependence is taken as an example as Keohane and Nye stated, it becomes evident that states are not the sole actors in the international system since the activities of non-state actors can serve as transmission belts, rendering government policies more sensitive to one another (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 21). Hence, it is possible to assert that states do not stand exclusively as the main actors; rather, the actions of the non-state actors can affect both domestic and foreign policies.

The second feature of complex interdependence reveals the fact that issues related to foreign policy are no longer connected merely with military security. This means that the traditional agenda of security threats and military deterrence is no longer sufficient. Different problems which could be categorized under 'Low Politics' before, such as energy resources, environmental problems, and population, now become equally important as the military security threats. This leads to the third significant point: the diminished role of the military.

The importance of the military and its associated threats cannot be denied, and this will continue to be the case in the future. However, in today's World, particularly among developed pluralist countries, the fear of attacking one another has decreased due to the relationships between these countries, making the use of force less relevant. Moreover, solely relying on hard power presents limitations in achieving broader objectives encompassing economic, political, or ecological dimensions (Keohane & Nye, 2011, p. 23). Last but not least, the destructiveness of nuclear weapons makes it less likely to have conflicts since the risks of nuclear escalation are higher and the use of force has more significant consequences than before. Kostas Ifantis (2011, p. 444) argues that the significance of hard power has diminished in light of modern security challenges including nuclear proliferation, jihadism, failed or collapsed states, irregular immigration and refugees and 'Black Swan' events.

Another reason which highlighted the decreasing impact of hard, traditional means of power, is that the end of the Cold War marked a turning point with the increased impact of globalization on the relationship between actors in the international arena. Since the 1990s, there has been a further decline in the significance of nation-states as traditional actors in international politics. While states still remain as the main dominant actors on the international stage, it has become more difficult and complex for them to control international relations as more actors have emerged (Ohnesorge, 2020, p. 7). This rapid emergence of other actors, including international organizations, private corporations, terrorist groups, and even individuals, has swiftly surpassed the primacy of nation-states. As a consequence, while the possibilities of cooperation in different areas increase, concurrently, the potential for conflicts or likelihood of engaging in large-scale war gradually decreases to the same extent (Weidenfeld, cited in Ohnesorge, 2020, p. 6). Furthermore, the contemporary political issues which emerged in the present day such as

issues related to ecology, global health and transnational and cyberterrorism transcend the limits of nation-states and their areas of control, rendering traditional hard power resources ineffective in solving them (Ohnesorge, 2020, p. 8)

Simultaneously, the notion of power has evolved as well, delving into a more complex and interconnected concept. In the past, power was predominantly understood mainly by the Political Realists as the ability to exert control over others, facilitated by the possession of key assets such as population size, territorial extent, natural resources, economic scale, and military strength (Nye, 2004, p. 53). Political leaders often equated these factors directly with power as well. However, this perspective has grown increasingly insufficient to encapsulate the true essence and multifaceted nature of power in the 21st century. In addition to conventional hard power instruments, over time, the influence of communication, diplomacy, and cultural factors has become increasingly crucial for a nation to be considered "powerful."

As Keohane and Nye defined in their book (1977) while defining complex interdependence, instead of utilizing hard power, one might use its ability to entice and influence others' decisions and opinions by using its influential resources as well especially since economic challenges cannot be solved solely through military power or policy innovation in the new century (Bound, et al, 2007, p. 13). This ability to attract and influence others is called Soft Power.

According to Cambridge Dictionary's definition, coined by Joseph Nye in 1990 in his book "Bound to Lead," soft power is characterized by the utilization of an actor's cultural and economic influence to attract or influence the behaviours of other actors, in contrast to the deployment of hard power tools. (Soft Power, n.d.). Accordingly, countries may simply employ soft power resources to influence people and get them to do what they want in the international stage without utilizing any hard power resources. Soft Power serves to foster attraction rather than using force in contrast to Hard Power (Nye, 2004). While Hard Power relies on resources like force, military deployments, sanctions, and bribery, Soft Power functions through culture, democratic principles like freedom of expression, and foreign policy decisions.

Joseph Nye defended that the coercion's influence on power behaviour has been declining in importance and is being replaced by Soft Power. Particularly after the end of the Cold

War, while communication across the world improved and technology developed, universal values and attractiveness have become increasingly significant. As the importance of the knowledge and technology and significance of mass communication tools have increased, soft power tools gained proportionally (Nye, 1990, p. 179). Therefore, rather than imposing hard measures, states began to look for newer and safer methods to protect their interests in the international arena by influencing other states and their people.

In Joseph Nye's theoretical framework, the United States provides an appropriate case study for the effective utilization of 'Soft Power'. This argument gained importance since there was a common belief that the power of the US had been in decline. Nye, however, defended that there was another dimension of power besides military and economic power (Nye, 2004, p. XI). This third dimension was soft power, as explained before, which includes the cultural values of the US such as Hollywood, universities or even its democratic and open culture within. As indicated by Joseph Nye, there are significant contrasts between material power, which is categorized under military and economic power, and soft power. He defines and distinguishes them based on behaviours, principal currencies, and government policies. Coercion, deterrence, and protection indicate military power behaviours, while inducement and coercion reflect economic power.

However, soft power is characterized by attractiveness and agenda setting. In other words, rather than spreading fear, soft power seeks to attract people. Similarly, threats and force can be viewed as the primary means of military power, just as payments and sanctions define economic power. Soft power does not rely on the use of force but instead uses non-coercive means to achieve its goals such as values, culture, policies, and institutions. Hence, promoting cultural values while also creating new networks between people, becomes one of the most important tools to achieve the full potential of soft power. Government policies such as war, alliance and coercive diplomacy often indicate military power. Also aids, bribes and sanctions can be put under economic power. States usually choose to bribe or sanction others to get what they want in international relations. However, public diplomacy and bilateral-multilateral diplomacy seeks the same outcome with a different kind of power.

Soft power and public diplomacy use its influence usually on foreign people to create an attraction. In this way, they can benefit themselves without using any other harder measures. “Soft power is the ability to influence the preferences of others by using attraction and co-optive power”, as Nye indicated. If an actor can exert influence over others through persuasion and attractiveness, rather than relying on coercive measures or tangible assets, this demonstrates the possession of soft power. With all these factors considered, the notion of soft power surpasses traditional understandings of hard power in complexity and scope. While hard power still remains significant, its solitary application is considered insufficient in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **1.2.1 THE SOURCES OF SOFT POWER**

In contrast to hard power, soft power relies on its distinct set of resources. The contribution of diverse resource types to soft power is contingent upon the particular country and its strategic approach. For Joseph Nye (2004, p. 11), soft power resources can be categorized into three: (1) the cultural appeal of the country, contingent upon its attractiveness to the external actors; (2) its political values, that align with both domestic policies and international stances; and (3) its foreign policy, recognized as legitimate by other nations in international arena.

#### **1.2.1.1 CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

The cultural dimension stands out as one of the pivotal factors in shaping a nation’s soft power dynamics. Culture is defined in various ways, regarding time and context, reflecting the diverse interpretations within different fields of study. Culture, which is known to be a word of Italian origin dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century (Reeves, 2004, p. 14) is defined as the thoughts, actions, and viewpoints displayed by a specific group within society for Cambridge Dictionary (n, d). The Mexico Declaration on Cultural Policies, which was published by UNESCO, states that (n.d,1982), culture is the composition of the distinct values of arts, literature traditions, shared history and lifestyles.

Culture and identity profoundly influence national goals and objectives, since they contribute to the institutions and conventions that nations create or engage with in the international arena (Saaida, 2023, p. 50). In the international relations context, culture also acts as a diplomatic instrument to build a connection between different actors to build

a stronger understanding (Papaioannou, 2017, p. 943). Cultural exchange and diplomatic interactions have always been substantial since they often shape interactions between countries and people by building common connections. By the help of cultural exchanges, states can build stronger relationships and overcome their differences with their prejudices as well (Kamak, 2024, p. 3).

History is filled with instances where culture has profoundly influenced various circumstances. It can be said that one of the greatest examples of the earliest cultural exchange that has a great influence is the Silk Road. This ancient route system not only physically connected the East and West but also facilitated the transmission of music, art, and fashion. It helped exchanging ideas and culture making different societies to interact with one another. Similarly, the French Revolution exemplifies how cultural movements can have profound impacts. Its far-reaching effects in Europe included the spread of French language, art, literature, and political values, illustrating the transformative power of cultural movements on a global scale.

A more contemporary successful application of cultural influence in international relations can be observed in the United States' support for domestic actors, musicians, artists, and writers, who are sent abroad to promote cultural diplomacy between 1950-1975 (Schneider, 2003, p. 2). These 'cultural ambassadors' were deployed to perform for audiences across the world, with the objective of introducing and promoting American values during the Cold War.

In today's interconnected world, culture has become even more important in international relations. It holds an unalterable place as a tool for negotiation in finding common solutions due to identity's progressively increasing role in domestic and foreign policies (Holden et al., 2007, p. 11). Culture in diplomacy is a valuable tool for fostering peace and to create new horizons for the cooperation between parties.

In the Age of Globalization, soft power is wielded not only by traditional state actors, such as governmental bodies, as well as by non-state entities, such as international businesses and NGOs, and cultural institutions, through ideas, culture, and lifestyles (Kamak, 2024, p. 6). These corporations significantly influence people by often shaping societal preferences. UNESCO serves as a prime example of the impact of culture, as it

recognizes and preserves the histories and cultural landmarks of countries by forming cross-cultural dialogue. (Kamak, 2024, p. 4).

Nye distinguishes primarily between two types of cultures: “High Culture, including literature, art, and education, and Popular Culture, which focuses on entertainment” (Nye, 2004, p. 11). If a country has universal values that appeal to other societies and its policies are built with shared beliefs, then that country’s desired outcomes are more likely to be successful in contrast to having narrow values in international politics (ibid).

Even though culture is a big component of soft power, it is not the only one. Also, the effectiveness of power resources is connected with the context as well. Nye gives an example of tanks in swamps and jungles, which are normally extremely powerful but does not work that efficient in different contexts (Nye, 2004, p. 12). Meaning that, culture’s impact on different societies can be misleading or deceptive if it is not researched or examined detailed, based on the context. This distinction between soft and hard power becomes apparent through the concept of the 'willingness' effect (Rugh, 2009, p. 7), highlighting the need to consider not only cultural factors but also the receptivity of the target audience.

#### **1.2.1.2 POLITICAL VALUES**

A country’s domestic and foreign policies are the second potential source of soft power. One example can be the political values with the democracy understanding that the US has. America is usually seen as a place where people can succeed regardless of their race, gender, nationality or religion (Rugh, 2009, p. 9). These values form the core foundation of the soft power that the US wields, rooted in its domestic principles. Nevertheless, since soft power is intangible and uncontrollable, the opinion of foreign publics over certain politics can change swiftly. This dynamic was evident in the case of the US after 9/11. The US began to lose its credibility following failed policies, such as initiating the war in Iraq without a broad military coalition or UN authorization (Nye, 2004b, p. 255). Accordingly, a 2003 study by Roper indicated that, for the first time since 1998, societies in 30 countries preferred fewer US products and began to favour Asian or European products (Melillo 2003, as cited in Nye, 2004, p. 255).

A more recent example is the boycott of Israel and Israeli products following Israel's military offensive in Gaza. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement of Palestine, launched in 2005, actively challenges Israel's occupation and pressures international support for Israel (BDS Movement, n.d.). After decades of leveraging its soft power on the international stage, Israel is now widely viewed by many as an aggressive occupying power. Israel's international reputation has further deteriorated following recent judicial reforms and the ascendance of the radical right (Freilich, 2023).

One of the aims of the movement is to initiate and lead customer boycott in certain brands. In the first month of 2024, sales of brands such as Starbucks and McDonald's decreased after being boycotted due to perceived support for Israel (Rajvanshi & Serhan, 2024). While the primary goal of the boycott strategy and protests was to apply economic pressure, they also functioned as a catalyst for political consciousness and collective mobilization.

### **1.2.1.3 FOREIGN POLICY**

The third source is a country's foreign policy, which is inherently connected to the previous two sources. It is linked with the other two sources because a country's culture and political values are also embedded in its foreign policies. In a globalized world, it is crucial to maintain a transparent foreign policy while being sensitive to the common problems of humanity in order to have an effective soft power strategy. Due to social media and the internet, the policies implemented by countries are more visible today, as news spread faster than ever. Therefore, morality and ethics are especially important in today's world and in foreign policies of countries.

An example of effective foreign policy as an instance of soft power is Norway. Despite its strategic and geographical importance during the Cold War, Norway became overshadowed after the end of the war. Culturally, Norway was not considered attractive in international relations due to several factors: its small territory, population, and economy; its lack of linguistic attractiveness since many Norwegians speak English; the absence of distinctive brands or icons representing Norwegian identity; and the similarity of its culture to other Scandinavian countries (Leonard and Small as cited in Popa, 2015, p. 44). Therefore, Norway chose a different path to gain recognition and establish its identity in international relations.

Hence, Norway sought to alter this perception of itself by adopting a distinctive foreign policy. Nowadays, Norway is often called "The Peace Nation" because it's known for its diplomatic and ethical approach to international affairs. In 2007, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry established "the Norwegian Model" to actively engage in peace processes as a mediator, promoting dialogue and negotiation efforts (Eriksen, n.d). The Oslo Process is a well-known example of Norway's efforts for peace. Norway's effort to become a mediator and a negotiator between Israel and Palestine showed its initiative to be recognized as "humanitarian superpower." In spite of the fact that it ultimately did not succeed, this approach was crucial in establishing Norway's reputation as a peace mediator.

### **1.3 SMART POWER**

In order to remain influential and effective, nations need to adapt their strategies to the changing dynamics of international relations. The complexity of modern international politics cannot be adequately addressed by the traditional approaches to power, which only rely on military or cultural appeal. Therefore, the concept of smart power has emerged as a composition of hard and soft power to provide a more balanced and strategic approach.

Smart power is a strategy that combines hard power's coercion and soft power's attraction, highlighting the importance of both approaches. Joseph Nye coined the term "smart power" in 2003 to describe the ability to combine these two. For Joseph Nye, soft power is not the only solution because it can be misinterpreted and used inappropriately depending on the context. Therefore, smart power "goes to the heart of the problem of power conversation" by leveraging the strengths of both hard and soft power concurrently (Nye, 2013, p. 5).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need for having a strong military but also partnerships and areas of influence is evident to establish legitimacy (Armitage & Nye, 2007, p. 7). This was particularly evident in the aftermath of the George Bush Administration's invasion of Iraq. Accordingly, after losing popularity after the invasion, the US sought to pursue an approach that could fix the image of the US again for a better image. Smart Power functions as a mechanism for achieving this goal by recognizing the significance of

tangible resources, including military and economic assets, as well as intangible resources like culture..

The 2007 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), titled “A Smarter More Secure America,” emphasizes the necessity of a strategy that integrates military strength with soft power resources for the US. During her Nomination Hearing for Secretary of State in 2009, Hillary Clinton emphasized the significance of "smart power," stating, “*We must use what has been called “smart power”: the full range of tools at our disposal -- diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural -- picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation.*” The significance of the smart approach, which combines the military power of the United States with the promotion of its interests and values, was emphasized.

The concept of smart power highlights the importance of balance in the international arena. By integrating both the economic assets and strength of military with intangible appeal of culture and values, it offers a more nuanced approach for addressing the diversification of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The evolving dynamics of power and global politics necessitate that nations adopt both hard and soft power to exercise influence. Consequently, reliance solely on hard power or soft power will be inadequate for the implementation of an effective strategy.

## **1.4 DIPLOMACY AND THE ROAD TOWARDS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

### **1.4.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF DIPLOMACY**

It is widely acknowledged that diplomacy is among the most essential components of international relations, and it is also one of the most studied subjects in the field as well. It is essential because it is an integral component of power and one of the ways in which nations may engage with one another and try to accomplish their objectives in the global arena. The roots of the word "*diplomacy*" trace back to Ancient Greek times, where "*diplomat*" described an elder, later adopted in French to mean a negotiator (Siracusa, 2010, chapter 1, para 2). In its contemporary sense, *diplomacy* refers to the relationship between sovereign states through various channels including official governmental channels and diplomatic services (Berridge & James, 2012, p. 62). In other words, it is a

negotiation process between states and an instrumental tool of foreign policy to build and improve peaceful relations (Magalhães in Balão & Almedia e. Silva, 2022, p. 16).

The first examples of diplomatic practices can be found long before the era of Ancient Greece. Before Ancient Greece, three significant diplomatic milestones are widely acknowledged within the 2000-year period preceding it: the Hammurabi Era of the Babylonian period (1792-1750 BCE), diplomatic relations between Egypt and the Hittites, notably during the Kadesh Peace Era around 1287 BCE, and the Persian Period (522-486 BCE), characterized by improved diplomatic relations between Ancient India and Ancient Greece (Çetinsaya, 2020, p. 16). Yet, Ancient Greece became the civilization that carried this diplomatic legacy into the modern age, with the Roman Empire and Byzantine Empire succeeding it

Despite the fact that diplomacy dates back to ancient times, the formal emergence of modern diplomacy dates to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. During this period in Italy, the first ambassadors were appointed, and the first embassies were established. Notwithstanding, only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, public opinion began to have significant influence over diplomacy (Ekşi, 2018, p. 75). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Cardinal Richelieu established the first foreign ministry in France and became the first person to recognize the importance of public opinion by creating a new system of propaganda.

Up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the term 'diplomacy' referred to a negative concept among non-diplomats and was seen as ambiguous until the Enlightenment and the transformation of political order that came with it; however, beginning in the 1770s, the term 'diplomatie' was used as a synonym for the practice of ambassadors (Leira, 2016, p. 67-69). Therefore, it can be argued that before the Enlightenment, there was no collective usage of diplomacy. In the wake of the French Revolution, it spread throughout Europe, taking shape both etymologically and practically. By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, diplomacy was partially institutionalized across the Europe.

Despite the wider adoption of diplomatic practices after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the term still carried negative connotations, as it was generally perceived as secretive and private, referring to informal agreements conducted out of public view (Byrne, 2016, p. 170). While diplomacy became institutionalized over time, ambassadors and ministry officials required immunities and privileges to act without fear or obstruction. Hence, the

diplomatic practices started to be associated with the secrecy and ‘gentlemen’s agreement’.

The 1648 Westphalian Peace solidified concepts such as legitimacy and independence, setting the stage for the Congress of Vienna in 1815. After years of destructive Napoleonic Wars, European states sought a more peaceful era characterized by new diplomatic norms and a more established world system. After the Congress of Vienna, multilateral diplomacy understanding was recognized more commonly, and ‘Concert of Europe’ era lasted for almost a hundred years up until the First World War. Between the years 1822 and 1914, 26 conferences were held by the great powers (Çetinsaya, 2020, p. 20). In this period, the first examples of intergovernmental organizations seen, and new commissions were established.

Before the start of the First World War, the French influence dominated the diplomatic practices, and French was widely recognised as the official language of diplomacy (*Lingua Franca*). However, following the end of the war, the 'Fourteen Points' speech by US President Woodrow Wilson signified a substantial transformation in world politics. According to this speech, the diplomatic understanding would be open, without secret or private agreements, and conducted in public view, with the first chapter specifically referring to the “principle of open diplomacy” (Wilson, 1918). For Wilson, the international system should be built on the notion of “self-determination” rather than military agreements that are formed in secret (Kissenger, 2006, p. 11). The need for a ‘new’ diplomacy was evident since the ‘old’ methods could not prevent the catastrophic war and, instead, paved the way towards it (Çetinsaya, 2020, p. 21). Therefore, avoiding and preventing large-scale wars could be possible with the principle of ‘collective security.’

The consequence of the First World War showed that there was a need for more transparent system with equality and participation. The League of Nations was established in 1920 as a collective security organization to fulfil this purpose. Nonetheless, the League failed to prevent the Second World War. According to Eloranta (2011, p. 28), there are two main reasons behind this failure: (1) The League failed to guarantee sufficient security measurements to its members as an alliance and caused its members to employ more aggressive policies which lead to arms race; and (2)

Disarmament efforts did not meet expectations as they were inadequate. Yet, despite the League of Nations being deemed a failure, the period between the world wars was named the era of diplomatic openness.

Newly established organizations and this change in diplomacy brought relatively new concepts to the agenda of global affairs. Increased attention has been directed towards economic and social concepts, rather than focusing solely on military security and the prevention of wars (Çetinsaya, 2020, p. 22). The dawn of the Second World War and the increasing prevalence of propaganda practices influenced the understanding of diplomacy and the development of new diplomatic tools. Therefore, traditional diplomacy began to transform into an even 'newer' form. Nevertheless, this 'newer' form was not considered a bright era by some scholars.

According to Hans Morgenthau (1970), the golden era of diplomacy was between the years of 1648 and 1914 (Çetinsaya, 2020, p. 23). He describes the era after the end of the First World War, particularly with the onset of the Second World War, as a decline in diplomacy. However, it is an unquestionable fact that the world wars changed diplomacy, for better or worse, leading to contemporary diplomatic practices.

The Second World War was seen by many as a continuation of the First World War due to unresolved issues from the latter (Carruthers, 2001, p. 66). Even before the war ended, there were new initiatives such as the Bretton Woods Meetings, the Yalta Conference, and, most notably, the San Francisco Conference, where the United Nations had first emerged as an idea. The US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill, held a meeting on August 9, 1941, in Newfoundland to discuss the situation. This meeting led to the publication of the Atlantic Charter on August 14, which became the foundation for the establishment of the United Nations (Armaoğlu, 1991, p. 382). Following this, 26 countries participated in signing the Declaration on January 1, 1942.

In 1944, 44 countries, excluding Germany, Italy, and Japan, held a conference in Bretton Woods to discuss and establish a world system aimed at liberalizing international trade (Oran, 2001, p. 480). Later, this conference helped forming the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Following these initiatives, toward the end of the Second World War, the Yalta Conference was held followed by the Potsdam Conference. This time period is a

great example for *Conference Diplomacy* which can be explained as the multilateral instrument that can address important problems peacefully (Launsky-Tieffenthal, 2014).

After the meetings at Yalta, on 11 February 1945, Theodore Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill announced that there will be an organization dedicated to ensuring peace and security (United Nations, n.d.). Accordingly, the UN was created, and the Security Council of the UN was established by the five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). The UN Charter was signed by 50 countries in San Francisco on June 26, 1945, to address international problems, especially conflicts on a global scale. Today, the United Nations has grown into a large system with nearly 200 member states and various specialized organizations, and without its recognition, countries cannot attain full sovereign status (İskit, 2018, p. 67).

Diplomacy began to slowly institutionalize starting with the Second World War. However, it took its real shape during the Cold War with the advancement of technological and communication developments. These developments paved the way for propaganda and eventually accelerated the creation of public diplomacy. By the 1960s, propaganda had almost completely replaced the classical understanding of diplomacy, and with increased public participation during the Cold War, a new kind of diplomacy was born. During the time of the Cold War, the role of diplomacy in international relations expanded, multilateralism became more prevalent, and the forty years that passed during this time period were devoted to the search for compromise, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of diplomacy in the first place (İskit, 2018, p. 70).

#### **1.4.2 THE BIRTH OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

With the globalization and the transformation of the world system, states developed public diplomacy which is a complex diplomatic tool that combines power, traditional diplomacy, media, public and the civil society (Ekşi, 2018, p. 21). As previously noted, given the significance of power and its transformation in International Relations (IR), the 21st century has seen the emergence of soft power, based on intangible resources, as an alternative to traditional hard power. The traditional understanding of diplomacy is no longer sufficient to regulate international relations, given that the international system no longer consists solely of states. The emergence of new actors, such as NGOs, multinational corporations, and individuals, along with significant technological

developments, particularly in communication, has made it imperative to update the understanding of diplomacy. Furthermore, new concepts have emerged apart from war and peace, which are the main themes of the classical diplomacy.

Hartmann (1983) identifies four factors that contributed to the transformation of diplomacy: (1) public opinion, (2) the emergence of new states after the Cold War, (3) Cold War rivalries, and (4) the rapid rise of terrorism in international relations. Additionally, the development of technology has facilitated faster and more effective information flow (Balão & Almeida e Silva, 2022, p. 23). These factors, along with the emergence of new concepts, have facilitated the introduction of public diplomacy onto the world stage as it was described in the previous chapter.

As diplomacy evolved, new concepts such as propaganda bloomed starting with the aftermath of the Second World War. *Propaganda*, according to its dictionary definition, can be explained as a set of ideas spread by an organization or government, often without explicit or complete transparency (Cambridge University Press, n.d., "Propaganda"). It is a collection of biased information towards a certain circumstance or case (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001, p. 14). In order for a policy to be considered as propaganda, there should be a deliberate behaviour to control or change the decisions (Ari, 2017, p. 367). Propaganda differs from diplomacy in that traditional diplomacy aims to build connections with official government bodies, while propaganda seeks to engage with societies in specific countries by shaping their way of thinking.

The emergence and development of mass media facilitated the global use of propaganda especially starting with the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first modern government propaganda operation can be considered the Woodrow Wilson administration's commission called the Creel Commission that was created in 1916. (Chomsky, 1997, p. 3). This commission was the first ministry of information of the US to influence citizens of the US about participating the war against Germany (Daly, 2017). The aim was to use movies, posters, and journals to show German barbarism and American loyalty, encouraging people to support the decision to wage war in the first place. To achieve this, the Committee spread famous posters, such as the portrait by James Montgomery Flagg of Uncle Sam with the title: "I WANT YOU FOR THE U.S. ARMY."

The use of propaganda during the interwar years from 1920 to 1939 is characterized by three different developments: (1) The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the USSR; (2) The isolationist politics of the US; and (3) The rise of fascist states and regimes in Europe, especially the Nazi regime (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015, p. 248). However, propaganda held an even greater importance during the Second World War to influence the masses. In 1933, even before the outbreak of the Second World War, Adolf Hitler established the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda which was headed by Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of propaganda. The aim was to control mass media and to control the public opinion while forming a collective behaviour on matters that are politically important (Bytwerk, 2010, p. 93). Visual propaganda tools such as films, newspapers and posters were used to promote Nazi regime while spreading antisemitism.

The radio also played an important role since the Nazis believed that the spoken word is always more effective than the printed word (Bytwerk, 2010, p. 114). Radio became the principal tool for sending messages to the publics abroad during the Second World War (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015, p. 275). Germany was not the only country that recognized the value of radio and visual propaganda means. Both Britain and the US used propaganda during the WWII, through various channels. Britain re-created the Ministry of Information just after declaring war against Germany in 1939 to better prepare than it did during WWI. Britain used the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to spread the news and persuasive messages both towards domestic and international audiences (Potter, 2022, p. 72). During the war, BBC was broadcasting in different languages including Spanish, Arabic, French, German Italian and Portuguese in different countries such as Turkey, Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria (Potter, 2022, p. 75) Moreover, the cinema was also used for propaganda, exhibitions were created, and Ministry of Information's books were published (Welch, 2021).

American propaganda during WWII was no different from that of other nations. In 1941, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI), which was later transformed into the Interim International Information Service (IIIS) by Harry Truman in 1945. In this context, artists and intellectuals were recruited to spread the government's ideas and objectives by using common propaganda tools including posters, films and radio channels (National WWII Museum, 2018). The main themes were usually

anti-German, anti-Japanese, anti-Italian, Women at War, victories of the US, and optimism about the future.

Another example of justifying the war was a series of documentaries called 'Why We Fight,' commissioned by the US government between 1942 and 1945 to show why the US entered the war and to gain support from the public (Welch, 2017, p. 29). Cinema served as a significant instrument for disseminating American ideas without being perceived as propagandistic. For instance, Walt Disney Studios formed a different unit to produce military training films and released cartoons that portrayed famous characters as soldiers like Donald Duck in 'Commando Duck' (Naval History and Heritage Command, n.d.). At the same time, the Office of War Information had a special unit, the Bureau of Motion Pictures, that focused specifically on Hollywood and reviewed 1,652 scripts between 1942 and 1945 (Simpson, 2020).

The Cold War marked a significant time period for the shift from the use propaganda to the birth of public diplomacy. Even though some scholars argue that public diplomacy is no different from propaganda, others believe that public diplomacy is an entirely different concept in the new world order. It is easier to view public diplomacy as an extension or an enhanced form of propaganda when there is a comprehensive and inclusive definition. That is why it is often associated with propaganda by many, as Richard Holbrooke wrote: "Call it public diplomacy, call it public affairs, psychological warfare, if you really want to be blunt, propaganda" (Holbrooke cited in Melissen, 2005, p. 17). However, Melissen (2005, p.18) argues that public diplomacy differs from propaganda in its use of two-way communication, even though both aim to persuade people about what they think.

Propaganda aims to achieve short-term results, while public diplomacy sets its goals for medium to long-term periods. For a public diplomacy initiative to succeed as planned, it is crucial to have a peaceful strategy with cooperative elements. On the contrary, propaganda's nature is often offensive, as its primary goal is to control the audience, sometimes even by distorting the truth. However, public diplomacy must build trust among partners and between audiences; otherwise, policies would lack consistency or sincerity.

The Cold War period marked a significant shift because it combined psychological warfare with ideological conflict. By the time of Cold War, the term propaganda started

to have a rather negative meaning. Therefore, the US used a new strategy, public diplomacy, both to improve its policies and to keep up with the communication age. In 1965, the term 'public diplomacy' was first used in its original meaning by former American diplomat Edmund A. Gullion, the Dean of Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Even though the term was used before, it took its shape as its contemporary sense with Edmund Gullion's views. According to Nicholas Cull (2008, p. 21), the reason behind this transition was the negative connotation associated with the term 'propaganda', particularly after WWII. Therefore, the US Information Office (USIA) needed a positive alternative to build new strategies and to improve diplomatic activities.

### **1.4.3 TRADITIONAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

For Gullion (cited in Ekşi, 2018, p. 12), public diplomacy is a type of strategy that aims to go beyond traditional diplomacy by ensuring government interactions between foreign publics through different communication channels including communication specialists, diplomats, and cultural exchanges. While public view in traditional diplomatic understanding not seen as important, public diplomacy brings the public into diplomacy by adding it as a new layer of communication. In 1966, Gullion defined public diplomacy as a tool that can impact foreign policy decisions of other nations by successfully influencing their attitudes towards certain issues.

The terms 'public' and 'diplomacy' seemed contradictory to one another since diplomacy was seen as encompassing the whole of the official relations that a government maintains. However, public diplomacy adds the public to diplomacy to get closer to the people by actively listening to and engaging them, aiming to change the behaviour. It relies on mutual understanding rather than one-way communication, emphasizing an approach based on dialogue.

Gullion's definition of public diplomacy also introduced the idea of additional actors in international relations beyond states only. For Hans Tuch (1990, p. 3), public diplomacy is a process of communication directed towards a foreign public regarding a certain country's ideals, views, institutions, and culture, aimed at developing sympathy and understanding. Meaning that, the main aim of public diplomacy is not to accomplish foreign policy goals but to build understanding. In addition, since it is a process of

communication, it is vital to build consistent long-term strategies to promote a country's values.

Delaney's definition (1968) of public diplomacy is the process of influencing individuals or people from a country, whether directly or indirectly, resulting in a change in their foreign policies in favour of the initiator (Aslan, 2020, p. 45). This definition shows a different layer of public diplomacy by bringing individuals to the decision-making process of foreign policy and their influence over policies. This is one of the reasons why public diplomacy is studied by different departments including communication, media studies, public relations, international relations and marketing.

La Cour (2018, p. 11) analyses the meaning of public diplomacy, the timing of publicity, and who should conduct diplomatic activities according to four different statesmen from various schools of thought. These four scholars (Woodrow Wilson, Harold Nicolson, Henry Kissinger, and Joseph Nye) hold divergent perspectives on public diplomacy, as its definition has continually evolved as a concept. According to Wilson, public diplomacy involves exchanging written opinion statements between delegations, while Nicolson defines it as the aggregation of diplomatic conferences broadcast live over radio. Kissinger includes formal negotiations conducted through diplomatic channels, while Joseph Nye introduces the concept of 'public' and defines public diplomacy as directly addressing the public through focused communication strategies.

