

When film met aid, in a city of a Southern donor

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This study examines the transformation of Korea's development cooperation in light of expanding inclusivity. Korea's economic development is characterised by state-centrism, and so has been the Korean development cooperation. Thus, the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 championing a plurality of development agents offered an opportunity for Korea to exercise the global leadership in supporting sub-state actors. Simultaneously, Busan has been shaping Busan-style ODA based on its sectoral comparative advantage – a knowledge sharing in the film industry. Based on understanding the path of a politically odourless Korean development cooperation, this study argues that the state-municipal collaboration in Korea, a conformist emerging donor with a short history of democracy and a long tradition of developmental state, presents an alternative version of cities' engagement breaking the traditional North-South dynamics both in development cooperation and the cultural and creative industry.

Keywords: ODA, city, creative industry, film, Busan, emerging donors

INTRODUCTION

Cities “deserve greater attention” in international affairs (Cornago, 2010). Given the long history of cities as primary actors in global affairs, which dates back to the Peloponnesian War described by Thucydides around 430 B.C.E., nation states are “the new kids on the block” (Goldin and Muggah, 2020). Today, mega cities are wealthier than some nations; the nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of Paris exceeds that of South Africa. Furthermore, ever-increasing urbanisation will soon reclaim cities' traditional roles back in global affairs. Or, is it just another Euro-centric narrative in International Relations?

Whereas the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 opened the era of sovereign states in

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This work was supported by Korea Institute for International Economic Policy and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies [Research Fund of 2023].

Article Received: 30-10-2023; Revised: 06-12-2023; Accepted: 20-12-2023

Europe, Korea experienced the state formation more than a millennium earlier. Three dynasties with centralised bureaucratic system, Silla (57-939), Goryeo (939-1392) and Joseon (1392-1910), governed the Korean peninsula. Borders of the three dynasties were well defined, and crossing borders was restricted to government delegations; those who cross borders illegally were beheaded until the 19th century (Choe, 2006: 93). After the turmoil of states during the Japanese colonisation and the Korean War (1950-1953), a series of authoritarian leaders took power and Korea turned itself to a developmental state, a developmentally driven state based on a strong government intervention and technocratic bureaucrats. The outstanding economic development of a developmental state turned Korea to a donor country, and the technocratic state-centrism becomes the basis of the Korea model of economic development that the government shares with partner countries. Hence, the autonomous cities may be a back-to-normal in the West, but it is a new normal in Korea.

Municipal diplomatic engagement in the West can be broadly categorised into three: economic competition, political distinction, and cooperation (Lecours, 2008). Cities in Korea, however, do not enjoy such a diplomatic spectrum. At the economic front, cities must remain in; it is not optional. Cities should not spare their endeavours towards creating more favourable international economic conditions as more than 84% of Korea's GDP comes from international trade (The Korean Gov., 2022). Politically, in contrast, cities must stay out; it is not optional either. Korea is technically still at war with North Korea, and it relies critical part of its national security on the Western allies. In such geopolitical milieu, city's political renegade is hard to fathom. Hence, economic and political diplomacy is unlikely to offer a distinctive international identity to cities in Korea. Cooperation, on the other hand, ranging from cultural exchange to development assistance, provides more room for distinctive identity than economic diplomacy and it is less conflictual than political one.

Based on reflecting a path of Korea's development cooperation, this paper illustrates how cities' engagement in development cooperation is transforming Korea's development cooperation both in terms of inclusivity and with respect to spectral priorities. Soon after Korea joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) in 2010, the government hosted the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. The event showcased Korea's aspiration to become an agenda-setter in development cooperation. Additionally, the Busan forum became a turning point in Korea's development cooperation as the event is marked by championing the role of multiple agents, including cities and local governments. Simultaneously, at the local level, the forum led to shaping the Busan model of official development assistance (ODA) combining development cooperation and film-making. Cities are better poised to leverage creative industries for socioeconomic development than nation-states (World Bank and UNESCO, 2021). Whereas key cities in the Global North have long been the global centres of the cultural and creative industries, the accusation of cultural imperialism deters them from engaging in development cooperation in the cultural and creative industry. A Southern city of Busan, the hub of the film industry in Korea, on the other hand, is relatively free from such imperial accusations.

