

Knowledge-Sharing as Middle Power's New Public Diplomacy: The Case of Korea's Higher Education ODA

Hahnkyu Park¹

Received: 18 April 2023 / Accepted: 14 August 2023 /

Published online: 1 December 2023

© Korean Social Science Research Council 2023

Abstract This paper seeks to explain higher education ODA as an effective instrument of Korea's public diplomacy. The educational ODA is designed to provide training and higher education programs in which people from various developing countries can learn knowledge and know-how for economic and social development from Korea. Against this backdrop, this paper will focus on Korea's higher education ODA as a new type of public diplomacy that will contribute positively to enhancing Korea's national image and producing the common good in the global society. For that purpose, it first reevaluates the concept of power and then attempts to redefine it in the changing context of contemporary world politics. As it examines the changing context of public diplomacy since the end of the Cold War, it would be argued that knowledge-sharing diplomacy can be introduced as one of the major aspects of the middle power's public diplomacy. To explain the effectiveness of knowledge-sharing diplomacy as new public diplomacy, it examines the case of the Scholarship Program (SP) sponsored by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Keywords knowledge-sharing diplomacy · public diplomacy · ODA · KOICA · higher education

✉ Hahnkyu Park
hkpark@khu.ac.kr

¹ Professor, Department of International Studies, Kyung Hee University

Introduction

‘Middle-power diplomacy’ has been a buzzword for the Republic of Korea’s (Korea) foreign policy since the mid-2000s. Many scholars and foreign policy practitioners in Korea began to claim that Korea, as a middle power, neither a great power nor a small power, should play a more important role in international relations commensurate with its rising power position in the international system. Over the last three decades, successful economic development and democratization have enabled Korea to rise to one of the economic powerhouses and liberal democracies in the world that no one could have thought possible until the late 1980s. According to World Bank statistics, as of the end of 2022, Korea has become the tenth-largest economy in the world in terms of nominal GDP, and it has also achieved one of the most stable democracies in Asia.

Over the recent years, Korea has been playing a proactive role as a middle power in global politics. It joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the international organization of advanced nations, in 1996. Since then, it has hosted major global events such as the G-20 Summit in 2010, the OECD Fourth High-Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness in 2011, the Nuclear Summit in 2012, and the UNESCO World Education Forum in 2015. In 2013, Korea also played a leading role in organizing a new innovative partnership of newly emerging economies named MIKTA, including Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia, the main goal of which is to play pivotal strategic roles in the global issue areas such as open economies, human rights and democracy, and international development, etc. The 2021 P4G Seoul Summit was held on the theme “Inclusive Green Recovery Towards Carbon Neutrality.”

Many foreign policy experts and practitioners now agree that public diplomacy is one of the important means of middle power in contemporary world politics. Public diplomacy was developed as one of the major foreign policy means to increase a state’s influence in international relations not through hard power like military and economic power but through soft power such as knowledge, culture, and institutions. Consequently, public diplomacy is often regarded as niche diplomacy for middle powers like Korea that have limited hard-power capacities with soft-power potential. For instance, it may be difficult for Korea to catch up with the major powers, such as the United States and China, regarding hard power. However, Korea has great potential in terms of soft power to play a bridging role between advanced and developing countries by disseminating knowledge and know-how for economic, social, and political development based on Korean experiences. Korea, as a middle power, is now paying more important attention to public diplomacy than ever before, especially since the Lee Myung-bak government in the late 2000s.

Since it acceded to the Development Assistance Committee in the OECD (OECD-DAC) in 2010, the first recipient-turned-donor country, Korea has prioritized the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) policy as one of the important tools in its public diplomacy. The attainment of membership in the OECD-DAC has a special meaning to Korea in that it successfully transformed itself from an aid recipient about two decades ago to an important donor in such a short period. Many developing countries now see Korea as a source of knowledge and ideas on economic development drawn from its experience. Many developing countries want to understand and learn about Korea’s developmental model of economy and democracy. Through various

training and educational programs provided by the Korean government, many people from developing countries annually visit and learn about knowledge and skills based on Korea's experience of social and economic development. Consequently, sharing knowledge, know-how, and experience of successful socioeconomic development with developing countries can be an effective tool for Korea's public diplomacy.