Leonard, Stead and Smewing (2002, p. 9-12) identify three different dimensions of public diplomacy. The first point emphasizes continuity, highlighting the importance of frequent use of communication channels to establish recognition. For a country to build recognition, visibility and effectiveness are essential aspects of public diplomacy. As recognizability increases, the possibility of creating a positive image increases proportionally. The second dimension involves creating an agenda to disseminate ideals through various activities and using multiple tools. Using different channels proactively ensures stability and the range of diversity. The last dimension is to build long-term relationships with the publics via different strategies such as international conferences, exchange programs, transnational media establishments, language programs and cultural events that can reinforce the continuity.

Nicholas Cull (2008, p. 35) makes a broader classification and divides the public diplomacy practices into five different elements: “listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting”. Listening being as the most important element of public diplomacy, refers to an actor’s all attempts to collect data about public overseas (Cull, 2008, p. 32). The second element, advocacy, encompasses all the attempts made by an actor to manage international channels through various communication activities, whereas cultural diplomacy refers to the effort to use an actor's cultural resources to facilitate cultural transmission.

Exchange diplomacy includes cultural exchange at its core, as its aim is to send an actor’s citizens overseas or to accept individuals for a certain period for study or other reasons. It is a two-way academic exchange that both parties enjoy and benefit from. The Fulbright Scholarship, Jean Monnet Scholarship, and the Korean Government Scholarship Program (KGSP) are successful examples of this element. The last element mentioned by Nicholas Cull is international broadcasting, which is the process of managing the international environment through the use of various media instruments such as radio, television, and the Internet. One important example is the use of news; Britain, for example, uses the BBC in its public diplomacy initiatives.

As discussed above, public diplomacy became more prevalent in the second half of the Twentieth Century, especially with the developments during the Cold War. Throughout this period, public diplomacy was mostly dominated by the United States and Great Britain, while they were in a race with the Soviet Union. One important goal was to convince the foreign publics of their own ideologies and lifestyles without resorting to the old ways of propaganda. Initiatives such as the BBC World Service and Voice of America were adopted as new methods.

Voice of America was founded in 1942 by the U.S. government through the US Agency for Global Media to 'fight against the Nazi threat' with 'accurate and unbiased' information (U.S. Agency for Global Media, n.d.). The goal was to brief the public with transparent and accurate news, and to carry this news to the world, even when the news was bad, as promised by John Houseman. After the end of the war, there have been debates about the purpose and future of VOA. The VOA Charter in 1976 established that VOA would

continue broadcasting with comprehensive and reliable sources, representing America, American society, and American policies abroad.

Other practitioners of early public diplomacy included Germany with its *Goethe Institute*, Britain with its *British Council*, and France with the *Alliance Française* (Huijgh, 2016, p. 479). These institutes practiced and organized cultural events as well as exchange programs and language schools.

Established in 1951, the Goethe Institute was named after the famous poet and statesman Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who identified himself as a world citizen with humanistic ideas (Lanshina, 2015, p. 86). Starting with 1960s, the institute started with its active cultural initiatives with opening cultural centres abroad. In 1976, the Goethe institute and Germany's Foreign Office signed an agreement that created the institution as an autonomous cultural organization. As of today, the institution has 151 offices in 98 countries, where it teaches German language and culture to foreign students while simultaneously collaborating with the German government (Goethe-Institut, n.d.).

Institut Français was formed with the same purpose: to promote French culture through the use of the French language and to foster cultural diversity in 1922 (Institut Français, n.d.). It encourages the spread of French culture and hosts various events abroad. Today, there are 143 cultural centres located outside of France that are working with French embassies to promote French education, culture, and language to foreign students with a gender equality and diversity approach.

Just like the Institut Français, the British Council was established in 1934 to introduce British culture and foster friendly knowledge of the country abroad (British Council, n.d.). In 1940, it was granted a Royal Charter, a formal document which is granted by the monarch. Setting its role as a promoter of the values of the UK, the English language, and the improvement of relations with other countries. The British Council aligns its strategies along similar lines with the government for long-term results while maintaining relevance. In 2009, it has reached 220 offices in over 100 countries, with more than 7,400 employees, 85% of whom are located outside their home country (Fisher, 2009, p. 2). Today, it supports English language programs and art events such as theatre and literature, while maintaining peaceful relations and collaborating with institutions such as NATO, the United Nations, and the European Union.

Considering all these factors, it is additionally possible to state that public diplomacy is, in fact, a process of finding new grounds for communication internationally by influencing the foreign public or simply introducing itself as an actor wants to be introduced. That is why knowing the audience well and accurately targeting the masses is essential. This point highlights the importance of strategic communication and active listening strategies in public diplomacy. One goal of public diplomacy is to fix the misunderstandings and prejudices of a country about itself as the way it wants to be known. This requires a careful strategy of communication, being able to understand the target country and its culture and to find common grounds for mutual understandings (Leonard, 2002, p. 9). In the perspective of Kotler and Gertner (2002), the national reputation of a country affects public behaviour regarding purchasing, travel, and decisions about residency (Lee, 2021, p. 404). National reputation affects more than public behaviour; it also influences the decisions of investors, international students, tourists, and the opinions of the international media. That is why public diplomacy is studied by different academic disciplines including communication and media studies.

Following the onset of the Cold War, technological advances in communication led to an increased role of media in international affairs. The Cold War, being a conflict between ideologies and cultures, marked a breaking point for the change in public diplomacy. During this era, the primary goal of the states was to show their cultures and ideologies to the other, in order to influence them. Since the developments in nuclear technologies made it easier to reach mutually assured destruction at the expense of destroying each other, states sought to use different strategies. To meet this need, public diplomacy was invoked and improved.

For many, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War were largely due to Western cultural strategies aimed at the Soviet Union. Yale Richmond, a specialist in intercultural communication who served in the US Foreign Service for 30 years, argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a direct consequence of its exchanges with the West (Richmond, 2003). The exchanges in culture, technology, ideology, lifestyle, education, and information had a profound influence on the Russian people. In a heavily controlled and censored state, free broadcasting was crucial for disseminating information and challenging the Soviet monopoly and communism (Richmond, 2003, p. 184). Moreover, individuals such as Alexander Yakovlev, who spent a year at Columbia

University just before closely collaborating with Mikhail Gorbachev, exemplified this shift towards liberalization and were among the early participants in this exchange strategy (Critchlow, 2004, p. 76).

Apart from broadcasting activities, the US also invested in exchange programs. The International Cooperation Administration and the International Educational Exchange Service of the US spent \$136 million on training and exchange programs, only in 1956 (Bu, 1999, p. 405). However, for those who could not travel outside of the Soviet Union, other forms of public diplomacy, such as music, became effective. During the Cold War, the US encouraged its musicians to go abroad to introduce American music styles and, ultimately, the American lifestyle. American music had its fans in the Soviet Union, even among high-ranking officials like Mikhail Gorbachev, who personally met John Lennon's wife (Richmond, 2003, p. 205).

"Music is a world within itself, with a language we all understand," as Stevie Wonder said in his 1976 song, "Sir Duke." This aspect was proven correct during the Cold War. Rock music was influential on the Soviet people because it provided them with a free space to express their thoughts, far removed from Stalinist ideas (Richmond, 2003, p. 205). For some, rock music was even seen as a reason for the fall of communism (Serge Levin cited in Richmond, 2003). Rock singers and bands such as The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, and U2 had a significant influence on spreading US culture and values through their concerts and albums.

Apart from music and exchange programs, another important aspect of public diplomacy that the Cold War advanced was sports diplomacy. Even before the start of the Cold War, sports began to play a role in international relations. For instance, in 1945, Dynamo Moscow became the first Soviet football club to visit and play against an English side, Chelsea ("Digital Archive, Wilson Center" n.d.). Before kick-off, Russian football players presented a bouquet of flowers to their rivals as a gesture of goodwill. This friendly match ended 3-3, providing Soviet players an opportunity to showcase their nation to the 'Motherland of Football. The Cold War transformed the use of sports in international relations, whether for propaganda purposes or as part of public diplomacy strategies.

The Olympics were a great opportunity to show nations' strengths. In 1952, the USSR participated in the Olympics for the first time since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution,

alongside Japan and Germany. The Olympics became a platform during the Cold War for showcasing the greatness of state ideologies. Despite its isolation from international events, the Soviet Union joined the United Nations and participated in international sports federations to display Soviet athletes' capabilities. The Olympics held great importance in Asia, particularly as the People's Republic of China (PRC) sought to demonstrate the success of the communist bloc in sports.

In a nutshell, the Cold War became a battleground for ideologies to compete with each other, while using different channels including culture, cinema, art, sports and music. Since the idea of nuclear war emerged as a hazardous concept, states leaned into different and newer ways to influence other actors. This threat helped public diplomacy evolve into what it is today or at least paved the way towards it. What came after the end of the Cold War, with new threats emerging such as the rise of terrorism, changed the concept once more, and public diplomacy became known as 'the new public diplomacy.'

#### **1.4.4 THE NEW PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

The attacks on September 11 in 2001 significantly influenced and changed the course of many things, including the public diplomacy. The 9/11 attacks hold a great importance as a watershed moment for public diplomacy, given that the attacks targeted US values such as freedom, democracy, and the identity of being a superpower, rather than being characterized by traditional military warfare. After the attacks, fear grew that the US, considered one of the world's greatest powers, had been attacked on its own soil. In response, President George W. Bush introduced his political discourse known as the 'War on Terror.'

President Bush initiated the war on terror on September 20, 2001, declaring that it would start with al Qaeda and would not finish until all terrorist organizations with global influence had been defeated. After declaring the war, President Bush stated that "The attack took place on American soil, but it was an attack on the heart and soul of the civilized world" on October 11. Soon after the US declared war on Afghanistan, and then on Iraq, claiming that the declaration of war was a 'preventive attack,' a term referring to a military action aimed at eliminating a threat before the enemy can use its capability to cause harm (Ersity, 1993:4). This rhetoric of the war against terror was used by President Bush to convince people that the war was built on just cause claiming that Iraq possessed

chemical weapons, aiming to create a perspective that the US can win the hearts and minds of people (Aydemir, 2022, p. 27). This changed the public diplomacy rhetoric and made the term more prominent in international relations from the beginning.

The declaration of war sparked a great debate about whether it was legal. These US policies towards the Middle East called its credibility into question and damaged its image on the world stage. Therefore, the Bush administration used public diplomacy in its foreign policy to build public support for the US, and the tools of public diplomacy were used for intelligence in the war on terror strategy (Aydemir, 2022, p. 33). However, hard power alone did not succeed in the war on terror in Iraq.

After declaring the war and changing the regime by force in Iraq, it did not bring peace nor stability in the region. The goals of the US were not achieved, leading to a diminished prestige and image of the US, thereby substantiating the importance of soft power once more. Accordingly, 'smart power,' a term introduced by Joseph Nye in 2003 to describe the combination of soft and hard power tools as a strategy to reach goals (Nye, 2009), was brought into question to reach the aims. Consequently, not only did the US but also many other countries began to incorporate public diplomacy into their foreign policies, leading to an increase in its popularity.

The influence of globalization and the emergence of new threats, particularly terrorism, made a shift in public diplomacy essential. The increasing connectivity of the world made this shift mandatory, as new communication technologies made it much easier to stay in touch and new actors emerged in the more integrated international relations landscape. New concepts, such as digital diplomacy, which involves using internet networks, especially social media, for diplomatic purposes, have arisen, highlighting the growing importance of new media tools.

James Pamment (2012) identifies the factors motivating the shift towards public diplomacy as: (1) new actors in international relations; (2) new modes of communication; and (3) a new geopolitical context in the post-9/11 era. The range of new actors that participates in international relations affected countries and their strategies as ways of how and when to communicate with them while how to construct relationships. Rather than following traditional methods, governments updated their policies to be more proactive and multidimensional in order to compete with these new actors

New media tools and the technological advancements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century affected the ways public diplomacy is conducted. Internet and social media made it easier to be in touch and to spread news more quickly and efficiently than before. With this, it is possible to say that the traditional print and media 'push' information to the public, whereas new public diplomacy allows audiences to 'pull' the information they seek (Pamment, 2012, p. n, d).

As the tools and methods of public diplomacy evolved, the concept of nation branding gained importance as an essential part of countries diplomatic strategy. Therefore, nation branding concept has emerged as a powerful mechanism for countries to promote their image and identity internationally, using their culture, history, values, and national strengths to foster positive perceptions.

### **1.5 NATION BRANDING**

Many aspects of the world's mechanism have changed as a result of globalization. Globalization has brought competition in the global market and even among countries. Therefore, one of the aspects of this change was the strategy that was adopted by the countries in the international arena. *Nation branding* is one of these strategies that was adopted by different countries and was used to promote the positive image of their nations. Just like public diplomacy, the concept of nation branding includes several disciplines in it including international relations, public relations, media studies, anthropology, and business administration. For this reason, it is important to define the concept with the correct terminology.

In this chapter, the concept of nation branding is analysed in detailed. The concepts of “nation” and “brands” is evaluated to clarify the definition of “nation branding” afterwards. Next, a brief history of nation branding is explored to how the concept has evolved in time, adapting to the changes, and conforming to the dynamics of the international context. The chapter will conclude the notable examples of nation branding, including the successful initiatives by countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan and the US. These examples will demonstrate how different nations have used their cultures to enhance their images globally.

### **1.5.1 THE CONCEPT OF “NATION”**

In attempt to fully grasp what nation branding is, it would be helpful to break down the concepts within it, namely 'nation' and 'branding'. Historically, the concepts 'nation', 'state' and 'nation-state' have been confused with each other continuously and occasionally used interchangeably. However, the difference between them should be elucidated in order not to overlook the terms that generate nation branding.

The concept of 'Nation' stems from the Latin word 'Natio', which refers to a social group established on a community of birth or ethnicity (Rejai & Enloe, 1969, p. 141). Over time, especially with the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the scope of it has widened and started to embody culture, language, history and physical territory as well as customs and even laws. Contemporarily, it is possible to define a nation as “a group of people that are bound by common features such as language, culture and history who feel solidarity and collective unity”.

In comparison, state refers to a political context rather than sociological or cultural meaning. A state is a legitimate and sovereign political entity with formal institutions of government that include laws, permanent physical territory and has relationships with other states in the international arena. A state can consist of multiple nations or represent a single nation as well. A nation does not have to be represented by a state, nor does a state have to exist with a nation in itself. Considering this, when a state consists of a single nation, it is called a nation-state.

### **1.5.2 THE CONCEPTS OF “BRAND” AND "BRANDING”**

The origin of the word brand comes from the old Norse word “brandr” which meant “to burn” and refers to the practice of branding livestock to help farmers claim their properties (Viktorin et al., 2018, p. 3). In ancient Greece and Mesopotamia, people used to mark their goods such as their wines, to identify their unique features (Sarkar & Singh, 2005). Likewise, Ancient Egyptians used hieroglyphics to stamp their markings on their jewellery and structures as well.

History demonstrates that the purpose of branding has not changed in terms of claiming property. Building on this, the concept of brand in modern times can be described as the entirety of the aspects that define the unique features of a product or service. The most

common definition of a brand is provided by the American Marketing Association (American Marketing Association, n.d.) as follows: any distinguishing feature, such as a name, word, design, or symbol, or a combination of these that differentiates goods or services.

The definition of a brand for Philip Kotler (2002), reveals that there are two points about a brand which are the symbolic representation of an offer and secondly, this representation is being the mandatory since the brands are always in competition in the business field. For Simon Anholt (2023, p. 219), a brand refers to three different meanings: (1) a designed identity of a product with the physical features; (2) the culture and the value behind the products; and (3) the reputation of the product in the consumers.

Today, brands offer more than just unique features for consumers. They also represent a lifestyle and the freedom of choosing as well as the opportunity to belong to an idea. Brands reflect their consumers' minds and beliefs while mirroring their feelings at the same time. This creates an opportunity to connect with and internalize the products or services.

Branding, on the other hand, can be defined as the process of promoting a certain representation for demonstrating a positive promotion and distinctiveness. Philip Kotler (2001, p. 188) draws attention to six levels of brand meaning, namely: attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality, and the user. Following this, he adds up the concept that Aaker (1991) built upon, brand equity which represents the value of a brand. The value which a brand has can be understood by looking at the quality, and its assets such as patents, the relationships and the trademarks with its associations.

In the 21st century, particularly due to the globalization process and rapid advancements in global web technology, brands have become increasingly important. Branding now presents both a challenge and an opportunity, making it more difficult to maintain stable value. Therefore, the branding process has now become more complex and is characterized by numerous subfields.

### **1.5.3 DEFINITIONS OF NATION BRANDING**

When it comes to defining nation branding as a concept, there is disagreement and uncertainty about its nature and scope in the literature since it is a multidisciplinary

concept. Correspondingly, given that the concept of nation branding is comparatively new, the definitions vary at the same time. Accordingly, for Keith Dinnie (cited in Krenn, 2018, p. 150), there are two views about the definition of nation branding: (1) the definitions that focus the brand and, (2) the deeper definitions that focus more than just the visual aspects. Therefore, moving from here, there is more than one definition of the concept without consensus.

The concept nation branding was first used at the start of the 21st century. It derives from the studies of the country-of-origin studies. For Gertner and Kotler (2002), the label of a product can change the perception of the consumers as well as identifying the effects of the origin country on the consumers' minds. Simon Anholt, who is the first one who used the term "nation brand", advocated that nations can also be branded and marketed in the international arena like products. For him, the reputations of the countries, places or regions influence the effect they have.

Keith Dinnie (2008, p. 15) describes nation brand as the *"unique, multi-dimensional combination of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences."* He also illustrates the differences between a national brand and nation brand by stating that a national brand is a unique brand that comes from a specific region or country that differentiates itself from the others.

The brand of a nation is the appearance of the nation in the eyes of non-domestic people. Moreover, not only tourists but also foreign investors, entrepreneurs and different enterprises from various sectors can be drawn into a country depending on the attraction and the perception that country has.

Another important scholar who has important research on nation branding is Wolff Olins. He argues that even though brands are traditionally associated with products, branding is applicable to every area of mass communication, political leaders, destinations, and so on. There is another aspect of nation brand, according to him, about the vulnerability and dangerousness of nation brand since it can distort the true nature of a country.

For Nadia Kaneva (2011), branding a nation encompasses a wide range of actions, including the establishment of governmental and quasi-governmental agencies to coordinate efforts as part of national policy, which is inextricably linked to economic

development. Therefore, nation branding not only deals with cultural and national identity but also acts as an economic instrument. It attempts to boost a country's international visibility while attracting investments, broaden its range of political influence, and accelerate nation-building (Viktorin et al., 2018, p. 2).

#### **1.5.4 A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATION BRANDING**

Even though the concept of 'nation branding' relatively started to be explored academically, its roots go back in time. Even in medieval times, the branding of places, peoples and art was used to get recognition in general. In Medieval Europe, some places were used as a Center for religious purposes to attract people. For instance, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Sainte-Dévote Chapel in Monaco attracted pilgrims for religious purposes (Sadigova, 2014, p. 80). In a similar manner, the Austrian chocolate Mozart Kugel was named after Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, a famous composer born in Salzburg, Austria. In this case, Mozart appears as a branding icon to enable tourists to correlate him with the city first, then the country (Ermann & Hermanik, 2018, p. 1).

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century, similar strategies were used by countries with the name of "country of origin." In his book *Made in Germany*, Ernest Williams highlighted the significance of the origin label in influencing a customer's purchasing decision in 1896. The effect of country of origin refers to the impact of a product's label country on the customers' choices. It is a phenomenon for differentiating the countries by looking at the production place of certain goods. For instance, one of the best examples can be identified as Germany, since German-made products (particularly cars in this context) are perceived to be durable and of high-quality by customers. Similarly, France is known for producing the best wines, and Switzerland is well-known for luxurious watches. However, the effects of country of origin are not necessarily required to be positive. For example, people often perceive Chinese items as low-quality and relate them to materials that are inexpensive.

In 1947, Arthur Lisowsky defended that the principles of branding can also be applied to tourism advertising as well (cited in Viktorin et al., 2018, p. 7). During the 1960s there were some studies about the effects of the country of origin. However, the breakthrough of the term came with the United Kingdom and its strategy of Cool Britannia in starting with the end of 1980s.

Philip Kotler and his associates Donald H. Haider and Irving J. Rein suggested in 1993 that nations or regions may apply the same brand management methods. Later, Simon Anholt coined the phrase "nation branding" in a contemporary sense for the first time in 1996. He stated that in the context of development for prosperity, nation branding was important and just as the brand images of companies and products. Over time, he preferred the term "competitive identity" (CI) over nation branding. Competitive Identity is a concept that synthesises brand management and public diplomacy with various different promotion strategies such as tourism and trade, to improve national competitiveness in a global scale and showing positive results regardless of their wealth (Anholt, 2007, p. 3).

### **1.5.5 NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF NATION BRANDING**

Cool Britannia was the result of a collaboration among officials to rebrand the United Kingdom. Margaret Thatcher's privatization encouraged the development of branding in the following manners: (1) her administration's neoliberal policy created new kinds of competition, and (2) Thatcher used branding with public diplomacy to better political communication methods (Viktorin et al., 2018, p. 7-9). Tony Blair played an unquestionable part on the road towards the Cool Britannia. After he got elected as the leader of the Labour Party in 1994 and then Prime Minister of the UK in 1997, his policy was to rebrand the UK with the manifest of "New Labour, New Life for Britain".

The purpose of this policy was to create a new industry and bolster the image of the UK in the first place. The party was renamed as the New Labour, and they collaborated with specialists to develop new communication methods. The goal was to create a new British image utilizing music, media, and art. In a way that aligns with this thought, the slogan that was used for Cool Britannia was coined by a surrealist rock group the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, with the lyrics "*Cool Britannia, Britannia you are cool, take a trip, Britains ever ever ever shall be hip*".

Noel Gallagher, the lead singer of the British group Oasis, stated that Britpop and Cool Britannia were really entangled that they were almost the same thing. He met Tony Blair in 1997 during the 'Cool Britannia' Party. After the party, he had statements about this policy was a preview of the modern world and the UK's part in it. For Tony Blair, Rock and Roll was not only a part of British culture, but a part of a lifestyle. He wanted to use

this strategy with the popular bands from that time such as U2, The Smiths, Oasis and the Spice Girls. The policy also received recognition by foreign magazines. In 1997, an American magazine of pop culture, *Vanity Fair*, published a special edition on Cool Britannia with Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit on the cover. However, this policy was not limited by the music.

The princess of Wales, Lady Diana, was seen as the symbol of modern Britain. Her image was intended to be used to rebrand the British monarchy by the Labour Party. Even though she did not publicly identify herself as a part of the Cool Britannia movement, her image was gaining popularity abroad with the idea of British modernity. Likewise, sports were also used for this campaign. In 1996, two comedians, David Baddiel and Frank Skinner, recorded a song called "Three Lions" to be used for the European Championship which took place in England. The lyrics included a sentence, "Football's coming home." The aim was to create a '*Britishness*' and to brand the nation as whole by linking football and music together while referring to winning and taking the ownership of the game in the first place (Dubinsky, 2023, p. 137).

Even though Cool Britannia was not the first attempt or the best example of nation branding, it is an important one. Britain's efforts draw attention to nation branding and the conceptualization of the concept accelerated (Viktorin et al., 2018, p. 8). Therefore, it is marked as a cornerstone of the conceptualization process of nation branding.

An important milestone of nation branding came after 9/11 attacks. Following the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration started to investigate why there was an increase in anti-American sentiment. Charlotte Beers, the CEO of Ogilvy & Mather, a British marketing agency, was appointed Vice President. The primary motivation was to improve the image of the United States, particularly in the eyes of Muslim countries. Regarding this matter, foreign minister Colin Powell indicated that their objective was to rebrand the United States with the help of those who understand how to promote an image. However, this attempt was not successful. In 2003, the campaign was abandoned while Charlotte Beers resigned.

The German "Du bist Deutschland" campaign from 2005, which translates to English as "You are Germany," is a relatively contemporary example. The objective of the initiative was to build a stronger sense of national identity and a positive image of Germany. In this

regard, some of the influential and famous people were used such as Albert Einstein, Ludwig van Beethoven and Wolfgang von Goethe. Again, like Cool Britannia, football was also used with 2006 World Cup which was held in Germany.

The US made another attempt at branding in 2011 with the creation of Brand USA. This initiative's primary objectives were to increase the number of tourists by promoting destinations and bolster the US economy through tourism. It was created after the Travel Promotion Act passed in 2009 with Barack Obama's initiative. According to the studies by Oxford Economics, Brand USA generated 8.7 million visitors and \$28.8 billion in incremental spend since it was established (Brand USA, n.d).

Cool Japan initiative shows that how a country can use its culture and uniqueness to build a global identity. In 2002, with the Gross National Cool idea, Japan sought to improve its public diplomacy while using its rich historical culture and popular culture tools such as manga, anime, films and music. In order to expand its influence in the region and promote Japanese values and culture, programs that offer student exchange scholarships were launched such as the Asia Kakehashi Project by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo (Aruni et al., 2022, p. 1588).

These different examples of nation branding demonstrate how countries have strategically shaped their identities through their unique culture, media tools with their diplomatic initiatives. In addition to these examples, one of the most successful ones is Korea, whose public diplomacy strategies have been crafted in time to enhance its global image. In the next chapter, the development of Korea's public diplomacy is analysed in depth within a historical perspective.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: AN EXPLORATION OF HISTORY AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

After a theoretical analysis of the concepts of Soft Power and Public Diplomacy, it is important to examine South Korea. The Republic of Korea, (hereinafter South Korea / Korea), is without a doubt, one of the most exemplary cases of successful public diplomacy applications in the twenty-first century. The country has exhibited a significant development in terms of soft power and the practice of it which started to dominate the country's public diplomacy in recent years. It can be stated that it has greater success than other countries who have engaged in public diplomacy even for a longer period. By examining South Korea, it may be possible to understand the reasons behind their success and determine whether there are points that can serve as examples for implementing these policies.

In this part of the thesis, an in-depth investigation of South Korea's Public Diplomacy history is conducted, which is partitioned into multiple distinct periods. This examination begins with the exploration of the history of the Korea to illustrate the turning points and cultural influence that transformed Korea into its contemporary state. After giving the historical summary, the analysis of the earliest-known instances of South Korea's Public Diplomacy efforts from the country's establishment after the Korean War is researched to the more recent history of this topic. It explores the ways that South Korea's Public Diplomacy has evolved over time, as well as the successes and failures that have occurred within these various periods. Additionally, the examination will explore the impact of South Korea's Public Diplomacy efforts on its international relations, its economic development, and its cultural influence in the world.

With examining South Korea's history of Public Diplomacy, the cultural policy implementations of the country are studied in the next sub-chapter. After examining South Korea's history of Public Diplomacy in detail, including its successes and failures, the next sub-chapter dives into a comprehensive analysis of the cultural policy implementations of the country. This analysis will consider various aspects of the cultural policies, including their origins, goals, and impact on the country's socio-economic development. Additionally, it will examine the ways in which these policies have evolved over time and how they have been received by different segments of society. By providing

a thorough examination of South Korea's cultural policies, this sub-chapter aims to shed light on the country's unique approach to public diplomacy and how it has helped to shape its international image and standing in the world today.

## **2.1 KOREA'S HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND MODERN TRANSFORMATIONS: BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTEMPORARY SOUTH KOREA**

Korea, “the land of the morning calm”, has a unique culture that blends historical heritage with modern innovation. The rich and extensive history of Korea continues to influence daily life, politics, traditions, and lifestyles. This historical influence is embedded in public diplomacy practices and soft power tools and is also reflected by them. Therefore, it is highly important to analyse the history of Korea to understand the importance of culture and history in the country’s developmental process and culture’s impact on this process.

Even though Korea was divided into two in 1945, the land has a recorded history of 2000 years. Since 2333 BCE, many proto-states have developed in the area that includes the Korean Peninsula and Northeastern China. However, the earliest date for a political entity that located in the peninsula is Joseon, in 109 BCE.

“The Land of the Morning Calm” comes from the early recorded name Chaoxian (in Korean: Chosŏn), which includes two Chinese characters: “chao (meaning dawn or morning)” and “xian (meaning fresh or calm)” (Seth, 2010, p. 16-17). According to the legend, the first Korean country, Gojoseon, was founded in 2333 BCE by Dangun. According to the Legend of Dangun, the first prince of land who grew up to establish his own kingdom (Gojoseon), was born from a bear that turned to a human.

Based on the legend, *Hwanung* the son of the ruler of heavens *Hwanin*, asked his father’s permission to rule the earth. After descending to earth, Hwanung brought 3000 of his followers to earth. Later, a bear and a tiger prayed to Hwanung to become humans, which followed by the Hwanung’s promise of whoever avoids sunlight for 100 days with only having garlic and mugwort, will eventually become a human. Ultimately, *Ungnyeo* (The bear woman) becomes a human, and prays for a son to Hwanung. Hwanung replies to her prayers by turning himself to a human and soon they gave birth to the first human prince

of land, Dangun. Today, Koreans still celebrate Gaecheonjeol (the National Foundation Day) the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, the establishment of the first Korean country Gojoseon.

It is said that the Joseon was defeated by the Chinese emperor Han Wudi during 109-108 BCE and for the next four centuries, the Korean Peninsula was ruled by the Chinese Empire (Seth, 2010, p. 18). After the fall of Han Dynasty, the successor tribal states that located in the area consolidated into three kingdoms that are known as Goguryeo (dated from 37 BCE to 668 CE), Silla (dated from 57 BCE to 935 CE) and Baekje (dated from 18 BCE to 660 CE). This period is named as the Three Kingdoms period which was lasted until 668.

Apart from these three kingdoms, there were a fourth confederation of states in the area named Kaya (dated from 42 to 562 CE), which was eventually assimilated by Silla and Baekje in the sixth century (McBride II, 2024, p. 20). These states had characteristics akin to modern statehood, such as a centralized the military, an organized training system centered around the military and academy, a strong constitutional monarchy supported by a powerful aristocracy, and a sophisticated and rich culture (Pardo, 2022, p. Prologue). Each kingdom had its own legends and myths. For instance, the tale of Dongmyeong is to be believed as the foundation myth of the Goguryeo state. According to this myth, Ch'umo who was a legendary archer is the founding figure of the Goguryeo. His name appears in the famous records of Samguk Sagi and Samguk Yusa which is known as the historical records of Korean history. Similarly, the founding tale of Baekje comes from Goguryeo as the founding figure of Baekje, King Onjo, is the son of Ch'umo (McBride II, 2024, p. 33). However, Silla's founding myth is distinctively different. According to Samguk Sagi, the Silla's founding figure was discovered by a village chief, Lord Sobeol. He discovers a large egg at the foot of Mount Yang and when the egg splits open a boy named *Hyeokgeose* appears. Later, he ascends to the throne in 57 BCE when he was 13 years old.

Silla joined forces with China's Tang dynasty in the seventh century, defeating Baekje in 660 and Goguryeo in 668 to emerge victorious in the three kingdom wars (Pardo, 2022). Even though Buddhism was common in Korean states before the Silla's rule, the unification and the close relationship with Tang Dynasty hastened the spread of Buddhism and its influence over the peninsula. Silla also had the Bone Rank System

(Kolpum) to detect a person's political rank and social status. Based on the Bone Rank System, a person's status is based on the hereditary bloodline which is impossible change. Silla was also famous for its *Hwarang*, which can be translated to English as The Flower Boys. The Flower Knights of Silla was an elite organization who were trained in martial arts and educated the younger generations in art, philosophy and religion. They were the aristocratic military elite who were linked to Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Korean shamanism (Lazore, 2014). The younger generations would become the state leaders after their education was done and the prime age for hwarang teaching was fifteen to eighteen (McBride II, 2024, p. 117). Their prominence is evident, both in the history and in contemporary Korea to the extent that a television series has even produced in 2016 about *Hwarang*, with famous Korean singers and actors.

