SAIS | US-KOREA 2010 YEARBOOK

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Searchers and Planners: South Korea's Two Approaches to Nation Branding

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Nation branding," a concept first developed over a decade ago by British government advisor Simon Anholt, is the practice of creating a positive image of a country, leading to a more favorable perception of that country by the outside world. The national brand of a country is largely a reflection of its soft power, and since exerting strong soft power can enhance a country's influence and competitiveness in the international community, countries are increasingly turning their attention to improving their national brands. Perhaps no other country in the world has tried so aggressively to improve its national brand in recent years as South Korea. In South Korea, there are currently two main forces of nation branding: the country's official nation branding campaign, which was launched by the South Korean government in 2009, and the Korean Wave (*Hallyu* in Korean), the Korean pop culture craze that began in the 1990s, led mainly by the private sector.

The two drivers of South Korea's nation branding—the Korean government and the Korean entertainment industry—may share a common interest in enhancing Korea's image abroad, but they fundamentally differ in their approaches to promoting Korean culture. The Korean government seeks to design and implement its nation branding projects using a top-down approach, in which plans are initiated and decisions are ultimately made by a council. Plans are subsequently brought to fruition by various Korean organizations. In contrast, the Korean entertainment industry's agenda seems to be largely fueled by market demand. That is, the industry responds to the demands of consumers of Korean pop culture. This difference in approach can be likened to William Easterly's comparison of planners and searchers in his book *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. In the first chapter of the book, titled "Planners versus Searchers," Easterly explains why the efforts of advanced countries and multilateral institutions have largely failed to help the world's poor by contrasting "planners" with "searchers." Unlike national governments and multilateral aid institutions (the "planners"), some NGOs and private companies have taken a "searchers"

approach to development aid and have been relatively successful. That is, instead of setting unreasonably high goals and attempting to execute grandiose projects through layers of bureaucracy, they try to figure out where the demand is and what the reality is like on the ground, adapting their strategies accordingly to satisfy their targeted beneficiaries. Although Easterly used this theory in reference to international aid, we can apply his "planners versus searchers" dichotomy to Korea's nation branding activities.

This paper will compare the Korean Wave "searchers" approach and the Korean government "planners" approach to South Korea's nation branding efforts and will attempt to assess their respective strengths and weaknesses. It will assess which approach is more effective in upgrading Korea's national brand, or if some combination of the two should be used. Finally, it will conclude by suggesting some general policy recommendations for the future direction of Korea's nation branding efforts.

II. THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT'S NATION BRANDING CAMPAIGN

Formation of the Presidential Council on Nation Branding (PCNB)

When the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, the most widely accepted measurement system for national brands, ranked South Korea thirty-third out of 50 nations in its 2008 edition, President Lee Myung-bak vowed to improve South Korea's national brand to be on par with the OECD average—to raise it 18 spots to fifteenth place by 2013, to be precise. On January 22, 2009, in order to accomplish this objective, he established the Presidential Council on Nation Branding (PCNB) and appointed Euh Yoon-dae, a former president of Korea University, as its chair. Euh considered South Korea's low ranking in the brand index as "a shame for Koreans," noting that there existed a huge gap between the reality in South Korea and its perceived brand image that needed to be rectified.

Role and Structure of the PCNB

The mission of the PCNB (otherwise referred to as "the Council" in this paper) is to educate other countries about South Korea, with the ultimate goal of improving Korea's status and image in the world, correcting misperceptions about Korea, and increasing other people's respect for Korean individuals and businesses. The Council's hope is that raising Korea's recognition and

standing in the world will result in Korean individuals being more respected by foreigners; more people wanting to visit or live in Korea; and Korean products and services being valued more highly. The main functions of the Council include: 1) overseeing and coordinating nation branding projects; 2) implementing nation branding–related policies and projects in an effective manner; and 3) cooperating with the private sector as well as the general public in formulating ideas and executing projects. The Council plans medium- to long-term strategies, sets medium- and long-term objectives, and reviews the outcomes of its projects every year to make any necessary adjustments. While ideas and suggestions for improving the nation branding campaign are welcomed from the public (both Korean and non-Korean), the campaign's strategies and policies are still initiated and ultimately decided on by the Council.