This paper will especially focus on higher education ODA as an effective instrument of Korea's public diplomacy. The educational ODA is designed to provide training and higher education programs in which people from various countries worldwide can learn knowledge and know-how for economic and social development from Korea. Against this backdrop, it will focus on Korea's higher education ODA as a new type of public diplomacy that will contribute positively to enhancing Korea's national image and producing the common good in the global society. For that purpose, the following section will first reevaluate the concept of power and then attempt to redefine it in the changing context of contemporary world politics. The third section will explain public diplomacy as niche diplomacy for the middle power. It will examine the changing context of public diplomacy since the end of the Cold War. Knowledge-sharing diplomacy will be introduced as one of the major aspects of the middle power's public diplomacy. The fourth section will explain the effectiveness of knowledge-sharing diplomacy as new public diplomacy, mainly based upon the case of the Scholarship Program (SP) sponsored by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Reevaluating the Meaning of Middle Power

The pioneering work on the concept of middle power was done by Carsten Holbraad (1984) during the Cold War period. He defined a middle power primarily based upon the material capabilities such as the size of the population and the economic power in terms of GDP. According to him, a *middle power* can be defined as a sovereign state that is not a great power but still has a large or moderate influence on international relations. He argued that middle powers played the role of facilitator in various international organizations and a crucial bridging role between the developed and developing worlds, as well as between the two superpowers, that is, the United States and the former Soviet Union. However, during most of the Cold War period, the concept of middle power was not popular among scholars and practitioners who preferred the dichotomous method to divide the states in the international system into great powers and small powers.

Research on middle power began to flourish after the end of the Cold War. Many scholars have contributed significantly to the further development of the study of middle power in the changing context of world politics.¹ Among them are Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal, who contributed to more clearly elaborating the concept of middle power. According to them, the term middle power can be conceptualized in the following criteria: (1) it is positioned at a middle point of material capabilities in terms of population, economy, and military, (2) it is

¹ For the post-Cold War research on middle power, see the following literature: Cox (1989, 823-862); Stokke et. al. (1989); Pratt (1989). Higgott and Cooper (1990, 589-632); Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal (1993); Cooper (1997).

geographically located between the great powers, (3) it is normative in that middle power play a trustworthy and responsible role with value orientations that favor diplomatic means rather than force and coercion in the maintenance of stable global order, and (4) it has particular behavioral patterns including the “tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, the tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes, and the tendency to embrace notions of “good international citizenship” to guide its diplomacy” (Cooper et al., 1993, p. 19). Higgott and his colleagues especially paid attention to the diplomatic behavioral patterns of middle powers. Middle powers engage in unique behavioral patterns that make them catalysts, facilitators, and managers; ‘catalysts’ trigger and promote special global issues while ‘facilitators’ build coalitions based on cooperation, and ‘managers’ develop and advance international institutions and norms (Cooper et al., 1993, pp. 25-26).

In defining the concept of middle power, the criteria of both material capabilities and behavior patterns are needed. First of all, in terms of material capability, middle powers should have relatively limited hard power (both military and economic power) to have a significant influence in particular global issues of their interests, but not powerful enough compared to those of great powers in the international system. Secondly, middle powers should have a behavioral tendency to pursue greater cooperation and global common interests in the global society and to use their relative affluence, managerial skills, and international prestige for the maintenance of the existing international order and peace.

To summarize the defining features of middle power in contemporary international relations, middle power should meet both the necessary condition of material capability and the sufficient condition of foreign policy behavior.² Using these defining features of middle power, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have been traditionally regarded as middle power. These middle powers are usually perceived as maintaining a neutral and objective stance, not following the lead of global hegemon or regional powers but taking the initiative to form a coalition with other states on specific global issues that require international negotiations and compromises. There is also a group of emerging middle powers that have newly enhanced their power position because of the market size, population, and foreign direct investment (FDI). Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia may be included in the categorization of newly emerging middle power (Jordaán, 2003, p. 165).

Based on this definition of middle power, Korea can be regarded as a middle power. It has become a significant global economic power over the past years, rising from the devastation of the Korean War as one of the poorest countries in the early 1950s. Due to its rising economic power, it has rapidly increased its power position in the international system. As of 202, Korea has more than 50 million population and is the tenth-largest economy in the world in terms of GDP (World Bank 2023). In 2012, Korea became the seventh country in the world to join the so-called “20-50 club,” with a population surpassing 50 million per capita income of US\$20,000. Korea is also the world’s sixth military power according to the 2023 Global Fire Power (GFP) index. Considering these statistics on Korea’s national power, it is safe to say that it satisfies

² Woosang Kim suggests that, if a state meets both necessary and sufficient conditions, it can be called a ‘pivotal’ middle power. If a state meets only the sufficient condition, it can be called an ‘ordinary’ middle power. According to Kim, pivotal middle powers include Korea, Indonesia, Australia, Spain, Netherlands, Turkey, Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc. Ordinary middle power include New Zealand, Singapore, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria, etc. (Kim 2015, 257).

the criteria of material capabilities as a middle power.