The period starts with Silla's domination is usually referred as the 'Unified Silla' or 'Greater Silla' Period. Today, it is also called 'Northern and Southern States Period' as well. Beginning with the end of the partnership between Tang Dynasty and Silla after conquering Goguryeo and Baekje, the Unified Silla period lasted until 935. After series of wars between the two sides, in 676 Silla forces became victorious and the Tang withdrew from the Korean Peninsula.

Silla held much of present Korean territory, but not the entire peninsula. At the end of the seventh century, another kingdom named Parhae formed and controlled the majority of the previous Goguryeo (Seth, 2019, p. 53). Even though there has been debate over whether Parhae should be considered a part of Korean or Chinese history (Sloane, 2014, p. 3), it is important to acknowledge the diversity of kingdoms in the Korean Peninsula during the timeframe in question.

At the start of the eighth century, Silla's reign began to wane in power. The conflicts between the aristocracy and peasants along with the new threats such as rebellions, weakened the authority of the state. The Latter Three Kingdom period started and in 918, a new kingdom, Goryeo was founded by Wang Geon. The emergence of the Goryeo Dynasty brought about unification and stability, and the Wang Dynasty ruled the Korean Peninsula for five centuries. During this era, two of the most important documents *Samguk Sagi* and *Samguk Yusa* were written by Kim Pu-Sik. These writings shed light on the past and continue to serve as sources for researchers to reference.

Wang Geon, King T'aejo, considered Goryeo as a successor of Goguryeo and sought to extend its boundaries to the north, to the Chongchon River, around Pyongyang (Kim, 2012, p. 122). One of the biggest aims of Wang Geon was to adapt Chinese institutional system with Korean adjustments (Kim, 2005, p. 55). Wang Geon was also the first Korean king to adopt Buddhist art, having ordered the construction of 10 Buddhist monasteries in the capital city of Goryeo. Under Wang Geon's reign throughout the Goryeo period, Korea also became increasingly "Korean," distinguishing itself apart from Chinese identity.

Goryeo's long-lasting disputes with the northern nomadic Khitans ultimately led to their collapse. Khitans invaded Goryeo in 1216 before the Mongol invasion started. Mongolian invasion of Korea actually started around 1231, after defeating the Mongol enemy Khitans in Goryeo. The resistance of Goryeo against the Mongol invasion continued for a long time, until around 1270. Even though Mongols did not directly occupied Goryeo, they were controlled by Mongolia to the extent that royal marriages were being arranged between these two states and Goryeo was even mentioned as the step child of Mongolia (Halcombe, 2016, p. 178).

After decline in power of Mongols and the overthrow of Goryeo ruling order in 1388, a new dynasty was established in 1392, called the Joseon (hereinafter referred to as Joseon or Chosŏn) Dynasty. The Joseon Dynasty is Korea's last and longest imperial dynasty that lasted until 1910. This change of dynasties was more than just the transfer of the governance but an important attempt to build a society based on Neo-Confucian values while evaluating a more distinct Korean culture (Seth, 2011, p. 127).

Yi Song-Gye, the founder of Joseon, was the first monarch of the Yin dynasty. He established a new government, often called "Dynastic Foundation Merit Subjects" (Seth, 2011, p. 127) to rule Korea with Neo-Confucian ideals. During this time, the capital city was moved to Hangyang which is now the current capital city of Korea, Seoul. In this period, the country's physical borders were established as they are today, society became more unified, and Korean culture was consolidated into a single identity.

The fourth king of Joseon, King Sejong, is still regarded as the greatest monarch of Korean people and his reign is often called as the 'Golden Age of Korea'. He was born in 1397 and ruled from 1419 to 1450. He was a scholar and a researcher who gave a high importance on education and scholarships. He prioritized the research on medicine,

pharmacology, agronomy and calendrical science (Reich, 2010, p. 84). However, the development of the Korean alphabet Hangeul is often regarded as his most noteworthy contribution.

In 1420, King Sejong the Great founded a royal research institute called Jiphyeonjeon (Hall of Worthies) to discuss policies with young scholars and officials (Kim, 2005, p. 74). Later, this institute together with the King Sejong himself, created the alphabet of Hangeul in order for common people to read and write just as the upper-class people who were conversant in Chinese characters. During that period, only the elite classes were fluent in Asia's lingua franca, Chinese and adapted Korean written in Chinese character (Reich, 2010, p. 85).

The original name for the alphabet was *hunminjongum*, which translates to English as "teaching people the correct sounds" (Reich, 2010, p. 85). Hangeul, unlike Chinese and Japanese, is not a syllabary. It consists of 24 characters (10 vowels and 14 consonants) that may be merged in a variety of ways. King Sejong's efforts were crucial in encouraging Koreans to adopt and utilize Korean Hangeul. He encouraged the scholars to compose poems in Hangeul and translate substantial works such as Buddha's biography, agricultural and sericultural works. Hangeul is now recognized as one of the world's leading phonetic alphabets and is included in "UNESCO's Memory of the World" (Kim, 2012, p. 189).

After King Sejong died at the age of 47, his oldest son, Munjong (1452-1455), succeeded to the throne but lived for only two more years. Following this, the throne was inherited by King Munjong's son, Tanjong, at the age of 12. However, he did not remain long, as his uncle, King Sejo, imprisoned Tanjong under the guise of being advised by evil counsellors and eventually poisoned him to death (Reich, 2010, p. 88). This episode marked the beginning of the period of King Sejo, the Usurper.

King Sejo, formerly known as Prince Suyang, ascended to the throne by executing his political enemies, including his own siblings and his nephew, King Tanjong. Some believed that his succession was not legitimate, and it violated the Neo-Confucian idea of the rule of right. Six Martyred Ministers were among those killed by King Sejo for allegedly plotting to assassinate him. The six ministers hold a significant place in Korean history; in such, a Korean drama (*Six Martyred Ministers*, 2007) consisting of 24 episodes was created in 2007 that focuses on this incident.

Despite King Sejo's brutal reputation, his administration and management were rather seen as successful. He started codifying the legislation into the State Code, known as *Kyöngguk taejŏn*, which was completed under the reign of his grandson (Kim, 2005, p. 77). He changed the land ordinance to bolster the national economy and promoted technical advancements by increasing publications on history, agriculture, and economics. He also made a cultural contribution by transforming Chinese court music into Korean Jongmyo (also known as Royal Shrine in English). King Sejong's desire to play Korean music for royal ancestors was accomplished by his son, King Sejo, who changed the ceremonial music that was composed by his father (KBS World, 2024). Today, this composition is on "the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" and continues to be used in Korean historical dramas.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century Korea was based on continuity and balance with progress and prosperity. During that time frame, Korea developed a philosophically orthodox culture driven by the rise of Neo-Confucianism and prominent intellectuals Yi Hwang and Yi I (Reich, 2010, p. 93). Yi Hwang (also known as Toegye) is regarded as the most prominent philosopher, and his portrait can be found on the most widely used 1000 Won Korean banknote. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he pioneered the orthodox Neo-Confucianism tradition in Joseon Korea and inspired scholars in other nations, including Japan (Chung, 2021, p. 3). Yi I (also known by his pen name, Yulgok), on the other hand, although not in complete agreement with Yi Hwang, exchanged letters with him and contributed to the development of Neo-Confucian thought. The image of him is also imprinted on the 5000 Won Korean banknotes, and some Seoul streets still carry his name as a legacy.

Yulgok continuously stressed the possibility of a Japanese attack and in 1592, Japan invaded Korea. Even though Japan's aim was to invade China through using Korea, Korea did not let Japan to use Korean territory. Followingly, the Japanese forces under Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded Korea and the siege (also known as the Imjin War) continued for seven years. Between three and four million Koreans died in the conflict, and the nation suffered terrible destruction to the point that the main palace in Seoul wasn't restored until 1865. After the battle ended, a new problem arose for Koreans: The Qing Manchu Invasions of Joseon. The demand of Qing Dynasty was to sever Korea's relationship with Ming Dynasty in 1627. Following the rejection of their requests, the newly created Qing dynasty invaded Korea in 1636. As a result, Korea became a tributary state under the

Qing Dynasty. However, Joseon Korea never entirely committed to the Qing Dynasty and continued to support the Ming Dynasty, also known as China. These invasions resulted in a change in Koreans' mindset as they strengthened national identity and collective consciousness on the cultural developments in Korea (Man'gap, 2020, p. XII). This particular incident is recognized as an important part of Korea's history, so much so that in 2017, a movie titled *The Fortress* (*Namhansanseong* in Korean) was made, focusing on the Qing invasions of Korea.

Korea's 18th century was marked by a developing sense of national identity and uniqueness of Korean culture (Seth, 2019, p. 201). This period is mostly seen as the golden age of Korean art and literature. The relationships with the countries nearby were peaceful and constructive. Korea sent tribute teams to Qing, and the memoirs of these journeys have persisted to this day such as Hong Tae-yong's *Beijing Record* and Pak Chi-Won's *Jehol Diary*.

*Pansori*, a new type of music resembling opera, also first appeared during this time. This musical genre is presently Korea's most famous traditional music, and it has been declared as a Korean National Intangible Cultural Heritage since 1964, as well as a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity of Korea. *Talchum*, or Korean mask dances, first appeared in this century as well and has become a part of the unchangeable cultural legacy of contemporary Korea.

Nineteenth century for Korea was different from the previous centuries. To begin with, China, Korea's only trading partner at the time, started to open up to trade with the West during this time frame. Meanwhile, Western missionaries introduced Christianity to Korea. As a result, numerous Koreans were converted to Christianity, but the government responded harshly, imprisoning and even executing them. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Korea was undergoing transition beginning in the early nineteenth century. Even though Western forces entered to Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and forced them to have trade and economic relationships, Joseon Korea somehow maintained its isolationist politics in response to threats that are coming from China and Japan until the *General Sherman* incident. In 1866, a US Navy vessel named *General Sherman* arrived at Korea to distribute particular commodities to Koreans, despite the fact that Korean officials notified the ship that it was not permitted and that the visit was illegal in its whole. Despite

Korea's repeated warnings, the ship did not leave the coast and in return the ship was burned and all aboard was lost.

Following the General Sherman incident, French expedition and intervention took place over the Ganghwa Island. This incident is usually known as *Byeongin-yangyo* which translates to English as the Western Disturbance of the Byeongin year. The intervention took approximately six weeks, which resulted with a French retreat. However, the result was not the final result for these western interventions and this French expedition was followed by another American expedition in 1871.

*The Battle of Ganghwa*, which is named after the American intervention in Korea, started with the year 1871. The goal for Americans was to force Korea to sign a treaty, a similar one that they signed with Japan in 1853. Korean forces refused to welcome the Americans peacefully because of their isolationist stances and the memory of their initial encounter with an American ship. Hereby, the Battle of Ganghwa took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, resulted in an American victory. Korea refused to sign a treaty until it was 1882 which remained in force until the annexation of Korea in 1910 by Japan. Consequently, stemming from these interactions with Korea, Western countries frequently used the name of "Hermit Kingdom" when referring to Korea in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

While dealing with outside threats and external problems, the dynasty also had internal problems as well. During this period, several rebellions took place. There were problems such as economic inequality, corruption, increasing in taxes and social injustices. In December 1811, a yangban named Hong Kyong-Hae started and led an uprising in the Northwestern province of Pyongan after he failed his exam for his civil service. Soon, the followers of the rebellion increased in number and attacked in government buildings and controlled the centres (Seth,2010). This rebellion is referred in the history as the Hong Gyeong-rae Rebellion of 1811 that lasted for a year until 1812.

The main reason behind the Hong Gyeong-rae rebellion was the discrimination against the residents in the northern part of the province by the southern elites, especially in the case of civil examinations. The rebellion's manifesto pointed out that the government had abandoned Pyongan Province, and even though it depended on the province's military power, it did not treat its people fairly (Kim, 2007, p. 15). After five months, the government suppressed the uprising, and the remaining rebels were subdued as well in 1817.

Even though the uprising was suppressed, the rebellion served to fuel deeper dissatisfaction and the increase of the number of uprisings. “The Chinju Peasants’ Rebellion of 1862” is considered as one of the most important one among the rebellions that is the legacy of the Hong Gyeong-Rae rebellion. Similar to earlier rebellions, the Chinju Peasants' Rebellion arose from economic and social reasons. The government's taxes proceeded to rise to the amount that peasants were unable to handle. *Gyeollyeom*, a practice that government used to reclaim the lands from the peasants to cover the loss that was caused from public officials (Song, 2002, p. 127). Furthermore, the corruption in the government aggravated the already-existed problems with the peasantry. This rebellion weakened the Joseon dynasty and later led to the Donghak Peasant Revolution of 1894. The year 1894 was a tumultuous year which was marked by several problems and challenges for Korea the rebellions continued, and they ultimately evolved into a component of the forthcoming incidents. The main goal of the Donghak uprising in 1894 was to eradicate injustice and corruption in government while standing up to anti-foreign forces at the same time. This anti-government movement was motivated by religious beliefs, which were supported by opponents of the westernization movement (Hwang, 2021, p. 107). What followed was a war between China and Japan, as well as a series of reforms which was known as the Gabo reforms.

The uprising provided Japan with an opportunity to take military action in Korea. To put an end to the “Donghak Uprisings”, Korea sought help from China and in return encountered with a Japanese respond as well. The result was the first Sino-Japanese war which stemmed up from the competition over the supremacy in Korea. With its successful modernization, Japan emerged as a world power from this war while ensuring the downfall of China. *The Meiji Restoration* that started in Japan during 1868, helped Japan to adapt western ideas and a rapid growth in the industrial reforms which eventually led to the change in power structure in the East Asia. After its victory in the war with China, Japan wielded a greater influence over Korea while using this influence with *the Gabo Reforms*.

*The Gabo Reforms* played an important role in Korea's modernization process and its impact throughout the twentieth century. The Gabo Reforms established to implement 208 reforms in all, including abolishing trade slavery, prohibiting torture, allowing talented students to study abroad, and employing foreign advisors. In addition, the

Chinese calendar was substituted with the Korean calendar, and hirings were to be conducted without regard for social status. The most important impact of the Gabo reforms was the abolition of slavery and bringing Korea closer to modernization.

The era from 1897 to 1910 was a brief period in which the Great Korean Empire (Taehan Cheguk, which is shortened to "Han'guk," the name for South Korea today) coexisted with the foreign powers surrounding it. During this period, the Korean Empire improved and progressed both technologically (transportation and communication) and modernly. In 1900, the first electric streetlights were used and during the fall, the new Seoul-Incheon rail line was introduced and launched for the first time (Robinson, 2007, p. 8). These modernization improvements were usually financed by Japanese and American assistance, marking Korea's enter into imperial world.

While Russia and Japan were at conflict in the region, Korea took advantage of the situation to preserve its independence. Despite Korea's desire to remain neutral, Japanese armies invaded Korea about 1905 by making Korea sign the Eulsa Treaty. The existence of Japanese soldiers in the area was tenfold between 1900 and 1910 (Holcombe, 2016, p. 284). Following the assassination of Ito Hirobumi (the first prime minister of Japan, who was later sent to Korea to rule) by a Korean nationalist, Japan colonized Korea, using this as an excuse along with Korea's debts. The annexation of Korea by Japan was lasted for 35 years until it was 1945.

The Japanese reign was severe and uncompromising especially at the beginning. Until it was 1920, the newspapers that were owned by Koreans were not permitted to publish anything and their public or political meetings were banned. However, after the March First Protest in 1919, which holds a great importance in the history of Korea, there were significant reforms towards Koreans. Now Koreans could publish their newspapers and journals, also the censorship was loosened. However, Korea's colonial state status did not change. Therefore, the demonstrations failed to achieve their primary aim of liberating Korea from Japanese colonial rule and gaining independence.

With the relaxation of the restrictions, the acceleration of art and culture intensified. The domestic film production started in 1919, the first radio started broadcasting in 1927 and most of the Korean newspapers that are still publishing today, such as the Tonga ilbo and Joseon ilbo, was established during this time (Hwang, 2010, p. 177). It is possible to say that modern literature and intellectual works stemmed starting this era with more liberate

Japanese rule (Seth, 2011, p. 272).

This relatively liberal Japanese rule did not continue for a long time. The Japanese rule became harsher and more repressive in time. In order to meet Japan's need for labour in industrial cities, Koreans were voluntarily or forcefully displaced from their residences (Seth, 2011, p. 293). Following their victory in the war against Russia between the years 1904 to 1905, Japan's success facilitated an increased Japanese influence on the Korean Peninsula. Subsequently, in 1905, Japan established a protectorate over Korea, which was later formally annexed as a colony in 1910 (McDougall, 2016, p. 174). Starting with the 1930s, especially after the outbreak of the Second World War, it was mandatory for Koreans to worship to Japanese religion which is known as Shinto. Furthermore, Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names, and the Korean language was forbidden in government offices and the media. Nonetheless, these assimilation politics of Japan could not last long.

In 1937 the Second Sino-Japanese war broke out. Because of the Second World War and the Second Sino-Japanese war, Koreans were forced to fight for the name of Japan regardless of their gender or age. Women were forced to provide sexual services under the name of “comfort women” for the military. The years from 1910 to 1945 are commonly regarded as highly oppressive by Koreans, and this period continues to shape Korean opinion towards Japan (McDougall, 2016, p. 175). When China lost the war against Japan after the Sino-Japanese War, Korean provisional government moved to the Southwestern China and fought under the Allied Forces until the Second World War ended. Japanese forces surrendered in 1945, bringing an end to 35 years of Korean invasion.

## **2.2 CONTEMPORARY SOUTH KOREA: FROM 1948 ONWARDS**

Korea was liberated in 1945 after being under Japanese colonial rule for over 35 years, following the end of World War II. Following the surrender of Japan, the Korean Peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel, with the southern region administered by the United States and the northern region under the rule of the Soviet Union. This division was meant to be temporary at first until it became solidified in 1947 with the establishment of the Republic of Korea in the south and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north. In 1958, the United Nations officially recognized South Korea, and

this marked a crucial milestone in the country's post-colonial history.

On 14<sup>th</sup> November 1947, "The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK)" was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations to hold general elections in the Korean Peninsula and to establish a unified Korean nation that encompasses both the northern and southern regions. However, it was not successful as expected since the USSR'S continuous effort of not letting UNGA to engage with the area. Therefore, the election was only held in the Southern part of the Peninsula while Rhe Seung-man became the first president of the South Korea. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1948, the government of Rhe Seung-man was recognized as the only legitimate regime in the area by the United Nations. This recognition solidified South Korea's status as an independent nation and opened doors to various opportunities, including economic and political partnerships with other countries, as well as access to international aid and resources. Furthermore, it granted South Korea a seat at the international table, giving it a voice in global affairs and allowing it to participate in various international organizations.

There was a different story in the north side over the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. On 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (Hereinafter DPRK or North Korea) was established. The first president of North Korea was Kim Il Sung who fled to the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Despite ideological differences between the two Koreas, many Koreans on both sides of the divide initially believed that the separation would be temporary. However, time proved that this assumption was entirely wrong.

The dawn of the Cold War affected the Korean Peninsula as well. The communist regime established in the North and the U.S.-backed Korea in the South were on the edge. On June 25, 1950, Soviet-backed North Korean soldiers attacked South Korea. North Korea had support from both China and the Soviet Union, while South Korea sought assistance from the U.S. and the United Nations. In three weeks, North Korean soldiers seized Seoul. However, at the end of September, the soldiers were repulsed to the north side of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

The war came to an end in 1953 after years of conflict, though it technically remains unresolved to this day. At the end of the war, more than three million Koreans had lost their lives, which amounted to one in ten Koreans (Holcombe, 2010, p. 342). It is often referred to as the first "hot war" of the Cold War between the US and the USSR, with the involvement of many countries, including China, due to its support for North Korea. The memory of the Korean War continues to hold a significant place in the lives and history of Koreans.

Although democracy was established in Korea in 1948, its real emergence occurred a long time later. Through the implementation of land reforms, the regime of Rhee Seung-Man attempted to structure the economy in a capitalist form. However, the nation was ravaged due to the Japanese invasion and the subsequent Korean War. Only a short period of time passed before the Rhee Seung-Man dictatorship began to exhibit authoritarian behaviours. It is stated that he once shut the doors of the parliament when there was a decision that he did not agree with (Holcombe, 2016, p. 345). Also, Korea was dependent on US help during this period and suffered from governmental corruption. Even in the 1970s, South Korea's circumstances were worse than those of North Korea, and behind South Vietnam and Israel, Korea was the third-most dependent nation on US assistance (Holcombe, 2016, p. 346).

Rhee Seung Man's rule came to an end in 1960 with an uprising and later in 1961, a new period started when the government was overthrown by a military coup. The illegal actions of the government led to the outbreak of the 1960 Uprising, which is sometimes referred to as *the April Revolution*. The uprising started with the high school students in Daegu and subsequently expanded into a large-scale movement. For Koreans, the rebellion was more than merely a movement; it represented the younger generation's

recognition that democratic concepts were not in line with Korean reality, highlighting their crucial demand for a fair system within Korean political heritage (Kleiner, 2001, p.127).

Between 1960 and 1961, Korea witnessed a brief period of democracy until Park Chung-Hee launched a military coup. During his time, Korea experienced a series of economic advancements and industrial improvements and made the first steps toward becoming a "little tiger." The presidential election that took place in 1963 resulted in Park Chung-Hee being elected. Modernizing Korea through economic reforms was his republic's top objective in order to help the country recover from the war and the subsequent authoritarian government. Park Chung-Hee's decision to promote economic aid from Japan sparked popular opposition. This signalled the start of a series of demonstrations against the administration that would take place in the future.

Korea went through a period of turbulence throughout the 1970s. Throughout this period, the economic expansion was fundamentally rooted in export-led industrialization which was deeply connected to the authoritarian regime in power at that time (Hwang, 2021, p. 196). The authoritarian power structure was further cemented in 1972 with the Yushin Constitution, which gave the president broad powers.

The first stage of the New Village Movement (Saemaul Udong Movement) started in this period. The New Village Movement was a community-led movement that aims to initiate a long-term economic development that takes its power from rural areas with the development of agriculture. The, which is a nationwide policy for development, is often seen as the driving force for Korea's rapid economic growth starting with the 1970s. Park stated that this movement should be seen as a spiritual movement which combines traditional and ethic with efficiency and modernism at the Seoul National University (Park, 2010, p. 78).

Uprisings broke out throughout Korea when the democratic system was abolished, and the Yushin Regime was established. As a consequence, the Anti-Yushin Movement began in 1979, sparking the Gwangju Uprisings of 1980, which are still holding a significant part of Korea's history. During the Gwangju protests, almost more than a quarter million people participated in the uprisings who encountered harsh response as many of them were captured, tortured or even executed.

In the aftermath of the Gwangju Uprisings in 1980 and the assassination of Park Chung-Hee in 1979, Chun Doo-Hwan declared the establishment of the Fifth Republic of Korea. Chun Doo-Hwan's primary objective was to improve the economic growth of Korea. In order to do this, he initiated a strategy of economic liberalization and also loosened the links that existed between the government and the chaebols (Pardo, 2022, Chapter 3). By the mid-1980s, the Korean economy had been reshaped and transformed as a result of the beneficial effect of the private sector's increasing competitiveness.

It was also during the 1980s that Korea witnessed a significant social transformation. The middle class was expanding, and the changes that resulted from this expansion were causing changes in all aspects of society. Even though the censorship was not abolished completely, it was loosened. The cinema business started creating new and popular films, while the music industry saw similar transformations (Pardo, 2022, chapter 3). The growing middle class, the liberalization movement, and societal changes led to the year 1987, when the election was held, marking Korea's transition to democracy after a series of uprisings. It is important to note that *the June Uprisings*, also known as *the June Democratic Struggle*, maintains a key position in the political history of Korea since they were successful in overcoming authoritarian violence and played an important part in the establishment of democracy. (Jung, 2021, p. 126).

In spite of the economic difficulties, the upheavals that occurred the year before, and the boycott from North Korea, Korea shared the hosting of the Summer Olympics with Japan in the year 1988. The administration of Roh Tae-Woo was able to effectively organize the Summer Olympics within the first year of his presidency, demonstrating that Korea is capable of hosting large-scaled events. In addition to marking the beginning of the democratic movement in Korea, it was also a chance for Korea to exhibit itself to the rest of the world after being dominated by authoritarian governments for years (Bridges, 2008, p. 1947).

Korea had a period of transition throughout the 1990s, which was characterized by a diverse range of possibilities and difficulties. In 1992, Kim Young-Sam was elected president, becoming the first democratically elected civilian president in 30 years. His last year in office as president coincided with the outbreak of the 1997 Asian Crisis, which dragged the country into the midst of an economic catastrophe.

As a result of Thailand's currency being devalued, foreign investors began to pull their investments out of the Asian region, which was the trigger of the Asian Crisis that began in 1997. The crisis has also had an impact on Korea. Several chaebols declared for bankruptcy, foreign investors withdrew from the country, and Korea had to seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund. For Korean people, the economic crisis was the most catastrophic since the Korean War, and the biggest national embarrassment since the Japanese invasion in 1910 (Coe & Kim, 2001).

The first peaceful transition between the parties in Korea took place in 1998, when Kim Dae-Jung was elected as the president of Korea. In spite of the fact that Korea was still suffering from the consequences of the crisis throughout this time period, the government of Kim Dae-Jung made a number of steps to manage the situation with minimal disruption as possible. As examined in a later chapter, Kim Dae-Jung's reforms significantly impacted both the chaebols and the economic landscape.

In addition to the reforms and efforts in economic growth after the crisis, a significant aspect of the Kim Dae-Jung administration is the Sunshine Policy. The Sunshine Policy was a strategy that South Korea employed towards North Korea which was initiated by Kim Dae-Jung starting with the year 1998. The policy's primary objective was stated as to improve inter-Korean relations by fostering peace, reconciliation, and collaboration based on three key principles: no attempt of takeover, no military provocation, and fostering the expansion of reconciliation and cooperation between the two countries (Paik, 2002, p. 14). Kim Dae-Jung's effort for the Sunshine Policy ultimately brought him the Nobel Prize, making him the first Korean to receive this prize.

The 2000s represents a transformative period for Korea, characterized by both political evolution and societal change. Following the Asian crisis that occurred in 1997, the nation was still dealing with economic issues while also implementing political reforms. Roh Moo-Hyun was elected after Kim Dae-Jung, with a motto of “participatory government” which aimed to increase the citizen engagement and involvement in decision-making processes. Roh’s presidency was followed by Lee Myung-Bak, whose administration primarily focused on economic growth, free trade agreements and greater global engagement.

What sparked controversy was the next president Park Geun-Hye's corruption scandal. As the previous chapters have shown, South Korea's journey to democracy was far from peaceful, marked by numerous protests and incidents. As a result, Koreans developed a strong attachment to their democratic rights, a connection that was clearly demonstrated during Park Geun-Hye's impeachment. The process of impeachment demonstrated that Korean society was committed to their democratic rights, and that they would adopt civil and peaceful methods to protect those rights without applying any kind of violent extremism (Ayhan, 2017, p. 14).

The impeachment was yet another significant turning point for Korea, since it resulted in Moon Jae-In being elected as the next president. His term of presidency was widely described to as the transparent era, during which justice was carried out and efforts were made to reconcile the political tensions created by past scandals. In addition, throughout this time period, Korea prioritized the construction of infrastructure and the acquisition of technology for the benefit of future generations (Korean Cultural Center New York, n.d).

Nevertheless, after Moon Jae-In's term, the election of Yoon Yeok-Sul marked a similar challenge for Korea, as he was impeached as well in 2024 due to the debates around corruption and governance. After declaring martial law, Yoon Yeok-Sul was impeached following protests, as the Korean people, aware of the past consequences of martial law during 1980s, reacted strongly. Following the impeachment of the president, visuals of civilians cheering in the streets appeared on worldwide media, symbolizing Korea's democratic resilience.

During the protests, the use of K-pop songs such as "Fire" by BTS as an anthem for change, resonated deeply with the public, highlighting the strong link between cultural expressions and political movements (Tiwari, 2024). The protests and the whole event emphasized the role of South Korea's vibrant pop culture as a tool of public diplomacy, reinforcing the nation's identity on the world stage and illustrating how cultural elements can amplify political messages globally.

### **2.3 SOUTH KOREA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

Although South Korea was established after the end of the Korean War, the rich and diverse history of Korea dates back centuries before the conflict, encompassing a wide

range of cultural, artistic, and social traditions that have evolved and developed over time. Korea entered the arena of public diplomacy more recently than its competitors, due to the delayed process of its establishment and nation-building period. Despite this, it is still possible to track 'unofficial' public diplomacy activities that predate the country's formal establishment. According to Kwang-jin Choi (2019, p. 5), the first successful modern public diplomacy practice was executed by Dr. In Wang in the fourth century, when he travelled to Japan to teach literature, art, and philosophy by the order of the King of Baekje. His influence was so profound that, in 1937, Japanese citizens honoured him by dedicating a monument to his name in Tokyo, recognizing him as the Korean Confucius. These early instances of public diplomacy laid the foundation for the country's later efforts in this field. As South Korea began its nation-building process, especially with the Rhee Seung-Man period (1948-1960), these past experiences would have an impact on the contemporary public diplomacy strategies that developed in the following decades.

### **2.3.1 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PRACTICES OF SOUTH KOREA DURING THE PROCESS OF NATION BUILDING: RHEE SEUNG-MAN PERIOD (1948-1960)**

In accordance with “the Government Organization Act”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) was created on July 17, 1948, under the Rhee Seung-Man administration following the Republic of Korea's establishment. It was stated that the Ministry's formal responsibilities included overseeing foreign policy, managing external economic policies, protecting Korean people globally, and managing public relations while evaluating international relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, n.d.). The highest priority of the ministry was to establish relations with other countries and seek recognition after the newly establishment of the country as the only legitimate government on the Korean Peninsula. For this purpose, Korea sent delegations to United Nation's General Assembly and following MOFA's founding, foreign missions were established in the US, France, the UK, and other countries. In response, the United Nations approved a resolution on December 12, 1948, recognizing the Republic of Korea as the only legitimate actor on the peninsula.

MOFA included various bureaus, including Policy, Trade, Treaty, Research, and Information. The Information Bureau was in charge of public relations, with three

divisions: propaganda, press, and culture. The cultural division considered subjects of international collaboration and exchange under the umbrella of culture and tourism, whilst the propaganda division was in charge of foreign publicity, information collection, and public opinion on issues such as diplomatic issues (Choi, 2019, p. 9).

In order to maintain the authoritarian political structure and shape public opinion, a number of organizations were established starting with this period, including the Bureau of Public Information in 1948. However, the conflict with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea began in 1950, and the nation and its ministries were entirely preoccupied with war-related matters until the ceasefire in 1953. The Korean War nearly destroyed the cultural legacy of Korea and almost caused the collapse of the Republic of Korea.

After the war, Korea mainly focused on recovering from the war while constructing a national sense of unity and inform international arena about its history and its potential as an independent state (Choi, 2019, p. 8). Thereby, Korean government entered the world scene seeking ways to tell its story to the world. In 1952, Rhee Seung-Man administration passed a law to protect the culture. However, these measures were seen as the updates of existing measures that were coming from Japanese colonial rule (Park, 2010, p. 71).

Between the years 1948-1960, Korea's cultural policies and Public Diplomacy strategy was rather limited and not comprehensive. Since Japan's colonial rule from 1910 to 1945, as well as the Korean War, caused a deterioration in the Korean economy, the first government's priorities were different. To overcome these issues, Korea initially addressed the issue of national identity (Park, 2015, p. 73).

Up until 1959, Korea was limited to establishing nine embassies, eight consulates general, three representatives, and two offices. (Choi, 2019, p. 9). The two departments of Culture and Press were united in 1958 to establish a single Information and Culture Division, which was renamed the Culture Division in 1961. The 'information' arm of the ministry was transferred to the newly founded Ministry of Public Affairs (MPA), which was entrusted with gaining international support and establishing the legitimacy of the new administration.