Drawing on the analysis of the complementary dynamics between the municipal

and national development cooperation, this paper argues that Korea, an emerging donor with experiences of the state-centric model of economic development, presents an alternative version of state-municipality collaboration in international development cooperation, which has long been considered as a practice of matured donors with a longer tradition of democracy. While Korea, similar to traditional donors, champions the autonomy of municipalities in development cooperation since 2011, Busan's role in development cooperation remains limited to a strategic sub-contractor of the state's development cooperation projects. This study widens the literature on city diplomacy which has been weighed towards the cases in the West by providing a fresh case Busan. While Busan's development cooperation is not as autonomous as that in the traditional donors with a long tradition of democracy, the municipality-state collaboration in the developmental state widens the range of inclusive development cooperation.

This paper is structured as follows. In the following section addresses the path to the current state-centric technique-oriented model of Korea's development cooperation. This provides a useful backdrop for understanding Busan's municipal development cooperation. Following discussion on the way forward for state-municipality collaboration in development cooperation, the paper concludes with a summary.

KOREA'S STATE-CENTRIC DEVELOPEMTN COOPERATION

Korea is an emerging donor.¹ Yet, Korea is distinctive from typical so-called emerging donors such as China, Russia, and Argentina. While the West has raised concerns over developmental intervention from those countries as "rogue aid" disturbing established norms in the aid industry (Naím, 2007), Korea has been persistently emulating traditional donors in the West, although its aid is still driven by a top-down initiative largely dictated by presidential agenda (Watson, 2013; Mawdsley et al., 2017) and legislators have little knowledge of it (Koh and Lee, 2008). The continued conforming efforts is well reflected in its aid structure; in the beginning, Korea's development cooperation was high in loans based on its own experience of economic growth drawn upon loans, but aid given in the form of grant exceeds 68% of its total aid in 2020 (OECDiLibrary, 2022).

Korea's position as an emerging conformist donor has shaped the path of Korean ODA. The path had a good number of mishaps and fixes in a relatively short period of time, and the current trend of Korean official development assistance can be described

¹ Here, the term emerging donor requires clear definition. Although the term emerging donors often refer to non-DAC donors, China is a long-time donor. TANZARA railways, connecting Tanzania and Zambia, is often cited as a case demonstrating the long tradition of Chinese aid as it dates back to the 1970s. On the contrary, Korea is a member of DAC, but Korea's aid structure shares characteristics typical of emerging donors; aid flow overlaps with investment - more than a half of its bilateral aid went to neighbouring countries in Asia (ODA Korea, 2022); the aid programmes are often fractured and overlapped, and; its ODA/gross national income (GNI) ratio is still low as 0.16%, which places the country on the 20th in the DAC in terms of aid generosity (OECDiLibrary, 2022).

as primarily demand-led programmes with an emphasis on local ownership. The programmes involve sharing knowledge embedded in its own experience of economic growth and distinguish Korea not only from the maverick emerging donors but also from the Western traditional donors with historical burden. Taking a risk of the Korea development cooperation model becoming a nationalist celebration and overly culturalist understanding of the complex national development, this aspiring emerging donor has continued institutional efforts to modularise its experience as a replicable lesson for development countries (Doucette and Sial, 2020).

The Korea model is based on its outstanding experience of economic development, which transformed the Asia's second poorest country next to Bangladesh to the world's 10th largest economy with the 18th highest GDP per capita (National Assembly Budget Office, 2022). Hence, the Korean government has long considered its experience as its comparative advantage as a donor country. First, the Roh Moo-hyun administration introduced Korea's development model as one of its core strategic principles in the General Plan for Improving International Development Cooperation in 2005. The following Lee Myung-bak government accelerated the move by forming a task-force team on the special presidential order and three major government think tanks participated in the project to draw up the Korea model in 2012.

The Knowledge Sharing Programme is Korea's flagship ODA reflecting such institutional drive. The Korean government presents the programme as "a knowledge-based development cooperation project which offers policy recommendations tailored to partner countries based on Korea's experience and knowledge from its economic development" (KSP, 2023). The policy-oriented research, training, consultation and recommendation programme is given upon a voluntary request of partner countries. This technocratic oriented programme aims to achieve aid effectiveness via voluntary integration of Korea's knowledge with the local development efforts (Kim and Tcha, 2012, p. 2). Although the name of knowledge sharing modularisation has changed to "context studies", the core process remains similar (Doucette and Sial, 2020). In the belief that knowledge, not the financial capital, is pivotal to economic development, the core of the programme lies on sharing the Korean module with partner countries.