Until the late 2000s, however, Korea's foreign policy behavior did not seem to meet the criteria of a middle power that would contribute to greater international cooperation and the global common good. It was the Lee Myung-bak government (2008-2013) that began to proactively promote the term 'middle-power diplomacy' as Korea's foreign policy strategy to increase its influence in international relations.³ Under the slogan of 'Global Korea,' the concept of middle power was used to promote its international influence as catalyst, facilitator, and manager in some global issues of its interests. Korea, as a 'facilitator,' took the initiative in cooperation with Australia to create the G-20 Summit and host the 5th G-20 Summit in November 2010 in Seoul. In 2013, Korea organized a new coalition of rising economic powers named MIKTA, including Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia. The main mission of the MIKTA is to play a new innovative role in the global issues of open economies, human rights and democracy, international development, etc. In the Seoul G-20 Summit, Korea actively played a 'catalyst' leadership in agreeing to endorse the Seoul Development Consensus, a set of guidelines and principles for cooperation with less developed countries to improve economic development and reduce world poverty. Korea also played a 'manager' role by hosting the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), which was agreed upon to be established at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. In January 2015, the GGGI was accredited as an observer international organization to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) agreed upon by Parties at the 2010 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference held in Cancun, Mexico. As a status-quo seeker in the international system, Korea is also actively participating in the UN Peace-Keeping Operation (PKO), the central mission of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. As of May 2022, 1,100 Korean military personnel have been deployed to 13 different PKO missions, including Kashmir, South Sudan, Sudan-Darfur, Cote d'Ivoire, and West Sahara (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2022).

As a middle power, Korea has also actively attempted to contribute to solving a common global problem, world poverty, since it became the 24th member of OECD-DAC in 2010. It has rapidly improved its ODA system by enacting the Framework on International Development Cooperation and increased its ODA expenditure amounting to US\$1.91 billion, 0.14% of its GNI. Korea set a new goal to increase its ODA expenditure to 0.20% of GNI in 2020. Korea is the 24th largest Development Assistance Committee (DAC) provider in terms of its ODA as a percentage of GNI and the 14th largest by volume (Korea Export and Import Bank 2017). Although Korea's contribution to ODA is slightly more modest compared to those of other donor countries, Korea's ODA has made significant strides over the past few years, with increases that are far more than most DAC members. It has set a new target of 0.30% ODA/GNI by 2030. The top two recipients of Korea's ODA over the last ten years are Asia (46.3%) and Africa (23.9%). Latin America (7.9%) and the Middle East (4.3%) were followed (OECD, 2017). With its volunteer program 'World Friends Korea' (WFK), Korea has sent more than 3,000 volunteers every year abroad to over 100 countries, chiefly in Asia but also Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Aligned to support the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these volunteers

³ For the study on the foreign policy of Korea as a middle power, see Robertson (2007); Rozman (2007); Kim (2008).

have provided various volunteer work programs in health, education, sustainable rural development, and information technology.

Knowledge Sharing as a New Public Diplomacy

Many scholars have argued that middle powers should focus on niche areas of diplomacy. It was Gareth Evans, the former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (1988-96), who first articulated the concept of ‘niche diplomacy’ for middle powers and defined it as “concentrating resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field” (Cooper et al., 1993, p. 25). A. F. Cooper (1997, 4-5) also explained that traditional middle power diplomacy tended to rely on niche areas, focused on normative agendas of low politics (e.g., human rights, international development, and cooperation, the environment, etc.) since middle powers have a relatively limited range of diplomatic resources compared to great powers. Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal argued that niche diplomacy involved middle powers taking the initiative to incorporate new ideas into international governance, and three behavior patterns of middle power, including catalysts, facilitators, and managers, are linked to niche diplomacy. Consequently, middle powers tended to rely on soft power for their niche diplomacy rather than on hard power.

After the end of the Cold War, public diplomacy became a major feature of middle-power diplomacy because it mostly relied on soft power to promote the national image and capture the attention of the foreign public worldwide. The concept of public diplomacy is a familiar one in this century. During the Cold War period, superpowers such as the United States and the former Soviet Union conducted public diplomacy as a supplementary tool to traditional government-to-government diplomacy.⁴ In other words, public diplomacy has often been used by the state to cultivate public opinion in the target state in favor of implementing the state’s foreign policy. However, since the end of the Cold War, middle powers began to employ public diplomacy more actively to enhance their influence and national prestige in international relations because the collapse of the Cold War system predominated by the superpowers opened more room for middle powers to maneuver and increase their influence in specific issue areas of their interests in the international relations. With the end of the Cold War, many states began to consider non-traditional security sectors such as economic security, regime security, environmental security, and societal security as important as traditional national security, mainly based upon military security. In this changing context of post-Cold War world politics, middle powers can provide leadership on some global issues other than military security issues using their soft power. These global issues include hunger, poverty, pandemics, human rights violations, climate change, etc. They have played a technical and entrepreneurial leadership on these global issues through multilateral cooperation, compromises, and good global citizenship.