Korea simultaneously used publications and journals that were centred on Korean culture, cultural exhibitions such as Korea Today, Korean Arts and Korean Survey, with the programs for student and sport exchange in order to obtain financial assistance from other countries to recover in the post-war era (Choi, 2019, p. 10). Additionally, the government funded publications like Korea Times and Pictorial Korea, redistributed them overseas, and gave cultural and historical items to museums (ibid). Student exchange programs were important from the outset, with three students sent to the United States in 1947, and the number rapidly expanded over time. For example, in 1956, the Korean government sent 22 sports delegations abroad, while 146 artists were despatched to Southeast Asia as goodwill art envoys.

Korean government stood with the United States during the Cold War period. Therefore, the US supported Korea in its way towards Public Diplomacy activities, to help spreading anti-communist agenda at the same time. Rhee Seung-Man's administration prioritized mass media initiatives, primarily propaganda against communism. The media was simultaneously employed as a tool for national unity and cohesion as well as nation building.

This period emphasizes the need of utilizing public diplomacy to develop a new identity, both domestically and internationally. The utilization of history and culture is an effective technique for gaining recognition as a newly founded state following a devastating war that divided the country in two. The first republic's inability to prioritize issues related to culture stems from Korea's unstable condition at the time. However, despite having limited resources and recognition due to being a newly established state, Korea's first government fought for establishing a nation identity while promoting Korea as the only legitimate actor in the peninsula.

### **2.3.2 THE PARK CHUNG-HEE ERA (1962-1979): MARTIAL LAW AND “THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE”**

The presidency of Park Chung-Hee from 1962 to 1979 signified an important period in South Korea's history, significantly reshaping the nation's political, economic, and social structure. Following the destruction of the Korean War and a decade of stagnation under the Rhee government, the Park dictatorship implemented a series of ambitious reforms designed to stabilize the state and accelerate industrialization. Therefore, this period holds

a significant importance in Korea's history which is characterized by state-led economic planning, strategic partnerships and a focus on export-driven growth.

#### 2.3.2.1 The Economic Growth Under Park Chung-Hee

The economic transformation of South Korea, which originated in the Park Chung-Hee era, is often referred to as the "Miracle on the Han River." It is considered one of the most remarkable and unique development stories of the 20th century. Before the economic transformation, Korea was highly dependent on foreign aid and struggled to establish a self-sufficient economy. The period of rapid growth in the economy signifies an important turning point in South Korea's history, establishing the foundation for its subsequent application of soft power internationally. Within the context of smart power, as articulated by Joseph Nye, the interaction between hard power's coercion and soft power's attractive characteristics are essential for a nation's capacity to influence and lead effectively. Nonetheless, the effective execution of this strategy necessitates a strong foundation, especially regarding economic strength.

Under Park's leadership, South Korea's industrialization and economic transformation in the 1960s and 1970s established a foundation that allowed the nation to become a significant actor in international relations. The economic progress achieved during this era was crucial for the subsequent soft power initiatives of South Korea. Therefore, this section examines the economic policies and accomplishments of the Park Chung-Hee era, emphasizing their foundational role in South Korea's capacity to utilize soft power within the larger framework of smart power.

In 1960, Korea was classified as one of the world's poorest nations and considered a 'hopeless case' by American policymakers (Pirie, 2007, p. 1). The Park regime's development is frequently referred to as a miracle, as it transformed Korea from an economy based on agriculture to a modern industrial power (Kim, 1991). The economy, which was formerly dependent on agricultural, was intended to be turned into an industrial economy that would include steel, electronics, and technology. At the same time, the export led industrialization started as well. In 1963, the Korean Businessman's Association dispatched a survey team to Japan to investigate industrial export potential and foster Japanese Korean investment in Korean industry, thereby facilitating the establishment of export industrial parks in Seoul for such investments.

Substantial policy reforms, including the unification of the exchange rate in 1961 and the implementation of reduced tariffs for exporters, established a free-trade structure by 1967 (Westphal, 1978, p. 350-351). The government implemented more reforms, devalued the currency, simplified trade regulations, and prioritized export-oriented companies in accessing raw resources and infrastructure. In 1970, the Park administration implemented an economic growth strategy known as Heavy-Chemical Industrialization (HCI). This initiative was designed to speed up the growth of heavy sectors including steel, petrochemicals, machinery, and electronics, which were considered necessary for the economy to advance in the long run. The chaebols were the primary actor for this initiative to become the main force behind the industrialization policy. Accordingly, the regime supplied beneficial credit terms such as low-interest loans and tax advantages. The objective was to turn Korea into a leading industrial economy by consolidating financial power to these corporations and for these firms to compete globally in heavy industries by achieving self-sufficiency.

According to Vivek Chibber (1999), who discusses the developmental state in his research, this change was not only the consequence of the state having power over the capitalist class. It was also “the outcome of a special partnership between the state and businesses”. Korea's export-led industrialization (ELI) policy has been significantly helped by the increasing connections between Korean and Japanese companies. These connections gave Korean companies access to technology, markets, and resources that they would not have been able to obtain otherwise.

Chibber challenges the view that the Korean government imposed its policies on businesses. Rather, he claims that the transition to export-led industrialization (ELI) was facilitated by collaboration, as Korean companies demonstrated a distinct tendency to adopt this approach as a result of the opportunities generated by Japanese partnerships and access to international markets. The economic accomplishments that were made during this period served as the foundation for South Korea's subsequent soft power initiatives. South Korea established an adequate financial and industrial foundation through this export-oriented growth model, which paved the way for its global influence and nation-branding initiatives.

### 2.3.2.2 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGIES UNDER PARK CHUNG-HEE ERA

Park Chung-Hee's military coup in 1961 marked the beginning of Korea's cultural policy. Park Chung-Hee's past included military service in Manchuria during World War II under the Japanese Army. Therefore, he was familiar with Japanese traditions and had strong connections from Japan. The Park Chung-Hee administration began to employ the ideals and institutions of Japan's cultural policy in 1965 to expand Korean culture and to mobilize national subjects with pride in South Korean products, following the normalization of relations between the Republic of Korea and Japan (Park, 2010, p. 70).

Park Chung-Hee administration sought to enforce his legitimacy first and took measures towards this direction. In 1961, the regime established the Ministry of Public Information, which regulated cinema and other forms of performance arts, as well as the National Theatre and National Classical Music Institute. The objective was to systematise and centralise cultural policy in order to strengthen Korean national identity and reinforce the regime's political authority (Park, 2016, p. 74). Additionally, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) was formed in 1961, followed by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 1962 to manage royal assets such as national treasures, historical remains, scenic locations, and natural monuments (Myungseok, 2017, p. 108).

The regime additionally sought to increase anti-communist sentiment in Korea. Following Park Chung-Hee's election in May 1967, conservatism towards North Korea progressively increased. South Korea's attempt to normalize relations with Japan also stemmed from this threat from North Korea since having good relations with Japan and the Western sphere meant that increased support both economically and politically for Korea.

In 1971, the third administration of Korea, led by Park Chung-Hee, indicated its plan to modernize Korea under the name "Cultural Korea" (Munhwa Han'guk) and established the first Five-Year Plan for regenerating Korea's Culture and Arts from 1974 to 1978 (Park, 2010, p. 74). The aimed objectives were to the promotion of national studies of Korea, the adoption of Korean culture by the people and introduction of this culture to the international arena. During this time, 48.5 billion won was spent on the initiative to promote Korean culture, with the government providing 78.4% of the funds directly (Park, 2010, p. 74).

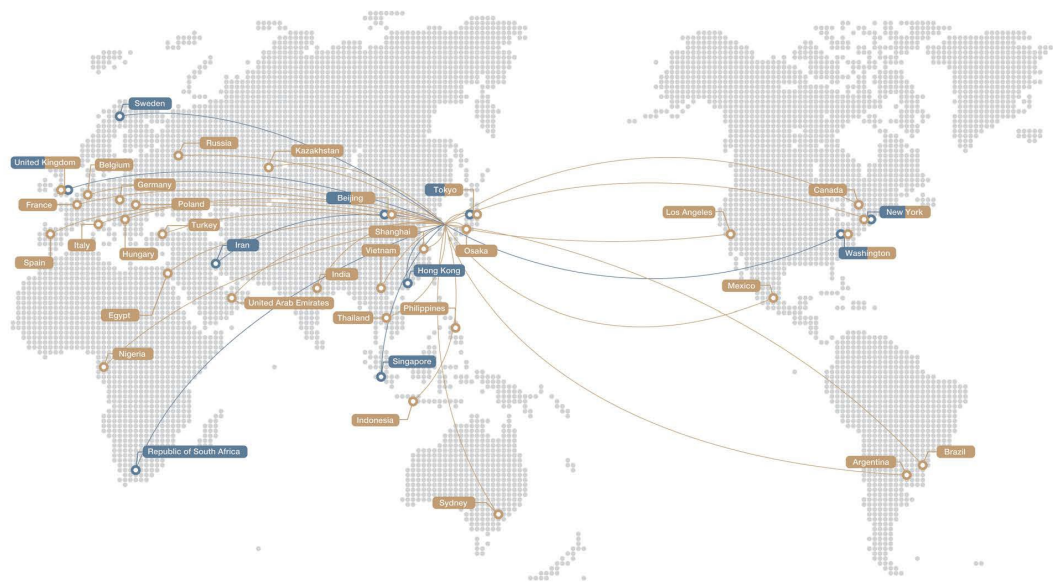
During this period, historical landmarks which were damaged by past conflicts started to be reconstructed, and historical figures such as King Sejong started appearing as a national emblem, even in institution names. Accordingly, the Law for the Protection of National Treasures and Charter of National Education were renewed under the Park Administration.

In 1972, October was officially recognized as the month dedicated to culture, with the 20th of October 1973 marked as the day of cultural significance (Park, 2010, p. 76). Presently, the last Wednesday of each month is celebrated as the culture day in Korea during which four royal palaces—Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, Changgyeonggung, and Deoksugung—along with Jongmyo Shrine and the Royal Tombs, provide complimentary access to the public.

The Korean Culture and Art Foundation was founded (hereafter KCAF) in 1973 and continued to operate until its name was changed as Art Council Korea in 2005. The council is governed by the council members who are appointed by MOFA to improve artistic activities, strengthening strategic collaboration with organizations internationally, and connecting tourists with art programs in Korea.

With the New Village Movement, the well-being of Korean people was aimed to be strengthened, including physical power. Regarding this, the government established the Center for National Sports and Taekwondo was designated as a national sport in 1971 (Park, 2010, p. 80). Nowadays Taekwondo is known as a famous Korean martial art and there are many programs for foreigners who seeks to learn Taekwondo. Park Chung-Hee government sought to introduce Taekwondo and to internationalize it with the goal of introducing it as an Olympic sport (Johnson, 2019, p. 1653).

Korean Overseas Information Service (KOIS) was founded in 1971 under the Ministry of Culture and Information to inform people abroad about Korean culture and the development of Korea. Between 1979 and 1980, there were four different Korean cultural centres in Japan, the United States and France. Later this number rose to 31 centres in 27 countries. It helps to increase the awareness of Korean culture, promotes the essence of Korean culture internationally and helps upgrading the National Stature with promoting accurate and correct information about Korea's history and culture.



*Figure 1 Korean Cultural Centres around the World (KOCIS, 2017).*

The National Film Production Center, which was established in 1961, was actively used under Park Chung-Hee administration. The film industry started to grow faster than before. The Motion Picture Law of 1962 established new regulations, and it connected the awarding of regarded import licenses for foreign films to the creation of domestic films (Doherty, 1984, p. 842). The approach was extremely significant since a production company had to produce three domestic films before importing a foreign one. However, it also meant that companies could use this policy convolutedly by making these three films with cheap and useless ideas to import a foreign film after meeting the conditions (Doherty, 1984, p. 842). Therefore, the law was changed eventually into “producing good quality three films”. With this direction, both quality and number of the films that were produced slowly began to increase.

Even though the numbers of films that were produced decreased beginning with the 1970s due to inflation, the late 1960s experienced a significant increase in the number of films that reached over 200 films in a year. Within this time frame, *The Coachman* was produced in 1961 and became the first Korean film to win an award at an international film festival, during the Berlin Film Festival of 1961. Unfortunately, the period that came after in 1970s was seen as the Korean Cinema's dark age. After passing a new constitution, Yusin, in 1972, the Park Chung-Hee government enacted the New Yusin Motion Picture Law, allowing the government to easily control film production (Lee, 2019, p. 16). There was a strict censorship, a double system which restricted the film makers.

Public Diplomacy in Park Chung-Hee era can be summarized with the endeavours aimed at building a national unity that is based on culture and identity. Culture and the historical legacy were used as a tool for this goal. Even though there were restrictions and censorships, Park Chung-Hee government became the first government to introduce public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. An example for this endeavour can be given as in 1979, the expenditures on culture was doubled in compared to the previous year. Therefore, it is possible to say that Park Chung-Hee period holds a great importance in the public diplomacy history of Korea. While the Park Chung-Hee era laid the foundation for Korea's public diplomacy, it was simultaneously marked by remarkable economic transformation, often referred to as the '*Miracle on the Han River*'.

### **2.3.3 CHUN DOO-HWAN ERA (1980-1988): THE TRANSITION PERIOD**

In 1979, Chun Doo-Hwan inherited the presidency as a result of Park Chung-Hee's assassination. He led the military coup on December 12, 1979. Then, in the 1980 coup, he declared martial law. Chun Doo-Hwan period is usually named as the transition period in Korea to democratization. Therefore, this period is highly important to witness the change and transformation that Korea experienced.

Even though this period is marked by the martial law and the restrictions over the media of government increased, as contractionary as it may appear, Chun Doo-Hwan became the first government to enhance cultural progress of the public. As with the previous regimes, the military government required a high degree of economic success and to consolidate its legitimacy. The censorship, therefore, intensified proportionally.

With his new cultural policy known as 3S: sex, screen, and sports, the Chun Doo-Hwan government turned people's attention away from politics through popular culture (Lee, 2019, p. 215). 3S policy acted as an excellent tool for the purpose of entertaining people with the screens away from politics. Lessening censorship and initiating the broadcast of colour TV with explicitly sexually dramas and films like *Madame Aema*, the first erotic film after the 3S policy entered into force, distracted people from politics (Jin, 2020, p. 119).

There was one industry in which censorship was considerably relaxed: sports. The 1980s in Korea was characterised by a strong emphasis on sports diplomacy. Both the 19th Asian Games and the 24th Olympic Games and Paralympics were held in Korea in the year 1986 and 1988 respectively. Just after hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> Asian Games, the Chun Doo-Hwan government ordered the creation of the professional Baseball league as well. The 19<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in 1986 actually acted as a rehearsal for one of the biggest sporting events that was going to take place in Seoul in 1988. Also, it was the first big-scaled sporting event that took place in Korea. Both games provided a significant chance to demonstrate Korea's capacity to hold major events shortly after its establishment.

Hosting the games signified a debut for Korea on the global stage after the Korean War. Furthermore, it implied that Korea was expected to present itself in opposition to North Korea and communism throughout the Cold War. It was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to communist nations, such as the Soviet Union, that Korea was capable of hosting such an event and with the purpose of preventing these countries from participating in the Olympic boycott in favour of North Korea (Grix et al., 2021, p. 8). Considering that Korea was able to successfully hold the Olympic Games, provided the country with the opportunity to launch a new sport, Taekwondo which is Korea's traditional form of martial arts.

Public diplomacy was not limited to the world of sports throughout the 1980s. In 1984, the government founded Korean Academy of Film Arts under Korean Film Council to foster cinematic talent. One of its most distinguished graduates is Oscar-winning director Bong Joon-Ho, who completed the academy's two-year program (Lee, 2022a). Nonetheless, censorship continued to persist.

Lee Jin-Keun, the head of Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation, justified censoring, claiming, “In censorship, the security of the nation is most important. Second, films should not hurt our cultural heritage. Third, they should not criticize or disregard certain groups in society” (Park, 2007, p. 17). The motivation for this censorship-supportive approach was to mitigate any unfavourable commentary regarding the regime through the film industry. However, this policy delayed the development and the future success of Korean cinema.

In 1981, the minimum number of days required for the screening of domestic films was raised to 165 days, marking the highest quota established to date (Jin, 2020, p. 40). This quota system was implemented to ensure that foreign films do not overshadow domestic Korean productions. In late 1985, the fifth version of the Motion Picture Law was approved. This version established three notable changes: (1) substituting the licensing system used by production companies, mandating the production of one feature film annually to maintain registration, (2) permitting independent film production without governmental registration for up to one independent film, and (3) dissociating film imports from local production (Paquet, 2009, p. 48). Following the Fifth Amendment, between the years 1985 and 1989, the number of domestic production enterprises that were registered with the government expanded from 25 to 98 (ibid).

The engagement of the corporate sector, which was encouraged by the government, is another significant development that occurred during the Chun Doo-Hwan period of public diplomacy. For instance, Samsung Foundation of Culture, founded in 1965 by the prestigious Korean company Samsung, established two important museums in 1982: the Leeum Museum of Art and the Ho-Am Museum of Art. These museums continue to promote Korean culture and facilitate interactions between cultures.

The significance of the Chun Doo-Hwan period cannot be denied since it makes reference to the period of transition that Korea went through in terms of internationalizing its culture. This period experienced the creation new markets for cultural industry while embedding culture in the national policy in the first place despite the presence of severe censorship. The Chun Doo-Hwan period ended with the 1987 presidential elections, resulting in the election of Roh Tae-Woo as president of the Sixth Republic.

### 2.3.4 ROH TAE-WOO ERA (1988-1993): DEMOCRATIZATION, MODERATION AND NORDPOLITIK

In 1987, just before Roh Tae-Woo's election, a nationwide uprising took place, commonly known as the June Uprisings or the June Democratic Struggle. The main reason for the uprising was to compel the government to conduct direct presidential elections and implement democratic reforms. The uprising succeeded, causing Chun Doo-Hwan to declare his choice of candidate for the next president, Roh Tae-Woo. The speech that ended the uprising was the June 29 Declaration which was made by Roh Tae-Woo. It consisted of eight points, which include: “amending the constitution to enable direct elections; granting amnesty to political prisoners; ensuring human dignity; restoring press freedom; enhancing education; transforming the political atmosphere into a more peaceful environment grounded in dialogue and compromise; and achieving significant social reform.”

In the history of the Republic of Korea, Roh Tae-Woo became the first president to be chosen through democratically held elections. The period starting with the first democratic election highlights the democratic change for Koreans. Following his election, there was a significant increase in freedom of expression and a loosening of censorship restrictions which paved the way for future policies.

In the first year of his presidency, Roh Tae-Woo successfully hosted the 24<sup>th</sup> Summer Olympics in Seoul. The successful Olympics in 1988 resulted in a 24.9% increase in tourist visits to Korea compared to the previous year, marking the highest growth rate observed between 1980 and 2015 (Abduazimov, 2017, p. 90).

In the year 1990, the government of Roh Tae-Woo made the decision to construct a plan for the development of culture. Accordingly, they developed the slogan "culture for all people." This ten-year plan aimed to initiate a cultural identity while promoting artistic supremacy, enhancing cultural welfare, and encouraging the regional dissemination of culture. Furthermore, it sought to increase international cultural exchange, improve cultural media, and contribute to the goal of ethnic reunification within the Korean Peninsula (Yim, 2022, p. 41).

The policy of *Nordpolitik* that Roh Tae-Woo implemented was one of the significant aspects of the 6th Republic administration. *Nordpolitik* was a policy aimed at engaging

North Korea's traditional partners, including the USSR, China, and former Yugoslavia, with the objective of normalizing bilateral relations. Although this program was economic in nature, it was perceived as controversial due to the fact that it raised doubts over the possible future reunification with North Korea.

The first stage of the Nordpolitik agenda involved establishing economic connections with nations allied to North Korea and eliminating trade barriers between the North and South while second and third step involved getting international recognition that would born from these economic ties (Sanford, 1993, p. 2-3). Although the origins of this program may be traced to the Park Chung-Hee administration, it was Roh Tae-Woo who actively focused on enhancing intergovernmental relations and expanding trade connections (Han, 1989, p. 288).

The endeavours of Roh Tae-Woo proved effective as Korea restored relations with certain communist countries, including the Soviet Union in 1990 and China in 1992, while joining to the UN in 1991 with North Korea. The policy of Nordpolitik and its subsequent implementation were key steps in Korea's public diplomacy since recognition enables a country to promote its culture while paving the way for public diplomacy initiatives.

South Korea's goal was to strengthen ties not just with North Korea's allies but also with North Korea itself, and to encourage exchanges between the two countries. The "7.7 Special Declaration for Unification" was the declaration that established the foundation for Roh Tae-Woo's open-door policy, which was implemented with the intention of forming a united Korean community (Yim, 2022, p. 42). According to Roh Tae-Woo, the reestablishment of trust between the two nations was an absolute need, and the unification process was to be guided by this strategy. Followingly, as a consequence of the agreements that were reached between North Korea and South Korea following the introduction of the open-door initiative, some of the North Korean literature were made available for the very first time in South Korea the scope of the cultural products that were permitted to be in South Korea gradually expanded (Yim, 2022, p. 42-43).

After the removal of South Korean travel restrictions in 1989, large Korean corporations began investing abroad, strengthening Korea's cultural and diplomatic representation (Şahin, 2022, p. 46). Previously, only a few Koreans were permitted to travel abroad, since it was believed that this policy would minimize the outflow of foreign currencies

while decreasing Korean public interactions with communism. However, with the relaxation of limitations in 1989, 1.21 million Koreans travelled abroad, compared to 500 thousand in 1985 (Jae-Hee, 2023).

A significant strategy initiated under Roh Tae-Woo administration was the representation of Korea as a middle power. In 1991, Roh Tae-Woo associated Korea with the term “middle power” to describe Korea’s role in the new international environment (Ayhan, 2019, p. 6). Accordingly, being a middle power meant having a voice in international matters while having an influence. Even though the middle power policy as a nation branding tool is officially started with the Lee Myung-Bak, the first reference took place during the Roh Tae-Woo period (Ayhan, 2019, p. 8-9).

Taking everything into consideration, the Roh Tae-Woo period is considered to be the beginning of the period of transition for Koreans. In light of the democratic transition and the rhetoric of Roh Tae-Woo's "Middle Power," Korea has once again entered the world scene with an effort to change the status of the country that is commonly associated with the Korean War. The efforts that were made to get international recognition and to demonstrate that Korea has been effective in implementing a free-market economy were ultimately successful.

### **2.3.5 KIM YOUNG SAM ERA (1993-1998): SEGYEHWA (GLOBALIZATION) POLICY AND THE CREATION OF THE NEW KOREA**

The beginning of the 1990s marked a period of transition in Korea. Kim Young Sam's election, the first democratic election in Korea’s history, signalled the start of democratic change. The fact that previous leaders of Korea were mainly military leaders, while Kim Young Sam was a politician and former opposition leader, marked a significant shift in the nation's political trajectory.

Kim Young Sam aimed to implement reforms that affected many aspects of Korean life during his first three years as president, distinguishing himself from previous presidents by disclosing his personal assets and promising not to accept any financial contributions while he is in charge (Yoon, 1996, p. 512). Concurrently, the government started to take steps to investigate the scandals that had occurred in the past and to improve its reputation

by removing some of the factors that contributed to the corruption through the implementation of certain institutional changes.

In 1994, Kim Young Sam announced his new policy, *Segyehwa*, a globalization strategy for making Korea an advanced nation. This new strategy was not only economic. It was “far more comprehensive, embracing political, cultural and social open-mindedness” (Kim, 2000). Han Sung-Joo, the foreign minister of Kim Young-Sam government, described *Sagyehwa* as part of Kim Young-Sam's “New Diplomacy Policy”, which was based on the concepts of globalization, diversification, multidimensionality, regional cooperation, and futuristic orientation (John, 2015, p. 42; Saxer, 2024). Furthermore, due to the decrease in the pace of economic growth, it was essential that the state undergo a restructuring.

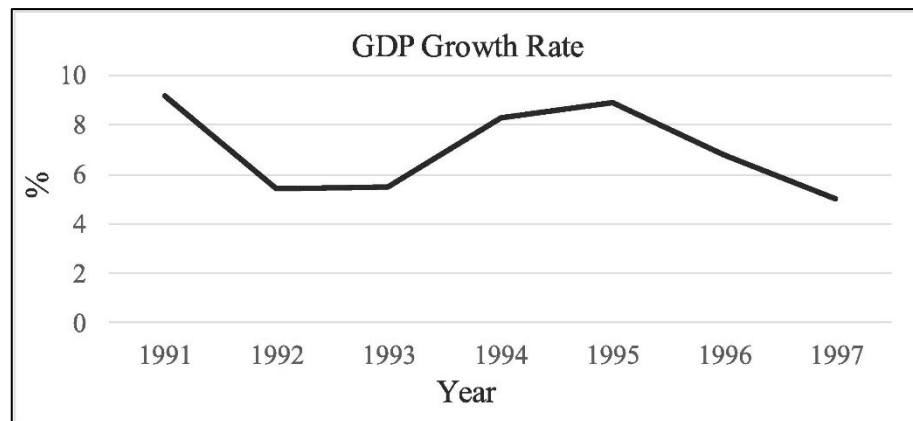


Figure 2 GDP growth rate between 1991-1997 (Saxer, 2024)

The fact that Kim Young Sam treated culture as a necessity to pave the way for a more advanced country while simultaneously improving the economy is the most important change that occurred during this time in the context of cultural policy. This shift became more evident in 1994, the Presidential Advisory Board on Science and Technology submitted a report to the president on the implications of cultural policy and the globalization of cultural assets. According to this report, “the Hollywood film *Jurassic Park* exceeds that of exporting 1.5 million Hyundai Cars” (Shim, 2006, p. 32). This research, often known as the *Jurassic Park* report, underlined the significance of cultural industries and their development.

The report indicated that films could possess economic value comparable to that of an established company. For example, a relevant statistic is the economic impact of popular

domestic films. According to the Bank of Korea, “the economic impact of films such as *Shiri* (1999), *Joint Security Area* (2000), *Friend* (2001), *Marrying the Mafia* (2002), and *Memories of Murder* (2003) was equivalent to the production of 3,119, 2,264, 4,860, 2,932, and 2,279 Hyundai cars, respectively” (Lee, 2018, p. 93). Consequently, following the influence of the Jurassic Park Report, the government decided to establish the Cultural Industry Bureau under the Ministry of Culture and Sports to develop strategies for globalizing the cultural industries. The Bureau was divided into four divisions, each focused-on formulating policies related to films, videos, music, publishing, and strategic planning. Similarly, in 1995, the government enacted the Motion Picture Promotion Act to support cultural industries through subsidies and tax benefits, as outlined in Article 23 of Section III, which states: “The Motion Picture Development Fund shall be established in order to improve motion pictures qualitatively and to promote and develop Korean motion pictures and the film and video product industries.”

The Kim administration also emphasized the chaebol's influence on the cultural industry. Kim Young Sam invited significant chaebols, including Samsung, LG, SK, Tongyang, Hyundai, and CJ, to engage in the cultural industry with the aim of enhancing revenue and employment within the sector (Kim, 2000b, p. 82). For example, Hyundai joined the film business and established a joint venture with Canal Plus of France. Meanwhile, CJ spent 300 million UD in DreamWorks, which is owned by Steven Spielberg. Samsung endeavoured to develop films such as *Shiri*, which was the first blockbuster film to be produced in Korea. As a result of this, the contribution of the chaebol climbed to about one hundred percent, whereas it had previously been somewhere between twenty and thirty percent.

A new five-year strategy, known as the Five-Year Plan for Cultural Prosperity, was introduced in the year 1993 with the purpose of fostering the growth of the cultural sector. In 1996, “The Master Plan for Cultural Welfare” was initiated and at the same time, the restrictions that had been placed on films and music was removed. Furthermore, the first cable television system began broadcasting on 21 channels in 8 local TV stations in 1995 and expanded to 77 cable stations by 1998.

The Korean government also employed media tools to further promote Korea. For instance, Korea collaborated with broadcasting stations such as CNN and the BBC to

broadcast Korean news in English. Soon after, Arirang Radio and Arirang TV were formed, administered by the Korea International Broadcasting Foundation and funded by the MOFA, to broadcast in English. Kim Young Sam articulated the significance of broadcasting by stating, *“We are living in the era of borderless broadcasting ... we have to globalize our broadcasting services. We must improve not only technologies but also international competitiveness of television contents, thereby triggering the globalization of broadcasting and image industries”* (Kim Young Sam, 1996)

Cultural exchange programs continued to have an important place. However, their scopes were expanded to include a worldwide perspective rather than one that was limited to the nations of the United States or Europe. In 1998, thirty museums globally presented Korean exhibitions, while 305 classes were conducted across 50 countries. Additionally, 33 universities in seven countries established Korean Studies professorships, and 26 Korean Studies Centres were opened in eight countries (Choi, 2019, p. 13)

It is evident that public diplomacy has been progressively progressing in line with the path of democracy in Korea, as seen by the policies and initiatives that were implemented under the Kim Young-Sam administration. The road that Korea has taken to modernization, which began with the election of Kim Young Sam, is reflective of the late entry of Korea into the arena of liberal and democratic sphere. The government of Kim Young-Sam, on the other hand, made the decision not to focus on this delay. Instead, it accepted the significant part that culture plays in international relations and mapped out a strategy for using diplomatic efforts to promote Korean culture. As a consequence, the policies that were implemented by the government made it possible for Korea to establish itself as a major participant on the international stage. Kim Young-Sam period established a strong link between domestic progress and worldwide visibility, paving the way for the evolution of Korea's global identity and the start of its transformation into an influential nation in the international arena.

### **2.3.6 KIM DAE-JUNG ERA (1998-2003): “SUPPORT BUT NOT INTERVENE”**

Kim Dae-Jung became the President of South Korea immediately after the 1997 Asian Crisis, one of the most severe challenges the country had faced since the Korean War. This marked a historic shift, as for the first time in Korean history, a candidate from the

opposition party was elected president. Therefore, for Kim Dae-Jung, the most preeminent issue was to save Korea from getting drawn into this financial crisis for further.

Following this objective, first he implemented liberal reforms with the assistance of the IMF. Subsequently, the government introduced “knowledge-based economy” which meant rather than physical goods, most of the wealth was going to be created through knowledge and innovation by using technology, culture, research and education. In this approach, the Kim Dae-Jung administration attempted to leverage cultural industries and recognize them as high-value-added businesses (Kim, 2020, p. 85). In addition, this strategy was founded on what is often referred as the "third way politics," which is a term that describes the simultaneous development of democratic government and market-based economic system (Lee, 2018, p. 91).

The President of Korea believed that focusing on culture was the most effective approach to revive the Korean economy after the global financial crisis, particularly in the 21st century. In 1998, during his inaugural speech, Kim Dae-Jung used the word “culture” for five times highlighting the importance of globalizing Korean culture:

“We must pour our energy into globalizing Korean culture. We must embrace and develop the high values that are contained in traditional culture (...) Tourism, the convention industry, the visual industry, and special cultural commodities are a treasure trove for which a limitless market is awaiting (...) The 21st century will be a millennium characterized by both competition and cooperation. Diplomacy in the age of globalization will require a change in ways of thinking. Diplomacy in the 21st century will center around the economy and culture. We will keep expanding trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges in order to make our way in the age of boundless competition which will take place against a backdrop of cooperation.” (Kim, 1998).

Simultaneously, Kim Dae-Jung referred to himself as President of Culture and indicated the policy of "Culture as a Nation." During this time period, the cultural industries were not only considered as a means of generating revenue, but also as a means of promoting Korea's image globally. Therefore, the government has implemented measures in this regard. For example, the New Cultural Plan was issued in 1998 and followingly Five-Year Plan for the development of the Cultural Industry in 1999. Both of these plans were

intended to further foster the growth of the cultural sector. In the aftermath, “the Content Industry Promotion Act” and “the Framework Act on the Promotion of Cultural Industries” were both released in order to organize the functioning of the cultural industry. As a result, “the Korea Cultural Industry Fund” was created, and 148.5 million dollars was used between 1999 and 2003 to support Korean film industry (Oh, 2016, p. 172).