The Council is composed of 47 members (34 appointed members—most of whom are professors or CEOs of Korean companies—and 13 ex-officio members from the government) and 34 international advisors who sit on five different committees: planning, international cooperation, business and IT, culture and tourism, and global citizenship. The chair who heads the Council is appointed by the South Korean president. The current chair is Lee Bae-yong, who succeeded the Council's inaugural chairman, Euh Yoon-dae, in September 2010. The Council also has a Secretariat composed of government officials seconded from various Korean ministries. The Secretariat works with the chair and the committee members to plan and execute the Council's activities.

The Council's Strategy

The Council's main objectives for its nation branding campaign are: 1) to increase Korea's commitment and contribution to the international community; 2) to help Koreans become responsible, respectful global citizens; and 3) to promote Korean products and services. The Council's strategy to achieve these objectives consists of four parts. First, it seeks to cooperate closely with the private sector and the general public to carry out its branding efforts. Second, the Council has been attempting to manage Korea's brand power by establishing a "master plan" and by developing Korea's own nation-brand index. The third part of the Council's strategy consists of tailoring its policies to fit the needs of different regions around the world. Fourth, the Council aims to create and maintain a strong momentum behind its branding campaign by fostering a "common national response" with the participation of the private sector and the public.

The Ten-Point Action Plan

In March 2009 the Council devised the following 10-point action plan for carrying out its campaign:

1. "Shaping the Future with Korea." Help developing countries achieve rapid economic growth by providing them with technological support and by applying Korea's development model to their cases.
2. "Campus Asia." Provide funding for international students to study in Korea. Promote exchanges of university students and talented young professionals between Korea and other Asian countries to build a pan-Asian network of future leaders.
3. Dispatch 3,000 volunteers abroad every year as part of the World Friends Korea program, launched in May 2009 as the Korean counterpart of the United States Peace Corps. The volunteers teach people everything from math to sports to IT, as well as methods for improving medical treatment and agricultural productivity, and other skills the local people might need or request to learn. Emphasis is placed on personal interaction between the volunteers and the locals, in line with the Korean government's belief that developing such trust and cooperation on an individual level can be more effective and sustainable than simply donating money to these countries.
4. "Global Korean Network." Establish a single network that connects all Koreans living overseas and use them as a resource for promoting Korea abroad.
5. Promote certain aspects of Korean culture such as Korean cuisine, language, and *taekwondo*, and develop Korea's tourism industry.
6. "Global Citizenship." Help Koreans become global citizens by conducting a TV campaign to encourage Koreans to treat foreigners better and improve their etiquette (whether in Korea, abroad, or on the Internet).
7. Promote Korea's technological achievements and high quality products abroad and more closely associate Korea's successful corporate brands such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG with Korea's national brand. However, this project has run into some difficulties, since many of these famous Korean conglomerates are reluctant to acknowledge their brands as being Korean because of the "Korea discount"—that is, the cheaper value that is often given to Korean

products because of the lower prestige that they are perceived to have. The government's purpose here is to help turn the "Korea discount" into a "Korea premium."

8. Help the increasing number of foreigners and multicultural families better assimilate themselves into Korean society by providing them with economic and other types of assistance, including better health care and education.
9. Promote online communication and information sharing between Koreans and foreigners to improve cross-cultural awareness and understanding.
10. Periodically assess the campaign's progress and evaluate Korea's national brand power.

Of course, many of the components of the action plan are interrelated and reinforce each other. For instance, the Korean government hopes that by fostering global etiquette among Koreans and by encouraging them to embrace multiculturalism, it will make Korea a more attractive tourist destination.

Results of the Nation Branding Campaign

The PCNB's planners approach to nation branding is most evidently exemplified by this ambitious 10-point action plan. Whether this approach has been successful is yet to be determined; considering the fact that the Korean government's nation branding campaign was not launched until 2009, it may still be too early to thoroughly assess the impact it has had on improving Korea's brand image in Asia and elsewhere. We may still have to wait for at least another year or two before we can confidently determine to what extent the campaign has enhanced Korea's national brand. Nevertheless, there are some signs that the campaign might be beginning to have some sort of impact on raising Korea's brand power. For instance, while Korea was ranked thirty-third in the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index in 2008, it moved up two spots to thirty-first in 2010.

