



JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

<https://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/jis>

How to cite this article:

Silitonga, D. F., & Nagsabandiyah, A. H. (2026). South Korea's community development policies for women in Indonesia. *Journal of International Studies*, 22(2), 142-158. <https://doi.org/10.32890/jis2026.22.2.8>

SOUTH KOREA'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR WOMEN IN INDONESIA

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Received: 4/12/2024

Revised: 14/1/2025

Accepted: 21/7/2026

Published: 31/8/2026

ABSTRACT

Foreign aid or grants are often considered temporary commitments in response to conflicts or humanitarian crises. However, many countries provide foreign aid as a moral obligation to promote global welfare. Since 1963, South Korea has provided foreign aid and grants to developing countries. This commitment is exemplified by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), a government agency established to manage technical grants. KOICA also plays a significant role in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals. Indonesia, a developing country with a significant poverty rate and high Gender Inequality Index, has become a key focus of KOICA's development policies. Specifically, KOICA implements women's empowerment programs, particularly for women in rural and vulnerable communities, with the expectation that these programs will have long-term positive impacts on community welfare. This research uses a role theory framework to examine the internal and external factors influencing South Korea's role as a donor and the implementation of its community development policies targeting women in Indonesia.

Keywords: Indonesia, KOICA, South Korea, women empowerment, development program

INTRODUCTION

Foreign assistance is well-established in international relations, dating back to the 18th century, when military aid was provided to conflicting parties. There are two fundamental assumptions about foreign aid: that assistance is a moral obligation, and that foreign aid is a means of fostering economic development. Such assistance is expected to eradicate poverty and improve socioeconomic conditions and equality. For example, Myanmar, an ASEAN country with the lowest GDP in the region, has more

than a quarter of its population living in extreme poverty, making it highly dependent on assistance from other nations (Ware, 2020). In other cases, foreign aid is also considered capable of influencing the identities of countries within the international system (Talesco, 2020). Over time, foreign aid has become an important objective for many countries, including South Korea (Kim, 2012).

South Korea has a long history before becoming one of the world's major economic powers. After the Korean War, the country's economy suffered a significant collapse. The postwar conditions positioned South Korea as a recipient of substantial aid flows from various international organizations and the United States from 1945 until the mid-1970s. Following postwar reconstruction, South Korea remained an aid recipient from the 1960s to the 1990s before emerging as a donor country. Development cooperation programs, such as training, also began to be implemented, although on a limited scale. In 1987, South Korea established the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) to contribute to economic stability and industrial development in developing countries and to enhance economic cooperation with partner countries (MOFA, 2015).

South Korea's commitment to providing financial aid became more evident in 1991, when it established the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). KOICA's initial purpose was to manage grants and technical cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) (MOFA, 2015). In 1995, South Korea graduated from the list of World Bank aid recipients. Another transformation followed in 2010, when South Korea joined the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), marking its emergence as an international aid donor country. The disbursement of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries increased from an average of \$77 million in the 1990s to more than \$1.1 billion in 2010, when South Korea became a member of the OECD DAC. In 2015, the Republic of Korea became the 24th-largest DAC provider in terms of ODA as a percentage of GNI and the 14th-largest based on volume (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific [UNESCAP], 2018).

KOICA was established in response to the South Korean government's recognition of the importance of playing a more significant role in the international community following the rise in South Korea's global status. At that time, the government sought to formulate policies focusing on development cooperation, grants, and the ODA system. KOICA was established to facilitate more efficient international cooperation in delivering projects, resources, and knowledge to countries that would become development program partners, particularly developing countries. Initially, these programs focused on development cooperation efforts to meet the basic human needs (BHN) and human resource requirements of developing countries. However, following these developments, KOICA's focus expanded to promote sustainable development, strengthen cooperation with development partners, and increase local ownership (KOICA, 2020).

Through KOICA, South Korea is committed to increasing the effectiveness of development programs in collaboration with business entities, community organizations, and educational institutions. KOICA's mission is to strengthen friendly relations with partner countries, support the sustainable socioeconomic development of developing countries in line with the SDGs, encourage civil society organizations and the private sector to participate in KOICA projects, expand public assistance, and increase the volume of ODA and grants. KOICA is also committed to implementing a results-based management system, providing an example of Korea's development system and strengthening ODA implementation capacity. As of 2007, KOICA had issued annual grants valued at USD 271 million and maintained 28 representative offices in 27 countries (KOICA, 2021).

Indonesia is included among South Korea's foreign aid program partners. Through the EDCF, the relationship between South Korea and Indonesia has been established since 1987. Since then, South Korea has supported 21 projects in Indonesia, totaling USD 6.999 billion. Additionally, Indonesia ranked sixth among 54 countries participating in the EDFC program (MOFA, 2015). As a developing country, with 26.58 million people living in poverty in 2017 and 11,258 underdeveloped villages, Indonesia is also a partner in KOICA's development programs. KOICA has three main programs: project development, capacity building, and the World Friends KOICA (WFK) program (KOICA, 2020). South Korea has also implemented several empowerment programs in Indonesia, ranging from education and training to providing access to a more inclusive environment for communities and marginalized groups, particularly women.