The utilization of these funds was both efficient and beneficial. After the Funds were introduced, the film industry thrived as there were international festivals like “the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF)” (Şahin, 2022, p. 51). Before the establishment of BIFF, the Cannes Film Festival only shown three Korean films; however, after BIFF was founded, more than a hundred films were welcomed to the festival (Lee, 2022b, p. 5). It is possible to state that the Kim Dae Jung administration was the first government that officially and financially supported the film business.

Another noteworthy initiative launched by the Kim Dae Jung administration was "Vision 21 for Cultural Industries: The Five-Year Plan for Developing Cultural Industries," which sought to create a vision for the next century. This strategy sought to make the cultural industry a national one in the 21st century and the leading sector of Korea's knowledge-based economy (Butsaban, 2023, p. 11). It is known as Korea's first comprehensive cultural industry development strategy. This was followed by the establishment of the Korean Culture and Content Agency.

“The Korean Culture and Content Agency” was founded under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the purpose of implementing and managing programs that are sponsored by the government in order to develop and promote businesses that are associated with the Korean culture. During the same time period, the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Cooperation changed its name to the Korean Film Commission in 1999. This transition included revisions such as the elimination of the need for approval by the MCT. Through the provision of funding, the promotion of local attractions, and the attraction of domestic and foreign film initiatives, the Commission aimed to stimulate economic development on both the regional and national levels.

Following the removal of film censorship in the year 2001, there was an increase in both the production of Korean films and the export of Korean films. Consequently, Korean films began to find a place in nations in Asia at the beginning. This growth in the film

industry coincided with the Kim Dae Jung administration's recognition of the Korean Wave (hereafter Hallyu) as a cultural and economic opportunity, officially supported through collaborations with chaebols. Between 1999 and 2003, \$125 million was spent in promoting Korean cinema, while Korean banks, such as Ha-Na Bank, invested \$7.8 billion on the film business (Park, 2016, p. 102). There was a total of 48 funds that were valued 535 million dollars during the years between 1998 and 2005 for the film industry (Paquet, 2009, p. 77).

Chaebol's involvement in the Film sector made a significant difference. For example, Samsung financed Korea's first blockbuster film, *Shiri* (1999), which was the most expensive film produced in Korea at the time (Park, 2016, p. 103). Following *Shiri*'s breakthrough, films such as *Joint Security Area* (2000) were produced, and the success went on. Thus, the year 2000 was the first time in Korean history when the cultural sector received more than one percent of the government's overall budget (Paquet, 2009, p. 75).

*Dynamic Korea* was a strategy that was introduced by the government of Korea at the beginning of the year 2002. The Korean Overseas Information Service indicated that “*Dynamic Korea represents the vibrant spirit; the heritage of the Korean people that will be passed to future generations. It embodies the unshakable moral strength that has overcome so much hardship, as well as a vision which proactively explores the future*” (cited in Lee, 2015a). At its core, the term *Dynamic Korea* was strongly linked to the significance of the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

Korea and Japan co-hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2002, marking the first time in history that a World Cup took place in Asia. For the purpose of hosting the games, Korea constructed ten stadiums and spent more than two billion dollars to accommodate both the games and the tourists (Kim et al., 2004). The World Cup provided Korea with an opportunity to showcase both its national improvement and its culture to the rest of the world.

Concisely, Kim Dae-Jung's philosophy was to advocate “Support but not intervene.” During his administration, he made efforts that reflected this philosophy, such as eliminating censorship, providing financial assistance to cultural and creative sectors, and exerting influence over chaebols. His implementation of the Sunshine Policy to repair ties with North Korea further contributed to his legacy, earning him the Nobel Prize. As

demonstrated by these instances, his efforts successfully fulfilled their intended purpose. The majority of his initiatives were passed down to his successor, Roh Moo-Hyun, who was tasked with building upon them for future implementation.

### **2.3.7 ROH MOO-HYUN ERA (2003-2008): CULTURAL WELFARE AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE**

When Roh Moo-Hyun was elected in 2003, he mentioned the cultural industry's significance in his inauguration address, stating, "I will promote culture and extend active support for the progress of culture industries." It was highlighted by the new administration that he was the first leader who was completely in touch with the internet (Watts, 2017). This showed the relevance of the views of the younger generation as well as the significance of the advancement of technology in Korea.

Roh Moo-Hyun prioritized "*cultural welfare*" and sought to stimulate the national economy through the cultural sector, as well as strengthen cultural education and diversity (Park, 2016, p. 108). Interest in Hallyu began to rise during Kim Dae-Jung's presidency, as its success became evident. The achievement was also recognized by Roh Moo-Hyun, who subsequently adapted the cultural strategy in accordance with this. The government established the National Image Committee in 2002. This committee consisted of members from various government officials as well as representatives from the private sector, with the goal of improving the national image of Korea in the most effective way possible (Istad, 2016, p. 58).

The term "Han Brand" was created, which included the term "Hanbok," refers to the traditional Korean clothing, "Hanok", that references to the traditional housing in Korea, and "Hanji", the mulberry paper, by enhancing the popularity of Korean products with the traditional cultural elements (Abduazimov, 2017, p. 97). Also in 2003, the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE) was established with the aim of connecting Korea and the world through culture. Building on the notion of the Han Brand, the establishment of KOFICE further formalized attempts to promote Korea's cultural identity globally. The purpose of KOFICE is described as "*Different countries around the world are cultivating their cultural industries competitively (...) Korea, too, is focusing on the unlimited potential of its cultural industry and has recognized the cultural industry as a new growth engine*" (KOFICE, cited in Lee, 2015b, p. 9).

In this time period, Korea made significant progress in expanding its use of public diplomacy, which was only a convenient strategy when taking into consideration the dynamics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a way that supports this, the Roh Moo-Hyun administration's prime objective was becoming one of the world's top five content powers by 2010 (Suntikul, 2019). It was around this period that *Hallyu* started to demonstrate its true potential. Prior to the 2000s, Hallyu was mostly centered in Southeast Asia; however, with the beginning of the 2000s, Hallyu's influence expanded to a global scale. This phase of Hallyu, which lasted until the end of 2007, is referred to as the First Korean Wave or Hallyu 1.0.

The new Broadcasting Law was passed into law in 2003, and in accordance with that law, the Korean Broadcasting Commission, which was subsequently renamed the Korea Communications Commission in 2008, was officially constituted. "Prepare a foundation for high-quality content production to spread the broadcasting of Hallyu media" is included as one of the issues on the agenda of the Commission (KCC, n.d).

Even though the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), a significant institution with the mission to promote Korean cultural assets, was created in 2009, the foundations were built during the Roh Moo-Hyun period under the name of The Korea Culture and Content Agency due to the increasing appeal of Hallyu. During this time, the government contributed 55 billion Korean won to the KOCCA for a project to establish cultural archetypes, which included public bids, expert reviews, financing for chosen initiatives, and online publishing of the results as prototypes (Park, 2015, p. 110).

There was a strong emphasis on cultural technology, as the government contributed \$10 billion to the industry's development (Park, 2015, p. 110). Meanwhile, a strategy named "Ten Million People Internet Education" was developed with the goal of increasing cultural creativity through internet infrastructure. More crucially, the efforts in this area aimed to connect traditional assets to the cultural industry. In 2004, the Cultural Archetype Project was launched with the intention of re-creating Korea's traditional and unique cultural material while incorporating the advancement of technology. The initiative included not only tangible assets, but also works of art, architecture, traditional clothing, and even design patterns, with the intent that Korea's distinctive traditional culture will boost cultural innovation and competitiveness in the knowledge-based

economic model (Lee, 2013, p. 136). The strategy states that "*Culture content is more valuable and competitive when it is made out of national cultural traditions. (...) The Korean culture's value has not been positively utilized by the culture content industries.*"

The success of integrating historical and traditional elements to contemporary cultural policy first seen with the K-Drama "Dae Jang Geum (Jewel in the Palace)" which was about the first female royal physician of the Joseon Dynasty. With its international dubs, the series became the first Korean historical drama to run in more than 50 countries, and its ultimate earnings from broadcasting rights and DVD sales reached almost \$10 million (Sungeun, 2008, p. 125). The sales of Korean dramas were around 42 million dollars in 2003, followed by a rise to 71 million dollars in 2004 and ultimately reached to 123 million dollars in 2005, as stated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Korea (Han & Lee, 2008, p. 116).

Tourism that is oriented on attracting tourists by using the sources of the Korean Wave is referred to as "*Hallyu tourism.*" During this time period, the popularity of Korean dramas such as Winter Sonata and Jewel in the Palace might be considered to have been the catalyst for the beginning of the marketing of Hallyu tourism. The number of Japanese tourists visiting Korea in 2004, following the broadcasting of Winter Sonata in Japan, increased by nearly 36% compared to the previous year (Bae et al., 2017, p. 4).

Roh Moo-Hyun's politics were influenced by all these cultural policies. Since the beginning of his administration, Roh Moo-Hyun has referred to his type of government as a "*participatory government*" and has made efforts to promote public engagement (Kim, 2010, p. 172). The goal of this program was to develop a more open cultural identity while also increasing openness and public participation in the process of governance. Through the process of decentralizing cultural authority from government entities to local authorities, the government desired to facilitate more engagement from citizens and make it easier for them to engage in cultural activities. Furthermore, diversity was prioritized by ensuring equal access to cultural engagement and supporting marginalized communities.

Ultimately, the Roh Moo-Hyun administration issued approximately 160 legislation that were related to cultural industry policy (Park, 2015, p. 110). Beginning with this particular period, it became possible for public diplomacy methods of Korea to have a wider

sphere of influence and for Hallyu to have a greater effect on the rest of the world. In order to make Kim Dae-Jung's policies more appropriate and sustainable for the 21st century, Roh Moo-Hyun adopted them and improved them. It can be argued that during this time period, Hallyu took the first steps towards reaching its full potential. However, to provide a more comprehensive and detailed analysis, the third chapter will focus on the significance of Hallyu and its development in relation to the implications of the policies.

### **2.3.8 LEE MYUNG-BAK ERA (2008-2013): “GLOBAL KOREA”**

In 2008, President Lee Myung-Bak assumed office, resulting in a transition from a liberal to a conservative administration. Before his election, Lee outlined his foreign policy goals in what became known as the 'MB Doctrine'. This seven-point doctrine emphasized the importance of cultural diplomacy, stating, *"Cultural diplomacy to capitalize Korea's soft power through mutual opening and exchanges in the region and the world."* In his inaugural speech he highlighted the importance of culture once more with these words:

“Korea is a nation of culture with an extensive history. The Korean Wave that is now well placed around the globe testifies to the advantage of skilful replications of such a long tradition. Modernization of traditional culture is useful for facilitating arts and culture and such attempts surely dignify the country's economic prosperity. Now, culture has become an industry. We must develop our competitiveness in our contents industry, thereby laying the foundation to become a nation strong in cultural activities (...) Through culture we are able to enjoy life, through culture we are able to communicate with each other and through culture, we will be able to advance together. The new Administration will do its best to bring the power of our culture into a full blossom in this globalized setting of the 21st century” (Lee, 2008).

Lee Myung-Bak placed a significant amount of emphasis on culture and the role it plays in the growth of the nation. Lee had the intention of further developing Hallyu for two reasons: first, he wanted to differentiate himself from the previous administration in terms of the cultural sector; second, he wanted to improve Korea's image on a worldwide scale

while simultaneously contributing to the expansion of the economy (Kim & Jin, 2016, p. 5524).

Lee served as the Chief Executive Officer of Hyundai Group before being elected as the President of Korea. This previous position allowed him to preserve a different perspective on branding and the influence of an image on the world stage. Therefore, the strategies about nation branding and public diplomacy were taken accordingly. The Presidential Council of Nation Branding (PCNB) was founded in 2009 with the objective of systematically maintaining the country's international image. One of the reasons why the council served a special role was because it was located at the highest level of government and was tasked with providing advice to the president as well as reporting to him (Choi & Kim, 2014, p. 347).

The council was also in charge of initiatives such as the "World Friends Korea" project, which runs volunteer activities for Korean people abroad in order to promote friendly connections and improve Korea's image. In 2008, the number of Korean volunteers was the third largest in the world, with 1,500 volunteers, and the number grew to more than 4,000 volunteers every year in subsequent years (Choi & Kim, 2014, p. 354). Today, the World Friends Korea initiative continues to share Korea's development experience and offers assistance in 50 fields for developing countries (Korea International Cooperation Agency, n.d).

The new government had the goal of altering Korea's reputation in the international community. Their goal was to transform the perception of a poor nation that had been torn by the war and economic difficulties in the past. In order to accomplish this objective, the administration launched the "Global Korea" initiative with the intention of rebranding Korea as a developed nation (Trisni et al., 2019). The PCNB was established in line with this objective, after consulting with McKinsey & Company, an American consulting company, for enhancing Korea's attractiveness and visibility in the world. The council was responsible for elevating Korea's position on the Anhold-Gfk Nation Brand Index to the 15th spot in only four years, when it had previously been placed as 33 at that time (Choi & Kim, 2014, p. 353). Although it did not rank 15<sup>th</sup>, Korea secured its place in the top 20 in four years, demonstrating the success of nation branding strategies.

Another goal of the PCBN was to assist in increasing the number of King Sejong Institutes, which aims to teach Korean language and convey Korean traditional culture to people throughout the world. The King Sejong Institute teaches not only the language, but also Korean culture, food, and other traditional characteristics, with 248 institutes in 85 countries (2024).

The Lee Myung-Bak administration became the first to back up the globalization policy by making significant contributions to the international agenda. By making important contributions to the world agenda, the government of Lee Myung-Bak took the initiative to become the first to support the globalization strategy in a substantive way (Snyder, 2018, p. 167). For example, Lee's 'hosting diplomacy' was a successful strategy to draw more global leaders to Korea, as seen by the G20 conference in 2010 and the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012, both of which provided Korea with the chance to speak on crucial financial and issues related to security (Snyder, 2018, p. 167). Concurrently, Ban Ki-Moon's appointment as the UN General Assembly's eighth security general following Kofi Annan in 2007 solidified this approach, emphasizing Korea's increasing appearance in the global arena.

The phrase "public diplomacy" was used officially for the first time, and 2010 was designated as the first year of Korean public diplomacy, with Ma Young-Sam operating as the first public diplomacy ambassador. There were also institutional changes inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Cultural Product Trade Division was established under the ministry with the objective of supporting the expansion of Korean firms internationally. 2010 marked the publication of the "Cultural Diplomacy Manual" by the Ministry, which acknowledged cultural diplomacy as the third pillar of diplomacy in the 21st century (Kang, 2015, p. 434).

For the purpose of better integrating public diplomacy to the objectives of foreign policy, the Korea Public Diplomacy Forum was founded, and the Public Diplomacy Policy Division was established subsequently. At the same time, governments' emphasis on the Korean Wave increased therefore the Korean Wave Research Institute was established to promote the development of Hallyu and the spread of Korean content (Istad, 2016, p. 58). In 2012, the MOFA additionally established the Senior Public Diplomacy Group as a

nonprofit organization to represent public diplomats and enhance public diplomacy knowledge in Korea (Istad, 2016, pp. 58-59).

MOFA established the K-Culture Promotion Task Force to integrate traditional Korean culture with Hallyu and expand the scope of K-culture's impact. The Culture Minister Choe Kwan-Shik emphasized the importance of Korean pop culture by stating *“It is necessary for Korean pop culture, including K-pop, to influence the overall cultural sphere, ‘K-culture,’ and eventually create added value out of it (...) Although traditional culture is the rich repository of cultural resources that may enhance added value of such related industries as arts, content and tourism, and raise national brand image, the efforts to modernize and recreate traditional Korean culture have been lacking,”* and the budget was set at nearly \$30 million in the task force's first year.

The government term of Lee Myung-Bak is significant for the public diplomacy initiatives of Korea since it brought attention to the legislative formation of cultural policies for the very first time in the history of Korea. The government's adoption of policies that were both innovative and grounded made it easier for Korean public diplomacy to get off the ground more quickly than it had in the past. It is possible to argue that the Lee Myung-Bak period marked the beginning of the golden age of Korean public diplomacy, which was characterized by the use of a variety of channels and methods.

### **2.3.9 PARK GEUN-HYE ERA (2013-2017): A NEW ERA OF HOPE AND CULTURAL ENRICHMENT**

In the years 2013 to 2017, Park Geun-Hye, the daughter of Park Chung-Hee, held the position of the 11th President of Korea, making her the first female President of Korea and the Northeast Asia. The growth of economic development was her principal objective from the beginning. In order to accomplish this goal, Park took use of the opportunities for cultural enrichment and national happiness.

In her inauguration speech, Park Geun-Hye promised for a “New Era of Hope” by stating *“The new administration will usher in a new era of hope premised on a revitalizing economy, the happiness of our people, and the blossoming of our culture”* and continued about the importance of culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century *“In the 21st century, culture is power. It is an era where an individual’s imagination becomes creative contents. Across the*

*world, the 'Korean Wave' is welcomed with great affection that not only triggers happiness and joy but one that instils abiding pride in all Koreans*" (President Park Geun-hye's Inauguration Speech, 2013). The inauguration speech included PSY's performance of his song 'Gangnam Style.'

The Hallyu phenomenon started to reach its peak in 2012, when the song "Gangnam Style" by PSY, a Korean singer and rapper, became the first video to reach one billion views on YouTube. Starting with this achievement, recognizing the potential of this global wave further sought to improve Korea's soft power through her initiative, President Park Geun-Hye initiated what she called "cultural enrichment." Accordingly, this initiative was consisted of three categories: (1) increasing public engagement in cultural activities, (2) promoting culture and the arts, and (3) bringing culture and the industry together (Kim, 2021, p. 99).

For the purpose of executing the initiative of cultural enrichment, Park Geun-Hye established the Presidential Committee on Cultural Enrichment (PCCE) in the year 2013. The Committee was an advisory board that was given the responsibility of developing strategies and improving the status of culture within the economy (Kim, 2021, p. 99). The Committee launched a monthly "Culture Wednesday," which is a nationwide campaign that takes place on the last Wednesday of each month with the goal of increasing possibilities for people to attend museums, movies, and exhibits by offering discounts and arranging activities (KOCIS, 2014a).

During her statement at the 2014 New Year's meeting, Park Geun-Hye celebrated culture as the "most valuable asset" with the potential to unite people beyond language barriers (KOCIS, 2014b). In this meeting where influential people from the culture industry participated such as the actor Kim So-Hyeon, popular K-Pop group EXO, pianist Paik Kun-Woo, the president continued her remarks stating: "*When witnessing the enthusiasm for Korean culture seen around the world, I thought that this could lead to a new era (...) I hope we can also stretch Korean culture to cover the world and help make Korea a country with a culture loved by people all around the globe*" (Park, 2014).

Park Geun-Hye enhanced the cooperation between chaebols and the government, resulting in some favourable effects for the growth of Hallyu and the cultural business. The most significant of the collaborations was with the CJ Group, a chaebol that was once

a part of Samsung but has since formed its entertainment branch. For example, in 2015, CJ served on the Korean Wave Planning Committee, signed an agreement with KOCCA to promote Korean goods internationally, hosted KCON (a music festival held around the world featuring the most famous K-pop groups) and the Mnet Asian Music Awards, collaborated with the government to promote K-Food, and even more (Lee, 2018, p. 133).

The Korean Foundation and the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE) have made substantial contributions to Hallyu's growing worldwide prominence, significantly starting with this period. The Korean Wave White Paper, Hallyu Now and Global Hallyu Issue were started to be published to promote Korean values and culture (Lee, 2018, p. 133). Furthermore, since 2011, the Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS) has boosted its publishing on topics such as K-Drama, K-Pop, the Korean Wave, K-Literature, K-Movie, K-Food, K-Sports, and K-Fashion.

The 'Creative Economy' concept served as the cornerstone for Park Geun-Hye's public diplomacy policy. According to Park's definition, creative economy is defined by *“the convergence of science and technology with industry, the fusion of culture with industry, and the blossoming of creativity in the very borders that were once permeated by barriers”* (Park Geun-Hye's Inauguration Speech, 2013). In line with this description, Park Geun-Hye announced seven strategies for fostering a creative economy: (1) opening new markets and creating new opportunities for recruitment; (2) advancing software development; (3) promoting a sharing and open-value economy; (4) establishing a startup-driven nation; (5) reforming hiring practices to go beyond standard qualifications; (6) supporting the K-Move initiative internationally; and (7) founding a Ministry of Science (Cha, 2015, p. 37).

In line with the creative economy policy, the government established Creative Economy Innovation Centers (CEIC) to support the developments of start-up while encouraging the sustainable growth (Creative Economy Innovation Center, n.d.). There were originally 17 centres, which were subsequently enlarged to 19, with four of them dedicated to cultural companies like as computer and video games, cinema and television, and tourism (Kim, 2021, p. 101).

Complementing these initiatives, in 2014, Park Geun-Hye administration announced the Second Basic Plan of Promoting the Content Industry aiming to establish Korea as a

leading creative force in the global content industry (KOTRA, 2017). Also, a new initiative was founded, the Culture Creation and Convergence Belt (CEL), in collaboration with the CJ Group to develop representative Hallyu convergence content, as President Park Geun-Hye described the initiative as “a bridgehead of the prosperity of Korean Culture” and noted that it will “play a pivotal role in the cultural content industry” (Matthew, 2015).

It was very important that Park Geun-Hye placed such an emphasis on the Korean Wave. The president made an intense effort to promote Korean culture both domestically and internationally. Attending K-pop concerts and visiting European countries while participating in events connected with Korean culture were some examples of her endeavours concerning the promotion of Hallyu. Regarding this, she indicated, *"I am happy to see in-person how K-pop can unite young people from around the world, no matter how different their languages are, no matter how far away they maybe geographically"* (Kang, 2016). Park Geun-Hye also leveraged the Korean Wave to promote soft power through including K-pop idols on her overseas visits, and Hallyu was used to achieve the administration's economic aims while promoting national pride domestically (Kim, 2021, p. 102).

In 2016, the government approved the Public Diplomacy Act, Korea's first legislation to formally handle public diplomacy activities. With this law, MOFA was acknowledged as the primary authority in charge of controlling Korea's public diplomacy strategy and coordinating funding for public diplomacy activities, which have undoubtedly expanded in the recent years (Choi, 2019, pp 14-15). Having said that, it is acceptable to state that public diplomacy became an established approach for nation branding for Korea in the 2010s, particularly under the Park Geun-Hye administration.

However, Park Geun-Hye was impeached in 2016 as a result of a political scandal involving Choi Soon-Sil, a government official and a friend of Park Geun-Hye who exploited her position to accept money from chaebols. As a consequence, the president was impeached with 234 out of 300 votes, and she was sentenced to 24 years in prison in 2018, before being pardoned in 2021. Despite her impeachment, her period is often recognized as the first legal phase of Korean public diplomacy and the Korean Wave.

### **2.3.10 MOON JAE-IN ERA (2017-2022): “DIPLOMACY TOGETHER WITH PEOPLE”**

After Park Geun-Hye's scandal, Korea's image was affected despite years of public diplomacy attempts to develop a nation brand. Koreans were concerned that the situation would tarnish their reputation as a corrupt country. Nonetheless, it would also highlight their intolerance for corruption, since they did not overlook it and proceeded to impeach the president instead (Ayhan, 2017, p. 14). After Park Geun-Hye's impeachment, Moon Jae-In was elected president in 2017, marking a new chapter for the country.

In his inaugural speech on 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, President Moon Jae-In expressed his ambition to become a president for everyone in Korea who values communication, justice and equality. His objective was to establish a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula and to be remembered as a humble and fair president. Therefore, his primary objective was to create a diplomatic understanding that was open to dialogue and peaceful relationships.

MOFA developed an integrated and coordinated system for public diplomacy in 2017 with the introduction of the Public Diplomacy Act, which was introduced first in 2016. The primary goals of the act included forming the Public Diplomacy Committee, creating both a Five-Year Master Plan and an annual Comprehensive Action Plan, enhancing PD capabilities in a systematic manner, and analysing PD activities while developing an online information system (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, 2018).

Following the establishment of the Public Diplomacy Committee in accordance with this legislation, the committee proceeded with introducing the First Basic Plan on Public Diplomacy (2017-2021). This First Basic Plan had four objectives: enhancing Korea's image with its cultural resources, distributing factual information about Korea, fostering a peaceful atmosphere for Korea's policies, and supporting Korea's PD agents while assuring smooth interaction between them (Ayhan, 2017, p. 17). Furthermore, five principal strategies aligned with this plan were established: (1) “cultural public diplomacy” to utilize Korea’s cultural assets, (2) “knowledge public diplomacy” to disseminate accurate information about Korea, (3) “public diplomacy on policy” to enhance the accessibility of Korea’s public diplomacy initiatives internationally, (4) “Public Diplomacy Program of Korean Citizens” to educate the Korean population about

public diplomacy and cultivate citizen public diplomats, and (5) “Public Diplomacy infrastructure” aimed at optimizing the efficiency of the proposed strategies (Ayhan, 2017, p. 17).

Furthermore, the committee designated the Korea Foundation as the main body that would be responsible for establishing the public diplomacy initiatives. In addition to providing scholarships and organizing special lectures, the foundation supported the organization of workshops for Korean studies. Just in 2017, the Korean Foundation provided financial assistance for 843 Korean studies courses that were offered at 168 institutions located in 75 different countries (MOFA, 2018).

At the same time, the Moon Jae-In government prioritized public diplomacy forums like the Korea-China Public Diplomacy Forum, as well as agreements to foster cultural cooperation. Taking all of this into consideration, Moon Jae-In has placed a high priority on multilateral diplomacy. In addition to this, he endeavoured to restore relations with North Korea, with the goal of establishing an atmosphere of peace not just in South Korea but across the whole Peninsula. This policy of his is often seen to be a continuation of the Sunshine Policy that Kim Dae-Jung established.

The 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, provided an excellent chance for both Koreas to demonstrate their intention to normalize their relationship. At the Olympics' opening ceremony, athletes from South and North Korea walked together as a single team, holding a shared flag for showing support towards a unified Korea. In addition, in the category of women's ice hockey, a unified team was formed. Moon Jae-In's friendly North Korean policy, which was also a part of his public diplomacy approach, was the foundation upon which these activities in the first place.

Just like the previous governments, Moon Jae-In supported the Korean Wave as well. K-pop celebrities and prominent actors from Korean dramas were often utilized by him as envoys, and he considered them to be a part of the diplomatic process. For example, in 2017, during his first state visit to China, he brought the famous boy band EXO, which sings in both Chinese and Korean, and the famous actress Song Hye Kyo, who acted in the popular K-drama *Descendants of the Sun*, to a bilateral summit. Similarly, in 2019, on the last day of the G20 summit, when US President Donald Trump visited Moon Jae-In, he was welcomed by the same boy band EXO.

In 2021, worldwide famous K-pop group BTS was appointed as “the special presidential envoy for future generations and culture” by the president, while also being granted diplomatic passports in recognition of their significant global influence and cultural contribution. K-pop stars, who are gaining a larger presence on the world scene, have begun to get significant attention for their cultural and global effect. BTS has visited the United Nations twice, first in 2018 for UNICEF's "Love Myself" campaign against child abuse, and again in 2021 for the UN General Assembly to discuss climate change and the COVID pandemic. Hallyu's economic and cultural accomplishments complemented public diplomacy efforts under the Moon Jae-Era. However, the importance of Hallyu as well as its growing popularity will be addressed in more detail in the later part of this thesis.

A number of structural adjustments were also implemented in order to improve the facilitation of the PD activities. Following these changes, MOFA's Policy-Planning Directorate (which ensures that PD policies are efficiently executed) and the Cultural Diplomacy Bureau (which uses Korea's cultural resources to achieve PD goals) have been in charge (Ayhan, 2017, p. 18). In addition, Enna Park, who was designated as a public diplomacy ambassador, was given the responsibility of coordinating all the operations related to public diplomacy and reporting directly to the minister.

Before the Moon Jae-In period, public diplomacy was focused on building a favourable image and one-way communication; however, with the latest Improvements Korea has expanded its reach and the complex nature of public diplomacy is comprehended (Ayhan, 2017, p. 16). Enna Park, ambassador for Public Diplomacy of Korea, characterizes public diplomacy as essential for achieving Korea's foreign policy objectives in the 21st century, adapting to the evolving diplomatic landscape, and overcoming constrained diplomatic resources (USC Annenberg, 2017). Korea, during this period, kept up with global developments by modernizing its public diplomacy methods, emphasizing the significance of citizen participation in the process.

### 2.3.11 YOON SUK-YEOL ERA (2022-2024): CONTEMPORARY KOREAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Following the elections that took place in 2022, Yoon Suk-Yeol was elected as president, making him the first President of Korea to be born after the Korean War. During his inaugural speech, he emphasized the importance of freedom by stating, *“everyone must be allowed to enjoy a certain level of economic freedom; everyone must be guaranteed the right to receive quality education, and everyone must be granted the freedom to access and experience various cultural activities. One cannot be considered a true citizen absent such freedom.”* (Yoon, 2022).

Although Yoon Suk-Yeol’s presidential term lasted for two years, prior to his impeachment, his administration managed to engage in modest efforts related to cultural diplomacy. For instance, during his visit to the United States, Yoon emphasized Korea’s cultural heritage by hosting a meal featuring traditional Korean cuisine for President Joe Biden, highlighting soft power through gastronomy. During the 17th policy discussion with citizens, he stated, *“K-pop’s BTS and BLACKPINK, soccer’s Son Heung-Min, baseball’s Kim Ha-Seong, as well as esports’ Faker, Lee Sang-Hyeok, are just a few of the youth who have risen to the top of the world.”* However, he faced criticism for allegedly leveraging these cultural icons to bolster his popularity among younger generations (Reuters, 2022).

Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous section of the thesis, after Moon Jae-In’s term, the election of Yoon Suk-Yeol marked a similar challenge for Korea, as he was impeached in 2024 due to the controversies about corruption. The impeachment process, which followed by the protests after Yoon’s declaration of martial law, garnered international media attention, with visuals of civilians celebrating in the streets symbolizing Korea’s democratic resilience. The future of Korea’s politics remains uncertain for now, as the political landscape continues to shift.

## 2.4 OVERVIEW OF PRESIDENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO KOREA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

South Korea's public diplomacy policy has developed significantly under different administrations, with each president contributing uniquely to this strategy. Every president influenced the nation's international reputation through distinct strategies. This chapter demonstrated that Korea's public diplomacy activities have broadened using presidential initiatives, changes in policies, and institutional developments.

PRESIDENT	YEARS IN OFFICE	POLICY NAME	POLICY SUMMARY
RHEE SEUNG-MAN	1948-1960	Early Nation-Building Efforts	Focused on gaining international recognition as the legitimate Korean government
PARK CHUNG-HEE	1962-1979	Saemaul Undong (New Village)	Promoted modernization and rural development while emphasizing national pride through cultural policies
CHUN DOO-HWAN	1980-1988	3S Policy	Used sports, cinema, and entertainment to distract from political unrest and showcase Korea's global potential
ROH TAE-WOO	1988-1993	Nordpolitik	Focused on engaging North Korea's allies and promoting cultural identity through events like the 1988 Olympics
KIM YOUNG-SAM	1993-1998	"Segyehwa" (Globalization)	Championed global integration by promoting cultural industries and democratic values
KIM DAE-JUNG	1998-2003	"Support but not Intervene" and Sunshine Policy	Fostered reconciliation with North Korea and emphasized cultural industries to boost economic recovery
ROH MOO-HYUN	2003-2008	Cultural Welfare	Advocated engagement in cultural diplomacy and strengthened Korea's democratic image
LEE-MYUNG-BAK	2008-2013	Global Korea	Used large-scale international events to position Korea as a global leader
PARK GEUN-HYE	2013-2017	Cultural Enrichment and Creative Economy	Focused on innovation and cultural enrichment but faced backlash due to political scandals
MOON JAE-IN	2017-2022	Diplomacy Together With People	Encouraged participatory governance and peaceful inter-Korean engagement

*Table 1 The Public Diplomacy Policies of South Korean Presidents*

Table 1 demonstrates that the public diplomacy strategies of Korean Presidents reflect distinct characteristics for each time period. Over the decades, Korea has evolved from a state with a security-centric foreign policy to a multifaceted strategy that harmonizes soft and hard power, integrating economic diplomacy and cultural exports. This chapter analysed each period according to the presidential terms that influenced Korea. During the Rhee Seung-Man administration, the emphasis remained on gaining recognition,

while the Park Chung-Hee era promoted industrial development, which ultimately facilitated the effective implementation of smart power. The following period, the Kim Young-Sam period, moved Korea's approach to the international scene, facilitating a broadened engagement. Kim Dae-Jung's initiatives at reconciliation with North Korea enhanced Korea's worldwide reputation as a democratic and peace-seeking nation, while also leveraging cultural industries to facilitate economic recovery after the 1997 financial crisis.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Korea progressively formalized its efforts to expand public diplomacy across different parts of the world. Korea sought to enhance its economic strength by enhancing the international influence of the Korean Wave through the integration of soft power strategies. It also established public diplomacy as a fundamental component of its foreign policy by the institutionalization of its soft power. This evolution of South Korea's public diplomacy over different administrations, which is contextualized historically, highlights the nation's progression towards becoming a middle power while using an adaptive public diplomacy approach responsive both to the geopolitical challenges and national crisis.

