

KOREAN COMMUNITY AS A CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IN INDONESIA: A CASE STUDY ON KSCC COMMUNITY

M. Syaprin Zahidi

International Relations Department, University of Muhammadiyah Malang,
Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The expansion of the Republic of Korea culture usually called by *Hallyu* actually showed significant result in Indonesia. The significance of cultural expansion can be recognized by spread of Korean communities established in several cities of Indonesia, such as *Running Man Lovers*, *Forever Dance Centre Jakarta (FDC Kpop dance cover)*, *UI Hangugo Dongari*, etc. The researcher observed that the Republic of Korea utilizing all sources to expand its culture in Indonesia through cultural exhibition shows by Korean Culture Center (KCC), Korean Drama broadcast by Television Stasions in Indonesia, etc. The researcher concluded that the success of cultural diplomacy of the Republic of Korea in Malang city can be identified through the establishment of Korean community, Korean Studies and Culture Center (KSCC).

Key words: *Cultural diplomacy, Korean community, KSCC*

INTRODUCTION

The existence of Korean culture in Indonesia can be stated as a short term process. Historically, the Republic of Korea goverment has already well prepared the stages to promote Korean culture in other countries including Indonesia. Initially, bilateral cooperation between Korea and Indonesia was marked by grand opening of Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Jakarta in December 1966 and finally announced to be official embassy in 1973 (Cultural Cooperation and Korean Wave report, 2012).

The main focus of the Republic of Korea to promote its culture as a trending topic is proved by cultural agreement between the government of the Republic of Indonesia and Korea on Cultural Cooperation signed in November 28, 2000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). After signing that agreement, in May 14 – 15, 2008, The First Cultural Committee Meeting RI-ROK was held in Yogyakarta to approve film as a cultural exchange besides traditional dance, tourism, handicraft, and music (The First Cultural Committee Meeting RI-ROK).

Finally, after signing that agreement, we can see the expansion of many Korean Dramas broadcast by several Television Stations in Indonesia. For example, Indosiar TV broadcast *Winter Sonata* and *Endless Love* in 2002; Trans TV broadcast *Glass Shoes* and *Lover* in 2002; and Trans 7 broadcast *Beautiful Days*. Moreover, SCTV broadcast some of Korean Dramas, such as *Invitation*, *Pop Corn*, *Four Sisters*, *Successful Bridegirls*, and *Sunlight Upon Me* (Amelita, 2010).

The massive expansion of Korean Drama in Indonesia can be explained as a cultural processing diplomacy of the Republic of Korea to achieve national objectives. Wibowo (2012) revealed that the high popularity of Korean wave in some other countries is widely caused by collaboration between government and private sector. During Kim Dae Jung era, for further information, Korean government has implemented culture policy 'The Basic Law Cultural Industry Promotion' and allocated 148.5 million dollars to expand Korean culture industry (Shim, 2006).

On the other side, the Republic of Korea in Kim Dae Jung era also allocated 125 million dollars to promote Korean films in 1999-2003 (Dal Yong Jin, 2006). In Lee Myung Bak era, this policy remains executing and considering Korean wave as a diplomacy system to achieve much more objectives. Consequently, the effect of that policy creates massive benefit in tourism sector. Based on the data of Korea Tourism Organization, Indonesian tourists increased by 25.8%.

Meanwhile, some other beneficial sectors for Korea on cultural diplomacy are broadcast contracts, famous tourism places, film actors, etc. In Indonesia, the popularity of Korean culture finally causes the emergence of Korean culture lovers communities, such as *Running Man Lovers*, *Forever Dance center Jakarta* (FDC K-pop dance cover) and *UI Hangugo Dongari*.

This study focused on two aspects, foreign policy of the Republic of Korea government related to Korean Wave and its effect on the establishment of Korean Studies and Culture Center community (KSCC) in Malang city, Indonesia.