From the description above, it is evident that South Korea is strongly committed to providing foreign aid to partner countries in need. Some researchers argue that internal motivations, external expectations, and pressures drive South Korea's community development policies for women in Indonesia. Therefore, this study conducts a comprehensive analysis to understand the reasons and motivations behind South Korea's foreign aid policies, particularly within the framework of community development for women in Indonesia. It also examines how internal and external factors shape South Korea's role in implementing community development programs for women's groups in Indonesia.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research methods, which involve data collection and analysis techniques that rely on gathering non-numeric social artifacts and interpreting social phenomena, entities, or events. The qualitative method is employed because it encompasses a wide range of data collection and analysis techniques that provide researchers with a deeper understanding of the social world (Lamont, 2021, p.94). In addition, this research uses a desk research methodology, which involves three important steps: formulating the research question, collecting secondary data, and synthesizing the data. The process of obtaining the secondary data required for the analysis of this case study involves the identification, selection, and review of secondary sources, including books, journals, websites, news sites, and official documents. This process is important to ensure that the data analyzed contain credible scholarly information and help the study obtain useful findings and draw meaningful conclusions.

In addition, during the identification and selection process, this study uses academic journals, books, and other academically relevant sources that discuss South Korea's development aid and women's empowerment project in Indonesia. Further, to ensure the robustness of the research outcomes, this article verifies the data provided by these existing works using official information from KOICA, the Saemaul Undong Foundation, ODA Korea, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, and UNDP Indonesia. The verification focuses on four important aspects: South Korea's empowerment programs, particularly those targeting women's groups in Indonesia; South Korea's foreign aid policies and distribution mechanisms, development cooperation between South Korea and Indonesia, and the progress of the Indonesian government's efforts to improve gender equality and the living conditions of women's groups. South Korea and Indonesia are the subjects of this research, while the implementation of community development programs targeting women's groups is the object of study. The first step of the research is to search for and identify data from available secondary sources on South Korea's community development policies for women in Indonesia. The data are then collected and curated before being analyzed in depth using role theory. Role theory was selected because of its compatibility with the research indicators, allowing the researchers to identify the driving factors behind South Korea's community development policies for women in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have comprehensively analyzed the dynamics of community development policies, foreign aid, and South Korea's aid strategies. A significant contribution is found in the book *Foreign Aid and Development in South Korea and Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Economic Growth*, which discusses how foreign aid has influenced South Korea's economy and highlights its pivotal role in the country's development. The book elaborates on South Korea's strategies, explores its foreign aid policies, and examines how the country's experience as an aid recipient has shaped its policies (Kalu & Kim, 2023).

Another study provides deeper insights into the development cooperation model adopted by South Korea from a post-colonial perspective. The article *Development Cooperation and Post-Colonial Critique: An Investigation into the South Korean Model* examines the dynamics of development cooperation, emphasizing South Korea's transition from an aid recipient to a donor as a notable achievement underpinning its current aid model. The article further introduces the "South Korean Model of Development Cooperation," which is based on South Korea's development experience and tailored to the needs of recipient countries. This approach provides a detailed picture of South Korea's aid delivery strategies (Kim & Gerland, 2018).

In discussing aid provision models, the article *The Misadventure of Korea Aid: Developmental Soft Power and the Troubling Motives of an Emerging Donor*, illustrates how South Korea integrates cultural and developmental aspects into its official aid policy. While focusing on the mechanisms of South Korean aid, such as medical services and food aid in rural Africa, the study analyzes aid provision as a political strategy through which South Korea seeks to expand its global influence. However, this approach often encounters challenges in implementation (Suweon Kim, 2019).

Concerning the political strategy of aid provision, the book *South Korea's Foreign Aid: The Domestic Politics of Middle Power Diplomacy* explores how foreign aid forms part of South Korea's middle-power diplomacy strategy. The book reveals that domestic politics, including the roles of the president, legislature, and government organizations, heavily influence foreign aid decisions. During the Cold War, aid focused on national security interests and international recognition. In contrast, post-Cold War motivations shifted toward economic interests, such as opening export markets and ensuring resource supplies. This book underscores that South Korea's foreign aid is not merely about providing funding but is also a strategic tool for enhancing its national status and pursuing national interests in the turbulent international system (Kim, 2022).

Another study examines a more specific aspect through a critical analysis of South Korea's ODA projects and gender equality. The article *A Critical Analysis of South Korea's ODA Projects for Gender Equality* explores South Korea's efforts to integrate gender equality into its foreign aid programs since joining the OECD DAC in 2010. Although South Korea's proportion of aid supporting gender equality remains low compared with that of other OECD countries, the study highlights how KOICA has developed strategies and initiatives to empower women. Challenges include limited institutional and operational input and a focus on the number of female beneficiaries rather than on actual changes in women's status (Kim & Shim, 2018).

Another study applies role theory to South Korea's foreign policy. The book *South Korea's Role Theory and Foreign Policy* offers an in-depth analysis of South Korea's international identity and global foreign policy in the 21st century, revealing the country's transformation from a "shrimp among whales" with

limited influence in regional and global affairs, to a middle power with a significant role on the global stage. South Korea's identity as an international actor is shaped by its participation in peacekeeping missions and climate diplomacy. Role theory provides a useful framework for understanding the influence of identity and roles on foreign policy (Flamm, 2019).