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **THE INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TOOLS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

The third chapter is devoted to the country's unique institutional setup of Public Diplomacy. In doing so, the reason behind its success can be understood better. Korea's public diplomacy strategy is shaped by a combination of historical elements, strategic priorities, and modern global challenges. The institutional framework of public diplomacy of Korea reflects not only the commitment of the government to enhance the branding of the nation but also its adaptability in responding to shifting international dynamics.

It is possible to articulate that Korea's public diplomacy follows a pattern that is both detailed and multi-faceted due to the fact that it employs a variety of instruments through different organizations and government bodies. Government bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS) and related organizations such as the Korea Foundation (KF) play unique and significant roles in defining and implementing these public diplomacy policies. Each institution has its own set of aims, audiences, and instruments, which contribute to a single and comprehensive public diplomacy strategy that includes culture, history, education, and sports.

Therefore, this chapter explores the structures, roles, and interactions with these institutions to illustrate how they coordinate their efforts to enhance nation branding strategy of Korea. Additionally, it analyses how these institutions have evolved in time due to both internal and external factors, such as the democratization of Korea, globalization, and regional security dynamic. Analysing this institutional structure will allow to grasp the strategic vision that drives Korea's successful public diplomacy initiatives.

### 3.1 MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) was established with the Government Organization Act, implemented in 1948 to “*be in charge of foreign policy, external economic policy, the protection of overseas nationals, assessment of international relations overseas public relations*” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, n.d.). Immediately after its creation, MOFA's primary goal was to build peaceful relations with nations across the globe by establishing embassies.

The first Foreign Minister of Korea was Jang Taek-Sang who later become the third Prime Minister. During this period of nation building, the ministry focused on consular relations (Choi, 2019, p. 8). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) founded the Office for people Information in 1948 with the purpose of informing the Korean people about diplomatic initiatives. However, due to the Korean War, all potential future activities were put on hold temporarily.

The difficulties that Korea has faced throughout its history, such as being a divided nation and the danger posed by North Korea, had an impact on the country's diplomacy, especially in the aftermath of the Korean War. A significant portion of the functions, procedures, and structures of the execution of foreign policy in Korea were conducted behind closed doors and without transparency before the democratization of the country (Robertson, 2020, p. 809).

After being dominated by authoritarian administrations that emerged in the aftermath of the Korean War, the 1980s represented a turning point for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in the process of democratization in Korea, which was shifting toward a more transparent and citizen-oriented approach. MOFA was reformed in 1987 to concentrate on economic diplomacy, public relations, and cultural affairs, while also assuring an increased workforce to improve Korea's worldwide image (Kim 2023b, p. 297). In 1994, MOFA merged its six departments into one, combined administrative and legal officers into the Public Administration Legal Affairs Office in 1995, and established an OECD-focused economic organization in 1997 (Kim, 2023b, pp. 298-299).

After the 1997 economic crisis, the Korean government sought to reorganize governmental entities to enhance the effectiveness of public diplomacy, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This restructuring allowed MOFA to better engage with

global audience through enhanced communication channels and more dynamic public diplomacy strategies. Throughout the early 2000s, MOFA strengthened its collaboration with the MCST to align cultural initiatives with Korea's foreign policy goals. Initiatives like cultural exchanges, exhibitions, and academic scholarships became vital tools in reaching international audiences.

In 2014, MOFA officially added public diplomacy to the third pillar of its foreign policy, recognizing the growing significance of the cultural engagement and Hallyu's influence in promoting Korea's image globally. This strategic move demonstrates MOFA's commitment to engaging international communities directly, not just through political or economic measures, but by fostering mutual understanding and positive relationships through cultural diplomacy. Thereby, the Public Diplomacy Act was implemented in August 2016 with the objective of enhancing Korea's image internationally by establishing the foundation for a stronger Korean public diplomacy.

For achieving this objective, the First Master plan for Public Diplomacy initiated between 2017 and 2022 and during this period, Public Diplomacy Committee was established as an inter-ministerial coordinating body, the Korea Foundation was designated as the main public diplomacy implementation agency, the public diplomacy information system was established, and the implementation plans that covers the action plans of central administrative agencies were integrated annually (MOFA, 2022, p.1).

Following the first master plan, the Korean government issued the Second Master Plan for Public Diplomacy in 2023 with three principal aims: strategic policy advocacy in national interests, positioning Korea as a powerhouse for science, technology, and culture, and, establishing a digital and innovative ecosystem for public diplomacy. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak and the negative consequences it brought about, Korea intends to transform itself into a pivotal global nation with the support of this second master plan.

In accordance with the Second Plan, Korea intends to broaden its cultural public diplomacy initiatives by using innovative technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, metaverse, and immersive media technologies. This will allow Korea to improve its digital public diplomacy. In addition to this, it intends to develop an innovative ecosystem for public diplomacy by enhancing the function of the Public

Diplomacy Committee and increasing the number of people who participate in it (MOFA, 2022, p.8).

In 2024, South Korea's public diplomacy aims to promote peace, strengthen international relations, and enhance the nation's global brand in alignment with universal values. Key priorities include the dissemination of knowledge, the promotion of Korean culture and language, digital diplomacy, and fostering youth engagement, all underpinned by the development of public-private partnerships to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable diplomatic framework (MOFA, n.d). The strategy stated in these initiatives reflects the changing character of Korea's public diplomacy, with a greater focus on digital innovation, cultural exchange, and global partnerships. One of Korea's key strengths in its public diplomacy approach is its alignment with technological advancements and its ability to adapt to and meet the demands of the contemporary era.

### **3.2 THE KOREA FOUNDATION**

South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the establishment of the Korea Foundation (hence referred to as KF), which was established in 1991 with the Korea Foundation Act. The KF plays a significant role in fostering international cooperation and boosting awareness of South Korea across the world. By conducting a wide range of academic, policy-related, cultural, and people-to-people exchange programs, KF aims to build a deeper familiarity with Korea while laying the groundwork for long-term global partnerships. These efforts are not only vital for spreading accurate information about Korea but also crucial for strengthening Korea's cultural diplomacy.

Today, the organization continues to provide fellowships and scholarships to students to learn Korean and conduct research on Korea. It sponsors intellectual, cultural, policy, and people-to-people exchange programs to promote worldwide awareness of South Korea, international collaboration, and trust through global connections (KF, 2023). To position Korea as an active global player, the Korea Foundation advances its mission through a range of initiatives, including.

- **Supporting Korean Studies Abroad:** KF provides support to universities for the establishment of Korean Studies programs, the employment of faculty members, and the development of infrastructure for Korea-related education and scholarship.

Additionally, it offers assistance to graduate students via the Scholarship for Graduate Studies, Fellowship for Postdoctoral Research, and Fellowship for Korean Language Training. Through the organization of Korean studies workshops, KF seeks to enhance proficiency in Korea-related educational initiatives. As of 2023, KF provides support to 73 countries, encompassing 239 universities across 1,374 cases (KF, 2023).

- **Global Networking:** KF supports policy industries abroad for research on Korea-related global issues and organizes high-level forums all around the world. It also organizes various programs such as the “Invitation Program for Distinguished Figures”, “Next Generation Leaders Youth Exchange Program”, “US Peace Corps Volunteers’ Revisit to Korea”, “KF Global Challengers” with public diplomacy seminars.
- **Support for Cultural Exchange:** KF aims to make Korean culture more accessible for a larger amount of people by supporting Korea-related exhibits abroad in museums and establishing curatorship for Korean art. The foundation also publishes KOREANA, a magazine that is issued in 11 languages to introduce Korean culture. KF Global Center, which is a space for cultural exchange, organizes exhibitions, lectures and performances that are about Korean culture.

The Korea Foundation plays a pivotal role in enhancing Korea’s soft power by utilizing cultural diplomacy to influence global perceptions about Korea. By sponsoring art festivals, performances, and exhibitions such as Traditional Fusion Korean Music Night in Japan, Korean Traditional Dance Repertoire in Panama, The Rhythm of Korea in Brunei and Korea Music Evening in Istanbul and Romania, the KF contributes Korea’s image as a nation rich in culture, history and innovation (KF, 2023).

KF also assists Korean diplomatic missions abroad in organizing Korean film screenings, promoting Korean cinema across various continents and countries. KF uses its social media tools effectively such as broadcasting videos on YouTube featuring Korean dances, music and motion graphics. Alongside these initiatives, KF also further supports cultural exchange through its publications of KOREANA, Global Hallyu Status and its annual reports reflect the foundation’s commitment to transparency and accountability.

### **3.3 KOREA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (KOICA)**

Korea International Cooperation Agency (Hereinafter KOICA) was formed in 1991 by Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Agency's primary objective is to enhance the effectiveness of Korean aid initiatives for developing nations. Therefore, the mission of KOICA is to contribute the common prosperity of the promotion of world peace through an inclusive approach with five core values: people, peace, prosperity, planet, and partnership (KOICA, 2022, p. 10). By promoting these values, KOICA aims to support world peace, foster global development, and help Korea position itself as a key player on the global stage.

Until today, KOICA has played a pivotal role in fostering international development cooperation. Some of its key milestones include the initiation of the NGO cooperation program in 1995, the launch of peacebuilding programs in Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s, and providing aid for the 2004 South Asian tsunami, among others. In 2009, KOICA established the World Friends Korea brand and the KOICA Global Village with the ODA Education Center in 2010 to further solidify its global engagement. More recently, during COVID-19, it provided vaccines to 92 countries. These initiatives reflect KOICA's growing influence in international development and global public diplomacy.

According to the 2024 KOICA Brochure, the agency's strategic goals for 2024 are as follows: (1) Promote achievement of sustainable development goals, (2) Lead development cooperation partnerships, (3) Enhance sustainability of the ecosystem of development cooperation and (4) ESG-Innovative management (KOICA, 2024). These strategic goals align with KOICA's overarching vision of achieving sustainable development while addressing global challenges through innovation and collaboration. With its forward-looking approach, KOICA continues to strengthen its role and reinforcing Korea's commitment to global peace and prosperity.

### **3.4 MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS, AND TOURISM**

The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST) of South Korea has played a pivotal role in the nation's public diplomacy strategy. By fostering cultural exchange, promoting sports diplomacy, and bolstering tourism, the MCST serves as a crucial instrument in shaping South Korea's global image and enhancing its soft power. The

Ministry of Culture formed in 1990. In late 1993, Ministry of Culture unified with Ministry of Youth and Sports and formed Ministry of Culture and Sports, which subsequently incorporated Tourism in 1998.

In 2004, Ministry of Culture and Tourism restructured to align with the contemporary developments. New departments were established namely: “International Cultural Cooperation Team” and “Regional Cultural Team” under “The Cultural Policies Bureau”, “The Culture and Arts Education Team” under “The Arts Bureau” and “The Cultural Industry Bureau” was divided into two divisions which were “The Cultural Industry Bureau” and “The Cultural Media Bureau” (MCST, n.d). Additionally, Cultural Media Industry Promotion Team and Broadcasting and Advertising Team was established with the Publication Industry Team.

The increased popularity of Hallyu brought economic growth for the country as well. Therefore, to support this increase, MCST raised their budget on Hallyu. From 1.8 billion Korean won in 2011, the government made the decision in 2012 to raise the total amount to 257.5 billion Korean won (Oh & Lee, 2014, p. 83). This amount even increased more in 2013, when it hit to 319 billion Korean won. This budget was spared to be used for the spread of Hangul, traditional and popular Korean music, and touristic places. The government subsequently established what is known as the "export-led economic development" with the assistance of the MCST and other government-supported bodies.

According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism's 2024 Policy Implementation Plan, South Korea's goal is to "establish the nation as a global leader in culture through K-culture and promote citizens' well-being through cultural engagement." To achieve this, the ministry plans to reduce cultural and leisure costs for citizens by introducing initiatives like the 'Youth Culture and Arts Pass.' Furthermore, in the content, tourism, and sports sectors, the plan is to expand the gaming, video, and webtoon industries, supported by a financial investment of KRW 1.74 trillion.

Initiatives to lay the foundation for K-Culture include the MCST's sponsorship of K-arts performances worldwide, the establishment of Hallyu fairs and exhibitions, and support for Korean cultural centres abroad. Additionally, the MCST emphasizes strategic cultural exchange, focusing on strengthening local cultural resilience and addressing social issues through culture. The MCST forms partnerships with various foundations to foster a better

understanding of Korea, such as collaborating with the Korea Craft & Design Foundation to promote the traditional Korean clothing, Hanbok, with actress Kim Tae-Ri. Additionally, the MCST hosts several festivals, including the 2024 K-Wave Festival, which welcomed foreign influencers and creators, and the world's first Webtoon Festival, aimed at promoting Korean Webtoon content.

The MCST implements a comprehensive strategy to enhance Korea's recognition as a global cultural powerhouse. The policies of the ministry support cultural exchange, tourism and the international spread of Hallyu and in this way it contributes strengthening the nation's soft power and highlights the potential of its culture. In this context, the MCST's strategic initiatives aim to solidify its cultural influence both domestically and internationally.

### **3.5 KOREAN FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE (KOFICE)**

The main organization for promoting international cultural exchange is the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (Hereinafter KOFICE), which was founded in 2003 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST). Responsible for organizing cultural exchange events, establish global networking, regulating the research and studies in related fields, KOFICE plays a pivotal role in connecting Korea with the world. The vision of the foundation is described as "A network hub connecting Korea and the world through culture."

The primary goals of the foundation are as follows: "To interconnect central, local governments and the private sector, to plan and support mutual cultural exchange projects tailored to each region, to train experts in the field of international cultural exchange, to serve as a core institute for research and study on international cultural exchange" (KOFICE, n.d). In essence, the foundation is instrumental in promoting Hallyu and expanding Korea's cultural influence worldwide.

In 2024, KOFICE organized the "Korea Season" in collaboration with various countries to promote Korean culture and arts through a range of events. The season coincided with the Paris Olympics, making France a central stage for Korean cultural performances. These included theatres, musical concerts, art exhibitions, conferences, film screenings,

K-Book events, operas, and ballets. KOFICE also runs programs like “Kore•A•Round Culture,” a bilateral arts and culture initiative that fosters collaboration with international cultural organizations, aiming to exchange cultures and create opportunities for Korean artists on the global stage. Some of the programs under this initiative include exhibitions, dance performances, and literature exchanges.

KOFICE also organizes major global Hallyu festivals, including “Mokkoji Korea”, “the Asia Song Festival”, “Culture Bridge Festa”, and the “K-Community Festival”. The term "Mokkoji" refers to bringing people together through games and parties, and this program has travelled to countries such as Uzbekistan (2022), Malaysia (2022), Mexico (2023), and Hungary (2024), showcasing K-Style through a variety of events (Mokkoji Korea, n.d.). Similarly, the Asia Song Festival, held annually since 2004, gathers musicians from across Asia to strengthen cultural ties. Meanwhile, the Culture Bridge Festa hosts a wide range of events worldwide, including film screenings, cooking shows, exhibitions, and traditional dance festivals (Culture Bridge Festa, n.d). Lastly, the K-Community Festival offers a broader experience of Korean culture, fostering cultural exchange between Korea and other countries.

KOFICE publishes various reports and studies on the impact and influence of Hallyu, including “the Hallyu White Paper”, “Survey on Overseas Hallyu Status”, “Study on Ripple Effects of Hallyu”, “Global Hallyu Trends”, “Hallyu NOW”, “Regional Overview Hallyu Next Step”, and “Overseas Cultural Policy Review”. KOFICE actively engages in promoting Korean culture across numerous regions globally, ensuring its accurate and meaningful representation to audiences around the world.

### **3.6 KOREA CREATIVE CONTENT AGENCY (KOCCA)**

The Korea Creative Content Agency (Hereinafter KOCCA) was established in 2001 to support production, planning and creation of creative contents around the world including video games, fashion, music and broadcasting. KOCCA plays a vital role in promoting and developing innovative content, both domestically and internationally. KOCCA’s vision is to become the leading organisation to promote innovating and growth of K-content.

Some of the agency's activities include providing filming locations for the popular Netflix series *Squid Game* in 2020, which became the most-watched Netflix drama worldwide, offering policy financing for the film *The Roundup*, which sold 12.7 million tickets, and supporting the screenwriting for the character Moon Ji-Won in the Netflix drama *Extraordinary Attorney Woo*. Moon Ji-Won received training in 2013 through KOCCA's Creative Talent Partnership Project as part of a creative education program. The drama went on to become the most-watched non-English language show on Netflix for seven weeks, generating an economic impact of KRW 1 trillion.

After the COVID-19 outbreak, KOCCA has been proactive in shaping its foreign policy to ensure the continued distribution of South Korean cultural content globally (Affandi & Putri, 2023, p. 4). KOCCA effectively localized Hallyu policies to tailor creative content for consumption in a way that better aligns with the preferences of each country. This effort proved successful, 2019 marked the first year Korea's cultural content exports surpassed \$10 billion peaked during the COVID-19 outbreak (Affandi & Putri, 2023, p. 4).

KOCCA organizes a variety of events both domestically and internationally, including Fashion Code, Asia's largest fashion market; K-Content Expo; Seoul International Music Fair; and the Game Level-Up Showcase, among others. As highlighted, the agency focuses on diverse cultural genres from animation to broadcasting and gaming as well as fashion and music. This diversity marks the detailed and extensive range of cultural initiatives to influence as many people as possible from various age groups.

The businesses creating K-content are supported by KOCCA through various branches located in regions such as Mexico, the US, China, and London. Currently, there are 8 Business Centers, 2 Marketing Offices, and five additional branches planned for establishment. As outlined in the KOCCA Brochure (n.d.), the agency's objectives for 2030 include reaching KRW 2 trillion in exports and sales, offering loans and investments amounting to KRW 140 billion, investing KRW 60 billion into the Research and Development projects, generating 50,000 new jobs in creative industries, securing top rankings in customer satisfaction, and achieving the highest safety evaluation scores. Considering the changing trends, KOCCA's approach highlights the importance of establishing diverse channels for promoting Korean culture.

### **3.7 KOREAN CULTURE AND INFORMATION SERVICE (KOCIS) AND KOREAN CULTURAL CENTERS**

The Korea Cultural Information Service (KOCIS) has been in charge of cultural relations since 2010. From 2009, KOCIS also has managed Korean Cultural Centers, which promotes the Korean culture. The agency's role is to disseminate accurate and transparent information about Korea including government policies, news about diplomacy and summit talks to international audiences. Its official web portal is called “Korea.net” that promotes the news online in ten different languages under five main categories which are About Korea, Events, Resources, Government and News. It has social media accounts on various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.

KOCIS works on projects to strengthen Korea’s national brand by supporting summit diplomacy and sharing government policies through press releases. It also helps spread Hallyu with the support of Korean Cultural Centers. One of KOCIS’s main roles is managing these centres, which promote Korean culture abroad. These centres organize events to engage people and inform them more about Korean culture. For example, the Korean Cultural Center in Ankara hosts exhibitions, film screenings, and offers Korean language scholarships throughout the year.

KOREA Webzine is a monthly publication by KOCIS that keeps global audiences informed about news from Korea, including the entertainment industry. It features trends in Korea, interviews with famous actors and K-pop idols, as well as recipes for Korean food and updates on government policies. Every month, the magazine covers Korean Dramas and the newly featured Korean Films as well. Through the magazine, KOCIS bridges the gap between Korea and the global audience while offering engaging content that highlights Korea’s dynamic culture.

### **3.6 KOREA TOURISM ORGANIZATION**

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) was originally established in the 1960s and collaborates with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST) to develop new strategies influenced by Hallyu. Its primary purpose is to position tourism as a central pillar of economic growth by attracting international visitors and enhancing domestic

travel, while simultaneously fostering national prosperity, cultural exchange, and global recognition through strategic tourism initiatives (KTO, n.d).

To attract more international visitors, KTO utilizes K-culture through creative content while collaborating with popular Hallyu stars such as K-pop idols. For example, BTS is one of the K-pop groups they collaborated with in their videos to promote Korean cities with unique cultural characteristics. One of KTO's most effective campaigns, *Feel the Rhythm of Korea*, combines traditional Korean culture with famous media personalities to showcase cities in Korea. On KTO's YouTube channel, almost every city is promoted with popular Hallyu actors, including Cha Eun-Woo, a well-known Korean actor, Lee Jung-Jae, the famous actor from Squid Game, and BTS members promoting destinations such as Busan, Seoul, Jeju Island, and Daegu. Each location features a traditional cultural element of Korea, such as folk songs, while seamlessly blending them with modern touches like hip-hop.

The years 2023 and 2024 were designed as "Visit Korea" years by the KTO. In accordance with the program, with the support of the MCST and KTO, the government launched a series of programs designed to attract a wide range of tourists. These programs included culinary tours showcasing Korean food, historical excursions to ancient palaces, and experiences that highlight the country's unique cultural heritage. KTO's efforts have also targeted youth and family tourism, with campaigns aimed at highlighting K-pop, entertainment parks, and family-friendly destinations. Through these strategies, KTO continues to position Korea as a leading global destination. By blending traditional culture with modernity, it fosters international collaboration while increasing Korea's global recognition and economic growth..

### 3.7 THE ASSESSMENT OF KOREA’S INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

South Korea’s institutional framework for public diplomacy and nation branding is mainly structured around multiple governmental and semi-governmental organizations that collectively enhance Korea’s global influence. As seen in table 2, these institutions coordinate policies in foreign affairs, culture, tourism and creative industries, ensuring a comprehensive and strategic approach to public diplomacy.

INSTITUTION	ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY	CONTRIBUTION
Ministry Of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)	The primary institution responsible for shaping South Korea's foreign policy. Manages public diplomacy strategies.	Coordinates cultural and diplomatic missions abroad. Oversees state-supported cultural projects.
Ministry Of Culture, Sports And Tourism (MCST)	Manages policies related to culture, sports, and tourism.	Develops cultural diplomacy strategies and organizes cultural events and initiatives.
Korean Culture And Information Service (KOCIS)	A division of MOFA that focuses on promoting Korean culture abroad through media and educational initiatives.	Conducts global cultural diplomacy, runs media campaigns.
Korea Foundation (KF)	A foundation aimed at promoting South Korea’s image and expanding its cultural diplomacy efforts.	Organizes cultural, academic, and exchange programs to enhance Korea's international standing. Develops international tourism campaigns and supports the growth of Korea’s image as a cultural and travel hub.
Korean Tourism Organization (KTO)	Promotes South Korea as a prime tourism destination globally.	Enhances Korea’s cultural diplomacy efforts by organizing events abroad and fostering cultural partnerships.
Korean Foundation For International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE)	Facilitates the global exchange of Korean culture, including performing arts, exhibitions, and cultural programs.	Supports global development through aid programs and partnerships that align with South Korea’s diplomatic objectives.
Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)	Responsible for providing development assistance and fostering international cooperation with partner countries.	Acts as the driving force behind the global expansion of Korea’s entertainment sectors.
Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA)	Promotes the Korean creative content industry, including music, animation, and games.	

*Table 2 Institutional Framework of South Korea*

Table 2 demonstrates how South Korea's institutional framework successfully combines public diplomacy with cultural branding and economic development in order to create a strong image. This well-structured and integrated strategy enables Korea to connect its soft power initiatives with economic and diplomatic objectives, which in turn leads to the strengthening of its smart power. Korea establishes an integrated approach to its public diplomacy strategy by coordinating with MOFA, MCST, KOCIS, and KF. While KOFICE and KOCCA increase Korea's impact in the creative industries and cultural economy, MOFA and KOCIS play a key role in state-sponsored projects.

South Korea's institutional framework of public diplomacy as outlined, plays a crucial role in shaping the country's global influence. Its success roots in the coordinated efforts of institutions with private sector that merges cultural elements with economic engagement and diplomacy. Korea is also reinventing itself in order to continue keeping up with global trends in a variety of fields, including tourism and hosting sporting events, while maintaining this coherent approach. Therefore, an important component in Korea's success is its institutional structure for public diplomacy. It updates itself while reinforcing this strategy by using its cultural strengths through institutions that are working in tandem.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S SOFT POWER TOOLS**

Korea's public diplomacy strategy is heavily reliant on its use of soft power that enables it to position itself better in the international arena. Korea uses its soft power tools to place itself while shaping perceptions without relying much on coercive measures. Korea employs several cultural and diplomatic instruments to use its soft power. Those tools, ranging from education and language to the global wave of K-culture, serve as a platform for dialogue and engagement. Key areas such as education and language, sports diplomacy, the global rise of the Korean Wave (Hallyu), and industries like K-Beauty, K-Food & Gastrodiplomacy, K-Games, and K-Animation contribute to this strategic positioning of Korea on the world stage. Therefore, this section explores these key concepts and how they contribute to Korea's nation branding strategy and public diplomacy while combining all together to form an image for K-culture.

#### **4.1 EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE**

The use of education as a public diplomacy tool is an effective method for promoting a country's values and culture. Although this strategy requires long-term investment and the achievement of measurable outcomes often takes time, it remains a highly effective tool grounded in a solid foundation of research and practice. In addition, the exchange programs make it easier to develop a two-way communication channel in contrast conveying public diplomacy strategies unilaterally (Snow, 2009, p. 4).

There are several examples of the utilization of education as a tool for public diplomacy. Some of these examples include the Fullbright Scholarship, the Chevening Scholarship, the Erasmus+ Program, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Australian Awards, the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarships, and the Confucius Institutes' Scholarships for both university education and Chinese learning. These scholarships, in turn, ensure cultural exchange and mutual understanding while promoting the values of the countries.

Korea as well used education as a public diplomacy tool. At the same time, Korea's other attractive soft power instruments encouraged people to learn more about Korean language and culture. In line with the increased effects of the Korean Wave, the government

developed “the Study Korea Project” in 2004 and modified “the Korean Government Scholarship Program” (GKS) in 2009 with a 10-point action plan. Accordingly, the main objective of GKS was to assist in enhancing the image of Korea among international students and academics. The outcome was positive since the students who benefitted from the scholarship increased from 133 to 745 between the years 2007 and 2008 (Ayhan et al., 2021, p. 2).

The GKS program is managed by the National Institute for International Education (NIIED), which coordinates with the Ministry of Education. The NIIED hosts Study in Korea fair to attract and support international students and operates programs for Korean students to study abroad as well. NIIED defines the objective of GKS as “*to encourage mutual cooperation and amity between nations due to their educational changes, to enhance its status as ODA in education for developing countries, and to establish a global network in favour of South Korea*” (NIIED staff, 2016 cited in Bader, 2016, p. 82). The scholarship offers a broad variety of advantages, and its scope encompasses a wide range of opportunities as such as the opportunity to study at the top universities in Korea while receiving a full stipend.

Through the Scholarship, an opportunity for *people-to-people diplomacy* approach is provided. Maintaining interactions between cultures while also developing participation on an individual level is accomplished through this approach. Not only this, but also the feedback of the graduates or the continuation of their lives in the place where they studied is also a positive outcome. According to research conducted by Istad et al. (2021), GKS students are more likely to remain in Korea after completing their studies if they feel comfortable enough and have a favourable experience in their everyday lives, as well as in their school environment with professors and academics.

In addition to the GKS Scholarship, language learning is a significant component of Korea's public diplomacy strategy. Language has been one of the most significant tools for utilizing soft power throughout history. Different nations make use of their own languages in order to foster cultural exchange, establish long-term partnerships, and spread their values and objectives. English with the British Council, German with the Goethe Institut, French with the Institut Français, Chinese with the Confucius Institute,

and Korean with the King Sejong Institute are some of the most prominent examples of language learning as an instrument for soft power.

The Korean alphabet, known as Hangeul, has an important place in the cultural history of Korea. The Hangeul alphabet was developed in 1443 by King Sejong and consists of 24 letters, 13 of which are consonants and 10 vowels. King Sejong established Hangeul since Chinese characters were hard to read and write, and only the upper classes or governing elites could read and write them. Hangeul's aesthetic appearance and significant history have made it a significant symbol of Korean culture throughout time. The Hangeul Day is celebrated every year on October 9th, and the most common way for Koreans to commemorate this important day is by paying a visit to the well-known statue of King Sejong, which is located in the Sejongno of Seoul. It is for this reason that the King Sejong institution was chosen as the name of the public diplomacy institution that is committed to advancing Korean language education throughout the world.

In 2012, the Korean government enacted the Framework Act on Korean Language. Clause 2 of Article 19 states that a foundation would be established for "the efficient diffusion of Korean language" (Framework Act on Korean Language, 2012). The institute's primary goal was described as *"teaching the Korean language as a foreign language or a second language and Korean culture, and support for them."* Following the Act, the King Sejong Institute Foundation (KSIF) was formally established in 2005. The foundation was responsible not just for promoting the Korean language through the King Sejong Institutes, but also for other similar initiatives.

According to the King Sejong Institute Annual Report in 2017, the primary aim of the institute is to "enhance the image of Korea as its cultural brand beyond just a language distributor and to make the world communicate with Korean culture" (Eom et al., 2019, p. 103). Today, what makes King Sejong Institutes successful is their ability to stay up to date and integrate various cultural elements beyond the Korean language, creating a more holistic and interconnected approach to the promotion process of Korean culture. For example, the institution offers online Korean learning programs that include K-pop and K-Drama contents as well as textbooks featuring BTS, in order to make it easier for younger generations to engage (Joung, 2021).

King Sejong Institute serves as a public diplomacy institution that teaches Korean in a transparent manner while also promoting Korean cultural values. My closest observation of its operations is based on the six months I spent attending a Korean course offered by the King Sejong Institute during my undergraduate studies in İzmir, Türkiye. During this time, I not only learned the Korean language but also actively participated in Korean cultural activities. These included “Korean Food Days,” where we cooked traditional dishes together such as Tteokbokki or Bibimbap, “Korean Dance Days,” where we wore traditional Hanbok and practiced Korean dances, and “K-pop Karaoke Days,” where we sang popular K-pop songs.

There are now 248 King Sejong Institutes located in 85 different countries as of February 2024, and the institute is planning to establish 18 additional branches in 15 countries (Hong, 2024). Additionally, other institutions, such as The Korea Foundation, are continuing their efforts to promote the Korean language through innovative methods, including a partnership with BTS to enhance online Korean language learning. Textbooks like “Learn Korean with BTS” and “Easy Korean with BTS” also play a key role in furthering the promotion of the language. These efforts would continue to facilitate the global adoption of the Korean language and culture, further enhancing the effectiveness of Korea’s soft power strategies.

## **4.2 SPORTS DIPLOMACY**

The use of sports as a diplomatic tool is not a new concept in international relations, it has always been important for nations to both display themselves and their customs while having an opportunity to enhance their national image on the international stage. For example, during the Cold War, sports were employed as an instrument of propaganda between two ideologies: liberalism and communism. Another way to use sports is to improve relations between nations, as seen with the Ping-Pong Diplomacy between the United States and China in the 1970s, when it was used to improve relations between the two countries, or in 2009, when Turkish Prime Minister Abdullah Gül and Armenian President Serzh Azati Sargsyan watched a football match together on the tribune.

