The Making of a Nation's Citizen Diplomats:
Culture-learning in International Volunteer Training Program

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This study examines Korea's international development volunteer program as a citizen diplomacy initiative. Informed by a cultural perspective of transmission and relational models of public diplomacy, I examine the ways in which volunteer training incorporates cultural-learning into its program. The study finds that volunteer training is largely based on an instrumentalist approach to culture that places emphasis on learning the "explicit" side of culture, such as Korean traditional dance, art, and food as a strategy to promote the country's national image. In contrast, much less covered in the training program is a relational approach to culture-learning that is guided by a reflexive understanding of the "implicit" side of culture, or the values and beliefs that guide the worldviews and behavior of both volunteers and host constituents. Whereas the value of the volunteer program as a citizen diplomacy initiative is in its potential to build relationships based on two-way engagement, its conception of culture is mostly guided by that of the transmission model of public diplomacy. Based on the findings, this study calls for an integrated approach to culture-learning in volunteer training program to move the citizen diplomacy initiative forward.

Introduction

Citizen diplomacy or people-to-people diplomacy refers to average citizens of a country participating in cross-national exchange programs, building face-to-face relationships at the grassroots. During the Cold War, bringing people together via exchange programs was seen to be vital to decrease negative sentiments by "humanizing" both countries (Nye, 2004). Primarily funded by governments, such web of human connections serves as building blocks for official dialogue and negotiations (Mueller, 2009). Although the world has become increasingly digitized and networked where messages are transmitted instantly across space and time, the human dimension is still considered important, if not imperative, to public diplomacy (PD) whose objective of constructing and encouraging sustained relationship with foreign audiences remain unchanged (Payne, 2009).

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It is against such human dimension of PD and the predominance of the soft power discourse and policy, that I situate my study. Soft power refers to the ability to attract others by means of culture, political ideas, and policies (Nye, 2004). According to the inventor of the term, Joseph Nye, "selling a positive image is often best accomplished by private citizens" (Nye, 2010, para. 3). Citizen diplomacy is perceived to be more credible, thus fostering more open dialogue than government PD initiatives (Payne, 2009). For Nye, the instrumental role of citizen diplomacy lies in making sure strategic messages presented are interpreted by target audiences without any distortions due to cultural differences. While Nye's approach to citizen diplomacy is closer to strategic manager of information than facilitator of dialogue, nevertheless, his emphasis on culturally driven interpretation reflects the centrality of culture in the evolving paradigm of PD from a one-way communication towards a relational model, in which the target audience are seen as active meaning makers rather than "passive receptacles."

This study argues that as the relational model of PD is gaining more traction in PD research and practice, we need a deeper and a more critical consideration of culture in theorizing about and undertaking citizen diplomacy programs. Although a growing body of research points to the importance of cultural understanding in public diplomacy programs (Clarke, 2016; Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Paschalidis, 2009), there is a dearth of research that examines how culture is implicated in citizen diplomacy. As such, this study engages with an education program of Korea's international development volunteers, named World Friends Korea.

In South Korea, the government seeks to gain the trust of the international community and increase global influence through a range of PD programs. One such program is an international development volunteer program, called World Friends Korea (WFK). WFK encompasses a range of voluntary services operated by different government ministries. The volunteer program sends Korean citizens on a volunteer mission to improve the quality of life of the people in developing countries while increasing cooperation and mutual understanding between the two countries. The program, in turn, seeks to enhance the image of the country "as a mature global country that contributes to international society" (World Friends Korea, 2014).

This study suggests that WFK volunteers constitute an important resource as citizen diplomats. Their value is in the richness of their relationship-building experience, being fully immersed in the host culture and engaging in a variety of daily activities with the local host. Particularly, in that volunteers are frequently sent to rural areas in developing countries, they develop relationships with international publics who otherwise would have very little opportunity to learn about Korea. As such, international volunteers are in a unique place to acquire intercultural competence (Lough, 2010). However, studies point out that cultural competence as an outcome is dependent on the individual capacity as well as institutional capacity of programs facilitating the experience (Sherraden, Lough, & McBride, 2008). Accordingly, this study examines WFK's educational training program for volunteers, questioning how culture is conceived and implicated in volunteer training activities.

I begin by explicating how culture is premised in the two models of PD, transmission model and relational model. Drawing on a cultural understanding of transmission and relational models of

PD, I conduct an interpretive analysis of documents related to WFK pre-departure training material. Based on the findings, I suggest that in order to strengthen the volunteer program as citizen diplomacy initiative, the current approach to culture-learning that is based on an instrumentalist understanding should be complemented by a constructivist understanding of culture. Such inclusive approach to culture would be beneficial to move people-to-people diplomacy programs forward.