The studies reviewed above illustrate the dynamics of South Korea's foreign aid. They demonstrate how South Korea transitioned from an aid recipient to a donor country and how foreign aid schemes have been utilized as a political strategy to strengthen South Korea's global position. The research also highlights South Korea's efforts to integrate gender frameworks into its international development programs and uses role theory to demonstrate how South Korea's foreign policy has been shaped. While extensive research has explored the dynamics of foreign aid and South Korea's development strategies, there remains a notable gap in examining the underlying factors and perceptions influencing the implementation of community development policies specifically targeting women. Furthermore, prior studies have not comprehensively investigated the evolving trends in women's empowerment policies within South Korea and their potential links to its foreign policy. To address this gap, this study adopts role theory as its theoretical framework to analyze the extent to which internal perceptions, such as national capabilities, values, and interests, as well as external perceptions, such as international pressures and expectations, shape the implementation of South Korea's community development policies in Indonesia.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To analyze and understand the underlying reasons for the South Korean government's decision to provide foreign aid in Indonesia, particularly in the community development sector, this study applies role theory, initially introduced by Holsti. The concept of role, which has its roots in psychology and sociology, does not have a single specific definition. However, roles are often associated with the appropriate behaviors that individuals perform according to their position and status (Holsti, 1970). Individual understandings of the role to be played are influenced by personal conditions, including values, beliefs, perceptions, and the expectations of others formed through interactions with the external environment. Sociological scholars distinguish between role performance, in which an individual behaves according to their self-conception, and role prescription, in which culture, society, institutions, or other external environments establish the standards of behavior that an individual is expected to perform. Notably, the potential for conflict and difference between one's self-concept and external demands are often unavoidable.

In the 1970s, international relations scholars extended the scope of role theory to the study of politics to understand states' foreign policy and international behavior. Holsti, for example, argued that categorizing a state's position during the Cold War era as a balancer, bloc leader, nonaligned state, or satellite resulted from the process of mutual influence between self-conceptualization and external expectations in the context of U.S.–Soviet competition. Although the state is portrayed as an individual entity interacting with other actors, Holsti clarified that role theory, as applied to international relations, does not precisely capture the attitudes and roles of individuals.

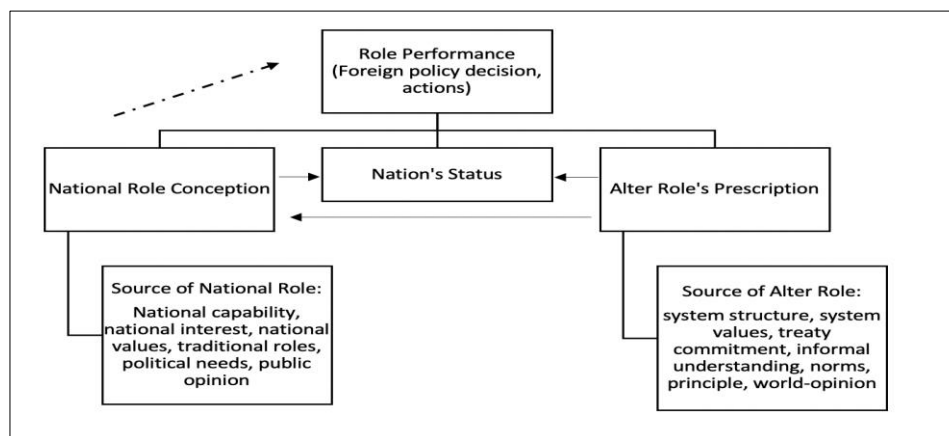
The definition of role must be adapted to the context of interstate relations. State roles are shaped by how states perceive themselves and by the corresponding standards established by others. However, there are some fundamental differences between the role of states and those of individuals, such as the fact that states exist in an “anarchic” system that lacks a hierarchical structure. Therefore, establishing

a defined standard of behavior for each state's "position" is difficult because positions are associated with defined functions, rights, and duties that are performed regularly. For example, individuals holding the position of a director in an enterprise are obliged to formulate policies, coordinate the enterprise, and pay workers' wages. In contrast, workers must implement the director's decisions and are entitled to receive wages. In the context of international relations, although a country may be considered to hold the position of a leader in a regional organization, the functions, rights, and obligations associated with that position are not clearly defined. Accordingly, applying the concept of national status rather than position to explain state behavior and foreign policy through role theory is essential.

Figure 1 illustrates the flow of the foreign policy-making process based on Holsti's role theory. The straight arrow shows that two independent variables, namely national role conception and altered role, can influence national status, which becomes crucial in foreign policy-making. Nonetheless, the dotted arrow indicates the possibility that a state's self-image may dominate foreign policy decision-making. Indeed, unlike social contexts in which established norms and rules determine the behavior of members of society through rewards and punishments imposed by authorities or other members of society, the anarchic international system places states as actors with complete sovereignty over their foreign policy and behavior. In other words, states can pursue foreign policy without necessarily considering the expectations of other actors.

