



## INTRODUCTION

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The term public diplomacy was coined by Edmund A. Gullion, the Dean of Fletcher School, in the mid-1960s. Prior to that, the closest term that was used was propaganda. Indeed, in 1967 Gullion said that he “would have liked to call it (public diplomacy) ‘propaganda’” since “it seemed the nearest thing in the pure interpretation of the word to what they are doing, but ‘propaganda’ has always had a pejorative connotation...” (Arndt, 2005, p. 480).

Public diplomacy has been increasingly studied, particularly since the end of the Cold War, probably as it is better distinguished from its predecessor ‘propaganda.’ The shock of September 11 brought public diplomacy to the attention of almost every country regardless of its size or development status (Melissen, 2005, p. 8).

Most literature on public diplomacy is still predominantly American. As a very recent field of study, public diplomacy still lacks literature on non-American experiences. Among many other prominent scholars, Gilboa (2008, p. 57) calls for more research on public diplomacy of countries other than the United States.

Korea is one of the latecomers in public diplomacy. The first Ambassador for Public Diplomacy of Korea, Ma Young-Sam et al (Ma, Song, & Moore, 2012, p. 1), states in his article that the concept of public diplomacy “was officially launched in 2010” in Korea. As is the case of the United States and other countries, there have been similar but different concepts that were used in Korea, such as propaganda, nation-branding and cultural diplomacy.

As a new concept in the country, there has not been much literature on Korea’s public diplomacy neither in Korean nor in English until very recently. Some recent developments triggered more interest in the study of



public diplomacy in Korea. Firstly, and most importantly, public diplomacy has become more popular both in theory and in practice all over the world. Due to globalization, democratization and technological advancements particularly in the communications field, public diplomacy has become a must-have in the foreign policy toolbox of every country. As the studies on American public diplomacy have become more saturated, there has been more interest and curiosity for non-American and particularly non-Western public diplomacy. Secondly, Korea “officially launched” its public diplomacy policies in 2010, and has placed more emphasis thereon particularly since 2013. The Korea Foundation has added the new focus of supporting “official diplomacy by facilitating public diplomacy” on its own and in collaboration with Korean “non-governmental diplomacy organizations” (Korea Foundation, 2015). Since then, the Korea National Diplomatic Academy has become one of the pioneers of Korea’s public diplomacy efforts to facilitate academic debate and research and provide public diplomacy activities and policies with more academic background. Following the trend, in February 2014, Ewha Womans University Institute for International Trade and Cooperation opened the country’s first Public Diplomacy Center, also to become the Institute’s largest center. While there was no course at any university with public diplomacy in its title, public diplomacy courses are now offered at couple of universities. These were not enough. Last, but not the least, in order to achieve more and to make up for being a latecomer, Korea enacted the new Public Diplomacy Act in February 2016 to be effective from August 2016. The Act is analyzed in the next section of this chapter in more detail.

These developments helped to stimulate more interest in Korea’s public diplomacy among scholars, diplomats, media and NGO activists. However, compared to its counterparts, academia in Korea still lacks public diplomacy research, literature, academic courses and grants. The participants of the recent special symposium on public diplomacy on the occasion of introducing the new Public Diplomacy Act, many of whom were Korea’s public diplomats and policymakers, “drew a common understanding that infrastructure for public diplomacy should be expanded to the level of other member states of the [OECD]” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016).

This book comes out against this backdrop as a modest attempt to

contribute to English literature on Korean public diplomacy. More importantly, all the articles in this book were written by graduate students who are still in the very early stages of making their career. For some of them, their articles, written for the purposes of this book, led them to study Korean public diplomacy in more depth for their dissertations. Another important aspect of this book is that the authors are from eight different countries, bringing diverse approaches to Korea's public diplomacy. We hope that, their arguments will also trigger more interest in Korea's public diplomacy among the readers, leading to more debate and more literature on the topic which is very far from being saturated.