Moving beyond mere numbers, however, the Council seems to have the right idea in devoting much of its campaign efforts to assisting developing countries. In the recent past, numerous government officials from developing African countries had approached the Korean government and expressed their desire to learn from the Korean development model. As a result, the Korean government began its World Friends Korea program, sending Korean volunteers to Africa and other developing regions. Volunteers are placed in these countries for about

two years, during which time they befriend the local people and teach them valuable skills in technology, medicine, farming, and more. In Burma, Korean volunteers from this program have been teaching the local population effective farming techniques; in Africa, they have been helping African villagers maintain cleaner and safer communities in order to reduce the incidence of malaria and other diseases. Since the start of the program, small yet noticeable improvements are beginning to occur in some villages in Africa.

III. THE KOREAN WAVE

*The Origins and Development of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*)*

The second major force of Korean nation branding has been the Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*, as it is called in Korean. The term *Hallyu* itself (which literally means "Korean Wave") was coined by the Beijing media around 1999–2000 to describe the surge in popularity of Korean pop culture in China. Today, the term is used to describe the spread of Korean pop culture throughout Asia, as well as to other parts of the world. The Korean Wave phenomenon can be arguably divided into four stages: 1) the beginning stage (1993–97), when Korean pop music and dramas first started becoming popular in mainland China; 2) the growth stage (1998–99), during which Korean pop culture spread to other Asian countries, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam; 3) the peak (2000–2004), a period in which *Hallyu* became a notable cultural phenomenon that was sweeping across virtually all of Asia, especially Japan and Southeast Asia; and 4) expansion (2005–present), a period in which the Korean Wave has been spreading to other regions of the world, including the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa.

The Korean Wave, unlike Korea's nation branding campaign, has been largely the result of a searchers approach used by Korea's private sector. Instead of mapping out a grand strategy for exporting Korean culture, individual media and entertainment companies have simply responded to rising consumer demand (both at home and abroad) for Korean dramas, films, and later, pop music. Each stakeholder in the Korean Wave—be it Korean actors, musicians, directors, producers, CEOs of entertainment companies, or others—simply continues doing what s/he does best and contributes in his/her own way to the Korean Wave (and indirectly to Korea's national brand). The overall result is that Korea continues to produce high-quality cultural contents that appeal to consumers, thereby sustaining the Korean Wave. Thus, the Korean Wave was not "a planned

current" designed by any entity, but "an international cultural response caused by enthusiastic reactions from consumers."

The Korean Wave has hit a total of about 70 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Korean dramas such as *Dae Jang Geum* and *Winter Sonata* have been particularly successful, boosting the popularity of the Korean actors and actresses who star in them and also raising Korea's image in the process. While a few years ago, Korean dramas were at the forefront of the Korean Wave, recently Korean pop music has taken the lead. "K-pop" concerts regularly sell out throughout Asia, and it is common to hear contemporary Korean music blaring in cafes and malls in various Asian countries. In addition, Korean films, though not as successful as Korean dramas or music, have gained international recognition at major film festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival, where Korean films such as *Old Boy*, *Thirst*, and *Poetry* have won awards.

Korean celebrities have become the faces of the Korean Wave and Korea's unofficial cultural ambassadors (although many of them have been appointed by the Korean government as official cultural ambassadors). They have brought enormous economic and intangible benefits to Korea directly through product advertisements in other Asian countries for various Korean companies. Much of the Korean celebrities' impact on the Korean Wave is indirect, however. For example, when foreign fans like a Korean singer, they might also become interested in the singer's clothes, hairstyle, and the products s/he uses. They may begin copying Korean fashion and buying Korean cosmetics and food. Their desire to emulate their Korean idol leads them to learn about and appreciate other aspects of Korea. In this way, the Korean Wave has had a multiplicative effect in encouraging many foreigners to embrace various elements of Korean culture.