⁴ Traditionally, the term “diplomacy” means the practice of conducting negotiations and communications between representatives of governments with regards to various foreign policy issues to achieve national interests, including security, political, economic interests and national prestige (brand). In traditional diplomacy, hard power such as military and economic power has been the main resources to influence other states. This form of national power is often aggressive, and is most effective when imposed by the powerful state upon the weaker states in terms of military and/or economic power.

Public Diplomacy Revisited in the Post-Cold War Context

Public diplomacy has been considered an important niche diplomacy for middle power since the end of the Cold War. In general, *public diplomacy* can be defined as promoting the national interest and the national brand of the state through understanding, informing, and influencing the foreign public and broadening one-way dialogue between the state's citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.⁵ The resources of public diplomacy are mainly based upon soft power.⁶ The chief instruments of public diplomacy are publications, motion pictures, cultural exchanges, and radio and television. However, this old type of public diplomacy is mainly executed by the state to foreign publics in other states in a unilateral way. In other words, old public diplomacy depends on top-down, unilateral communications (like public relations and propaganda) to attract foreign publics.

Entering the 21st century, scholars and practitioners began to readjust the concept of public diplomacy to the main characteristics of the new era, mainly represented by the globalization effect and information and communications revolution. The increased importance of mass media and public opinion, the emergence of new media such as Social Network Services (SNS), the increasing presence of non-state actors in international relations, and the rise of global culture are all new factors that necessitate a redefinition of public diplomacy. In the new type of public diplomacy, there are at least three distinctive characteristics different from old public diplomacy. First, an increasing number of non-state actors are involved in new public diplomacy. The states do not simply attempt to influence foreign publics directly but to design non-state actor-sponsored programs intended to influence foreign publics. For example, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), educational institutions like universities, and private enterprises have played an important role in conducting public diplomacy in recent years.

Second, new public diplomacy is based not only upon soft power but also on social power, which is similar to the concept of social capital.⁷ In international relations, social power is the ability to set norms, trust, values, and networks that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual goals and interests among the members of the international community. It is the power of consent, acquiescence, and voluntary compliance.⁸ New public diplomacy is thus concerned not just with self-centered interests in a unilateral way but with mutual goals and common interests between the state and its citizens and institutions and counterparts abroad.

Third, the instruments of new public diplomacy include not only old media but new digital

⁵ This definition of public diplomacy is heavily drawn upon the definition of public diplomacy provided by the now-defunct United States Information Agency (USIA). "What Public Diplomacy Is and Not." http://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/?page_id=6 (search date: April 11, 2017).

⁶ According to Joseph Nye, soft power can be defined as the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force or give money as a means of persuasion. In other words, it is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. A defining feature of soft power is non-coercion, attraction and persuasion. For the concept of soft power, see Nye (2004), Nye (2008), and Nye (2011).

⁷ According to Robert Putnam, social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. The term social capital emphasizes not just warm and cuddly feelings, but a wide variety of quite specific benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation associated with social networks (Putnam 2000, 67).

⁸ For the concept of social power in the international relations, see Ham (2010).

media. New digital media in contemporary public diplomacy are widely utilized due to the revolution in information and communications technology. The emergence of the Internet and smartphones provide a virtual space for two-way and open communications between the actors involved (Kim, 2012, p. 533; Melissen 2005, pp. 3-27). So, *new public diplomacy* can be defined as promoting the mutual interests of the state and other states through engaging, understanding, informing foreign publics, and broadening two-way and open dialogue between the state's citizens and civil society and their counterparts abroad.⁹

Table 1 Three Types of Diplomacy

	Traditional Diplomacy (G2G)	Old (Cold War) Public Diplomacy (G2P)	New (Post-Cold War) Public Diplomacy (G2P, P2P)
Actor(s)	Government	Government	Government Non-governmental actor
Target(s)	Foreign Government	Foreign Publics Foreign Government	Foreign Publics Foreign Government
Types of Power	Hard Power	Soft power	Soft power Social power
Instruments/ Medium	Communications and Negotiations between Governments	PR Campaign Old Media (TV, Radio, Publication)	Old Media New Digital Media Knowledge Sharing
Communication Type	Horizontal, Closed	One-way Asymmetric Unilateral Closed	Two-way Symmetric Collaborative Open

Source: Kim (2012, 533). Some modifications are made on the original table by the author.

Knowledge-Sharing Diplomacy

Sharing knowledge, know-how, and experience of Korea's successful socioeconomic development with developing countries can be an effective tool for Korea's public diplomacy. Many developing countries have seen Korea as a model to emulate for their socioeconomic development. Many developing countries would likely understand and learn about Korea's developmental model of economy and democracy. As part of ODA policy, Korea has provided various training and educational programs for many people from both public and private sectors in many developing countries annually to learn about knowledge and skills based upon Korea's experience of social and economic development.