Figure 1

The Flowchart of Holsti's Role Theory



Moreover, national role conception, considered the main variable in foreign policy-making, does not exist in isolation. Rather, it is affected by other aspects, including national capability, national interest, national values, political needs, public opinion, and even policymakers' perceptions. This perspective resembles the constructivist paradigm, which suggests that multiple variables influence state behavior, which is not limited to the pursuit of unlimited power. However, constructivist scholars such as Hopf and Wendt explain that the concept of identity in constructivism is not identical to role theory's concept of the self (Harnisch, 2011). On the one hand, while both perspectives recognize the process of interaction between the agent and its environment, constructivist scholars differ in the extent to which the environment influences identity. Hopf, for example, argues that an agent's identity is not determined by external actors, but is instead constructed internally. In contrast, Wendt suggests that identity and the external environment shape and influence each other (Harnisch, 2011). However, as portrayed in Figure 1, the external environment, or the so-called alter role, may influence the formation of the self-concept, while the self does not shape the alter role.

Regarding South Korean aid to Indonesia, role theory may explain the formation of the Korean self-image and the external factors that ultimately influence South Korean policy on providing foreign assistance to developing countries. It is imperative to study this case, considering that South Korea was previously an aid recipient. The economic crisis caused by the Korean War left the country in a state of extreme poverty with high unemployment (Lee, 2001). According to the World Bank, South Korea's GDP in 1967 was even lower than that of Indonesia, a country currently receiving foreign assistance from South Korea, at \$4.86 billion and \$5.67 billion, respectively (World Bank, n.d.-a). From its founding until the 1990s, the South Korean government relied heavily on foreign aid, mainly from the United States and Japan, as well as international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, from which it received approximately \$12.7 billion. However, alongside its remarkable economic growth since the 1970s, South Korea has emerged as an important player in the foreign aid regime. Furthermore, in 2010, Seoul joined the DAC, an international forum under the OECD.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses how South Korea, as a donor country, provides aid to developing countries, particularly Indonesia, through community development and women's empowerment programs. According to Holsti, the role played by a state in the international system is shaped by two aspects: the national role conception, which is influenced by domestic factors, and the alter role, in which the state's behavior is also influenced by events occurring in the international system. However, this study focuses only on state capacity, national economic interests, and national values as domestic aspects, while the alter role emphasizes treaty commitments and norm principles. Furthermore, this study limits the discussion to South Korean aid in the form of women's empowerment through community development programs. Therefore, this section first explains several South Korean community development programs targeting women in Indonesia. This limitation has implications for the data presented in this section, as the analysis is also limited to the factors that shape South Korea's role as an aid donor, with an emphasis on women's empowerment.

South Korean Women's Empowerment Projects in Indonesia

Well-managed development aid is believed to be one of the factors behind South Korea's impressive development in recent decades. The South Korean government successfully leveraged financial aid to address multiple domestic challenges through state-led projects designed to spur economic growth. This subsequently formed the basis for the implementation of South Korea's international development aid policies in various countries, including Indonesia.

KOICA has played a significant role in various development programs in Indonesia since 1992. KOICA's programs in Indonesia are conducted on a Government-to-Government (G-to-G) basis. There are three primary KOICA programs: project development, capacity building, and the WFK program (Kim E. M., 2012, p. 257). KOICA initially focused its development programs on the education, health, and basic infrastructure sectors. During its early presence in Indonesia, KOICA implemented its empowerment programs through basic training and education to enhance human resource capacity. KOICA also began offering training scholarships to academic and professional groups, although they were limited in scope. KOICA's empowerment programs in Indonesia later expanded to human resource development programs, providing training support in various other sectors, particularly agriculture and the environment. This aid focus was extended to programs supporting sustainability, including water management, in several remote villages (KOICA, 2021).

Agricultural development, particularly in rural areas, has recently become one of KOICA's primary programs in Indonesia. KOICA actively participates in technological development and the enhancement of agricultural production in farming areas. Empowerment programs are implemented with the active participation of all community elements by forming and empowering rural communities. On several occasions, these programs have targeted women's groups, especially those in rural areas. With contributions from other entities, such as NGOs, local governments, and academic institutions, KOICA implements empowerment programs for homemaker groups to raise awareness among rural women of their local potential and challenges and to empower them economically (KOICA, 2021).

KOICA also conducts community development programs in several underdeveloped villages in Indonesia. Many of these community development programs, as noted in KOICA's Mid-Term Sector Strategy 2016-2020, target women as a group vulnerable to discrimination and poverty (KOICA, 2017).

'Considering the importance of increasing an inclusive approach for vulnerable groups, KOICA will continue to focus on activities that target universal values such as promoting the human rights of women, children and persons with disabilities, achieving gender equality, and realizing humanitarianism'.

In addition, KOICA has included gender equality as one of the priority areas in its foreign aid activities. It is also important to note that women are also a main target group in other areas of cooperation, such as education, health, agriculture and rural development. One such collaboration is the partnership involving the Islamic University of Indonesia, the International Development Cooperation Team of Sungkonghoe University (AIDCT SKHU), and the NGO Bina Swadaya, Yogyakarta. This partnership involves community empowerment in five partner communities, including Bandungan, Banjaran, Batusari, Sengir, and Ngelosari. The program provides grants and skills training to community groups to support empowerment and welfare (Universitas Islam Indonesia [UII], 2017).