METHOD

The study applied qualitative with case study approach on KSCC community in Malang city, Indonesia. Meanwhile, the data were obtained by observation process through previous studies, documentation, and interview. Furthermore, this study was supported by primary data derived from KSCC members.

Cultural Diplomacy

According to Warsito and Sari (2007), cultural diplomacy is an attempt conducted by certain country to achieve nasional affairs through cultural aspects, such as education, science, sport, and art or propaganda. The purpose of diplomacy is to influence public opinion in supporting foreign policy of certain country. The 'stakeholders' involved in cultural diplomacy are both government and private institution. The material content used in cultural diplomacy is utilization of cultural aspects (foreign policy), such as art, tourism, sport, tradition, technology, and expert exchange.

Shin Seung Jin (2008) in *Strategic Directions for the Activations of Cultural Diplomacy to Enhance the Country Image of the Republic of Korea* explained that cultural diplomacy activity is another attempt of certain country to achieve national affairs instead of military. This national affair is intended to obtain positive judgement from other countries in order to ease bilateral cooperation among countries in every sector. On the other hand, Shin also explained that the implementation of cultural diplomacy should properly examine the characteristics of the recipient country in order the message can be effectively delivered by the sender country.

Thus, the concept of cultural diplomacy will be used by the researcher to explain the stages of foreign policy of the Republic of Korea related to culture spread in order to achieve national objectives.

National Affairs

According to Holsti, national affairs are defined as a crucial and fundamental factor that encourage certain country to interact and cooperate with

other relations. Moreover, Holsti added that national affairs aspects frequently are recognized as an initial purpose of foreign policy. Beside, national affairs refer to policy makers in making decision of certain country, such as defence and security, military, social culture, and economy (Nasution, 2008).

Basically, one country should decide and declare its national affairs due to the concept is abstract and the process is real. The key concept used by policy makers in making consideration on political practice is national affairs. This notion is still general, long-term, and contained purpose of state and government. However, it is practically synthesized and established by policy makers itself (Nasution, 2008).

The concept becomes important for the researcher to describe national affairs in the Republic of Korea which identified as a socio-cultural and economic affairs. As stated by Holsti, the Republic of Korea used cultural diplomacy to reach national affairs in Indonesia

Influence Concept

Daniel Little states that:

Consider these possible sibling concepts: status, affluence, charisma, eloquence, funny ... Each of these is what we might call an 'influence' concept. It stipulates a capacity to bring about a particular kind of effect in other persons. It follows that these concepts are inherently relational; we cannot define 'charisma' or 'eloquence' without explicitly or implicitly specifying the group of people who respond to these qualities. Second, conveying influence requires a mechanism of influence; and in fact, each of these examples depends upon some set of qualities or assets through which the individual with the property is able to exert this influence (admiration, laughter, persuasion, willingness to follow, willingness to obey).

It can be inferred that the influence of one person to another can work effectively or not effectively according to the ability or capability to influence. In this study, the researcher will discuss the ability of Korean culture to influence life style of KSCC community members.

The success of Korean cultural diplomacy in International level absolutely cannot be separated from government roles to design particular policy programs.

Mainly, the researcher will discuss historical aspects gradually, starting from discussion about Korean cultural diplomacy, Korean cultural diplomacy in international level, Korean cultural diplomacy Indonesia, and KSCC.

Historical Aspects of Korean Cultural Diplomacy

The emergence of Korean cultural diplomacy actually derives from negative perception of global people towards Korea. It occurred due to North Korea was known as an isolated country by global people (Kim, 2011:124).

Finally, Korea has been elected as successful country in economic development sector which included in the top 15 with the fastest growing economies in the world. In other word, the Republic of Korea just focuses on soft power (cultural spread effect) instead of hard power policy (economic infrastructure and superstructure).