Middle powers such as Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway have been very active in providing ODA for developing countries while hoping to reduce world poverty.¹⁰ By doing so, they attempt to increase their influence and national image in international relations. Since joining the OCED-DAC in 2010, Korea has also regarded ODA as one of the main areas for its foreign policy. Through its ODA policy, Korea has provided not just economic assistance and aid to developing countries but also educational and training programs for sharing

⁹ For the conceptualization of new public diplomacy from Korea's context, see Kim (2012, 527-555).

¹⁰ For the analysis of main characteristics of ODA policies of these countries, see Stokke (1989, 275-322).

its knowledge and know-how for economic and social development with developing countries. In this vein, Korea's ODA policy is unique because it emphasizes knowledge sharing, such as vocational training and scholarship and higher education programs. The knowledge-sharing programs sponsored by the Korean government mainly include the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) of the Ministry of Strategy and Finance, the Scholarship Program (SP) of the KOICA, and the Global Korea Scholarship and the Global Education Cooperation Assistance Program of the Ministry of Education. These knowledge-sharing programs aim to support the institutional and capacity-building of developing countries through a series of collaborative research works, policy consultations, technical assistance, and higher education.

Since the 2010s, in the ODA area, knowledge sharing and education began to be recognized as one of the key factors to the adoption and adaptation of effective and sustainable socioeconomic development in developing countries. At the Seoul G-20 Summit in 2010, the Multi-Year Action Plan on Development was endorsed by the G-20 leaders under the leadership of Korea. In the G-20 Multi-Year Action Plan on Development, the leaders recognized that sharing development experiences would be the most relevant and effective solution. At the HLF-4, which was held in Busan in November 2011, education ODA and knowledge sharing were also emphasized as the key components for socioeconomic development, sustainable growth, and capacity building in developing countries.

Knowledge sharing can be one of the important aspects of Korea's public diplomacy. Korea can share knowledge and know-how with developing countries on its successful development policies, institutions, and values accumulated and formulated through its own experience of socioeconomic development. Korea's historical and intellectual resources concerning economic, social, and educational development are particularly invaluable assets for Korea's public diplomacy when other developing countries voluntarily want to learn about and emulate them (Kim, 2012, p. 544). Over the recent years, on top of the growing global polarity of Korean culture known as the "Korean Wave" (Hallyu), many developing countries also hope to learn the Korean pathway of socioeconomic development. Consequently, knowledge-sharing diplomacy can be an effective tool for Korea's public diplomacy.

Higher Education ODA as Knowledge-Sharing Diplomacy: The Case of KOICA's Scholarship Program

The Scholarship Program (SP), sponsored by KOICA, is one pillar of Korea's knowledge-sharing diplomacy. KOICA offers a scholarship program for students from developing countries to undertake full-time postgraduate study at participating Korean universities. Applicants must be a government official, an employee in the public sector, or a researcher in a state institute working in his/her home country with a bachelor's degree or higher. The applicants must also be nominated by his or her government. The SP is designed to nurture future leaders in both public and private sectors from developing countries to promote their countries' sustainable economic growth and social development. Initiated in 1997, the SP has assisted over 4,200 students from 81 countries through 95 courses. In partnership with leading universities in Korea, KOICA has offered master's programs (seventeen months long) in economics, trade, gender equality, climate change, rural development, and more. The KOICA has invited about 400

students to the SP every year.¹¹

KOICA's SP can be a good example of Korea's new public diplomacy based on soft and social power. Based on knowledge sharing, it can establish mutual trust, common interests, and human networks that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual goals between Korea and participant countries. As part of public diplomacy, it can also contribute to enhancing the national image of Korea, promoting the bilateral relationship between Korea and participant countries, increasing Korea's influence in the area of International Development and Cooperation in the international society, and finally, reducing world poverty, a global common issue.

The effectiveness of the SP has been proven through the outstanding performances of many alums of the SP. After returning to their home countries, many of them are already working as influential political leaders and high-ranking government officials in their countries. Others are now in the private business sectors, mass media, international organizations, and academia. Thus, the SP can be taken as an excellent empirical case study to test the effectiveness of knowledge-sharing diplomacy as Korea's new public diplomacy. For that purpose, the following three indicators can be suggested:

Indicator 1: The degree of enhancing the national image of South Korea

Indicator 2: The willingness of promoting the bilateral relationship between South Korea and the states students represent

Indicator 3: The degree of creating mutual interests between South Korea and participants and their countries

In a survey with SP graduates, conducted by a participating university in the SP during the period from May 2015 to March 2016, 164 of 258 graduates responded to survey questions (the response rate was 63.6%).¹² Related to public diplomacy, the following questions were asked:

- ① After your study in Korea, how have your image toward Korea changed?
- ② If your image toward Korea has changed positively, on which aspects of South Korea has your image most improved?
- ③ How much are you willing to play a role in promoting a friendly relationship between your country and Korea?
- ④ To what degree did your mater degree at the SP help your career advancement?
- ⑤ How much do you want to revisit South Korea for either business or travel?