A 2005 report published by the Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI) shows the effect of the Korean Wave as a four-stage process. In the first stage, foreigners become avid consumers of Korean dramas, movies, and music; at the time of the report's publication, Mexico, Egypt, and Russia were identified as examples of countries falling into this category. The second stage involves these consumers buying products that are directly derived from Korean pop culture (such as accessories worn by a Korean actress in a Korean drama) and visiting Korea after watching Korean dramas and films and/or listening to Korean music. At the time, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong were labeled as being in this second stage. In the third stage, foreign consumers buy Korean electronics and other

everyday items made in Korea; China and Vietnam were cited as two countries who have reached the third stage. In the fourth and final stage, the foreign consumer admires Korean culture and prefers the Korean lifestyle; as of 2005 no countries were identified as having yet reached the final stage. However, more recent years suggest that it is possible that Thailand could be placed in this fourth category, as many urban youth in Thailand have been eagerly copying Korean fashion trends (sometimes even to the detriment of their own health!) and attempting to look and act Korean, to the point that a former Thai minister of culture expressed his concern that the Thai youth had forgotten their own culture.

East versus West: Measuring the Impact of the Korean Wave

The Korean Wave has had a markedly positive impact on Korea's tourism industry and economy and seems to have been the driving force behind the growing foreign interest in Korean culture. At its height in 2004, the Korean Wave was shown to be responsible for an estimated increase of $1.87 billion—the equivalent of 0.2 percent of Korea's GDP at the time—in Korean exports and tourism, according to statistics published by the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). Furthermore, out of the 968,000 foreigners who visited Korea in 2004, 647,000 (67 %) of them cited the Korean Wave as their main reason for visiting Korea. The Korean Wave has also improved Korea's image in countries such as Japan, which has had a long history of enmity with its neighbor. After Korean dramas such as *Winter Sonata* became a hit in Japan, the percentage of Japanese who claimed to like Korea increased to 55 percent in 2004. Among younger Japanese in their 20s and 30s, the percentage was over 60 percent (in 2004).

Owing to the spread of Korean pop culture throughout Asia, Korea became the world's ninth-largest exporter of cultural content in 2008, and it still remains in the top 10 today. However, not all of the results of the Korean Wave phenomenon have been positive: its enormous success has also led to a backlash in certain Asian countries. A 2010 study of the major newspapers in five Asian countries—Japan, China, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore—found that while the Korean Wave did not spark intense negativity towards Korea or Korean culture per se, it did cause some journalists to express their concerns that the Korean Wave was spreading too fast and that Korean cultural products (not only films and dramas but also pop music and games) were taking over their domestic markets.

Although the Korean Wave has had resounding success in Asia and has even reached parts of the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, it has yet to make an impression on the U.S. audience. For instance, K-pop artists such as Rain, BoA, and Seven—all of whom have enjoyed enormous popularity in Asia—have tried to break into the U.S. market but have largely failed. Korean movies have been screened in select theaters in major U.S. cities, but on the whole, they have not yet made any noticeable impact on the way ordinary Americans generally view Korea. And while Korean dramas are broadcast on certain cable channels in the United States, the overwhelming majority of viewers are of Korean descent.

There are many possible explanations for why the success of the Korean Wave has not carried over to the United States. First, the American public generally does not like to watch a movie or television series filmed entirely in a foreign language with a cast of foreign actors. Moreover, Asians and Asian Americans have been traditionally underrepresented in the U.S. media, which makes it all the more difficult for Korean dramas and films to find a receptive audience in the United States. Korean films are also produced with a much lower budget than many Hollywood movies, which can greatly affect their overall quality. Korean dramas explore themes and values that the Korean people share with many other cultures that are more traditional, collectivist, and hierarchical than the United States, which partly accounts for the success of Korean dramas in unlikely places such as the Middle East and Latin America. Such traditional values may not resonate as well with an American audience.

The Korean pop culture craze in Asia has led many Asians—especially the younger generation—to view Korea as the epitome of cool. If one lived in Asia, one would probably be inclined to think that Korea's brand power ranked within the world's top five (instead of in the 30s). The fact that Korea currently has a very strong brand image in Asia but not in the West perhaps shows that the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index (as well as some of the other nation-brand indexes) has a Western bias. In light of this, perhaps it is impossible to come up with an objective, global index that accurately assesses national brands, since the strength of a country's brand power will inevitably vary according to region. As if in acknowledgment of this inherent bias, Simon Anholt and GfK Roper recently published an online, interactive version of their nation brands index, in which users can select and customize search options to see how a country is perceived in different countries of the world.