The transition of policy concentration based on the consideration of nation branding about 'Korea' will contribute massively to tourism, investment, and other economic sectors. According to Dennie, a professor Temple University from Japan, it is preferable for a country to tell its story rather than competitor country does or stereotype among societies because it will create soft power in international level (Kim, 2011:125).

Commonly, the value of soft power cannot be separated from political will of Korean government, in this case, focusing on cultural diplomacy development as an attempt to spread out soft power in international level. Initially, political will was appeared in Lee Myung-Bak governmental which established Presidential Council on Nation Branding with 47 members, 13 of them were parliamentary members (8 members were minister) and 34 of them were in tourism sector (Korean.net, 2009).

The establishment of that council cannot be separated from Korean government consternation towards the position in 2008 annual report on Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index SM (NBISM). Currently, Korea is in the top 33 from 50 countries. Anholt is a credible ranking system for branding nations in the world regarding people perspectives towards international image countries.

Leader of Presidential Council on Nation Branding, Euh Yoon-dae, revealed that the position of Korea in the top 33 is a humiliation for that country. In fact, Korea was categorized successful country included in the top 15 with the fastest growing economies in the world. Thus, the government has responsibility to enhance nation branding in international level.

Euh Yoon-dae on the first report to President Lee Myung-Bak revealed that his institution has a big ambition to reach top 15 branding ranking of the Republic of Korea in international level in 2008. However, this initiation gets negative responses from beyond Korea.

Simon Anholt, founder of Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM), stated that in the national history of national brand index all the countries increase by two ranking prior to initial ranking. In fact, Simon Anholt's statement was right due to in 2009 Korea ranking just increased by two levels, from 33 to 31. Interestingly, Euh Yoon-dae established own national branding index institution due to his consideration of Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index was not transparent in conducting assessment. This audit institution was established cooperating with Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI) in July 2009. Outcome of this cooperation according to Euh Yoon-dae is intended to evaluate institution performances as an attempt to increase national branding of Korea in International level (Korea Times, 2009).

The establishment of SERI, in fact, causes many critics coming from certain groups which considerate the objectivity level in assessment process becomes bias due to SERI derived from NGO of the Republic of Korea. It leads to question to SERI objectivity in assessing institution effectiveness under Euh Yoon-dae leadership. The wave of critics emerged does not interrupt cooperation between Presidential Council and SERI. Moreover, in December 2009, both institutions issued their first report about Presidential Council performances to increase national branding of Korea. Meanwhile, SERI issued a report called by Brand Dual Octagon (NBDO).

Mainly, NBDO consists of two indicators; those are *Authentic Brand Index* based on statistical calculation and *Image Brand Index* based on polling of

13.500 people all over the world. The criteria included are economy, technology and science, government effectiveness, infrastructure, traditional and modern culture, natural resources, and assessment on societies and celebrities in purpose country. Based on those criteria, SERI of Korea were in 19 worlds' top level. Meanwhile, the recommendation issued by SERI for Korea is to increase infrastructures and its efficiency in government stability (Yonhap News Agency, 2009).

Korean Cultural Diplomacy in International Level

Cultural diplomacy of Korea in several countries is arranged by Presidential Council on Nation Branding aimed to increase national branding of Korea in international level. There are following steps arranged by the Council.

1. Promoting Taekwondo

This duty is executed by Foreign Affairs and Trade Government Ministries cooperated with Culture, Sport and Tourism Ministries, and Taekwondo Association in sending Taekwondo team to several countries as a national and official sport of Korea. In 2009, there was a project called by Enjoy Taekwondo where Taekwondo related to film and video games online shared to all countries all over the world.

2. Spread of Volunteers

This project also called by World Friends Korea. This program is initiated in America, United States Peace Corps. This program sends over 3000 volunteers to developing countries every year. Consequently, Korea becomes the second country which has regular program in sending volunteers to entire the world.

3. Korean Culture Boom

This program is implemented in developing countries and intended to assist those countries to imitate Korea success in utilizing technology and economy.