The initial idea behind having this book was the lack of literature on Korea's public diplomacy activities, particularly written in English. What made this book possible, though, was the funding provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a member of the Korean Public Diplomacy Scholars Group, I proposed having a graduate students' conference on Korea's public diplomacy at Seoul National University Graduate School of International Studies where I teach public diplomacy. The Ministry's Culture and Arts Division (changed to Multilateral Cultural Affairs and Tourism Division) agreed to have the conference using the public diplomacy budget. Hangang Network for Academic and Cultural Exchanges, a Korean NGO registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was contracted to organize the conference from the promotion of call for papers to the publication of this book. The conference was at the same time an article contest awarding prizes to the graduate students. This book is an outcome of the conference and the article contest.

## KOREA'S NEW PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACT

Korea has what is often referred to as '*bballi bballi*' culture. This is one of the first Korean phrases foreigners get to learn when they come to Korea. It literally means 'quickly' or 'to hurry.' The history of Korea's public diplomacy policies also reflects this *bballi bballi* culture. Korea was very late to "officially launch" its public diplomacy policies in 2010; but the rapid evolution of the policies to catch up with the latest trends in the field

has been noteworthy. The year 2016 is an important year for Korea's public diplomacy since it is the year Korea's Public Diplomacy was enacted (3 February 2016) and passed into law (4 August 2016). This book on Korea's public diplomacy is especially important as it is being published right after the enactment of the Public Diplomacy Act.

The Public Diplomacy Act aims to strengthen Korea's public diplomacy policies with a more systematic approach to public diplomacy. One of the most important developments regarding the introduction of this Act is that it brings a new Public Diplomacy Committee which is appointed by the President and led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Committee is to include various related government officials from different ministries and departments as well as those whom the President deems fit to add value to the Committee. The main reason for having this Committee is to increase efficiency by avoiding redundancies in the programs and activities of various ministries and departments and by coordinating their efforts. Creation of this Committee responds to calls from various scholars for a coordination center of Korea's public diplomacy efforts (Kim, 2012, p. 539; Park, 2010, p. 3). Indeed, there was the Presidential Council on Nation Branding from 2009 to 2013 during President Lee Myung-Bak's Administration. However, the focus of this Council was limited to nation-branding and was far from coordinating public diplomacy efforts at other divisions.

Per the official reasoning of enactment attached to the Act, it was found that due to the absence of a consistent strategy until now, there was uncertainty regarding government-wide and long-term planning and objectives of public diplomacy ("Gonggong Waegyo Beob," 2016). The official explanation also cites the enormous public diplomacy budgets of the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China, and Japan. Due to all these reasons, the Act calls for a government-wide cooperation system and institutionalization of public diplomacy's organizational operating system to strengthen the connection between public diplomacy activities and policies ("Gonggong Waegyo Beob," 2016). Most importantly, to be able to effectively conduct public diplomacy activities, the Act aims to mediate the policies of and facilitate cooperation between different departments and to empower the public diplomacy capabilities of local governments and the

private sector by preparing the grounds for (financial) support (“Gonggong Waegyo Beob,” 2016).

While it is better understood and widely accepted in public diplomacy policy circles in Korea that public diplomacy policies must go beyond a short-sighted understanding of it as nation-branding and an ambiguous relation with soft power, the purpose of this new Act is to improve Korea’s national image and status in the international society (“Gonggong Waegyo Beob,” 2016). The Act defines public diplomacy as the state’s direct, or in cooperation with local governments and the private sector, diplomatic activities using various soft power (assets) such as culture, intellect, and policies to improve understanding of and trust towards Korea by foreigners (“Gonggong Waegyo Beob,” 2016).

Article 1 and Article 2 of the Act give an oversimplified, and rather outdated, understanding of public diplomacy. Nevertheless, Article 3 explains “the basic principles of public diplomacy” (“Gonggong Waegyo Beob,” 2016) more in line with the more recent understanding of ‘new public diplomacy’:

- 1) Public diplomacy should harmoniously reflect the universal values of humanity and Korea’s inherent characteristics.
- 2) Public diplomacy policy must emphasize sustainable friendship and cooperation with the international society.
- 3) Public diplomacy activities should not lean too much towards specific regions or countries.