Sports diplomacy in the 21st century has evolved significantly, emerging as a crucial instrument in the broader landscape of public diplomacy. Athletes, clubs, and teams are

evaluated not only based on their skills but also serve as representatives of their nations and cultures on the global stage. It also helps building bridges between countries and complements a nation's public diplomacy profile (Murray, 2018, p. 95).

Among these instances, Korea utilized sports primarily for three purposes as an instrument for public diplomacy. First, it is used to demonstrate its successes as a country and capabilities during the nation-building period after the war and the economic crisis, as well as to change its image in the worldwide context by hosting some major sports events. Second, it is utilized for improving relations with North Korea through sports events and demonstrating Korea's peaceful attitude. Third, using sports, specifically Taekwondo, as a cultural asset to enrich Korea's public diplomacy.

Taekwondo was officially named in 1955 by Korean General Choi Hong-Hi and later designated as the national sport of South Korea. Even though Taekwondo was accepted as an official Olympic sport in 2000, the globalization of it started long before. Following Park Chung-Hee's announcement of Taekwondo as the national sport of the Republic of Korea, the 1988 Olympics became the first occasion for its worldwide presentation. Chun Doo-Hwan believed that organizing great sports competitions would bring prestige and respect to the country and strengthen the authority of the government (Woong-Yong, 1998, p. 11).

After Park Chung-Hee's declaration of Taekwondo as the national sport of Korea, the World Taekwondo Federation was established in 1973. The objectives of the federation are to become the leading and respected federation in the Olympic and Paralympic movements, organizing fairs and competitions also developing innovative projects such as Virtual Taekwondo and the Octagon Diamond Game (World Taekwondo, n.d). After its establishment, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism recognized Taekwondo as one of South Korea's 10 cultural symbols in 1996 (Rozenfeld & Podoler, 2002, p. 9). Today, every 4<sup>th</sup> of September is celebrated as the World Taekwondo Day to promote more interest all around the world to commemorate the IOC's decision to include Taekwondo as an Olympic sport.

Taekwondo also holds a great significance as a peacebuilding tool in the international arena. Taekwondo is also a valuable instrument for international peacebuilding. The philosophy behind Taekwondo is based on Buddhism, therefore, it values discipline,

justice, respect and self-confidence. In addition, Taekwondo fosters solidarity and understanding, which improves mutual understanding across cultures (Na, 2016 cited in Johnson, 2024, p. 5). Starting as early as 1959, Taekwondo acted as a soft power tool as it was introduced overseas to countries such as South Vietnam and Taiwan by General Choi Hong-Hi (Johnson & Vitale, 2018, p. 242).

While Taekwondo is the most widely recognized Korean martial art, there are several others worth noting as well. Some of them are Hapkido (a form of self-defence), Ssireum (Korean wrestling), and Taekkyeon (a form of martial art that focuses on hands and feet techniques). In fact, Taekkyeon was the first martial art included on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2011, characterized by UNESCO as "a traditional Korean martial art that makes use of fluid, rhythmic dance-like movements to strike or trip up an opponent" (Rozenfeld & Podoler, 2022, p. 5).

The cultural significance of sports in Korea is tied to the nation's sense of pride and identity, which was also evident during the 1988 Olympic Games. In the opening episode of the Korean drama series *Reply 1988*, a high school student is getting ready for her part in the 1988 Olympic Games that were going to be held in Seoul. Everyone in her family, her circle of friends, and even the entire neighbourhood feels proud and happy for her and eager to see the Olympics. Even that scene alone reflects how thrilled and proud Koreans were about hosting the Olympics in Seoul. In reality, Koreans were even more enthusiastic to show the world how Korea was developing.

Sandra Collins (2010, pp. 163-164) discusses the significance of hosting the Olympics as a showcase for developing countries to become a part of the global community. The Summer Olympics of 1988 exactly served this purpose for Korea. Accordingly, Korea portrayed itself nation with a rich culture and a developing economy. The investments for the Olympics began in 1982, with a total investment of 1,534 million dollars directly and 1,763 million dollars indirectly (Korea Development Institute, n.d).

The outcomes of these initiatives were primarily positive for Korea. Korea successfully demonstrated that it was capable of hosting a major event, improving its ties with communist regimes while benefiting economically from the Olympics, particularly in the following decade. Sponsors such as Coca-Cola and Visa contributed financially, while

the tourism industry benefited as the number of visitors climbed, bringing the total benefit to 1.3 billion dollars over three years (Bridges, 2013, p. 1942).

In 2002, Korea once again hosted to a sports event, this time the FIFA World Cup, which was co-hosted with Japan. A series of dances performed in traditional Korean costumes were followed by performances from Japanese and Korean actors together and statements from the president at the beginning of the opening ceremony. Kim Young-Sam, the president of Korea at the time, used the World Cup to inspire the people of Korea to recover from the financial crisis that occurred in 1997 and to establish a society that is confident and cohesive (Grix et al., 2021, p. 9). The tournament's primary objective was to emphasize national pride, rather than the overall economic outcome, as it was co-hosted with Japan (Hahm et al., 2020, p. 3). "The successful organization of the tournament highlighted Korea's ability to host large-scale global events shortly after the economic crisis of 1997, helping to restore national pride.

Internationally, Korea used the World Cup to reshape its image. According to the research conducted on US, Japanese, and Chinese visitors before and after their visits to Korea for the 2002 World Cup, they had more favourable attitudes on Korea than previously (S. S. Kim & Morrision, 2003, p. 245). The research also showed that tourists were more concerned about North Korean threats before visiting Korea in 2002. Also, after the tournament, the number of visitors had climbed by 23% in the following year (Lee, 2024). Moreover, the competition was responsible for generating income of 1.35 billion dollars while simultaneously strengthening Korea's image on the world stage.

Another important even that took place in the same year was the 2002 Asian Games that was held in Busan. Busan was the second Korean city to host the games, following Seoul in 1986. The most important aspect of the 2002 Asian Games in terms of sports diplomacy occurred when North and South Korea entered the stadium under the same flag. This symbolic emphasis on Korean unification and the promotion of peace on the Korean The 2002 Asian Games set a strong image for Korea's sports diplomacy by highlighting the themes of unity and peace on the Korean Peninsula. In the years that followed, Korea continued to organize large sporting events that helped improve its image. This was apparent again in the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon and the 2018 Winter Olympics in

Pyeongchang. On both occasions, Korea showed its technological infrastructure as well as its peaceful environment and warm hospitality towards tourists.

Korea emphasized on the "Information and Communication Technology (Hereafter ICT) Olympics" during the 2018 Winter Olympics, demonstrating five innovative ICT-based services: the world's first usage of 5G communication networks, the internet of things (IoT), ultrahigh definition (UHD), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI) (Grix et al., 2021, p. 12). New technologies such as VR experiences for winter sports, AI-based automated translation services, the 4K UHD terrestrial broadcasting and recording AR videos with winter sports were made possible to showcase South Korea as a country of innovation and technology to the international visitors (Young-min, n.d).

The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics further showcased Korea's continuous commitment to the technological advancements as it worked alongside China to promote digital engagement, reinforcing the role of ICT in shaping the future of international sports diplomacy. In addition, the integration of K-pop to the sports diplomacy initiatives established a more integrated approach of public diplomacy as it is seen with the examples of BTS's Jungkook performance of the song "Dreamers" at the opening of the FIFA World Cup in 2022 and again in 2024 Paris Olympics when BTS member Jin carried the Olympic torch. These examples reflect the growing influence of Hallyu, which have become a powerful soft power tool for promoting Korea's cultural diplomacy on the world stage.

#### **4.3 HALLYU: KOREA'S ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AS A SOFT POWER TOOL**

Psy's viral hit Gangnam Style in 2012, Netflix's famous show Squid Game in 2021, the Oscar-winning film Parasite in 2019, and globally admired K-pop bands like BTS, BLACKPINK, and Stray Kids—all significantly connected to the Korean Wave, also known as Hallyu. The term Hallyu, is a term derived from Chinese, first used in Chinese media in the 1990s to describe the success of Korean singers. It includes Korean films, Korean television shows, which are often referred to as K-Dramas, as well as Korean music, particularly Korean Pop, also known as K-Pop.

In addition to referring to the term "Korean," the letter "K" that is used in front of the words "Wave," "Drama," "Pop," and "Film" also conveys a more nuanced concept: a globalized representation of Korean culture (Kiaer, 2023). The cultural policies of Korea, which have been highlighted in previous chapters, have contributed to the spread of Korea's cultural assets around the globe. It can be stated that the emergence of the international impact of Korea's cultural policies is largely due to the success of Hallyu in the 1990s. Korea's democracy process, along with technological advancements that came along with globalization, made it simpler for Korea to employ its soft power tools, leading to the birth of the Hallyu.

The Korean Wave represents a strategic cultural export that shows Korea's ability to adapt in a globalized world, rather than being just an entertainment phenomenon. Therefore, to fully grasp the importance of Hallyu and its impact, this section explores the historical evolution through distinct phases respectively as— Hallyu 1.0, Hallyu 2.0, Hallyu 3.0, Hallyu 4.0. Following this chronological framework, key components of the Korean Wave such as K-Pop, K-Dramas and Korean Cinema is analysed to highlight their unique contribution to Hallyu's global success. The primary objective is to provide a detailed and organized perspective on how Korea's film and music industries helped shape the Korean Wave in time.

#### **4.3.1 HALLYU 1.0: THE EARLY DAYS (1997-MID 2000S)**

Hallyu's first enlargement took place primarily inside the Asian continent, especially the East Asia region. Sunny Yoon (2014, p. 7) defines this accomplishment using three arguments: cultural discount as a benefit of originating from a similar culture in comparison to western products, Confucianism as an attribute that Asian people have in common in their roots, and transnationalist empathy. Indeed, the first spread of Korean goods throughout Asia is often associated with cultures that are comparable to those of the targeted nations and the effective adaptation of those cultures. Korean dramas were the most significant soft power tool of Korea during the first period of the Hallyu. K-dramas, such as 'What is Love' (1992) and 'Star in My Heart' (1997), were the first dramas to receive worldwide recognition in nations such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Chinese people could relate with Korean Dramas, as it happened with 'What is Love' which about a family who were faithful to Confucian values, a concept

that Chinese people are familiar with. However, the dramas *Autumn in My Heart* (2000), *Winter Sonata* (2002) and the *Jewel in the Palace* (2003) were the most significant influential factors that contributed to the development of Hallyu during this period.

#### **4.3.2 HALLYU 2.0: DIGITAL EXPANSION (EARLY 2000S-MID 2000S)**

As a result of the rapid development of digital technology, the Korean Wave began to spread around the globe starting in the mid-2000s. This period saw the emergence of the phrase "Hallyu 2.0," which was first used in Japanese media in 2010 Tokyo performance of the Korean K-pop group Girls' Generation (Lee, 2015, p. 15). According to Dal Yong Jin (2016, pp 4-6), Hallyu 2.0 is an era that is characterized by a particular set of characteristics resulting from the development of digital technology as well as social media, both of which are strengths that Korea has. Hallyu's expansion started with the K-Dramas in general during the Hallyu 1.0 period. However, the key factor during the Hallyu 2.0 phase was music, particularly the Korean popular music, which is often referred to as K-pop.

During this time period, Hallyu's influence began to spread outside the Asia. The spread of Korean culture around the world was facilitated by the widespread popularity of Korean popular music. The rise in popularity of YouTube provided the path for Korean popular music and K-pop videos to adapt themselves to the markets of other countries via the use of YouTube. For example, the organizations that represent the K-pop performers SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment were seen 2.3 million times all around the globe in the year 2011 (Ju, 2018, p. 11).

The communication strategies used during the Hallyu 2.0 era grew more two-way, while Hallyu 1.0 was mostly one-sided (Butsaban, 2023, p. 2). The development of smartphones and other technological advancements has not only made it simpler for fans from other countries to access Korean cultural contents, but it has also made it possible to implement a two-way communication strategy. This interactivity marked the start of the transformation of the global spread of Korean culture while fostering deeper connections. Therefore, it is possible to say that Hallyu 2.0 laid the foundation for a more dynamic cultural exchange which is more suitable for the digital age.

### **4.3.3 HALLYU 3.0: THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON (2010-2016)**

The beginning of the 2010s marked the beginning of a new era in the growth of Korean Wave that was inspired by the spark that was grabbed by Hallyu 2.0. K-pop had already gained popularity in the previous decade, and during this period, its influence expanded internationally, continuing its global rise. K-pop started to gain considerable recognition worldwide, reaching a broader and more diverse international audience. Artists such as PSY and bands like EXO, BTS and BLACKPINK began to chart in the international markets, setting new standards.

The relatively narrow scope of Hallyu 1.0 and Hallyu 2.0 was broadened to include K-Culture, encompassing new fields like as the gaming industry, K-beauty, literature, and webtoons (Jin & Yoon, 2017, p. 2244). Rather than concentrating on K-pop or K-dramas, Hallyu 3.0 was primarily concerned with promoting "K-Culture" as a whole. In addition, a variety of soft power resources were used in conjunction with one another in order to enhance the efficiency of the Korean culture as a whole. As it was argued before in the previous chapters, especially with the Lee Myung-Bak period, the Korea Brand was started to be globalized.

### **4.3.4 HALLYU 4.0: THE FUTURE OF KOREAN CULTURE (2016 ONWARDS)**

The Hallyu 4.0 period, which began in the latter part of the 2010s, is the most recent phase of the Hallyu. It is the new era that is characterized by social media and themes that are relevant with the contemporary period. Unlike earlier stages, Hallyu 4.0 emphasizes the importance of accessibility and online interactions, making it more interactive and personalized for global audiences. K-style, a defining feature of this era, reflects the younger, more dynamic, and actively engaged approach to mainstream pop culture, encompassing fashion, music, and lifestyle trends that resonate with the digital age (Kim, 2015, p. 158).

During this period, a united representation of Korean culture emerged, including literature, fashion, cuisine, tourism, and beauty products. Hallyu 4.0 focuses on achieving measurable results in cultural industries, such as encouraging non-Koreans to consume Korean cuisine and watch Korean dramas on a monthly basis (Jun, 2017, cited in Boman,

2022, p. 422). The goal is to build a relationship of trust with the country while encouraging people to embrace its cultural elements.

Another important characteristic of this period is its reflection of Korea's socio-cultural transformation through music, series, and films. Feminist themes mixed with traditional Korean cultural elements are now more visible, showing both Korea's patriarchal traditions and how they are changing. In this context, feminist themes originating from the West are blended with Korean elements in dramas such as *The Descendants of the Sun* (2016), *Extraordinary Attorney Woo* (2022), and *My Name* (2021) (Boman, 2022). As Hallyu 4.0 continues to evolve, its impact on global audiences increases, paving the way for the next wave of Korean influence.

#### **4.3.5 K-POP: A CENTRAL ELEMENT IN THE GROWTH OF HALLYU**

"Music transcends language," said BTS member RM, Kim Nam-Joon, in a 2017 interview with *TIME* magazine. Indeed, Korean music has become a defining feature of the Korean Wave, helping to increase its global recognition, regardless of the language. K-pop, which combines Western and traditional Korean culture, portrays a merging culture through dynamic dances and music that people from the different parts of the world can relate. In addition, the use of K-pop as an effective tool of public-cultural diplomacy and soft power for Korea is regarded as a positive element in the country's international relations with other nations (Keskin, 2021).

While PSY's *Gangnam Style* introduced Korean music to a global audience in 2012 (as of December 2024, 5.4 billion views on YouTube), the history of K-pop goes back in the 1990s. In 1992, Seo Taiji and Boys (A Korean Boyband) performed their single in a television channel, "Nan Arayo" (I know in English) and it remained at the top of the Korean charts for 18 months. This marked the beginning of a new genre in Korea, which would eventually spread around the world. It was around this time that the first generation of Korean pop music emerged, which is often referred to as the period between the years 1990 and 2000 and known as the First Generation of K-pop.

Around this time, Korea's biggest entertainment businesses emerged, including SM Entertainment, JYP, and HYBE. The contributions of Korea's entertainment industries, as well as their collaboration with government agencies, facilitated K-pop's worldwide

expansion. In 1996, SM Entertainment's K-pop boyband H.O.T (High Five of Teenagers) was created, and the group supported the promotion of K-Pop with their concert in 1999 in Beijing (Binark, 2020, p. 191). The success of the group ignited the emergence of a new generation of K-pop groups such as S.E.S and Shinhwa, paving the way for the expansion and diversification of the genre both domestically and internationally.

As discussed in earlier sections of this thesis, the 2000s marked the initial global expansion of K-pop, setting the stage for its widespread international recognition. Beginning in Asia, several K-pop groups started to sing in languages such as Chinese and Japanese, releasing albums in these languages and performing more frequently in various countries. K-pop gradually began to cultivate fan communities across different regions of the world, particularly in Asia, up until the mid-2000s. Between 1998 and 2008, approximately thirty K-pop groups, duos, and solo artists were introduced annually, with the number steadily increasing each year (Russell, 2014, pp. 6-7).

The second wave of Hallyu, driven by particular singers like as BoA, Rain, and Se7en, sought to expand into the United States market following success of K-pop in Asia (Jung, 2015, p. 77). Following this, third-wave K-pop stars gained popularity in the late 2000s, and K-pop began to emerge as the central force of Hallyu. During this period, K-pop boy bands and girl groups gained significant recognition both domestically and internationally, exemplified by groups such as TVXQ, Super Junior, and Wonder Girls. This period was distinguished by the innovative approach that emerged in the creation of unique dance choreographies and a distinct musical genre, which collectively contributed to the evolution of K-pop as a global cultural phenomenon.

The feature of the K-pop stars as brand ambassadors for Korea and as an asset for public diplomacy started to be seen at the G20 Summit in 2010 (Keskin, 2021, p. 202). Performances of "Let's Go" by K-pop stars like Girls' Generation, SHINee, 2PM, 2AM, and Kara, along with traditional Korean clothing, were important elements of soft power at the G20 Seoul Summit. Later, K-Pop stars were also featured at the 2012 Yeosu Expo and the 2014 Incheon Asian Games, and at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics, the group EXO was selected as the "nation's favourite band" and presented as a symbol of 'Koreanness' (Keskin, 2021).

The 2010s witnessed the emergence of K-pop as a truly global force, with groups like Girls' Generation, EXO, Big Bang and BTS leading the charge in reshaping the genre's international influence. Their success marked a significant shift in global music landscape, with K-pop rapidly gaining recognition beyond Asia and becoming an integral part of the global cultural conversation. Analysing the success of these groups offers a valuable insight into how K-pop served as a driving force behind the global promotion of Hallyu, setting the stage for its continued cultural impact.

BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan, which translates to 'Bulletproof Boy Scouts' in English) debuted in 2013 under Big Hit Entertainment with their album '2 Cool 4 Skool.' Their initial success came from connecting with fans through concepts that were often considered taboo in both Korea and the rest of the world, which, in turn, allowed them to build a fanbase called "The ARMY," rooted in shared struggles. Since then, BTS has numerous several awards, totalling 118 awards and 43 nominations, and solidified their position as a global ambassador of Korean culture.

BTS has achieved groundbreaking milestones, including multiple Grammy nominations for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance, victories such as Top Social Artist at the Billboard Music Awards, and becoming the first and only K-pop group to win Favourite Group at the American Music Awards. They also made history as the first Korean artist to receive a nomination at the Brit Awards in 2021. Furthermore, BTS became the first K-pop group to top the US music charts in 2018 and the first Korean act to perform at the American Music Awards. Their achievements extend to becoming the most-streamed group on Spotify in 2021, holding the record for the highest Twitter engagement in 2019, and producing the most-viewed YouTube video within 24 hours (Dynamite), with 101.1 million views in 2020 (as in 2024, it has almost 2 billion views) (Spangler, 2020).

The collaboration of BTS with UNICEF and BTS's speech at the United Nations in 2017 as part of UNICEF's 'Generation Unlimited' campaign is perhaps the biggest example of the music industry being used as soft power by the Korean Government. In 2019, after achieving great success on Billboard, Time Magazine included BTS among the 100 most influential people who will be 'Leaders of the Next Generation' (Binark, 2019, p. 70). Following BTS's success at the Billboard Music Awards, the Korean Government awarded BTS for their contribution to the spread of 'Hallyu,' and the promotions of the

city of Seoul were also carried out by BTS with the 'BTS' Life in Seoul' videos and the song 'With Seoul.' In addition, BTS serves as a bridge between cultures under the umbrella of various UN aid agencies (Keskin, 2021).

In recognition of K-pop's contribution to Korea's cultural diplomacy and economic growth, the South Korean government implemented the so-called 'BTS Law' in 2020. Normally, South Korea requires mandatory military service, which lasts for two years. However, this law allows exceptional cultural contributors, including K-pop artists, to defer their military service until the age of 30. This legislative decision underscores the government's acknowledgment of the global influence and the contributions of K-pop idols to the national economy as valuable soft power assets (BBC, 2020).

In 2022, EXO member Suho delivered a speech at Stanford University discussing the impact of Hallyu. He stated that Hallyu has no borders with the words, *"We feel the power of the Hallyu wave not only on stage, but in our everyday lives. (...) Hallyu no longer stops at one specific art form. We are witnessing its expansion into our society from every angle: music, dramas, movies, food, education, and more. K-culture is more than a passing trend. It's a global phenomenon that will continue to grow and evolve."* (Cruz, 2022). This speech of Suho reflects one of the key aspects of K-pop's increasing influence that continues to evolve and expand across different sectors.

One concept that draws attention is the incorporation of traditional Korean culture into K-pop songs. G-Dragon, a member of the boyband BIGBANG, utilized traditional Korean culture by sampling old Joseon songs as beat samples in his track "Niriria," referring to his music as a form of international diplomacy at the same time. Later, BTS continued this integration of traditional and contemporary music. Some notable examples include August D's (BTS member Suga) song "Daechwita," which features the sound of Gugak, a genre of traditional Korean music. Similarly, in his song "Haegum," he references the Haegum, a traditional Korean stringed instrument. Additionally, BTS songs such as "Idol" and "Ddaeng" also incorporate traditional rhythms, like pansori, a traditional Korean narrative singing style. In addition to BTS, Rosé from BLACKPINK also references Korean culture in her song with Bruno Mars, "APT," by mentioning a popular Korean drinking game. These examples, both domestically and internationally

popular, showcase the successful blend of traditional Korean music with contemporary K-pop, highlighting the global appeal of this cultural combination.

As of December 2024, the current state of K-pop has reached levels that many once considered unimaginable. BTS visited the White House in May 2022 to discuss anti-Asian hate with President Joe Biden, sharing their personal experiences with discrimination and emphasizing the importance of embracing differences and promoting equality. During a 2023 state visit to the UK, King Charles referenced K-pop stars BTS and Blackpink in his speech, emphasizing the global influence of South Korean culture as a significant form of soft power (Coughlan, 2023).

Also, again in 2023, K-pop's global influence surged as Stray Kids, along with Seventeen and other groups, dominated the charts, with Stray Kids scoring two U.S. number one albums and becoming the third highest-selling act, reflecting K-pop's expansion and success beyond traditional Western markets. Rosé from Blackpink collaborated with Bruno Mars on the hit "APT," which has charted for two months on the Billboard Hot 100. Meanwhile, Stray Kids released a music video named "Chk Chk Boom" featuring a collaboration with the Deadpool and Wolverine film franchise, combining K-pop with blockbuster superhero themes.

From the initial regional success of Hallyu 1.0 to the global phenomenon of Hallyu 4.0, K-pop has evolved into a pivotal tool in Korea's soft power strategy. Beyond cultural diplomacy, K-pop has become a significant economic driver, contributing to both economic growth and cultural outreach. In 2022, the Korean music industry achieved a record revenue of approximately 11 trillion KRW, with exports approaching \$927.6 million USD (Redaktion, 2024). In 2018, the industry accounted for about 1.7% of Korea's GDP, and the value of the K-pop market is projected to reach 20 billion USD by 2023 (Allied Market Research, 2023).

It is possible to see the appeal of Korean groups in famous and popular TV shows such as the shows of James Corden, the Tonight Show of Jimmy Fallon, BBC's Graham Norton Show, the Ellen Show and so on. Also, the worldwide popular brands such as Vogue, Dior, Louis Vuitton and Calvin Klein uses K-pop stars as brand faces to attract more people. Through this global reach and cultural impact, K-pop not only promotes

Korean culture but also strengthens Korea's position in the world, demonstrating the effectiveness of soft power in modern diplomacy.

#### **4.3.6 KOREAN DRAMAS: STORYTELLING BEYOND BORDERS**

In recent years, Korean Dramas (Hereinafter K-drama) have gained international attention, captivating audiences beyond Korea's borders. What started as a domestic trend has blossomed into a global movement, attracting viewers from diverse cultures and backgrounds. One of the key reasons for their popularity is the relatability of the stories and their emotional expressiveness. The storytelling, therefore, serves as the driving force behind K-dramas, allowing audiences to connect deeply with the characters. K-dramas also serve as a window into Korean culture, introducing audiences to traditional customs, Korean cuisine, and social dynamics.

"Winter Sonata" was one of the first K-dramas to have a worldwide impact, spreading across Asia. The phenomenon known as 'The Yon-sama Syndrome' emerged as a result of the drama's immense popularity in Japan, particularly due to the affection Japanese women have for Bae Yong-Joon, the actor portraying the main character (Kim, 2023c). Accordingly, almost 40% of the Japanese people has seen the drama at least once (Kim, 2023d, p. 105). Another K-drama that achieved significant success was Jewel in the Palace, which tells the story of the first female physician during the Joseon dynasty. It became the first Korean drama to be broadcast in over 50 countries, from the Middle East to Europe, marking a milestone in the global reach of Korean historical dramas. At the same time, the Korean government actively encouraged fans to visit drama filming locations like the Jeju Folk Village, where they can experience traditional Korean culture by wearing hanbok and enjoying local cuisine (Kim, 2023d, p. 107).

As K-dramas gained international popularity, the South Korean government recognized the cultural power of Hallyu and began using it for nation branding. The government transformed the phenomenon of 'Hallyu' into 'Hallyu-hwa' (Hallyuization), employing it as a strategic tool for nation branding (Binark, 2019, p. 74). Particularly after 2005, the government took a more pragmatic approach, as seen with examples such as My Secret Romance (2017), King's Love (2017), and That Man Oh Soo (2018), all of which received direct support from KOCCA.

As stated earlier, the expansion of Hallyu began with K-dramas. With the rise of technology, particularly the use of the internet, the 2010s saw a significant increase in the popularity of Korean dramas. In 2011, K-dramas accounted for 90% of total TV program exports, reaching a value of 252 million dollars (Kim, 2013, p. 6). *My Love from the Star*, *Descendants of the Sun*, and *Boys over Flowers* are just a few examples of the new Korean dramas that began gaining popularity during this time period.

The rise of platforms like Netflix and Amazon has further boosted the popularity of Korean content. Netflix, in particular, began co-producing both new and classic K-drama series to meet the growing demand from international audiences (Kim, 2023d, p. 108). The concepts of these dramas, ranging from romance to fantasy and science fiction, offer international audiences a wide variety of choices.

One notable example among these successful dramas is *Squid Game*, which captured the attention of audiences worldwide in 2021, transcending language barriers and regional boundaries, with nearly 95% of its viewers coming from outside of Korea. The first season of the show attracted 330 million viewers, while the second season, released in 2024, broke records by becoming the number one show in all 93 countries where Netflix is available (Tassi, 2024). It has now become the most-watched show on Netflix, further solidifying its place as a cultural phenomenon. The announcement of the second season of the series in 2024 was made through various events in different countries. For example, in Paris' Champs-Élysées, 456 participants were selected and dressed just like in the series. Similar promotional events took place in Turkey, Bangkok, the US, and Italy.

As a direct result of all these achievements, Netflix extended its investment in Korea by becoming involved in the production of original content and by purchasing studios. As of the year 2016, Netflix has made an investment of 645 million dollars in Korea and been responsible for the production of 80 original dramas and films that included Korean creators and actors (Kim, 2023d, p. 108). This investment grew even further after the success of *Squid Game*. In 2023, the vice president of Netflix announced plans to invest 2.5 billion dollars in Korean content, emphasizing Korea's achievement in sharing its unique culture with the world (Wan, 2023).

In 2022, K-dramas exported around 214.4 million US dollars' worth of content, reflecting their growing impact. Several K-dramas have contributed significantly to various sectors,

such as “My Love from the Star”, which increased tourism to Korea by 20% and boosted chicken and beer sales in China by 150%, “Crash Landing on You”, which led to a 47% rise in sales of Korean beauty products in Japan and a 47% increase in global sales of Korean language learning materials, “Descendants of the Sun”, which contributed an estimated \$1 billion to South Korea's economy and resulted in a 40% increase in sales of Korean cosmetics in China, “Squid Game”, which reached \$2 billion in merchandise sales worldwide, caused a 7,800% increase in white slip-on Vans sales, a 40% rise in Korean language learning app downloads, and a 9,900% increase in Halloween costume sales on Amazon, “Guardian: The Lonely and Great God”, which exceeded \$50 million in merchandise sales, “Itaewon Class”, which increased visits to Itaewon district in Seoul by 40%, “Reply 1988”, which saw merchandise sales surpassing \$30 million, “Boys Over Flowers”, which contributed to a 30% rise in tourism to Jeju Island, and “Extraordinary Attorney Woo”, which led to a 30% increase in whale-watching tours in South Korea, showcasing the broad economic and cultural impact of K-dramas globally (Gitnux, n.d).

Korea has undeniably become more widely recognized on the global stage. The popularity of K-dramas has played a significant role in this, reaching audiences far beyond Korea's borders. This success has had economic implications, including boosting tourism to Korea. Additionally, cultural elements featured in K-dramas, such as the children's games and food in Squid Game, have introduced Korean culture to a global audience. As a result, K-dramas have helped elevate Korea's popularity not only in Asia but also in other parts of the world, with greater recognition of both the country and the Korean language.

#### **4.3.7 KOREAN CINEMA: FROM SEOUL TO WORLD**

Cinema has been a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy, and over the last few decades, Korean cinema has emerged as a dominant force in the global film industry. Korean cinema has evolved significantly over the decades and has played a vital role in Korea's soft power strategy. Once largely confined to domestic audiences, Korean films have gained international recognition, becoming a key player in the global film industry. This evolution is not only reflected in the success of films like *Parasite*, which made history at the 2020 Academy Awards, but also in the increasing international demand for Korean films and their cultural significance.

Korean cinema began to gain popularity in the 1990s, alongside K-dramas, during the first expansion phase of Hallyu 1.0. This period saw the emergence of blockbuster films such as *Shiri* (1999), *Joint Security Area* (2000), *My Sassy Girl* (2001), and *Oldboy* (2003). Following the 1997 financial crisis, the involvement of prominent chaebols in the film industry significantly accelerated the development of Korean cinema, as highlighted in the previous chapters. New producers and independent companies emerged during this time, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative storytelling that contributed to the diversification and international appeal of Korean cinema.

*Shiri* became Korea's first global success, setting box office records and claiming the top spot in Japan (Armstrong, 2021, p. 57). Its unprecedented success not only brought significant attention to Korean cinema but also marked the beginning of a wave of Korean films that began to gain prominence on the global stage. Building on this success, several other Korean films gained international recognition, including *Chunhyang* (2000), the first Korean film selected for the Cannes Film Festival, and Im Won-hee's *Chihwaseon* (2002), which earned the Best Director award. The film's inclusion at Cannes symbolized a shift in global cinematic trends, where non-Western films started to receive recognition in major international festivals. Following this, Park Chan-wook's *Oldboy* won the Cannes Jury Grand Prix in 2004, with the jury headed by Quentin Tarantino, a prominent figure in the global film industry. This series of successes showed that Korean cinema was gaining more recognition at major international festivals and becoming an important influence internationally.