Regarding the program implemented in Kepil Village, KOICA, AIDCT SKHU, UII, and the NGO Bina Swadaya formulated a community development program focused on social development to enhance the community's capacity to manage resources. The goals of community development are not limited to increasing the community's potential but also include improving overall living standards. Development is carried out in four main areas: human capital, including skills, workforce, capacity building, and experience; financial capital, related to funding and financing; physical capital, related to infrastructure; and environmental capital, related to natural resources (UII, 2017).

Kepil is a village with abundant natural resources. Nearly 85% of Kepil's residents are farmers. In addition to rice and guava, cocoa is the village's flagship commodity. However, due to Kepil's remote location from the modern city of Yogyakarta and the lack of information, residents have limited awareness of developments in market competition. As a result, cocoa is marketed only as dry and wet beans to collectors, limiting the benefits to the community. Based on these observations, KOICA and its partners, including UII, AIDCT SKHU, and the NGO Bina Swadaya, established a community development initiative by empowering the community, particularly homemakers (UII, 2017).

The development program was conducted in several stages. First, a group of homemakers was formed, named the IMUD (Ibu Muda Usaha Dagang) group. The group comprises 10 members who would later produce independent business products from agricultural outputs, particularly cocoa. Second, after identifying the flagship commodity, the program selected cocoa to be processed into chocolate and pyang products. Third, KOICA and its partners provided training and socialization covering product development, packaging, marketing, and financial management. KOICA and its partners also provided full funding for the purchase of production equipment (UII, 2017).

Currently, the IMUD group continues to operate, producing various agricultural products in the Kepil area. Through this community development program, the IMUD group has successfully developed products that are widely marketed in the Yogyakarta area. The group has had a long-term impact on household economies and has contributed positively to the economic welfare of Kepil Village. Through this program, South Korea aims to strengthen diplomatic relations with its partners, including NGOs, educational institutions, and Indonesia.

Regarding development programs for women's groups, KOICA also collaborates with UN Women, focusing on building sustainable peace for women in Indonesian villages. KOICA collaborates with UN Women to prevent violent extremism and mitigate climate risks (United Nations in Indonesia, 2021). KOICA contributes USD 4 million to support the "Empowered Women for Sustainable Peace" program. Through a humanitarian, development, and peace approach, this program is expected to serve as a platform for women's voices in rural areas to participate in decision-making processes and act as agents of change (KumpanWOMAN, 2023).

Another women's program organized by KOICA in Indonesia is ACCESS, which addresses electricity and clean water issues in 23 rural areas across four provinces such as West Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, East Nusa Tenggara and Central Kalimantan (UNDP, 2020). The project provides opportunities for local women to become operators of solar PV systems for electricity production. By 2023, 23 of the 50 local operators had been trained and certified to operate and maintain the solar PV systems. In addition, KOICA provided financial assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to support local entrepreneurship, particularly women-owned businesses. (Sugiyanto & Gokmauli, 2024). In terms of peacebuilding and climate change mitigation, KOICA, together with UN Women, launched a three-year project in Central Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara and East Nusa Tenggara that aims to strengthen the role of women in building community resilience to natural disasters. The initiative also aims to advocate for gender-responsive policies by local governments and improve women's skills and knowledge in disaster preparedness (Bhwana, 2023).

South Korea's development assistance to Indonesia goes beyond KOICA, as it also includes government-led nonprofit organizations such as the Saemaul Undong Movement and sister-city cooperation between the two countries. For example, since 2001, the government of Gyeongsangbuk-Do Province has maintained a sister-city cooperation agreement with Yogyakarta Province for rural development in Yogyakarta, modeled on the Saemaul Undong Movement in Korea (Agustiana et al., 2022, p. 88). Saemaul Undong itself is a policy initiated by President Park Chung-hee in the 1970s as a means of improving the economy and reducing poverty in rural communities. Gyeongsang Province became a source of inspiration and the birthplace of the Saemaul Undong policy. The success of the policy subsequently encouraged the Gyeongsangbuk-Do provincial government to establish the Saemaul Globalization Initiative and the Saemaul Globalization Foundation in 2005 and 2012, respectively. These organizations have been actively supported and mentored various community development projects in different countries, including Indonesia (Saemaul Globalization Foundation, n.d.). In Yogyakarta Province, the cooperation was carried out in the regencies of Gunung Kidul and Bantul, with a focus on the agricultural sector, including farming methods and organic fertilizer processing, as well as training to improve the entrepreneurial skills of the community and local government (Agustiana et al., 2022, p. 92; Lee, 2016). Similar to the programs organized by KOICA, the Saemaul Foundation also involves women's groups in implementing its activities in Yogyakarta Province (Fitria et al., 2021, p. 118).