Moreover, particularly Articles 8, 9, and 11 of the Act acknowledge the importance of public-private partnership for public diplomacy initiatives. Prior to the enactment of the Public Diplomacy Act, there were a couple of channels for individuals and NGOs to obtain support for their activities in the realm of public diplomacy, or “private diplomacy” (민간외교)<sup>1</sup> as it is

<sup>1</sup> I have my reservations about the strict distinction of “public diplomacy” (공공외교) as the realm of state-initiated public diplomacy and referring to all non-state public diplomacy as “private diplomacy” (민간외교). While it is beyond the scope of this introductory chapter to explain my reservations, I believe that the choice of the word gonggong (공공) for public is not a very good one. This is because, public refers to the publics who are addressed in public diplomacy, while gonggong implies the subject (or host) of the initiative.

often referred to in Korea. The Ministry had programs such as Public Diplomacy Scholars Group (which made this conference possible), All Citizens are Public Diplomats (which is analyzed by Cho Junghyun in this book), and Senior Public Diplomacy Group. Furthermore, the Korea Foundation has had a framework to support “Diplomatic NGOs” (Korea Foundation, 2015b, 2015c) since 2007, but more so since 2013 (Korea Foundation, 2015a). It is expected that with the enactment of this Act, there will be great increase in the range and size of the support for and cooperation with individuals and non-state actors.

Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed its first Public Diplomacy Ambassador, Ambassador Ma Young-Sam, in 2011 (one year after official launching of Korea's public diplomacy policy). However, there were practical and bureaucratic obstacles in putting this new position into effective use. The boundaries of the Ambassador's new post, particularly its network position vis-à-vis all other public diplomacy-related positions within the Ministry, were not clear-cut. Ambassador Ma assumed this new post for two and a half years together with his other position as the Ambassador for Performance Evaluation, and later was assigned as Korea's Ambassador to Denmark in 2014.<sup>2</sup> Ambassador Choi Sung-ju was assigned as the second Ambassador for Public Diplomacy 19 months after Ambassador Ma left the position. Ambassador Choi held this office for only five months, again, together with his other position as the Ambassador for Performance Evaluation.

It was right after the enactment of the Public Diplomacy Act that Korea assigned the third, but this time more empowered, Public Diplomacy Ambassador, Cho Hyun-Dong, in March 2016. From the time this position was established to the appointment of Ambassador Cho, there were two fundamentals alterations that empowered the position of Public Diplomacy Ambassador: 1) the Public Diplomacy Act was enacted and 2) Ministry of Foreign Affairs was restructured. Currently, the Public Diplomacy Ambassador is reporting directly to the Minister and oversees the activities

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<sup>2</sup> Experience in Public Diplomacy Ambassadorship proved helpful for Ambassador Ma and in turn Korea's Embassy in Denmark. Anyone interested in Korea's public diplomacy must have realized that in the last couple of years, Denmark has been one of the top countries where Korean public diplomacy activities have been most vivid.

of five different divisions related to public diplomacy. It is likely that the Public Diplomacy Ambassador will act as de-facto Secretary General of the above-mentioned new Public Diplomacy Committee, which is going to be led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Having the Public Diplomacy Ambassador more empowered and reporting to the Minister directly is “excellent” news for Korea’s public diplomacy. Grunig et al.’s (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) study, which led to the formulation of the widely accepted excellence theory of public relations, suggests that excellent public relations function requires empowerment of the Public Relations Department. One of the characteristics of “empowerment of the public relations function subsumes” that the top public relations person, in this case the Public Diplomacy Ambassador, “has a direct reporting relationship to the senior managers” with the greatest power in the organization, in this case the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Grunig et al., 2002). It is too early to analyze the impact of this change, but based on prior public relations studies, including Grunig et al., it is safe to assume that Ambassador Cho will have more human and financial resources at his disposal with the recent changes.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is consists of two parts. The first part contains articles on Korea’s public diplomacy policies. In the second part, the authors analyze Korea’s public diplomacy vis-à-vis certain countries or regions.