The 2000s witnessed the true global spread of Korean cinema, as its films gained increasing recognition and popularity in international markets. Films referencing Korea's history, such as *Joint Security Area* (2000), *Friend* (2001), *Silmido* (2003), and *Taegukgi: The Brotherhood of War* (2004), gained popularity by blending historical themes with mainstream genre elements, appealing to both domestic and international audiences (Shin, 20203, p. 69). In 2005, for the first time in Korea's history, the export of Korean films surpassed the import of foreign films, marking a significant milestone in the country's cinematic industry (Jin, 2016, p. 71).

Building on the momentum of the 2000s, the 2010s saw an even greater diversification of genres and narratives in Korean cinema, reflecting the country's evolving cultural

landscape and its growing global influence. Films such as the *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2013), *Handmaiden* (2016), *Train to Busan* (2016), *Forgotten* (2017) and the *Parasite* (2019). Korean cinema combined elements of drama, thriller, and psychology to offer diverse experiences to audiences from various regions. With the increased accessibility of films through online platforms, Korean productions were able to reach a wider global audience.

*Parasite*, which was directed by Bong Joon-Ho and released in 2019, was awarded four Academy Awards, one of which was for Best International Feature picture. This achievement made it the first film in a language other than English to win in this category. Following the success of *Parasite*, Korean cinema continued to gain global recognition with films like *Minari* (2020), *Decision to Leave* (2022), further solidifying the country's place in international cinema. Despite the language barrier, the growing popularity of Korean films led to a significant increase in global audiences, through streaming platforms like Netflix. Korean cinema's growing success in global markets and its recognition show that this success will continue, influencing both domestic and global audiences.

#### **4.4 KOREAN BEAUTY AND FASHION**

The phrase "Korean Beauty" (Hereafter K-Beauty) refers to a broad category of beauty products, particularly those that are formulated for the skin, that are manufactured in Korea. Hallyu's growing impact in the 2000s marked the beginning of the emergence of K-Beauty industry. Today more and more people are benefiting from the trends and Korean beauty techniques such as using BB creams or using the words that are used mainly in Korea such as "glass skin" or "rice water."

Korean brands are becoming widely available. Despite the fact that it is just as important as other sectors that are supporting the Korean Wave, the emergence of K-Beauty's significance on the Hallyu is sometimes overlooked when thinking about the worldwide influence of Korea. Not only the export of products but also the export of Korean style in the framework of K-Beauty is also worth considering. Through music videos, K-dramas and Korean idol's preferences, specific Korean trends are carrying into the world such as

red shadow around the eyes, 10-step of face cleansing or cherry lips (Hu, 2023, chapter 3).

K-Beauty companies often use K-pop idols and influencers to attract buyers from different countries, which is only possible through the rise of Hallyu. Many K-pop idols appear in the advertisements by being brand ambassadors including Blackpink's Jennie and Rose, Seventeen's Jeonghan, Twice's Jihyo and SHINee's Key. Another appealing aspect is the industry's gender-neutral strategy, since they promote such products with male idols such as the popular boy bands of Tomorrow x Together and SHINee.

Almost every K-Drama has a product placement for a K-Beauty product. However, the natural flow and placement of the sequences prevents it from looking like a commercial placement, especially in series scheduled for international broadcast. The most prominent instances of this method in recent years have been dramas such as Extraordinary Attorney Woo (one of Netflix's top 20 most popular Korean dramas), Business Proposal, Welcome to Samdal-Ri, True Beauty, and Queen of Tears.

The industry is supported by the government initiatives. The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) is focused on the regulatory diplomacy of different nations like China and the US to make it possible for Korean goods to overcome export obstacles. Accordingly, K-Beauty exports reached 160 nations all over the globe by the year 2020, making Korea the third biggest cosmetics exporter in the world, only behind France and the United States (Hu, 2023, chapter 3). Furthermore, the export of Korean cosmetics reached a record high of 7.4 billion dollars in the year 2024 (Kim, 2024). It is anticipated that by the year 2030, the business's revenue would amount to around 187.4 billion dollars, and the growth rate will be approximately 9.3 percent (Grand View Research, 2023).

#### **4.5 KOREAN GAMES AND THE GAMING INDUSTRY**

When it comes to video games, Korea is recognized as one of the leading countries in the sector amongst other countries. Since the beginning of the 2000s, video games have been a significant component of the culture of Korea. Statistics show that at least 63% of Koreans played games in 2023 (Statista, 2024). In Korea, video games and E-sport competitions are seen as cultural and social activities that are taken extremely seriously. Furthermore, Korean games are often built to be ideal for large-scale socializing

activities, such as massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) (Chung, 2015, p. 495).

According to the MOFA's White Paper on Korean Games issued in 2022, the domestic gaming market expanded by 11.2% over the previous year, while exports climbed by 5.8%. This was the first time that the local game market had reached 20 trillion won in value, placing it fourth in the global game market ranking after the United States, China, and Japan (Yun, 2023). Since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a consistent progression of technical advancements, which are essential to the success of the gaming business in Korea.

Following the government's call for assistance from chaebols like Hyundai, Samsung, and LG, the expansion of the Korean gaming sector accelerated in the 1980s, corresponding with the relaxation of gaming restrictions (Chung, 2015, p. 497). During this period, investments in technology expanded in the business, keeping it more current and updated. Games started to be marketed to different countries, including those based on Korean traditional folklore such as *Turtleship* (developed by Samsung in 1988), which centres around on the battle between Japan and Korea between 1592 and 1598 (Chung, 2015, p. 498).

The early adaptations of Korean game industry accelerated Korea's adjustment to the online games with the internet's global spread. In 1999, the Korean government established the Korean Game Promotion Center after enacting the Record, Video Contents and Games Act to encourage the Korean gaming industry, which was eventually renamed the Korean Game Development Institute in 2001. In 2009, the institute was integrated into KOCCA, further developing the institutional connection with the industry while ensuring its healthy and steady growth.

In 2003, the Game Promotion Center indicated "the Mid-to Long-term Plan for the Development of the Game Industry" and issued the "White Book on Korean Games" to further promote the game industry while developing fresh approaches. Following, the Game Industry Promotion Act was passed in 2006, making it the first legislation in the world that is completely focused on the gaming industry (Park et al., 2014). In addition to ensuring the gaming industry's continued expansion and the cultural effect of Korean

games on a global scale, this legislation additionally aimed to regulate the gaming business.

Korea is not just at the forefront of game development, but it also ranks high in E-sports. Of course, this is due in part to Korea's early technology breakthroughs and government regulations regarding the gaming business. As early as 2010, Korea announced the "E-Sports mid-, long-term development plan (2010-2014): E-Sports Innovation 2.0." The E-sports (Electronic Sports) Promotion Act followed in 2012 with the intention of "building infrastructure for the culture and industry of e-sports, improving e-sports competition, and providing for matters necessary to promote e-sports in order to increase people's opportunities to enjoy leisure time with e-sports and the robust development of the national economy" (National Law Information Center, n.d.). In 2015, The Korea Association of Game Industry was established both for domestic and foreign audiences to actively follow gaming industry's changing environment while having a future-oriented approach. This agency regularly develops studies and research on current gaming industry developments and popular trends.

Furthermore, the method taken by the sector is influenced by both traditional Korean culture and popular culture. One example of a popular topic in Korean video games is the incorporation of Korean mythology, which can be found in videogames such as *Blade & Soul* and *White Day: A Labyrinth Named School*. In addition, Battle Royale Games (an online video game genre based on the concept of last man standing), such as *PUBG: Battlegrounds*, have gained significant recognition around the world.

Another significant aspect of the gaming industry is hosting esports events, such as the Global Esports Festival, which was held in Busan in 2013. Moreover, successful e-sports players are featured in ads emphasizing the places where they are based, combining games with tourism to create a kind of gaming tourism. E-sport matches are being broadcasted often in Korea, since Korean society places a high level of emphasis on gaming activities. The stadiums are filled with audiences watching League of Legends e-sports games, highlighting the role of such events as cultural activities in Korea.

#### 4.6 KOREAN FOOD: HANSIK

One of the newest pillars of soft power resources of Korea is the Korean Food (Hereafter K-Food) which is often referred to as *K-Food*. Using food as a soft power instrument is a relatively new approach in public diplomacy practices, despite the fact that the use of food as a diplomatic tool has a long history from ancient to modern times. Gastrodiplomacy, also referred to as food diplomacy, is an efficient method for a nation to portray itself through its cuisine. Many examples of gastrodiplomacy as a nation branding strategy have emerged, particularly since the 2000s, including Japan, the United States, Thailand, and France.

Korea's food diplomacy also attracts attention from different parts of the world. It is possible to see Korean restaurants around more often now. There is a growth in the recognition of Korean meals, as well as the availability of Korean foods and ingredients in markets. There is a successful policy behind it, despite the fact that it seems to be a coincidence or a natural evolution.

The term *Hansik* is used to refer to the cuisine of Korea, which is used to describe meals or ingredients that originates from Korea. The Korean Food Promotion Act describes Hansik as “*food made using food ingredients used in Korea, or similar ingredients, and food made using Korea's traditional cooking methods or similar recipes, as well as making use of tangible and intangible resources, activities and food culture related to that food*” (Hansik, n.d). Accordingly, Hansik is recognized for its positive health effects and simple cooking techniques as shown by the World Health Organization's classification of Korean cuisine as a model diet with nutritional balance in 2004.

In 2009, the government of Korea provided financial assistance to the construction of the Korean Food Promotion Institution. The objectives of this institution were to increase the competitiveness of the food industry in Korea while simultaneously promoting Korean cuisine on a global scale. Publication of guidebooks and mobile applications, as well as the production of documentaries on Korean cuisine, are among the activities that the institution participates in. While keeping up with the trends and actively participate in social media projects, the institute organizes video contests, cook-offs and opening cooking classes abroad.

Once again in 2009, the former president Lee Myung-Bak announced an initiative to expand the culinary industry and culture of Korea by launching a campaign that would amount to 40 million dollars. According to this initiative, the number of Korean restaurants located outside of the country would expand from ten thousand to forty thousand by the year 2017, at least one hundred restaurants of the highest standard would be build abroad, and the amount of exported agricultural and seafood products would increase from four billion dollars to ten billion dollars by the year 2012 (Friedman, 2024).

After this attempt, a number of other initiatives were made to increase the appeal of Korean food. As an example, in 2009, Kim Yoon-Ok, the first lady of Korea, presented Korean cuisine to veterans from the United States of America and stated “*Cuisine not only reflects the cultural level of a nation but also represents the brand value.*” In addition, the government founded the World Institute of Kimchi under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries with the purpose of fostering the expansion of the kimchi industry and establishing Korea as the country of origin for kimchi, which is a traditional side dish that is made out vegetables and holds a great significance in Korean culture. Throughout the course of Korean history, the production of kimchi allowed Korean women to engage in society. Additionally, the act of sharing kimchi is a virtue that stresses the culture of sharing that exists in Korea while stressing the teamwork (Surya & Lee, 2022:56). In addition, the Kimchi Bus Project was launched with the intention of accomplishing this goal. In accordance with this objective, the bus would travel to many nations in order to inform people about the culture and legacy of Korean cuisine, which includes Kimchi. To achieve this objective, the bus made its way through a total of 34 nations located on a different continents (Kfoodinus, 2004).

The popularity of Kimchi can be seen in every single Korean drama, and even in Korean music videos. The Korean government demonstrates its uniqueness by combining its soft power resources and ensuring that they complement one another in this regard. Kimchi exports peaked in 2021 at 144.51 million dollars, according to the Korea Customs Service (KOCIS, n.d.-a). Statistics demonstrate that the initiatives were successful in marketing

Korean food, particularly the kimchi diplomacy, which was officially recognized by UNESCO in 2013 as a representative of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Kimch is not the only Korean Food that has been promoting to the world. A number of other specialized meals, including bibimpab, ramyeon, ginseng, Korean fried chicken, and Korean barbecue, are among the other significant gastrodipomatic assets that Korea has. Almost every Korean drama include a scene that features one of these meals, which serves to promote not just the cuisine but also the locations and the ambiance. An example that is especially popular is the pojangmacha, which is often a colorful tent that is located in the center of a street and offers Korean BBQ along with soju, which is a traditional Korean alcohol drink.

The efforts that the Korean government has taken to find fresh ideas that may use food as a soft power instrument to serve as a tool for country branding are impressive. Initiatives such as Enjoy Korean Food like a Local (Kto,2023), a project established by the Korea Tourism Organization to allow tourists to experience Korean food in the same way that a local would, and The Bibimbap Backpackers (Woo,2012), a group of five people sponsored by the Lee Myung-Bak government to promote Bibimbap, have helped Korea maintain its attractiveness by keeping up to date. Today, on the social networks, Korean cuisine is ranked fourth in popularity, even surpassing French cuisine in terms of appeal (Bessard, 2024).

## **4.7 KOREAN LITERATURE AND WEBTOONS**

In recent years, especially with the COVID-19, Korean literature and digital contents have garnered significant global attention, becoming of the most promising cultural exports of Hallyu. This section explores the international success of Korean Literature, focusing on the rise of digital contents such as webtoons and web novels that have played a crucial role in this global expansion.

### **4.7.1 KOREAN LITERATURE**

In 2024, Korean novelist Han Kang received the Nobel Prize, becoming the first Korean author and the second Korean to achieve this honour after the former president Kim Dae-Jung. This milestone highlighted a significant global attention about K-Literature, positioning it as another cultural source of *Hallyu* with K-Pop. Accordingly, there was

coverage of the news in newspapers and magazines all across the world. Han Kang's success is neither accidental nor sudden. It is the result of years of improvement and the successful spread of Korean literature worldwide, particularly in the 21st century. Statistics from the Literature Translation Institute of Korea indicate that over the past five years, 1.85 million copies of Korean literature were sold internationally, and 776 Korean works were translated into 41 languages (Kim, 2024).

The Korean government's support and endeavours are additionally contributing to the success of Korean literature. The promotion of Korean literature to the world through translation support, funds, and scholarship assisted this success. One of the most important assists comes from the Korean Literature Translation Institute (KLTI) which was established in 1996 under Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the purpose of promoting Korean literature abroad, providing assistance for the translation of Korean works, and training competent translators (Literature Translation Institute of Korea, n.d.). The institution conducts projects such as organizing international conferences, assisting research on translation, and contests that contribute to Korean literature acquire worldwide recognition (Türközü, 2024, p. 36).

In regard to the Korean Wave, the KLTI refers to the popularity of Korean literature as the Korean Literature Wave. As it was stated before, this success is not a sudden one. The year 1996 was designated as the Literature Year under the Kim Young-Sam administration, and a fund consisting of one hundred trillion Korean Won (almost 10 million US dollars) was established for the translation of Korean literature (Ünlü & Jeong, 2024, p. 118). Many foundations that cooperate with the government have funded Korean literature since the 1990s such as the Daesan Foundation and Korea International Communication Foundation.

In addition to the Nobel Prize awarded to Han Kang for *The Vegetarian*, there are other literary works that deserve recognition. Some of them include:

- *Cursed Bunny* by Chung Bora, which was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize,
- *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee, which was adapted into a TV series with the same name for Apple TV+ in 2022,
- *Please Look After My Mum* by Shin Kyung-Sook, which won the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011 and was also selected by Oprah Winfrey for her book list,

- Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop by Hwang Boreum, whose translation into Japanese was awarded the Japan Booksellers' Award and has been translated into many languages, while also being listed as one of the best fictional books by Waterstones in 2023,
- I Want to Die but I want to Eat Tteokbokki by Baek Se-hee which was recommended by BTS and become an international bestseller,
- Phantom Pain Wings by Kim Hye-Soon who became the first Korean author that won the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2024 which is widely regarded as one of the most prestigious awards in the United States of America.

In light of these, it is possible to say that since the 1990s, there has been an increase in the amount of literature produced in Korean. However, the fact that Hang Kang was awarded the Nobel Prize has once again proven that the efforts and finances provided by the government were effective. Following the awarding of the Nobel Prize, it is anticipated that Korean literature would continue to expand.

#### **4.7.2 WEBTOONS AND ONLINE CONTENTS**

The phrase 'webtoon' was coined by Koreans to describe the comics intended to be published and read on the internet. Since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a widespread belief that Korean webtoons would eventually take the place of Japanese manga. Particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 boosted internet traffic internationally, the popularity of webtoons also increased proportionally. In addition to webtoons, web novels such as "Under the Oak Tree", which made history as the first Korean web novel on the NYT Best Sellers List, and "Solo Leveling," are also contributing to the global expansion of Korean digital content.

The readers of webtoons range from students to private sector employees, and the genres of webtoons are so diverse that they range from romance to fantasy. Additionally, Individuals who have a limited amount of time may also spare time to enjoy webtoons since they are simple to read, consist of short chapters, and they convey the stories visually. Given the growing popularity of webtoons, it is anticipated that the market for webcomics would expand at a pace of 30.6% by the year 2028, and the industry is anticipated to be worth over 24 billion dollars (The Business Research Company, 2024).

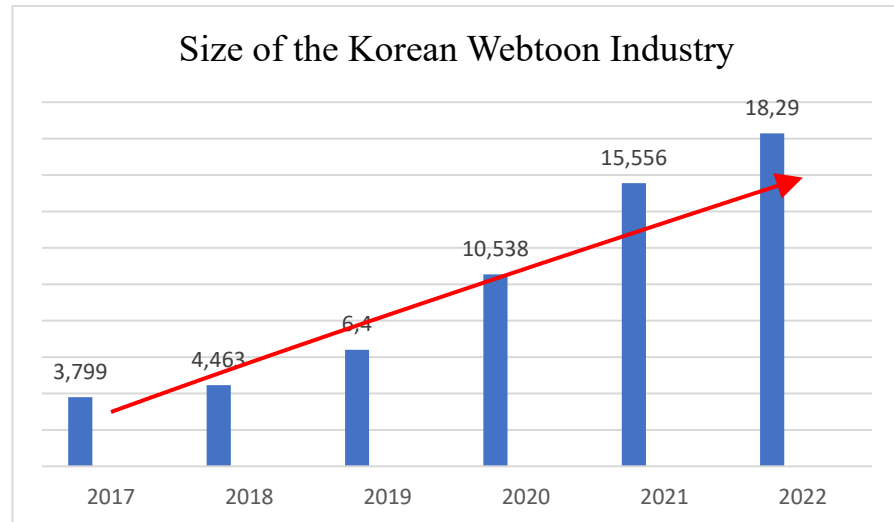


Figure 3 Size of the Korean Webtoon Industry (Korea Creative Content Agency, 2023)

To encourage the development of webtoons, the Korean government made the decision in 2024 to launch a number of initiatives. Within the year 2024, the Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Yu In-Chon, made the announcement that they would be launching a webtoon festival. Additionally, until 2027, a school that will be specialized to the webtoon sector will be established. Yu remarked *“Supporting webtoons is very important for bolstering the intellectual property rights of the South Korean content industry as a whole”* (Frater, 2024).

Also in June 2024, the government announced additional initiatives in the Third Master Plan for the Promotion of the Content Industry. According to the Plan, the vision was to encourage the cartoon and webtoon businesses with three objectives: growing the markets, increasing exports, and organizing festivals. Furthermore, the webtoon industry is quite open to foreign investments. For example, Kakao Entertainment, which is one of the leading companies in the industry along with Naver, announced in 2023 that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Singapore would invest 966 million dollars through a bond offering (Frater, 2023). Therefore, the sector not only encourages domestic investment but also brings foreign investment as well.

Based on the available data, it is possible to say that the webtoon industry will continue to grow, as evidenced by the popular K-dramas such as *All of Are Dead* (2022), *Hellbound* (2021), *Sweet Home* (2020), *My ID is Gangnam Beauty* (2018), *True Beauty*

(2020), and the Business Proposal (2022), all of which are webtoon adaptations that are available on Netflix to audiences all around the world.

#### **4.8 K-ANIMATION**

Among South Korea's diverse soft power assets in the twenty-first century, the animation sector remains one of the most underexplored and underappreciated. Even though Korean animation industry's popularity started during the 1990s, with the emergence of the Korean Wave, Korea's animation industry witnessed a cultural transformation affected by globalization in terms of creative agency (Yoon, 2009, p. 104).

Starting with the 2000s, technological advancements assisted animation businesses in their ongoing growth. As a result, by 2016, the industry has grown to a network of about 120 studios producing material for well-known networks such as Fox, DreamWorks, Nickelodeon, and Cartoon Network, which reached in 2020 to 509 animation companies in Korea (D8A Spring, n.d.). Numerous famous animated shows in the United States were hand-drawn in Korea, including Family Guy, as well as popular children's entertainment on YouTube, such as Baby Shark Dance and Pororo the Little Penguin, which were in fact produced in Korea (May, 2016).

All of these advancements and years of experience in the Korean animation business have brought various accomplishments. Over the course of 2023, the animation sector in Korea experienced a growth rate of 8.6 percent, resulting in sales of 406 billion won while the employees in the sector also increased (Yoon-Seo, 2024). In addition, animated films began to get attention on a global scale like Red Shoes and the Seven Dwarfs's (2019) nomination at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival. While acknowledging that the Animation Industry in Korea has been growing, it has not yet reached its full potential yet. Nevertheless, it is expected that it will become more visible on the world stage in the near future. Thus, the industry's international reach emphasizes Korea's creative capability while enhancing itself as a dynamic and innovative cultural actor.

#### 4.9 THE ASSESSMENT OF KOREA'S SOFT POWER TOOLS

One of the most significant factors in determining South Korea's worldwide image and impact has been its employment of soft power instruments. Korea's soft power tools, which include the media industry, cultural tools, tourism, animation, the gaming industry, and fashion, enable Korea to retain its influence on the world stage.

South Korea's public diplomacy approach proved effective, particularly through its cultural exports driven by the Korean Wave (Hallyu). The increasing popularity of K-pop, Korean films, and television dramas has enhanced Korea's global image. Korea has successfully adopted soft power instruments strategically, complementing its economic and political power. The rise of Hallyu increased Korea's visibility and substantially bolstered its economic development, especially through tourism, exports, and collaboration with other nations. This achievement is due not just to its evaluation of soft power but also to a smart power strategy supported by strong state regulations, government funding, and private sector involvement.

SOFT POWER TOOL	FOCUS AREA	KEY EXAMPLE	IMPACT AND OUTCOME
FILM	Media and Entertainment	Oscar-winning Parasite	Showcased Korea's storytelling and filmmaking talent, elevating its global cultural status
MUSIC	Cultural Diplomacy	BTS at the UN General Assembly	Promoted global issues such as anti-Asian hate and strengthened Korea's cultural leadership
TV DRAMAS	Media and Entertainment	Global success of Squid Game	Enhanced global demand for Korean dramas and streaming content
EDUCATION & LANGUAGE	Knowledge Exchange	King Sejong Institutes and Scholarships	Spread Korean language and culture, increasing cultural understanding
SPORTS DIPLOMACY	International Events	2002 FIFA World Cup and 2018 PyeongChang Olympics	Improved Korea's global reputation as a capable and modern nation
CUISINE (HANSIK)	Culinary Diplomacy	Kimchi Bus Project	Strengthened Korea's cultural branding through its traditional cuisine
TOURISM	Cultural and Heritage Tourism	Visit Korea campaigns	Boosted international tourism and showcased cultural landmarks
K-ANIMATION	Media and Entertainment	Success of Pororo the Little Penguin	Increased global recognition of Korea's animation industry
LITERATURE & WEBTOONS	Digital and Literary Media	Nobel Prize of Han Kang & Popularity of Solo Levelling	Expanded Korea's influence in global digital literature markets

GAMING INDUSTRY	Digital Media and Innovation	Korea's dominance in esports	Established Korea as a leader in global gaming culture and digital entertainment
K-BEAUTY AND FASHION	Beauty and Lifestyle Trends	Global success of K-beauty products and Seoul Fashion Week	Positioned Korea as a trendsetter in beauty and fashion globally.

*Table 3 South Korea's Soft Power Tools and Their Applications*

Table 3 illustrates that Korea's strategy encompasses several sectors. The integration of various industries, involving K-pop, K-dramas, and sporting activities, shows how South Korea utilizes its technological capabilities to enhance its cultural appeal. Similarly, Korean language and education initiatives supported by the King Sejong Institute strengthen diplomatic relations by promoting continuous interaction with international audiences, therefore preserving Korea's presence.

Therefore, table 3 shows that South Korea has a wide range of soft power instruments that are highly effective. However, their ability to last depends on how effectively these are combined with hard power approaches. Korea's worldwide impact has been significantly improved by cultural diplomacy, education, and sports. However, the full potential of these areas can only be achieved through a smart power strategy, which carefully balances cultural appeal with economic, technological, and diplomatic strength. In the years to come, South Korea will likely be able to preserve and increase its worldwide appearance by consistently modifying its strategies to international developments and establishing its position as a technologically advanced, economically stable, and culturally influential nation.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis answers the central question of how South Korea has used public diplomacy and nation branding to shape its international image through a multifaceted analysis. Korea's rise as a global cultural powerhouse is primarily attributed to its strategic use of soft power, which has transformed the nation's image from a war-torn state into one of innovation and cultural influence. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, South Korea has successfully leveraged its soft power tools, such as media, Hallyu, educational exchanges, and sports diplomacy, to enhance its global standing.

One of the most significant findings of this thesis is the growing importance of Soft Power in shaping global influence in the 21st century. Unlike traditional "Hard Power," which relies solely on military and economic strength, "Soft Power" is based on attraction and persuasion. Cultural and diplomatic exchanges increasingly shape global dynamics, making soft power a crucial tool for nations seeking to establish themselves as global leaders. South Korea has used a strategy centered around smart power, using its strong economic and technical infrastructure with the development of its cultural resources.

The success of Korea demonstrates the strategic use of smart power. Korea has established itself as a global powerhouse of cultural influence and innovation through its cultural exports, media influence, and diplomatic efforts. This evolution underlines the significance of soft power and its capacity to redefine a nation's global identity when used effectively within the Smart Power framework. Consequently, South Korea exemplifies that effectively applied soft power can have significant and persistent influence, serving as a model for other countries to follow.

South Korea, a nation that faced significant challenges in its history, including the devastation of the Korean War, decades of authoritarian rule, and the financial crisis of 1997, has transformed into a globally recognized state with a profound influence on the international stage. These challenges, rather than hindering its progress, have shaped a resilient and adaptive nation that has successfully navigated through these turbulent periods. Over time, Korea has not only rebuilt its economy but also established itself as a key player in global diplomacy and soft power. One of the most remarkable aspects of Korean soft power and its rise is the ability to distinguish itself in a region dominated by powerful neighbours, Japan and China. Through the development of a unique approach

to public diplomacy and nation branding, Korea has managed to carve out a distinct global identity.

Several key factors contribute to South Korea's success. First of all, the country's substantial investment in institutional frameworks has been vital to its public diplomacy efforts. The collaboration between the government and private sectors, along with a continuous focus on adapting to global trends, has allowed South Korea to build a positive international reputation. Since the establishment of the Republic of Korea, despite internal political divisions, the country has consistently prioritized cultural diplomacy, even in its early stages, laying a strong foundation for its later success in nation branding.

An important aspect of Korea's public diplomacy journey is the evolving strategies employed by its leaders, as summarized in Table 1. Each administration has contributed uniquely to the nation's public diplomacy and nation branding efforts, reflecting the priorities and challenges of their respective eras. This thesis found that these policies while varying in focus and scope, share a common thread: leveraging cultural, educational, and diplomatic tools to enhance Korea's global standing. For instance, Rhee Seung-Man's efforts were rooted in securing international legitimacy, while Park Chung-Hee's policies emphasized modernization and national pride. More recently, Moon Jae-In's participatory and peace-oriented diplomacy highlights a shift towards collaborative governance and soft power.

The presidential policies illustrate not only the adaptability of Korea's public diplomacy but also its ability to maintain continuity amidst changing domestic and global dynamics. By systematically addressing the distinct priorities of each administration, Korea has created a multifaceted and resilient approach to public diplomacy, setting a valuable precedent for other nations navigating similar challenges.

Historically, Korea's approach to public diplomacy has evolved considerably. Initially focused on promoting cultural assets, it later expanded to encompass digital media, education, technology, and tourism. This shift from recovery-based diplomacy after the war to a more dynamic, multifaceted approach is a testament to Korea's ability to adapt and modernize its diplomatic strategies in response to changing global dynamics. This transformation reflects a commitment not only to fostering economic growth but also to building positive and enduring international recognition. The government have played a

critical role in shaping and promoting Korea's public diplomacy strategies. These bodies, working together with private companies, have created a unified front in promoting the Korean brand. By fostering an environment of cooperation and strategic collaboration, South Korea has been able to maximize its cultural, economic, and diplomatic potential. This highlights the importance of building strong institutional frameworks and ensuring coordination between government and private sectors to support nation branding efforts.

Another key aspect of South Korea's success lies in the strategic integration of its soft power tools. The Korean Wave (Hallyu) has been used not only as a cultural export but also as a platform to promote the Korean language and traditional culture worldwide. Elements such as Korean popular music, Korean dramas, Korean beauty products, and tourism have been strategically combined with government support. This integrated approach, backed by a strong institutional framework, has significantly enhanced South Korea's global influence. This strategy has set South Korea apart from other countries in the region, providing a successful example of soft power usage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The strategic integration of Korea's soft power instruments, as outlined in Table 3, is another important outcome of this thesis. These instruments, ranging from film and music to education, cuisine, and gaming, demonstrate the country's capacity to use a diverse range of cultural assets to strengthen its global image. For instance, internationally recognized films such as *Parasite* have enhanced the global reputation of Korean cinema, while BTS's performance at the United Nations exemplified the integration of pop culture and political campaigns. Similarly, initiatives like the King Sejong Institutes and the expansion of Korean language education have played a crucial role in fostering cultural exchange.

This thesis discovered that South Korea's comprehensive and harmonious employment of these techniques has been critical in building its distinct characteristics internationally. Korea's public diplomacy is coherent and multifaceted, blending traditional components like as food and historical tourism with emerging trends such as e-sports and digital media. The examples shown in Table 3 demonstrate how these instruments have not only increased Korea's worldwide influence but have also established an example for other countries to use.

South Korea's public diplomacy and nation branding initiatives have benefited greatly from its capacity to adapt to contemporary global trends, including digital media, K-food, the gaming business, and K-literature. In particular, digital media has emerged as one of the most effective means of spreading Korean culture globally. K-pop, K-dramas, and Korean films were able to reach a worldwide audience through platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, which improved Korea's reputation abroad. Furthermore, Korean food has become progressively more popular worldwide, making K-food a significant cultural export that supports the nation's branding and soft power initiatives. Another important element in enhancing Korea's worldwide impact has been the growth of its gaming sector, especially in video games and esports. In addition to attracting attention from across the world, these sectors have established Korea as an innovator in digital entertainment and technology.

K-Style, which is a comprehensive term that encapsulates the combination of Korea's soft power tools, has been promoted in recent years as a part of South Korea's public diplomacy strategy. Combining the Drama and Film sectors, the Music Industry, K-beauty, fashion, food and digital culture under a unified brand identity, it symbolizes the integrity of Korea's cultural exports. Korea increases the impact of its cultural diplomacy by promoting a cohesive image through global campaigns, such as Imagine Your Korea. Korea's nation branding is strengthened by this comprehensive and integrated strategy, which also increases the interdependence and influence of its soft power instruments.

South Korea's strategic implementation of nation branding and public diplomacy serves as a model for other nations to follow. By effectively integrating soft power, adapting to changing global trends, and fostering cooperation across both government and private sectors, South Korea has successfully transformed itself into a cultural exporter. The country's capacity to integrate its distinctive cultural exports with its history, from Hallyu to K-food, emphasizes the significance of innovation and adaptability in its public diplomacy strategies. The power of a unified institutional framework, the significance of sustained investment in cultural and diplomatic initiatives, transparency, and the ability to transform challenges into opportunities for growth and influence are all emphasized through the example of South Korea. As the global landscape continues to change, South Korea's success provides valuable insights into how nations can shape their identity and position themselves as influential global players in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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**APPENDIX 1 ORIGINALITY REPORT**



**APPENDIX 2 . ETHICS COMMISSION FORM**