Indicator 1: The Degree of Enhancing Korea's National Image

The main objective of public diplomacy is to promote the state's national image, brand, and prestige by attracting foreign publics using both soft and social power. The national image of the state is one of the important elements of soft power. Consequently, many states promote a more favorable image to achieve national interest in their relations with other states. When the graduates were asked how their image toward Korea has changed after their study through the

¹¹ For more detailed information on KOICA's Scholarship Program, see "KOICA Scholarship Program (SP). <<https://www.koica.go.kr/ciat/7806/subview.do>>

¹² The survey project was funded by the Korea Foundation in 2016.

SP in Korea, 81.9% responded that their image toward Korea changed very positively compared to before they came to Korea and 13.9% relatively positively. Overall, as 95.8% responded positively, it is not an exaggeration to say that Korea's knowledge-sharing diplomacy, such as the SP, has been very effective in enhancing its national image among the participants in the SP program.

When they were asked on which aspects of South Korea their image has changed most positively, 62.5% responded that they were most impressed with the infrastructure and economic system, 45.2% with the educational system, 39.2% with people and society, 31.3% with tourism, 28.3% with culture, and the least with politics. This result may indicate that they are still more attracted to Korea's model of economic and social development than others. Considering that they are mostly government officials, Korea has an image of a role model that their governments want to emulate for economic and social development in their countries. A Peruvian graduate working for the Peruvian Embassy to Korea in Seoul explained how much the Korean model of development becomes a role model to emulate and how the SP graduates have improved their image toward Korea:¹³

“We realize (know) that we will go back (after study in Korea) and some will become leaders. The first model that will come to mind will be Korea, so it's a way to guarantee that you will buy Korean technology or Korea models... (Former) President Umala who studied in Korea encouraged (his government) to focus in (importing) Korean technology. It's something you have in mind. When I went back to Peru, I bought a Korean Car, Hyundai... It is a way to thank Korea. These things happen naturally.”

Indicator 2: The Willingness of Promoting the Bilateral Relationship between Korea and Participants' Home Countries

One of the most important goals of public diplomacy is to promote a friendly and cooperative relationship between the state and other states by attracting foreign publics around the world. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a growing criticism of Korea's foreign policy among scholars and experts that Korea was heavily dependent on the so-called “four big power” diplomacy. Korea has mainly focused its diplomatic efforts on its relations with the four powers surrounding the Korean Peninsula, that is, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia, mainly due to its geopolitical location, that is, Korea is surrounded by these four powers and have been victimized by big-power rivalry surrounding the Korean Peninsula.

Entering the 21st Century, upon this criticism, the Korean government has made serious efforts to extend its foreign relations with various countries worldwide. In doing so, Korea began to pay important attention to middle-power diplomacy. It has expanded its ODA expenditure to help various developing countries achieve their developmental agendas. As part of its ODA policy, Korea intensively provided higher education programs that allow government officials from developing countries to do their postgraduate studies in Korea.

¹³ This interview was conducted in Seoul, Korea on April 8, 2016. The name of the interviewee is not provided to protect the interviewee's anonymity

Through these high-education ODA programs, the program participants had a chance to learn about the Korean experience and know-how of economic and social development. After their study in Korea, these graduates enlarged their understanding of Korea and showed their willingness to play a bridging role between Korea and their home countries. When asked how much they are willing to play a role in promoting a friendly relationship between their countries and Korea, 88.3% responded very strongly and 10.4% somewhat strongly. In total, 98.7% showed a strong willingness to contribute to promoting the bilateral relationship between Korea and their home countries. Because most of them are promising and relatively young government officials, they are very important assets for Korea's foreign policy in promoting ties with the countries they represent.

A Guatemalan graduate working for Samsung Engineering Co. in Seoul after her study at a participating university in the SP eloquently explains how the graduates of various training and educational programs in Korea are playing a bridging role between Korea and their countries:¹⁴

“In the case of Guatemala, there are more than 100 (Guatemalan) students who are studying not only in the KOICA program but in other university programs in Korea. And, now there are a lot of students who went back to Guatemala. When they go back to Guatemala, they are promoting a network of businesses between Guatemala and Korea. They have just formed the Chamber of Commerce between Guatemala and Korea... There are many Koreans in Guatemala since the 1990s because a lot of Koreans came to Guatemala for textile business. But they just stayed within their community... (However) All these Guatemalans who came back (after their study in Korea) want to interact with Koreans. Before, there were (some) Korean restaurants only in the Korean community area mainly used by the Koreans. However, these days, because there are more Guatemalan people wanting to know more about them and go there, the Koreans are starting to opening more Korean restaurants for Guatemalans and the Koreans are more integrated in the (Guatemalan) society.”