4. Scholarship Program

Korea has scholarship program for overseas students. It greatly contributes to national branding of Korea.

5. Culture Centre

This platform aimed to Korean people in order to know deeper about their culture and to enrich their background knowledge for other people all over the world (Nation Branding, 2009).

Those five programs are arranged by Presidential Council on Nation Branding to support Korean cultural diplomacy expanding to several countries. Besides, this council has already designed several programs related to cultural diplomacy of Korea, such as funding Korean film and drama; sending celebrities overseas to promote Korean film or drama; and distributing Korean film and drama to several countries, for example Paraguay, Swiss, Iran, Peru, and Morocco.

Through this council, Korean government surely do not only focus on its cultural diplomacy, especially film, music, and drama (entertainment), but also language expansion in international level. Ministry of Culture, Sport, and Tourism (MCST) is responsible with this program. MCST planned to merge all Korean language variants into integrated institution, King Sejong Institute (Kim, 2011:127)

Another program initiated by Korean government is promoting traditional food, *Hanshik*. By promoting this program, Korean traditional will be known by international public entirely. Korean government has already targeted 40 million dollars US only to reach 5 worlds' top traditional food in international level. To reach this target, Korean government planned to open 30.000 Korean restaurants in other countries in 2017 (Hartvig, 2009).

Promotion of Korean traditional food was highly supported by Korean President's wife, Kim Yoon Ok. In 2009 ASEAN conference, traditional food was presented for all visitors upon request of Kim Yoon Ok. Moreover, she also promoted Korean traditional food through Eye on South Korea show broadcasted by CNN in October 2009 (Hee-sung, 2009).

Those programs can be stated as an analysis of policy makers of Korea which revealed that Korean cultural diplomacy in form of Korean Wave is an

effective attempt to increase nation branding and soft power. Through Korean Wave, the visiting level of tourism places in Korea highly increased. Thus, Korean government establishes many programs related to this sector.

Korean Cultural Diplomacy in Indonesia

Particularly, cultural diplomacy cannot be separated from Korean government initiation through Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and Republic of Korea signed in November 28, 2000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). This agreement yielded that film is considered as culture exchange between two countries as well as traditional dance, tourism, handicraft, and music (The First Cultural Committee Meeting RI-ROK).

Finally, it leads to Korean Wave term and Korean related programs, such as Korea-Indonesia Week. Culture exhibition was initiated by Korea Ambassador in Indonesia to develop bilateral cooperation between Korea and Indonesia especially in socio-culture. Moreover, Korean government established culture center in Jakarta, Korean Cultural Center (KCC), aimed to inform Indonesian public about Korean culture (Korean Cultural Center, 2016).

According to the researcher, the establishment of KCC in Jakarta aimed to ease the spread of Korean Wave in Indonesia. Consequently in 2008, Indonesian public well accepted Korean culture. It proved by the promotion of music and television programs in Indonesia.

KCC aimed to provide general information and background knowledge about things related to Korea. In 2012, the member of KCC was 2,700 persons (KCC, 2012). According to the researcher, this number showed high interest of Indonesian public towards Korean Wave.

The phenomenon of Korean music in Indonesia since 2008 caused K-Pop (Korea Pop) fever. Since 2010, K-Pop biggest fans actively involved in online media forums. They always make 'great and meet' and flash mob before concert in their city (Rijkers & Lily, 2012).

One of gatherings held by K-Pop fans is Tribute to Super Junior contained of sing and dance talents. SN Boys established on 2011 was one of Indonesia-

Korea communities consisted of many members with the same interest in singing and dancing.

According to Exo Digital Agency, there are more less 130,000 K-Pop communities in Indonesia. On the other side, Ministry of Culture of Korea stated that in 2011 there are 2.31 million K-Pop fans in Asia (included Indonesia) based on community membership officially registered (Jaipragas, 2012).