IV. CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS TO EACH APPROACH

Both the Korean Wave and the PCNB's nation branding campaign face their own set of challenges. In the PCNB's case, its creation of a grand strategy for all branding activities is a classic example of the planners approach (and, as Easterly indicates, it is also a main reason why so many development aid efforts have failed). Although some amount of coordination is needed, too much planning could be rather cumbersome and inefficient (the Council's 10-point action plan actually consists of 100 smaller action plans). A large degree of flexibility and adequate room for creativity are needed and expected, especially in the realm of branding and promotion. In addition, while the Korean Wave allows people to naturally come to like Korea by learning Korean songs and watching Korean dramas and movies, the Council's overall campaign is, in effect, using a supply-driven approach by actively promoting Korea (though a few of the campaign's particular projects are rather demand-driven—more about this later). However, no matter how passionate one may be about a certain cause, idea, or culture, one cannot *force* other people to appreciate it. If the Council is too aggressive in its approach, this could incite a backlash from other countries, as we have already seen with the Korean Wave. At the same time, however, the campaign could lose its momentum if those who are involved lack the drive to sustain it. Thus, the Council needs to keep a careful balance between maintaining the campaign's momentum and not appearing too aggressive in its promotion of Korea.

The Council also needs to welcome more input from foreigners. While outside input may not be as important for the private sector since market results are often an automatic and simple indicator of success, such input is crucial for a government campaign to succeed since it must be conducted with prior knowledge of what are the elements of Korean culture that would appeal to foreigners and how best to market those elements. Despite the Council's purpose of promoting Korea abroad, there are currently no foreigners who work as paid employees of the Council's Secretariat—the entire staff is composed of Korean government officials. Currently, there are no plans to recruit foreigners to work for the Secretariat. The international advisers on the Council are prominent foreigners working in Korea who have been invited by the Council to join as volunteer (unpaid) members. These advisers play a rather minor role in the campaign: they do not work with the Council regularly, and they are limited to giving advice—often via email.

There has been limited participation from the Korean public as well, a fact that

the Council hopes will change in the future. Furthermore, despite the Council's effort to engage the private sector in its campaign, there has been minimal cooperation between the two so far. However, cooperation is starting to grow and will likely continue to do so in the future. Finally, there is also the risk, however unlikely, that the Council and/or its nation branding campaign will disappear altogether when the Korean administration changes in 2012.

The Korean Wave faces two major constraints on its sustainability. First, as Korean drama and movie productions become more expensive, funding becomes strained, so entertainment companies are forced to ask the government for financial support. In response to their demands, President Lee decided to create a special government fund for Korean movies; however, even this has proved to be inadequate, so entertainment companies are now turning to other countries for help with funding. Therefore, budget constraints can undermine the global competitiveness of Korean films and dramas.

Second, while Korean pop culture has been thriving in Asia and some other regions of the world, it has failed to make a noticeable impact on advanced Western countries (namely the United States and Western European countries). This may indicate a limited appeal of Korean pop culture to certain cultures. It may also imply that Korean pop culture does not have the multiplicative effect in these areas that it does in Asia. For instance, although numerous Korean movies have garnered awards at film festivals throughout Europe, they have generally not led their European viewers to become interested in other aspects of Korean culture (as Korean movies and dramas have done with Asian audiences). Thus, in order for the Korean Wave to continue to thrive and to spread to the West, it needs to broaden its scope by including other aspects of Korean culture, such as Korean food, traditional Korean music, and the Korean language.

V. IS A MORE INTEGRATED APPROACH NECESSARY?

General Cooperation between the Government and Private Sector

As we have seen, the PCNB's nation branding campaign (the planners approach) and the Korean Wave (the searchers approach) each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The planners approach used by the PCNB implies a great need for careful coordination—and the more numerous and more ambitious the projects are, the more difficult overall coordination becomes. At the same time, however, some coordination is desired to minimize overlap and reduce budget

waste. And while the Korean Wave's searchers approach has proved remarkably successful so far in raising Korea's image in select regions of the world, the strong tendency of Korean companies to seek projects that will ensure economic profit implies that such an approach is risk-averse. In other words, many Korean entertainment companies desire to stick to established markets that have already been proven to be successful (e.g., Asia) rather than risking entering into new markets where the demand for Korean pop culture may be small or nonexistent (e.g., the United States).