The graduates of the SP also showed their willingness to contribute to promoting a friendly relationship with Korea at the civilian level. When asked how much they are willing to recommend their family members, friends, and colleagues to go to Korea for their study, business, and travel, 86.5% answered very strongly and 11.7% somewhat strongly. Suppose one considers that contemporary diplomacy is not just conducted at the state-to-state level but on the civilian level as well. In that case, it is significant that they are also willing to play an important role in promoting friendly relations between Korea and their family members and friends by disseminating a favorable image of Korea among them.

Indicator 3: The Degree of Creating Mutual Interests between Korea and Participants (and Their Countries)

As examined before, new public diplomacy also utilizes a state's social power in its international relations. The new public diplomacy based upon social power is aimed not only at promoting

¹⁴ This interview was conducted in Seoul, Korea, on April 8, 2016.

the state's self-centered interests but also at creating shared goals and mutual interests with other states and the people of the other states. The SP is designed to help students cultivate and build their capacity in their specialized fields. When the SP graduates were asked how much their M.A. degrees through the SP have helped their career advancement after graduation, 73% responded that it helped very positively and 21.5% somewhat positively. Likewise, most believe the SP is helpful and instrumental in personal career development. A Peruvian graduate also describes how helpful the SP was in her career development after completing her M.A. degree:¹⁵

“I am sure all the people who used to study here boosted their careers. An M.A. degree helped us grow professionally. In this sense, the SP program fulfilled this requirement. My master's degree helped me professionally. I'm not really sure if all the people from Peru who studied here tried to do something related to Korea. For me it was. I know about 10 or 15 people who used to study here, and they have good jobs. The M.A. degree helped them professionally for sure.”

The SP program is also a good case in which one can find the effectiveness of knowledge-sharing diplomacy in social networking between Korea and its educational institutions and the participants that will facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits. Due to their experience of studying at the SP program, the SP graduates came to want continuing participation in business and work relating to Korea. When asked whether they wanted to continue to visit Korea for their business and work in the future, 88.3% wanted very strongly to do so. The strong willingness of the SP graduates to continue participation in business and work relating to Korea is a good indication that there already exists a social network of beliefs, trusts, and cooperation that will generate mutual goals and benefits between Korea and them.

Conclusion

This paper has examined knowledge-sharing diplomacy as new public diplomacy for a middle power like Korea, focusing on the case of KOICA's Scholarship Program (SP). It has been argued that higher education ODA, such as the SP, can be an effective instrument of Korea's new public diplomacy based on soft and social power.

Theoretically, this chapter has also attempted to reevaluate the concept of middle power in international relations and the meaning of middle-power public diplomacy in the changing context of contemporary world politics. It has been argued that, with the Cold War over, there created more room for middle powers to increase their influence on global issues such as international development, environment, pandemics, and so on, and that public diplomacy is a very effective instrument to middle powers to achieve their interests and goals in the international relations.

Although public diplomacy is an effective means of middle-power diplomacy, it should also change in a more sophisticated form while incorporating the major characteristics of the new era of globalization and the information and communication revolution. While old public diplomacy is aimed at achieving the state's self-centered interests in international relations

¹⁵ This interview was conducted in Seoul, Korea on April 8, 2016.

through one-way communication with foreign publics in other states based upon soft power, the new type of public diplomacy should be based upon both soft power and social power, which generates mutual interests and goals between the state and other states through two-way communications with foreign publics.

Knowledge-sharing diplomacy can be a new type of public diplomacy for middle powers like Korea. Korea's experience of successful economic development is widely accepted as a role model of effective socioeconomic development among developing countries in the world. Many developing countries want to learn about and emulate the Korean economic development model. Consequently, Korea can attract and co-opt many developing states and their people through sharing its knowledge and know-how on socioeconomic development based on its own experience. At the same time, Korea can enhance its national image, increase its influence in international relations, and contribute to solutions for reducing global poverty. At this juncture, knowledge-sharing diplomacy critically produces the possibility of creating mutual benefits and goals between Korea and developing countries.

The KOICA's SP is one pillar of knowledge-sharing diplomacy in Korea. It can be a good case in which Korea and the participants' countries can establish a social network of mutual understanding, trust, and values that generate cooperation and coordination. In sum, while the participant countries can learn about Korea's knowledge and know-how for economic development and the participants can improve their capacity in specialized fields, Korea can enhance its national brand among the developing countries and its influence in international development and cooperation in global politics.