The high popularity of K-Pop in Indonesia refers to the high frequency of Korean concert. In 2008 until 2012, Indonesia held K-Pop concert event almost every month. In KIMCHI K-Pop (Korean Idols Music Concert Hosted in Indonesia) event show presented Korean stars, such as Super Junior and Park Jung Min. Another phenomenal concert was Super Junior in Mata Elang Indoor Stadium Ancol, Jakarta April 27-29, 2012.

The interest of K-Pop Indonesia fans, according to the researcher, cannot be separated from Indonesia media roles. The growth of information and technology helps people to easily access media about Korea, either printed or electronic.

Indonesian television channels intensely broadcasted Korean drama, especially Indosiar TV, O'Channel, and SCTV daily broadcasted in weekend days. The development of Korean Wave in Indonesia is followed by industry products of its culture. Finally, it leads to doctrine or imitation of Korean style. This condition occurred in Malang city where KSCC as an existing community consistently run the programs.

KSCC as a Result of Korean Cultural Diplomacy

The emergence of KSCC (Korean Studies and Culture Center) cannot be separated from Korean culture as explained above by the researcher. Based on interview with the members of KSCC, the researcher inferred that the age of KSCC members is between 19-22 years old. Moreover, the researcher discovered that the reason of joining the community was loving so much to K-Pop. One of the members, Habibie, explained that he loved K-Pop since 2009 when he was studying in University of Muhammadiyah Malang (Habibie, 2016).

KSCC is a community for students who have passion about Korea. This community was established by students of International Relations department, University of Muhammadiyah Malang in 2013. Based on one of member's recognition, this is important to build a platform for those who have the same passion about Korean features. The programs included in this community are learning language, culture, scientific discussion, and both modern and traditional dance (Putri Rahmawati, 2016).

Tri Ajeng, KSCC member, told that in the first year of its establishment, there are many students who are excited to join the community which coming from any major of study. Now, the community has almost 50 members. The founder of community routinely conducts meeting to discuss about any possibly programs that would be executed. The members of community are also supported by BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers) UMM in providing Korean student, Lee Ji-Ho, to design any program related to this community (Tri Ajeng, 2016).

The interest of KSCC members is an evidence of Korean cultural diplomacy. Based on interview related to the reason of choosing Korean culture, the members stated that the beginning of interest with Korean culture is from the actor and actress. Then, it slowly spreads to language, history, food, etc. Furthermore, another reason behind those interests is caused by Indonesian Television Stations which intensively broadcasted Korean drama in the beginning of 2003 until now. They said that *Winter Sonata* was the first impressive Korean drama aired in Indonesia which played by Bae Yong Jun and Choi Ji Woo (KSCC members, 2016).

Generally, the researcher attempted to observe community members' behavior related to the influence of Korean culture in real life. They were affected by dress style, gadget used, favorite menu, and other factors. Thus, it can be stated that they are still on imitating stage of Korean culture.

CONCLUSION

Korean cultural diplomacy (Korean Wave) showed that massive attempt of Korean government to spread out its influences to international. This seriousness can be seen through the establishment of Presidential Council on Nation Branding by President Lee Myung-Bak. This council aimed to increase Korean branding in international level by planning several programs cooperating with related ministry.

In Indonesia, Korean culture diplomacy was initiated by cooperation between two countries in film project as a culture exchange. It proved by broadcasting Korean drama in the beginning of 2000 in Indonesia, such as Indosiar TV and SCTV. Moreover, Korean drama becomes main channel for its fans, for example *Winter Sonata* and *Endless Love* with highest rate at that time.

The infiltration of Korean culture in Indonesia was supported by existence of Korean Culture Center (KCC) in Indonesia. Thus, Korea government will easily spread out its culture. Also, KCC became a mediator between fans and idols. Mainly, the success of infiltration can be recognized through the emergence of Korean lovers' communities. In Malang city, Korean community (KSCC) was established by several students from International Relations department, University of Muhammadiyah Malang aimed to provide a platform for its students to share each other about Korean culture.