Driving Factors of South Korea's Foreign Aid in the Community Development Sector

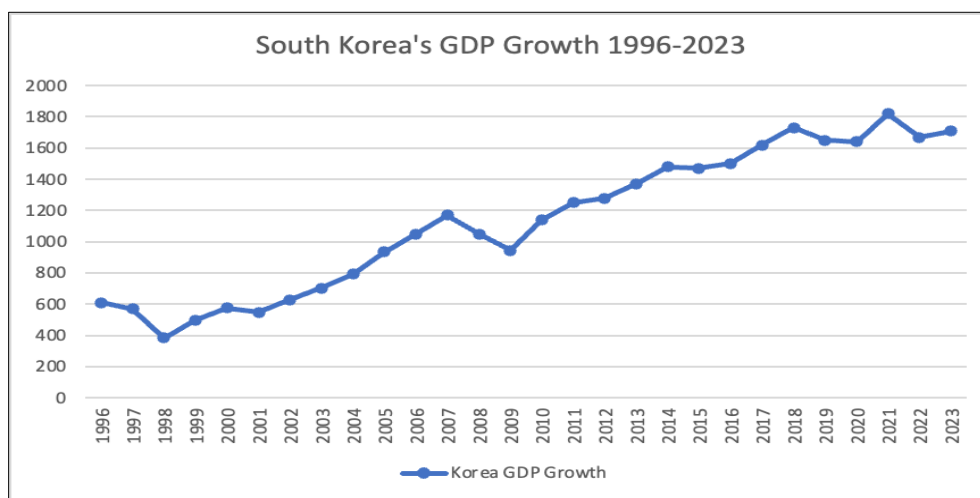
South Korean National Role Conception

South Korea has recently been playing a role as an aid donor country. In addition to joining the DAC in 2010, the South Korean government established KOICA 19 years earlier under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to manage the country's foreign aid. South Korea's commitment to becoming a foreign aid donor is also demonstrated by the goal of then President Yoon Suk Yeol to become one of the top 10 donor countries by the end of his term (Yi, 2024). More importantly, as an emerging donor, South Korea has sought to incorporate the SDG agenda, including women's empowerment, into its foreign aid projects to align its foreign aid policy with the principles and norms of the United Nations and the international order (Donor Tracker, 2024). Thus, this study contends that Korea's current role as a donor nation results from the interaction between its national role conception and its alter role, shaped by the external environment. The Korean self-conception is influenced by several aspects, mainly state capabilities and national interests, including political needs.

As mentioned above, South Korea is a newcomer to the field of foreign aid compared with other countries such as the United States, Russia, and neighboring Japan. Its GDP growth is considered one of the factors that led the country to become an OECD member and subsequently provide foreign aid. Since joining the OECD in 1996, South Korea has experienced dramatic GDP growth, especially from 2000 to 2007, making it one of Asia's new economic powers, the so-called Asian Tigers, along with Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (World Bank, n.d.-a). Despite being hit by several crises, including the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic, Seoul has managed to recover its economic situation, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

South Korea's GDP Growth after Joining the OECD

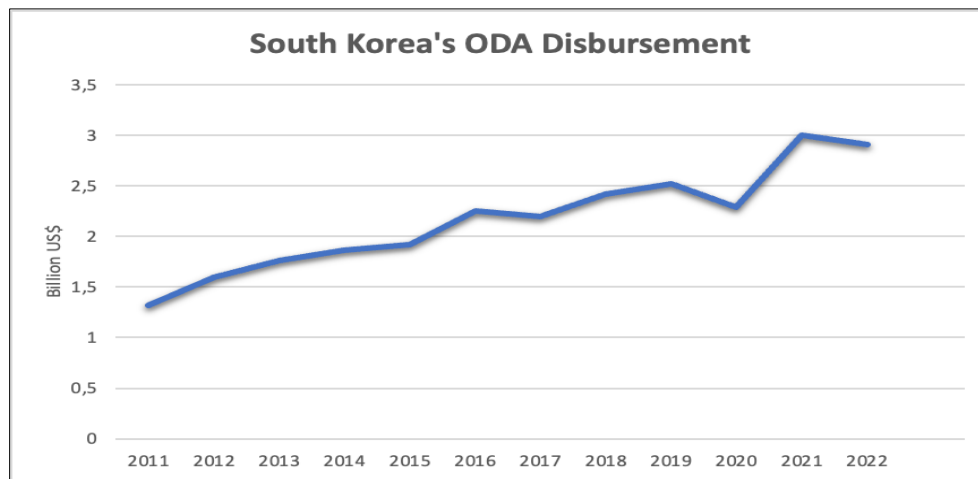


Source. World Bank.

Furthermore, the country has shown relatively stable figures in terms of grant and loan disbursements, demonstrating the Korean government's strong commitment to improving economic conditions and promoting development in developing countries. As shown in Figure 3, South Korea's ODA has demonstrated a steadily increasing trend over the past two decades (World Bank, n.d.-b).

Figure 3

South Korea's ODA Disbursement



Source. World Bank.

Scholars argue that the main motivation for providing foreign assistance is not only economic performance but also national interests. Van der Veen (2011) identified at least seven interests that states seek to achieve through foreign aid: security, influence, economic interests, empowerment, reputation, obligation, and humanitarianism. Unraveling South Korea's national interest in providing foreign aid is crucial because the country has actively channeled assistance to other countries since the 1960s despite its own difficult economic situation following the Korean War. For example, in 1963, the South Korean government financially supported trainees from developing countries to participate in a USAID-organized training program (Kim, 2022; Noh & Heshmati, 2021). This raises the question of whether the aid policy reflected the country's capabilities at the time, given that South Korea itself was still heavily dependent on foreign assistance from the United States, the World Bank and the IMF.