As examined in this paper, Korea's ODA policy has an important emphasis on educational ODA. However, there still exist some important problems to tackle in the years to come. First, ODA policymakers tend to see the immediate outcomes of their policy in the short term. As a result, they tend to increase expenditure on ODA programs such as construction projects that yield immediate results. However, they are reluctant to allocate more budget to educational ODA programs with long-term effects. However, the graduates of Korea's educational ODA programs will contribute significantly with the knowledge, expertise, and leadership they obtained in Korea to socio-economic development in their countries in the long run.

On top of that, the participants in the educational ODA programs are great assets of human capital in Korea's foreign policy. They may become pro-Korean figures in their countries in the future. For this reason, Korea must make more efforts to establish and maintain an effective networking system with them, for example, by helping them organize well-functioning alum associations so that the Korean government and the partner institutions can maintain contact with them for a long time in the future.

Second, Korea's ODA policymakers believe that Korea's economic development experience is likely to be transferred relatively easily to developing countries. Due to this belief of transferability, they often make a mistake by offering top-down and one-way educational and training programs to developing countries. To avoid this problem, Korea should first make serious efforts to understand and identify the needs of the participant countries and develop curricula and educational programs that sufficiently reflect their needs. In this vein, it is also necessary to set up a feedback system by which Korea can hear their opinions and assessments on the curriculum and other contents of the educational program after completing their study. The feedback should be reflected again in the new programs in the following years.

Public diplomacy is a very effective diplomatic tool for middle powers like Korea. To make it more effective and meaningful, it is needed to upscale from self-interest-centered to mutually beneficial one that produces global common goods in the future. Through this kind of two-way foreign policy, Korea may contribute significantly to bringing back shared knowledge claims of cooperation and friendship in global politics that go beyond the knowledge claims of competition and conflict in an anarchical world.

References

- Cooper, A. F., Richard A. Higgott, and Richard Nossal, 1993. *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*. UBC Press.
- Cooper, A. F., ed. 1997. *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War*. New York: St. Martin's Press Inc.
- Cooper, A. F. 1997. "Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview," in Andrew F. Cooper, ed. *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Cox, Robert W. 1989. "Middlepowermanship, Japan, and Future World Order," *International Journal*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Autumn), pp. 823-862.
- Ham, Peter van. 2010. *Social Power in International Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Higgott, Richard A. and Andrew Fenton Cooper. 1990. "Middle power leadership and coalition building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations." *International Organization*, vol. 44, issue 4, pp. 589-632.
- Holbraad, Carsten. 1984. *Middle Power in International Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Jordaan, Eduard. 2003. "The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing Between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers," *Politikon* vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 165-181.
- Kim, Taewhan. 2012. "Paradigm Shift in Diplomacy: A Conceptual Model for Korea's New Public Diplomacy," *Korea Observer*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Winter).
- Kim, Woosang. 2008. "Korea as a Middle Power in Northeast Asian Security," in G. J. Ikenberry and C. I. Moon, eds. *The United States and Northeast Asia: Debates, Issues, and New Order*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kim, Woosang. 2015. "Rising China, Pivotal Middle Power South Korea, and Alliance Transition Theory," *International Area Studies Review* vol. 18, no. 3.
- Korea Export and Import Bank, *Updated OECD Statistics, EDCF statistics DB*. (March 21, 2017). https://www.odakorea.go.kr/ODAPage_2012/T02/L03_S01_03.jsp (search date: July 30, 2017).
- Lee, Sook-Jong. 2012. "South Korea as New Middle Power Seeking Complex Diplomacy." *EAI Asia Security Initiative Working Paper* (September 12).
- Melissen, Jan. 2005. "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice." In Jan Melissen, ed. *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 3-27.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Korea, "UN Peacekeeping Operations," (May 10, 2022) <<https://www.data.go.kr/data/15050955/fileData.do?recommendDataYn=Y>> (search date: February 13, 2023).
- Nye, Jr, Joseph. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs.
- Nye, Jr, Joseph. 2008. *The Powers to Lead*. Oxford University Press.
- Nye, Jr, Joseph. 2011. *The Future of Power*. Public Affairs.
- OECD, "DAC member profile: Korea" OECD. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/korea.htm> (search date: July 31, 2017).
- Pratt, Cranford, 1989. *Internationalism under Strain: The North-South Policies of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden*, Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York:

Simon & Schuster.

- Robertson, J. 2007. "South Korea as a Middle Power: Capacity, Behavior, and Now Opportunity," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, vol. 16, no 1.
- Rozman, G. 2007. "South Korea and Sino-Japanese Rivalry: A Middle Power's Options Within the East Asia Core Triangle," *Pacific Review*, vol. 20, no 2.
- Stokke, Olav et. al., eds. 1989. *Western Middle Powers and Global Poverty: The Determinants of the Aid Policies of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden*. Uppsala, Sweden: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- World Bank, *World Development Indicators Database* (March 1, 2023).