Under the veneer of development cooperation, the programme reveals a number of soft power elements. First, the programme is given upon partners' voluntary recognition of Korean economic achievement and outstanding knowledge. Nye (2018) notes that voluntarism is one of the two main characteristics of soft power together with indirection. In contrast to hard power- a capacity to force a country to do what otherwise it would not do by using military or economic reserves, soft power is based on willingness by choice. Second, the institutional structure of the Korean government indicates the government's soft power framework. When the Lee Myung Bak administration launched the Presidential Council on Nation Branding to boost Korea's soft power, the Knowledge Sharing Programme was listed as one of the top ten priorities of the council. Finally, the programme found its audience not only abroad but also at home reflecting dualism in soft power (Gilboa, 2001). The ultimate audience that the government targets is the voters in the country who would become esteemed by the greater soft power abroad. On top of multiple press releases to promote the Knowledge Sharing Programme to a local audience, a government think tank and a

TV broadcasting company co-produced and aired a documentary film across Korea, titled “Secret of Miracle: Korean Knowledge Sharing Programme”, touting how it is contributing to socio-economic development in partner countries.

However, there is an irony of the Korea model being a source of soft power. Korea model is based on Korea’s experience of economic growth. Soft power is based on charm (Nye, 2018). Korea’s economic growth, however, is not necessarily charming; a critical part of its economic development took place under the authoritarian rules condoned in the geopolitical structure of the Cold War. The anti-communist authoritarian regimes, which led a state-central economic growth in Korea, oppressed freedom of speech and labour rights and tortured and massacred citizens who called for democracy. The existence of North Korea, as a threat to the survival of South Korea, was frequently used to oppress the call for a more liberal society in the name of stability, which was claimed as a precondition to economic development by the government. The outstanding economic of developmental state cannot be explained detached from such international and local political context.

Nevertheless, the Korea model zooms in technicalities and policies. It is a technique-oriented solution, sometimes with added emphasis on a can-do spirit of individuals (MoFA, 2016). Hence, the Korean model is a “politically odourless” model, which is drawn on “a deliberate effort by the government to soften the authoritarian associations of Korea’s development history, camouflaging its global aspiration to expand its influence” (Kim, 2019). Development, however, is a fundamentally political process. The politically odourless model of Korea’s economic development has limits as a framework for a lesson to emulate for development. However, the odourless economic development model serves its role in making Korea charming. Against this backdrop, what follows discusses the transformation based on the on-going global and local narratives.

Cities and local governments

Korea’s development cooperation is expanding to include more actors, particularly municipalities. The growing role of cities and local governments is a recent diplomatic phenomenon in Korea. City diplomacy has been most visible in old and matured democracy in Western Europe and North America (Lecours, 2008). Their cities have resources to act independently to influence foreign entities, will to act together with other cities in harmony for the greater good, and capacity to produce tangible solutions for their citizens via undertaking institutional reforms. On the other hand, the cities in young democracies do not have sufficient resources, political autonomy, or institutional support (Burksiene et al., 2020). While matured democratic countries, such as the United States, demonstrated city activism in defiance of state foreign policy from the 1980s, a new democracy like Korea was still under authoritarianism (Leffel, 2018). Only in 1987, did Korea hold its first direct presidential election. As most newly democratised countries that adopted democracy in the late 20th century, Korea chose inclusive decentralisation as a new principle for legal and political reforms hoping it could become an antidote to the previous inwardly exclusive authoritarianism. Accordingly, the first elections choosing heads of local government were held in 1995.

Local governments' engagement in international affairs began with the "Internationalisation" drive during the Kim Young Sam government in the 1990s in Korea, but the fledgling paradiplomacy did not make significant progress and remained primarily as building city-to-city networks, such as sister cities. Hence, the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan marked a significant event in Korea and Busan. The Forum, which championed the vital role of all actors in the development process offered an opportunity for Korea to exercise the global leadership in supporting sub-state actors. With the Busan Forum being the turning point, the Korean government drafted its first legal framework for municipal development cooperation. Municipal governments responded to the state initiative and Haeundae-gu in Busan became the first municipality that set up the rules for development cooperation in 2015. At present, eleven municipalities already have institutionalised local regulations exclusively on international development cooperation (Data on Local Regulations, 2023). Drawn on data on the municipal ODA in Korea, Cho and others (2015) point out the positive link between the existence of legal and institutional frameworks. Although overall municipal ODA in Korea is still biased to Asia and the volume is not substantive, the volume is growing.