Thus, it appears that a higher level of cooperation between the public and private sectors (and thus cooperation between the PCNB's nation branding campaign and the drivers of the Korean Wave) is optimal—as long as each party knows its roles and the government does not interfere too much with the private sector's activities. Careful coordination between the public and private sectors means that the Council should maintain the momentum of its branding campaign but also needs to be careful about not heavy-handedly promoting Korea. If the Korean government and the private sector were able to work synergistically together to upgrade the Korean brand and did a good job of complementarily blending their efforts, the result could be a surprisingly efficient and effective nationwide campaign.

Large private companies could cooperate more with the Council by agreeing to associate their products and services more with the Korean brand. Perhaps the Korean government could even make it mandatory for these companies to put "Made in Korea" labels on their products. At this point, brands such as Samsung and LG are already respected enough worldwide that alerting consumers that they are Korean companies will not cause their products to suffer from a Korea discount. Failing to acknowledge that these corporate brands are Korean will only perpetuate misperceptions about them. For example, in 2007, Anderson Analytics, a market research firm, conducted a survey of 1,000 American college students about their knowledge of global brands. Out of those surveyed, 58 percent thought that Samsung was a Japanese brand; 42 percent said that LG was an American brand; and 56 percent thought that Hyundai was a Japanese brand. Only 10 percent correctly answered that Samsung was a Korean brand; for LG, the number of correct responses was even smaller—9 percent. Hyundai fared a bit better, with 25 percent correctly recognizing it as a Korean brand. Simply letting consumers know that the products they love to purchase are Korean by adding the word "Korea" will only raise Korea's image in their minds.

Government Support of the Korean Wave

In some areas (for instance, the promotion of Korean entertainment—and hence, the Korean Wave), the Korean government should continue to play a minimal role and allow the private sector to take the lead, providing it with legal and financial support if necessary. Regarding legal issues, the government must carefully consider all of the potential ramifications of providing legal support to the entertainment industry. For instance, the 2005 SERI report on sustaining the Korean Wave states that the economic returns from the Wave have not been as large as they would have been otherwise due to the prevalence of piracy. The report suggests that hence, the Korean government should take more action to prevent piracy of Korean media. However, it is unclear to what extent the government should take measures to limit piracy. Such policies could potentially backfire, as they might prevent foreigners from having easy access to Korean media and thereby limit their consumption of Korean pop culture content, leading to a slowdown in the spread of the Korean Wave.

As for providing financial support, the Korean government could help Korean entertainment companies overcome their risk-averse tendencies in choosing their overseas markets by subsidizing some of their overseas projects. The government could also help fund innovative film projects and Korean indie artists, as they might find a more receptive Western audience. (Note, for instance, how films by directors Kim Ki-duk and Hong Sang-su are adored by many Western fans yet are not popular among Koreans. Many Westerners also probably would not like the manufactured sound of the Korean pop vocal groups that largely represent Korea's mainstream music today.)

In addition to providing legal and financial support, a third way in which the Korean government can support the Korean Wave without being overly involved is by continuing to play a crisis management role—that is, by stepping in to manage or prevent anti-Korea or anti-Korean Wave sentiment in other countries. To cite an example of how the Korean government has done this in the past, the release of the Korean drama *Winter Sonata* in Japan sparked a harsh outcry against the Korean Wave from the Japanese government, who claimed that Japanese wives were neglecting their husbands because of their obsession with the drama and its male protagonist (portrayed by actor Bae Yong-joon). The Korean government intervened by convincing the Japanese government to lessen its criticism and by urging Korean media companies to cool down their marketing efforts for a while. The government's efforts paid off, and the Japanese backlash against the Korean Wave subsided as a result. The Korean

government should continue to intervene in such crises in the future.

The government should also continue supporting cultural exchanges between Korea and other countries, particularly in Asia, to reduce the likelihood that the Korean Wave will be seen as a unidirectional "cultural promotion scheme" for Korea. However, doing this may not be enough; if the Korean Wave becomes too successful, to the point where it is perceived as a threat to the domestic culture—as has already happened in certain Asian countries—anti-Korean sentiment can arise even if cultural exchanges are occurring between the two countries. Again, in such situations, the Korean government should respond by playing its role in crisis management.

A fifth and final way for the Korean government to support the Korean Wave is by investing more in maintaining historical and cultural sites, as well as other potential tourist attractions, so that visitors who are drawn to Korea by the images they see on screen will not be disappointed when they arrive in Korea. This disparity between the generally high expectations of tourists who come to Korea because of the Korean Wave, and their subsequent disappointment when they realize that the reality of Korea does not always quite match the Korea they have fantasized about, has often been pointed out as an important problem that needs to be addressed.