Kim (2022) contends that Seoul's foreign aid was a foreign policy tool for achieving its national interests. After the Korean War, South Korea's primary interests were security and international legitimacy in the face of the North Korean threat. The South Korean government recognized the importance of supporting members of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), such as African countries, given that they could provide significant votes in the UN General Assembly forum (Kim, 2018). It is noteworthy that during the Cold War era, South Korea was seeking UN membership, while many African countries maintained friendlier relations with North Korea than with South Korea. Fearing that the Africa–North Korea relationship would undermine its position in the UN, Seoul deployed 85 doctors to various African countries between 1968 and 2008 to improve local communities' health and establish a positive reputation for South Korea (Kim, 2018). After the EDCF was established in 1987, the South Korean government promptly provided \$10 million in assistance to Nigeria to support the development of the passenger coach program (Kim, 2022).

The end of the Cold War did not eliminate the role of national interests in shaping South Korea's foreign aid policy. As conflict and ideological competition receded following the collapse of the Soviet Union and both Korean states were granted UN membership, the factors driving South Korea's foreign assistance were considered to have shifted toward prioritizing economic interests. In providing foreign aid, the South Korean government prioritizes its economic interests when offering assistance to

developing countries with higher incomes than the least developed countries (Kim & Oh, 2012). This was evident during the presidency of Roh Moo-hyun, when South Korea's foreign aid allocation in the African region favored less developed countries with large crude oil reserves due to the country's reliance on foreign oil supplies (Yoon & Moon, 2014).

In terms of South Korea's economic interest in Indonesia, the two countries have already developed a relatively strong level of economic cooperation, not least through the Indonesia-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK-CEPA), which has been implemented since 2023. This cooperation resulted in the elimination of 95.5 percent of the tariffs levied on imported Indonesian products and 92 percent of the tariffs levied on imported Korean products (Hynd et al., 2023). It is worth noting, however, that even before the IK-CEPA, Jakarta and Seoul had already been actively engaged in developing economic and trade cooperation. In 2012, for instance, Indonesia ranked seventh among South Korea's trading partners, while South Korea was among Indonesia's top five trading partners (Kang, 2013, 50). Friendly relations between the two countries were further strengthened after the New Southern Policy, which was adopted by then South Korean President Moon Jae-in in 2017 to diversify South Korea's partnerships amid growing competition between the United States and China (Botto, 2021).

The implementation of South Korean foreign aid through community empowerment programs has also been influenced by national values, particularly the spirit of Saemaul Undong. The South Korean economy was devastated by Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War. As a result, the Saemaul Undong or New Village Movement, introduced during the Park Chung-hee era, focused on improving economic conditions, including through the development of rural areas. The policy strongly emphasized the role of rural communities, especially farmers, in improving the country's economy. The Saemaul Movement was first implemented in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province and became a national movement in 1973. In addition, the Saemaul Undong policy was not limited to the agricultural sector but also introduced rural communities to non-agricultural activities, particularly industry, through initiatives such as the Saemaul Factory Program (Kim, 2019, p. 12). Thus, South Korea's economic progress cannot be separated from the community-led efforts that the South Korean government has sought to share with other developing countries.

South Korea's Alter Role Prescription

An alter role's prescription refers to the perceptions and expectations of external actors who anticipate or demand that a country act according to the role they deem appropriate within the international context. This concept is important because it highlights that the roles a state adopts are shaped not only by its internal perceptions and identity but also by the expectations and pressures of other international actors.

In analyzing South Korea's policies for implementing community development programs targeting women in Indonesia, several factors indicate that external expectations and pressures also influence the role adopted by South Korea. The first relates to its commitment to global norms concerning democracy and human rights. As an active participant in international organizations such as the UN and OECD, South Korea is indirectly expected to promote democratic values and human rights. These values include creating an inclusive environment, particularly for women. Although South Korea has not officially adopted a foreign policy emphasizing feminist perspectives, there is increasing global pressure to integrate gender perspectives into foreign aid (Song & Kim, 2013). These considerations

have influenced community development policies targeting women in Indonesia, which can be viewed as both a response to and an expression of South Korea's commitment to these global norms.

Expectations regarding South Korea's commitment to global norms are also linked to its membership in the OECD. South Korea's active participation since 1996 serves as a benchmark of its economic transformation and signifies its commitment to promoting global democracy, economic prosperity, and social welfare. As an OECD member, South Korea is also expected to support global economic development, including through ODA. Through the ODA framework, South Korea has strengthened its role in providing aid to developing and underdeveloped countries. This assistance includes efforts to promote gender equality and environmental protection (Hwang et al., 2022).