Development cooperation offers relatively low entry barriers for cities in young democracy compared to economic and political fronts. Backed by global initiative towards inclusive development, municipal engagement in global developmental affairs have been growing. Europe has a long tradition of city's development cooperation and cities in Europe engaged in international development cooperation since the 1940s (European Commission, 2023). Hence, the European Commission identified municipalities as one of leading agents in development cooperation. The United Nations recognised and supported the role of municipalities in development cooperation in the 1990s. Since the initiation in Rio in 1992, the Paris Declaration in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 reaffirmed cities' role for better aid effectiveness (OECD, 2008). The following Busan Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 underlined the positive impact of municipal agents along with other sub-state actors such as civil society and private enterprises on global collaboration (OECD, 2011). While United Nations Millennium Development Goals weighed more on the role of ODA and national state, the following Sustainable Development Goals shifted its focus to development and consequentially more actors, including cities. One of its 17 goals is dedicated to "sustainable cities and communities".

The creative industry

The Busan Forum coincided with the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation (Korea Legislation Research Institute, 2010). Based on the framework, the Korean government began drafting the Comprehensive Basic Plan, mid-term government plans with a span of five years to provide the directions of its national ODA practices (OGPC, 2021). The 2021-2025 Comprehensive Basic Plan for International Cooperation is the third mid-term plan. In pursuit of "enhancement of global social value and promotion of national interest through cooperation and solidarity", the current third plan suggests four types of goals "Inclusive, Mutual, Innovative, and Collaborative

ODA” and illustrates twelve main subjects to meet those goals (ODA Korea, 2022).

The third mid-term plan is noteworthy as it was the first time that “national interest” was stated. Additionally, the 2021-2025 Plan, for the first time, illustrates a number of strategic areas of Korea’s ODA practices, including the cultural content industry. The inclusion of the cultural and creative industry in the mid-term plan reflects its national confidence in *Hallyu* (craze for Korean creative products abroad) and the state’s intention to utilise it in pursuit of national interest. The cultural and creative industry is noted twice in the third plan. First, under the goal of Mutual ODA, the plan seeks to “establish tailored infrastructure and strengthen capacity to utilise tourism and cultural resources for economic development based on partner countries’ cultural content”. Second, to fulfil the object of conducting innovative development cooperation programs under the broad goal of Innovative ODA, the plan intends to “design programmes which utilise cultural content production techniques and build cultural content-based businesses in pursuit of strengthening cooperation through forming cultural empathy” (OGPC, 2021). This is a significant shift from the second mid-term plan which prioritised health, education and agriculture together with Korea’s foundational sectors such as economic infrastructure and environment (UNDP Seoul Policy Centre, 2020).

Despite the distinct direction, however, the scope of “cultural content” is blurry. The Korean government uses terms such as contents and cultural contents to refer to the sellable commodities produced in creative industries, such as “data or information of symbols, text, figures, colour, voice, sound, images, and video” (Korea Law Information Centre, 2018). This categorisation overlaps with the creative products which include film and video, TV and radio, internet live streaming and podcasting, and video games; the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) categorises this group of cultural goods as audio-visual products in its framework for cultural statistics (2009). In the third five-year plan, the use of cultural content under Innovative ODA appears to refer to cultural content as in Korean legal system—technology-based entertainment content. On the other hand, the cultural content under the Mutual ODA in the 3rd mid-term plan refers to traditional cultural resources, which UNESCO categorises as Cultural and Natural Heritage, and Performance and Celebration under cultural domains and Tourism in related domains. The unclear application, however, is not uniquely Korean. Even in the OECD, how to define cultural ODA and what to include in the categorisation is ambiguous. OECD guideline indicates that cultural programmes are “eligible as ODA if they build the cultural capacities of recipient countries, but one-off tours by donor country artists or sportsmen, and activities to promote the donors’ image, are excluded” (OECD, 2021).

In the narrative of global developmental cooperation, the developmental role of the cultural and creative industries became recognised relatively recently. The first the international meeting took place at Stockholm in 1998 dedicated to the interdependent relationship between development and the flourishing of culture (UNESCO, 1998). Since 1998, however, the discussion had been dormant until a decade later when the UN organisations resumed the narratives on the cultural and creative industries as “feasible development options” and “one of the best bets for economic development” (UNCTAD, 2008; UNCTAD, 2010; Schultz and Gelder, 2008). In 2013, the second world

congress after the Stockholm was held in Hangzhou calling for placing culture as the fourth foundational principle of the new international development strategies together with human rights, equality, and sustainability (UNESCO, 2013). Although Sustainable Development Goals are not devoted to culture as a standalone agenda, it includes more explicit references on cultural aspects than the previous Millennium Development Goals (UCLG, 2018).