Sticking to the Tried and True and Responding to Feedback

Besides supporting the Korean Wave in such ways, the Korean government (particularly the Council) should also focus more on areas in which it has already proved to be successful, and in which there is already a high demand from foreigners that cannot be adequately met by the private sector alone. For instance, the government should continue to be actively involved in promoting volunteer programs such as World Friends Korea. In the case of World Friends Korea, the government has used the searchers approach, in a sense, as countries had approached the Korean government eager to learn from Korea's development model. The Korean government states that it is simply meeting the demands from these developing countries. Perhaps the government could employ the searchers approach more often in determining what foreigners would like to see from Korea (e.g., asking more foreigners which aspects of Korean culture—or culture in general—might appeal to them) and in pinpointing areas in which there is a demand for Korean help, or at least where Korea could possibly step in and make a difference. The government could then implement its projects by assigning different tasks to different agencies and adjusting its

projects according to the feedback it receives from people on the ground (e.g., Korean volunteers working in other countries—this would be more in line with the searchers approach). In such a scenario, the government would be simultaneously using both the planners and searchers approaches in a mutually reinforcing manner.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, in summary, a more integrated approach—a mix of both the planners and searchers approaches—would probably be the best way for the Korean government to move forward with its nation branding campaign. Similarly, the Korean Wave would probably be most effective when the private sector and the government work together, but with the government in a subordinate and supportive role (ideally, government support should be "invisible" whenever possible). In his book *Korea Brand Power*, Youn Jung-in illustrates a good example of the Korean private sector and the Korean government (or rather in this case, a government official who happens to be Korean) working together to help other people and improving Korea's image in the process. In June 2010, Hyundai, the Korean auto company, launched its project of donating a *million* soccer balls to kids in Africa who dreamed of playing professional soccer but could not practice the sport because they did not have enough soccer balls. The company asked Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, to have the UN give the soccer balls on its behalf. When one of the African delegates to the UN found out about this, he was reported to have publicly said that none of the UN member countries, except for Korea, had ever done anything good for Africa.

Such an example shows how the Korean private and public sectors could work together to accomplish small miracles and raise Korea's image in the eyes of other countries. However, as mentioned earlier, the most effective approach to Korea's nation branding activities would not only be built on cooperation between the government and private sector, but would also incorporate more input from the Korean public and from foreigners in the planning and execution of nation branding projects. The PCNB needs to have more young, creative, internationally-minded, and multilingual people working for its campaign, and particularly as part of the PCNB's Secretariat, which is mainly responsible for implementing the Council's projects. Currently the Secretariat is composed of seconded government officials, many of whom may be working on the campaign only because they have been placed there by their respective ministries. Moreover, these government officials usually work on the campaign for only

a couple of years or so before they are brought back to their own ministries or transferred elsewhere, often making it difficult to initiate, execute, and sustain large-scale projects. The layers of bureaucracy within the Council and the relatively high turnover within its Secretariat, if not addressed, could prove to be two major barriers to the campaign's future progress.

Instead, recent college graduates (both Korean and non-Korean) should be recruited into the Council to bring in fresh new ideas. Today's youth, especially those in Korea, are extremely internet-savvy and adept at using social media, which are essential tools for brand promotion in the current world. The older members of the Council may focus more of their efforts on problem-solving, ODA, crisis management, and the like, but the promotional aspect of the nation branding campaign should really be left up to these younger recruits who, in general, have a tendency to be more creative and are more in step with the times. Not only does the Council need such fresh, creative, young talent, but it should also hire foreigners who have an understanding of both Korean culture and their native cultures as paid employees, since such people are best able to see how messages can be conveyed effectively from Korea to their homelands. Currently, only a select group of prominent foreign professionals working in Korea have been hired as international advisors for the PCNB—but these are volunteer positions, and many of the advisors do not seem to have much influence in the campaign.

If Korea really wants to improve its national brand, it needs to not only do a better job of publicizing the PCNB's efforts, but to also consider ways to fundamentally change the structure of the PCNB and the operation of its campaign—otherwise, the campaign may be doomed to stagnate or fizzle in the future.

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