REFERENCES

- Amelita, Nesy. 2010. *Kebudayaan Populer Korea: Hallyu dan Perkembangannya di Indonesia*. Depok: Universitas Indonesia.
- Dokumen Kerjasama Perjanjian RI-RoK, 2000
- Gulo, W. 2002. *Metode Penulisan*. Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia.
- Hartvig, Nicolai 2009, 'Korea aiming to refine image abroad; Korea JoongAng Daily', downloaded in July 29, 2016 <<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2908409>>.

- Hee-sung, Kim 2009, 'First Lady demonstrates wonders of Korean food; Korea.net', downloaded in July 29, 2016 <http://www.korea.net/News/News/newsView.asp?serial_no=20091020003>.
- Jaipragas, Bhavan 2012, 'Asia's K-Pop clones dance to South Korean beat'. downloaded in July 29, 2016 <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/lifestyle/02/06/12/asias-K-Pop-clones-dance-south-korean-beat>>.
- Jin, Shin Seung. 2008. *Strategic Direction for The Activation of Cultural Diplomacy to Enhance the Country Image of The Republic of Korea (RoK)*. Cambridge: Harvard University.
- Kim, Regina 2011, 'South Korean Cultural Diplomacy and Efforts to Promote the ROK's Brand Image in The United States and Around the World', *Standford Journal of East Asian Affairs*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp.124 -127.
- Korean.net 2009, 'National brand committee plans to uplift to the 15th ranking within 5 years', downloaded in July 26, 2016 <<http://eng.korean.net/wcms/view.jsp?bID=27273&pageID=01085266>>.
- Korean Cultural Center 2016, 'Tujuan Pendirian', downloaded in July 24 2016 <<http://id.korean-culture.org/id/6/contents/341>>.
- Korea Times 2009, 'Na Jeong-ju: New Government Logo Planned', downloaded in July 26, 2016 <http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2009/07/116_48880.html>.
- Report of The Cultural Cooperation and Korean Wave (Hallyu) Seminar Borobudur Hotel, Jakarta, Friday, December 14, 2012.
- Little, Daniel 2008, 'Influence Concept', downloaded in October 4, 2015 <<http://www.influence-concept.fr/>>.
- Lexey, Moleong. 2001. *Metodologi Penulisan Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakaria.
- Nasution, Dahlan. 2008. *Politik Internasional: Konsep dan Teori*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Nation Branding 2009, 'Brand Korea's 10-point action plan unveiled', downloaded in July 29, 2016 <<http://nation-branding.info/2009/03/25/brand-korea-10-point-action-planunveiled/>>.

Rijkers, Monicque Rijkers dan C Lily 2012. 'Wabah Demam Korea Melanda Indonesia', downloaded in July 25, 2016 <<http://www.mediaindonesia.com/read/2012/04/04/316524/61/10/Wabah-Demam-Korea-Melanda-Indonesia>>.

Shim, DooBo. 2006. *Media, Culture, and Society: Hybridity and the rise of Korean Popular Culture Who*.

Wibowo Wahyudi, Reza Lukmanda, Damar Raditya & Azizah Al-aziz. 2013. *Buku Pengantar Studi Korea*. Yogyakarta: Pusat Studi Korea Universitas Gadjah Mada *Institute of International Studies (IIS)*.

Warsito, Tulus dan Wahyuni Kartika Sari. 2007. *Diplomasi Kebudayaan: Konsep dan Relevansi Bagi Negara Berkembang*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak

Yong, Jin Dal. 2006. *Cultural Politics in Korea's Contemporary Films under Neoliberal Globalization*.

Yonhap News Agency 2009, 'S. Korea's global brand image ranks 19th: survey', downloaded in July 29, 2016 <<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2009/12/14/71/0301000000AEN20091214006700320F.HTML>>.