Creative industries are considered to have capabilities to provide jobs and incomes particularly benefitting women, youth and small and medium-sized enterprises (UNESCO, 2015). In tandem with global recognition of the role of the creative industries in development by international development institutions, partner countries are receptive to the developmental benefits of the creative industries. In Ghana, the name of an association of producers in the city is Creative Arts for Development reflecting the self-conceived role of film producers in economic development of the nation. Beyond the rather simplistic economic calculation, creative industries can play an instrumental role for social cohesion (De Beukelaer, 2017). Africa, the continent in which most of the least developed countries are found, is characterised by diverse cultural, linguistic and religious groups residing side by side within borders drawn in an arbitrary fashion by colonial Europe. Furthermore, demography of the continent is marked by the youth bulge. In Europe, no industries hire a larger number of the youth, aged between 15 and 29, than the creative industries (UNESCO, 2015). This data resonates further in Africa of which the median age is below 20. Acknowledging the developmental potential of the industry across the continent, the African Union launched the African Audiovisual and Cinema Commission in 2019 (AU, 2019).

Recognising the role of the creative industry from its own experience, the cultural and creative ODA has always been on the table in the making of the Korean model of development cooperation. Soon after Korea joined the OECD-DAC in 2009, the discussion on cultural ODA has emerged (MCST, 2010: 6). Pointing out that Korea's cultural ODA was the third largest next to Japan and France in OECD-DAC, Lee and Lee (2021) argue that the expansion of cultural ODA helps shape the Korea ODA model.² While Japan spends most of its cultural aid on building cultural infrastructure based on national interests and French aid finds its destination primarily in former French colonies, Korean cultural ODA mainly aims to build cultural capacity via sharing technologies and experiences (Shim, 2020). Ownership and partnership are considered as the two main pillars of Korea's cultural ODA. A typical Korea's cultural ODA takes a form of provision of infrastructure, devices and operating systems followed by training sessions for the operation (KRPA, 2019). For instance, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) established a broadcasting company in Nepal and a radio broadcasting transmission system in Oromia State, Ethiopia in 2013 (KOICA, 2022). Another government institution, Korea Information Society Development Institute, has carried out programmes providing Korea's broadcasting system and devices in Laos since 2007 with the aims of "building foundation for ICT advancement in partner countries

² Lee and Lee's calculation is based on the Creditor Reporting System in OECD. They accumulated the aid volume in Culture and Recreation (16061), Tourism Policy and Administrative Management (33210), and Site Preservation (41040).

and creating environment for Korea-friendly policy” (KISDI, 2020, p. 10). Another example is the Cultural Partnership Initiative, the flagship cultural ODA programme. The initiative provides artists and government officials from countries in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and South America with advanced training and exchange experiences since 2005 resonating the narratives in Knowledge Sharing Programme (MCST, 2019).

Additionally, the current administration is supportive of the cultural and creative ODA. When President Yoon Suk Yeol gave a key note speech at the 77th UN General Assembly in 2022, UNESCO was the only UN agency mentioned in the speech. Although a big part of his speech was dedicated to the emphasis on freedom and peace, it is noteworthy that Korea’s commitment to the UN cultural organisation was mentioned in connection to “(g)enuine freedom and peace can turn into reality when we are free from disease and hunger, free from illiteracy and free from want of energy and culture.” The present transformation of Korean development cooperation towards inclusion of sub-state actors and expansion to cultural content ODA is fused in a case of Busan’s film aid.

WHEN FILM MET AID, IN BUSAN

Busan, a port city located on the south-eastern tip of the Korean peninsula, is a symbolic city in the modern history of Korea. Due to its location as the nation’s southernmost city, colonial Japan loaded Korea’s crops, resources, and forced labours off to Japan at this port. During the Korean War (1950-1953), Busan, filled with war refugees, acted as a provisional capital in lieu of Seoul which was taken only a few days after the War began. Since the 1960s, the temporary port capital of a war-torn country has grown to the fifth largest port city in the world backed by Korea’s export-led economic growth (KTV, 2011). A decade ago, as Korea became a new member of the OECD-DAC, Busan hosted the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The event reflected a remarkable transformation of the port city, through which international donors used to unload food aid to feed the majority of Koreans, to a hosting city of a new donor country.