The first article by Jeffrey Ordaniel analyzes Korea’s public diplomacy regarding Dokdo between the years 2008 and 2015. Ordaniel divides Korea’s Dokdo-related public diplomacy into three parts: 1) citizen-driven public diplomacy (i.e. non-official); 2) proxy-public diplomacy (i.e. the activities of NGOs with public funding); and 3) official public diplomacy. He argues that the interplay of ideational factors, such as the roles and discourses of Japan in Korean polity, and observable behavioral factors, such as Japan’s policies and occasional references to the disputed land feature, determines Seoul’s passionate and vigorous Dokdo-related public diplomacy. Ordaniel posits that while Korea’s efforts may have practical

effects in reinforcing the favorable status quo, they may also be counterproductive for Seoul as the public diplomacy activities may have resulted in highlighting the existence of the dispute between the two countries before a global audience, and may support Japan's position of bringing the issue to rest via an international court ruling.

The second article by Felicia Istad analyzes Korea's public diplomacy, particularly cultural diplomacy, activities. Istad argues that Korean public diplomacy lacks a focal point and suggests that Korea can place its popular cultural contents, often referred to as the Korean Wave or Hallyu, at the center of its cultural assets and build its other assets around this. In line with prior research, Istad also draws attention to the lack of a control tower for public diplomacy and the increasing need for collaboration with non-state actors. Both issues are addressed in the new Public Diplomacy Act; we are now to monitor the implantation stage.

Jian Lee's article examines Korea's climate action diplomacy which changed from being in a passive observer position to become one of the facilitating countries. Lee examines Korea's public diplomacy on climate change, focusing on three main aspects: Korea's leadership in international climate change negotiations, its role as a base for international organizations addressing climate change, and the development of environmental provisions in Korean free trade agreements (FTAs).

The fourth article by Junghyun Cho explores the Karandashi project which was a citizens' initiative as part of the "All Citizens are Public Diplomats" program by Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She explores the characteristics and success factors that have affected the effectiveness of this public diplomacy initiative which was selected as the best public diplomacy project by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2015.

The last article of the first part, written by Simon Morin-Gélinas, analyzes Korea's development cooperation diplomacy from a public diplomacy perspective. Morin-Gélinas argues that, having graduated from an aid recipient country to become a donor country, South Korea's push towards international partnerships in the field of development fit in with its foreign policy orientation which broadly aims to position the country as a leader among middle powers. The article examines the cases of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), in which



South Korea has sought to play a leading role.

The second part begins with Seungyun Oh's article which explores Hallyu (Korean Wave) and responses vis-à-vis anti-Hallyu in China and Japan. She finds differences in the development of Hallyu in the two countries which stem from a combination of factors, ranging from political structure, domestic media environment, historical relations with Korea, and public opinion. Oh argues that that sustainability of Hallyu depends on employment of specific context-based strategies according to different countries, and consideration of mutual interests to go beyond pursuit of Korea's national interests.

The second article in this part by Seksan Anantasirikiat explores the Korea Foundation's educational programs vis-à-vis scholars and students from ASEAN countries. The Korea Foundation has managed these programs as part of its knowledge diplomacy aiming to build and manage relationships among young prospective academics and leaders from ASEAN countries. His interviews with the participants reflect their positive attitudes after the program.

Di Huang's article analyzes the Weibo account of Korean Embassy in China. The author finds out that the Korean embassy is one of the most active embassies in China that uses 'microblogging diplomacy' to reach out to the Chinese publics. She argues that while the influence of microblogging diplomacy on foreign policy is still limited, it is becoming a major influence in promoting and shaping the national image of Korea in China.

The last article in the book is written by Aduol Audrey Achieng. Her article is concerned with assessing the impact of the launch of Korean Studies at the University of Nairobi amongst the Kenyan public. She argues that from the perspective of Korea, Korea can promote itself as a reliable partner through diffusion of Korean culture and language in partnership with a prominent local university; while from the Kenyan perspective, there would be a competent group of Kenyans who are proficient in Korean language and able to engage with Korean people and Korean-owned companies in Kenya. She concludes that the collaborative initiative is a win-win situation for both countries.

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