This commitment led South Korea to issue Presidential Decree No. 13328 on March 18, 1991, regulating the country's foreign aid policies. The decree also established KOICA as the government agency responsible for domestic and international development cooperation, contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. Its mission is to promote friendly and cooperative relations and mutual exchange by supporting the economic and social development of developing countries (Sohn & Yoo, 2015). Through this Presidential Decree, South Korea also formalized its position on ODA, outlining the fundamental principles of its ODA, including contributing to poverty alleviation and sustainable development in developing countries and promoting world peace, global welfare, and humanitarian objectives. South Korea also established the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation in 2010 to ensure the practical and systematic implementation of ODA. The law explains that the basic principles of South Korea's ODA include not only efforts to reduce poverty in developing countries but also the improvement of the human rights of women and children and the achievement of gender equality (United Nations, 2018, p. 24). The commitments outlined in the ODA framework and the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation have become one of the driving forces behind South Korea's design and implementation of community development policies for women in Indonesia. Community development programs and assistance to women's groups in remote areas of Indonesia are not merely efforts to reduce poverty but also initiatives to promote equality among women's groups. Through empowerment programs in which women's groups are trained to voice their concerns, manage natural resources, and transform these resources into sources of income, South Korea demonstrates its commitment to the principles underlying its ODA. This clearly reflects its dedication to promoting equality and advancing women's human rights.

Second, South Korea's community development policies targeting women in Indonesia are also influenced by the global commitment to achieving the SDGs. The global norms underlying these goals create expectations for UN member states that adopted them in 2015 (United Nations, 2015). Thus, South Korea is driven to engage in initiatives that support empowerment programs. In this case, the programs implemented by South Korea in Indonesia particularly reflect its commitment to the SDGs, including ending poverty, achieving gender equality, providing quality education, reducing inequalities, and creating sustainable cities and communities. South Korea encourages the integration of SDGs into development programs conducted by developing countries so that they can address broader social and environmental aspects (United Nations, 2018). In Indonesia, through community development programs targeting women's groups, South Korea can address these social dimensions by training women to contribute not only within the domestic environment of their families but also at a more strategic level, such as in their surrounding communities. This is evident from the community development program implemented by South Korea through KOICA in Gunung Kidul in 2017. The program was considered capable of supporting community welfare and improving economic conditions and living standards through the agriculture and livestock sectors (UII, 2017).

Third, these expectations and pressures arise from the dynamics of the strategic partnership between South Korea and Indonesia, which has been in place since 1973. This partnership, which has evolved into a special strategic partnership, encompasses social, cultural, economic, and development cooperation (Dae-Chang, 2013). KOICA has designated Indonesia as a priority country for development assistance. South Korea has implemented community development programs for Indonesian women since the 2000s. This partnership creates expectations for both countries, particularly South Korea, to continue supporting development initiatives. This strategic cooperation has continued to grow. In 2017, under the leadership of Joko Widodo and President Moon Jae-in, the bilateral relationship between the two countries was elevated from a strategic partnership to a special strategic partnership. Subsequently, under the leadership of Yoon Suk Yeol, the commitment to strengthening the special strategic partnership with Indonesia was reaffirmed through the implementation of more impactful policies (Special Strategic Partnership, n.d).

South Korea assumes an expected role at various levels within the global community. As a country that has achieved significant economic progress in recent decades, South Korea is considered responsible for contributing as a partner or donor to developing and underdeveloped countries. South Korea also views providing assistance through empowerment programs as a means to meet expectations as a responsible developed country committed to global development. South Korea's involvement in community development in developing countries, including Indonesia, is integral to its public diplomacy strategy (Lee, 2023). This has created an alter-role prescription for South Korea to maintain and enhance its image as a responsible donor country.

CONCLUSION

South Korea's transformation from an aid recipient to one of the major international donors reflects the country's commitment to global development. Through KOICA and EDCF, South Korea has played a strategic role in supporting socioeconomic development in partner countries such as Indonesia. Its focus on sustainable programs and enhancing local ownership demonstrates that South Korea's foreign aid policy is not only aimed at meeting basic needs but also at empowering marginalized groups, including women. By applying role theory, the research findings indicate that South Korea's policy is influenced by its national role conception, which encompasses state capabilities, national interests, national values, and public opinion, as well as pressures and expectations from external actors (alter role) such as global norms, commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and strategic relations with Indonesia.

This research also finds that South Korea's national interests, particularly economic interests, play a significant role in driving its foreign aid policy. Additionally, global norms, membership in the OECD, and the strategic partnership with Indonesia contribute to shaping community development policies targeting women's groups. However, this research has several limitations. First, the study has not deeply explored South Korea's domestic women's empowerment policies and how they might influence its approach to community development programs in developing countries. Second, there remains a gap in the analysis of the long-term impacts of KOICA's empowerment programs in Indonesia, particularly in terms of the economic and social sustainability of the communities receiving aid. Third, this research relies on secondary data from sources such as official reports, journals, and websites, and the lack of primary data limits a more comprehensive understanding of local dynamics. Further studies are needed to examine the relationship between trends in South Korea's domestic women's empowerment policies and its community development strategies in developing countries. Moreover, future research could

further explore how changes in global geopolitical and economic dynamics influence South Korea's foreign aid policy. By addressing these gaps and limitations, future research can make a more significant contribution to understanding the dynamics of South Korea's foreign policy and its impact on women's empowerment, not only in Indonesia but also on a global scale.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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