Hosting the global development cooperation event offered an opportunity for Busan to engage in development cooperation; Busan began to make institutional efforts to shape Busan-style ODA vis-à-vis the Korea model. The city organised annual Busan ODA Forum. Busan Foundation for International Cooperation (BFIC), the municipal organisation in charge of development cooperation of the city, launched the Busan-style ODA project at the first annual Busan ODA forum in 2016. Mostly, the Busan ODA forum selects topics on possibilities and challenges found in municipal ODA in general, but two thematic agendas stand out: marine ODA and film ODA. The theme of Busan ODA Forum in 2019 and 2020 was dedicated to ‘Missions to discover marine ODA’ and ‘Culture for Development Cooperation: Framing the Future of Busan ODA in Film and Media’, respectively. Whereas marine ODA in Busan is straightforward given its coastal location, Busan’s choice as a source of film ODA requires a contextual understanding.

Busan was the first city in Korea to release a motion picture, and the city is an institutional hub in moviemaking in Korea. The Korean Film Council is also located

in Busan. Additionally, since the Busan International Film Festival launched in 1996, each year international travellers visit the festival; in 2021, during the pandemic, more than 76,000 audience gathered in Busan to the venue, and the number of visitors doubled a year after (BIFF, 2021; BIFF, 2022). Its creative and institutional capacity in film industry is recognised by the international organisations as well. (Busan UNESCO Creative City of Film, 2020) UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is a municipal network established to “promote cooperation towards and between cities that identify creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development” (UNESCO, 2021). UCCN designates creative cities demonstrating sufficient urban infrastructure and municipal supports in seven fields including crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music. At present, 18 cities around the world have been recognised as Creative City of Film. (Busan UNESCO Creative City of Film, 2020)

Busan has been dedicated to utilise such creative resources for development cooperation in the movie industry. For instance, Film Leaders Incubator, a film-making training program organised by the Busan Film Commission is one of the oldest such projects. . The project, which is called FLY, is a short-filmmaking workshop organised by Busan Film Commission-Busan Asian Film School and funded by the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund. Since the launch of the programme in 2012, more than 130 young filmmakers from member countries of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) complete the training courses on producing films every year until the programme (FLY, 2020). This year, the programme was carried out in Vietnam with 30 participants from 11 ASEAN countries (FLY, 2023). Additionally, Busan has been carrying out multiple state ODA contracts. Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange (KOFICE), the hub organisation of international cultural exchange by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, recruits partner organisations for the Cultural Partnership Initiative. To build up the base for cultural experts in development countries, the Cultural Partnership Initiative offers training programmes by matching them with the “best” organisations in the film and media industry, visual arts, publication, and performing arts (You, 2020). Busan won this project for capacity building in film industry twice in 2020 and 2021. The city also won a contract from KOICA in 2021 and extended its partner countries further to Rwanda beyond its usual partners in Asia. Initiated upon a request by the Rwandan government, this three-year project aims to share Korea’s experience of building creative industries, such as filmmaking and e-games, as a locomotive of Rwanda’s national economic growth (BFIC, 2021).

Busan ODA can be better understood in a bigger framework of the city’s overall municipal diplomacy. The white paper on Busan city branding published in 2021 illustrates priorities of its municipal diplomacy. With a “prestigious cultural city” at the top of priorities, action plans follow: building the Busan brand of an international peace city, forming a hallyu city, and fostering its status as an Asia film city (Busan Metropolitan City, 2021). Busan’s approach to city diplomacy underlining city-branding, under which its development cooperation is placed, echoes with the Korean government’s view of ODA as a diplomatic tool for boosting soft power. The white paper also shows that Busan’s city diplomacy is primarily aligned with the direction of national foreign policy. Busan’s role is limited to executing detailed action plans based on the city’s comparative advantages. For instance, a lion share of municipal diplomatic

priorities was placed on the New Southern and New Northern diplomacy, the crown jewel of the foreign policy of then Moon administration.

The limited autonomy originates from a lack of independent financial sources. Municipal autonomy can be measured by administrative and political autonomy, but the fiscal and financial autonomy is considered to be the most advanced stage (Heo, 2018). Similarly, Choi and others (2015) found positive correlation between the existence of municipal fund and municipal engagement in international development cooperation in Korea. Despite the increasing municipal engagement, only do Seoul and Gyeonggi have their own development cooperation funds. With no independent funding, Busan's development cooperation institution has to turn to bidding for state-contract programmes competing against non-governmental organisations and private agencies in this field. Such mechanism of national corporativism, which refers to "the control of state of organisation by large interest groups subordinate to the state using competitions amongst them," the seemingly multiple and inclusive developmental cooperation operates as one political entity (Tvedt, 2007). As the Korean government has not stopped increasing ODA budget, the competitions become ever-severe, and the bidder who sings along the best with the state is more likely to win the bid. At the end, the multiple agents who are invited for more inclusive development cooperation become supervised and guided by the state elite institutions and ministries, and Busan is just one of those multiple bidders without its own financial resources.

The lack of municipal resources originates not only from its short history democracy. The institutional path dependence explains the lack of autonomy in city diplomacy of Busan, the second most populous city in Korea. Based on the longer-term precondition of being a state since the 5th century and a successful developmental state as a critical juncture, the state is at the centre of financial management of municipal governments. One of primary roles of a development state entails allocation of financial resources based on its national development plans.

In contrast to the centralised financial management, , the survival of political elites in Busan lies on decentralised municipal elections. Hence, Busan-style ODA is centred heavily on how to benefit Busan and the voters in Busan (Do and Jung, 2018). Short-term direct gains of the city, such as assisting local enterprises with advancing to markets in neighbouring developing countries and supporting exports and skill-sets in Busan, are the claimed goals of municipal international engagement. The regional bias to Asia also tells a similar story.³ Busan's ambivalent standpoint as a subcontractor of national development programmes and a city of the municipal election renders the city as an emerging actor in global diplomacy and international development cooperation which tries to maximise economic benefits for city while abiding by the state development cooperation strategy. The state allocates Busan with what Busan does the best based on a bigger state framework of inclusive development cooperation—knowledge sharing in the film industry.

³ As most municipalities do not have a substantive financial capacity, they opt for Asian countries for the destination of funding, instead of the least development countries in Africa, which costs more on travelling and operating. =

Korea's municipal development cooperation

Compared to city diplomacy of matured donors in the Western democracy, Busan's development cooperation may give an impression of being "less developed". Stubborn habit in International Relations often leads to simple application of theories produced with a few cases of Northern metropolis to the Southern cities with the assumption that the expansion of theoretical application would enhance the understanding of cities in the Global South (Narayanan, 2021). However, such theoretical universalism led to dependence, derivation and alienation of the South (Banerjee et al., 2016). Although the municipal cooperation has been emerging in Korea in a temporal sense, I would argue that the differentiating historic experience of state-centrism renders a distinctive municipal diplomacy in Korea. And the municipal engagement in development cooperation is better understood in a broader structure of a state-centric economic and political development and its interpretation of development cooperation as a tool of national soft power.

This collaboration, of course, benefits Korea's the political odourless developmental soft power. Quoting Arquila and Ronfeldt (1999), Nye (2018) argues politics in an information age is a contest of competitive credibility which "may ultimately be about whose story wins". Doucette and Sial (2020: 106) also cautiously notes "perhaps a positive, urban vision of development cooperation has the potential to tell different story about both the future and the past than previously celebratory narratives" in Korea as a model of national economic growth. Development partners consider cities are politically more neutral than nation states. At the same time, cities can be more romantic. Film and film-making is telling a story. Busan's story in 'Ode to My Father', an internationally recognised film produced in 2014, and its film aid fill the vacuum the politically odourless model of Korea's economic development created. The growing visibility of cities is also linked with the emerging priority in Korea's development cooperation, smart cities. Recently, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport launched K-City Network to build Korean style smart city abroad, and the government organised 'Global Plant, Infrastructure, and Smart City (PIS) Fund to kick start exporting Korean urban model (MLIT, 2020). This government-to-government programme shares typical Korean ODA elements of infrastructure building combined with sharing knowledge.⁴

⁴ The shift to urban was a necessary in the local political context. Rural development, which was one of strategic sectors in the second mid-term plan in Korea, became politically infeasible after the scandal of Korea Aid, a corruption-ridden development cooperation programme designed for girls in rural villages by the impeached president Park Geun Hye (Kim, 2019). Similarly, the Global Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement), which was used as for political mobilisation by Park Chunghee, an autocrat and late father of Park Geun Hye, lost public support as well. The Moon administration, which replaced Park's, released plans to overhaul or abolish questionable development programmes initiated under Park. Korea Aid, has been given a fresh title of the Mother and Child Outreach Programme, and its budget has been cut by half. The budget and programme to promote the Global Saemaul Undong was subjected to a similar policy shift. Accordingly, the share of aid urban development has increased. Furthermore, urban development is in tandem with the global shift to urban development issues.

The state-municipal collaboration by the developmental state can be efficient to partner countries. Busan city diplomacy is conducted in a coordinated and top-down fashion shaping its own state-city collaboration backed by a state-centric developmental state tradition. While the state ODA fits better for large-scale physical projects, municipalities better understand detailed development challenges on the ground. However, although municipalities may have sufficient experiences and knowledges in particular industries to share vis-à-vis partner cities, it is not easy for most municipalities to keep sufficient staff specialised in development cooperation as in the state (Chang, 2016). Furthermore, state is better positioned to harmonise varied development projects carried out by multiple agents across the country and to prevent similar projects from being overlapped, which is important for aid effectiveness via harmonisation. When coordinated well, this state-city collaboration can be effective. Taking the creative industry for an example, small countries in the Global South do not participate in the global production chain and remain as places of consumption. Southern creative cities like Busan are more effective in delivering peer-to-peer knowledge acquired on the ground while it lacks funding to offer relative infrastructure and devices. The state-city collaboration was effective to resolve the challenge. For instance, Busan was able to conduct digital training courses for capacity building in the cultural contents industry in Rwanda at the ICT centre which was built by Korean state development agency completed a year earlier.

In terms of the broader dynamics in international development cooperation, Busan film aid is breaking the North-South balance. Both aid-giving and the production of global creative goods have been predominantly jobs of the industrialised matured democracies in the West and Japan, the global North. The global South is increasingly replacing the North in both fronts. Non-Western donors, represented by China, have been re-shaping the dynamics of international aid industry by offering an alternative financial source. In the global creative industry, the economically better-endowed countries in the global South, such as Korea, Turkey, and the BRICS, make institutional efforts to transform their cities to “the urban conglomeration to make the co-location of production and consumption” (Cunningham, 2009: 381). Adding another layer on the South-South link, while some of Southern partners’ cultural engagement are considered as a replica of the Western invasion, Korea positioned as a middle power, is considered benign (Kim, 2020). The Korea’s development assistance that built the National Museum of Congo is a good case that showcases the change in long-standing post-colonial dynamics in the cultural industry.⁵

⁵ In 2013, requested by the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Korea built a national museum of the DRC. The project entails digitalising the cultural heritage and training museum staff and officials. The museum has drawn attention as its construction coincided with the re-opening of the Africa Museum in Belgium, the former name of which was the Royal Museum for Central Africa. The museum is notorious of the colonial ‘human zoo,’ which held and displayed hundreds Congolese people for a purpose of an exhibition on the orders of King Leopold. This cultural institution holds one of the largest collections of African artefacts, roughly ten times the inventory of artefacts in Kinshasa (O’Donnell 2014). Upon a question on repatriation of the Congolese artefacts, a director of the museum raised the issue of the incapacity of the Congolese government to keep the artefacts. The brand-new museum of the DRC provides a good reason

CONCLUSION

At the end of 2022, the Korean government proposed its Indo-Pacific strategy which included the government commitment to turning Korea into the world's top ten largest donor and to "tap(ping) into our soft power that stems from the global popularity of the creative contents of K-culture, including K-pop, Korean movies, dramas and games" (MoFA, 2022). Such aspiration and its experience as a developmental state explains Busan film aid. While Korea's development cooperation is increasingly championing inclusiveness, the most newcomers from cities and local governments, such as Busan, remained sub-contractors of the state development projects due to the lack of independent financial resources and the decentralised municipal elections. Busan film aid, however, fills the void that Korea's politically odourless development model creates taking advantage of its local competitiveness of film-making. It is too early to tell whether city diplomacy in Korea is on its "upward" way to become more matured and decentralised like the Western democracies or to craft its own way of a distinctive city diplomacy. Yet, Busan film aid is providing a different path of state-municipal collaboration in development cooperation; it demonstrates an alternative route of inclusiveness for other current and potential emerging donors in the global South, that, like Korea, have relatively shorter histories of liberal democracy.

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to bring the artefacts back. Sarah van Beurden, a Belgian historian of modern Africa translates Korea's engagement as follows: 'The story they (Koreans) tell about themselves is about a formerly colonized country that has overcome its past to become a highly successful developed nation ... and they're using that image to say to the Congolese, you don't need to work with your old colonial overlords, you can work with us instead' (Brown 2018).

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