International Development Volunteering and Culture

Korea's government-sponsored international development volunteer program was established in 1989. Since then, more than 63,000 Koreans have served in the program across 96 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe (KOICA, 2016). Volunteers take part in education, healthcare and medicine, information technology, public affairs, agriculture, industrial energy, and environment sectors. A large majority of the volunteers are involved in the education sector, instructing host nationals in the areas of Korean language and culture, arts, Taekwondo, and information technology.

In addition to their primary assignment, many volunteers are involved in a secondary project during their two-year service. Secondary projects encompass cosmetic refurbishing of buildings, expanding infrastructure and developing educational content such as storybooks and textbooks (KOICA World Friends Operation Team, 2018). WFK volunteers also implement health campaigns to promote awareness of personal hygiene and sexual health, as well as provide medical check-ups in collaboration with Korean nurses and doctors volunteering in neighboring cities.

Within the geography of international aid, what makes volunteers unique is their positionality that rests somewhere in between promoting foreign policy goals of the government on one end and building cross-cultural and mutual relationship on the other (Schech, 2016). Volunteers have increasingly been subjected to in recent years to the foreign policy interests and neoliberal management structures of the governments that fund them (Georgeou & Engel, 2011). In 2009, Korea's volunteer program became institutionalized as a public diplomacy and nation branding initiative when it was selected, along with King Sejong Institute and other national heritage projects as a means to enhance the country's cultural attractiveness. The Presidential Council of Nation Branding, an institutional body that oversaw nation branding programs, consolidated seven different volunteer service programs that were operated by different ministries under one umbrella brand called World Friends Korea[2] . Since being consolidated under a single brand, WFK has come to be recognized in instrumental terms to enhance the country's cultural attractiveness (Presidential Council of Nation Branding, 2013).

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[2] The programs consist of: KOICA Volunteers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), IT Volunteers (Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning), Youth Volunteers (Korea University Council for Social Service), NGO Volunteers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Youth Volunteers (The Pacific Asia Society), Techno Peace Corps (Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning), and NIPA Advisors (Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy).

On the other hand, once volunteers are in the host country, they operate mostly free from the constraints of the government in terms of the kinds of volunteer-related work carried out. They live and work under local conditions and engage in exchange of skills and knowledge. Furthermore, in addition to professional relationships formed with the host institution, being immersed in the host country bring about social relationships that volunteers build with the host nationals. Therefore, volunteers are uniquely positioned to undertake both public diplomacy as formal representatives of their country[3] – which tends to be more interest-driven – and cultural relations, which, according to Richard Arndt, 'grow[s] naturally and organically, without government intervention' (2005, p. xviii).

However, studies suggest that simply having contact with another culture is insufficient to increase the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations (Fantini, 2007; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). These studies point to the importance of guided training as an enabler of cultural competency for volunteers.

While the volunteer program is treated as a diplomatic initiative to enhance cultural attractiveness, to a greater extent, its value lies in the potential to strengthen friendly relations and mutual understanding between Korean volunteers and the people of the host country. As such, the training should encompass both the transmission and relational function of culture as PD practice. In order to better understand how culture is implicated in PD, I go onto examine how each model enables certain definitions and exercise of culture.

Transmission Model of Public Diplomacy

Transmission model originates from theory of communication as a linear, one-way progression transferring information with the goal to influence the attitude and behavior of target audience. The model is traced back to the post-WWII context, during which PD emerged as a "theory of influence over foreign affairs" to socialize foreign citizens in Third World Countries to modern values and lifestyles, assimilating to market democracy over communism (Pamment, 2015, p. 194). PD initiatives within the transmission model are characterized by rigorous selection and dissemination of information, tight control of messages, and restricted interaction between the PD actor and the target public (Zaharna, 2009). Emphasis is placed on careful and deliberate selection, structuring, and presentation of information to achieve a desired effect, such as to promote a policy, advance political interest, or enhance national image. The transmission model approaches the public as target audience situated at the receiving end of the communicative process.

PD initiatives within the transmission model is premised on an instrumentalist understanding of culture. Culture is discussed as a strategic tool to advance national interest. The instrumental role

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3 In fact, volunteers are given official passports issued to government employees for the duration of their service abroad.

of culture in PD is encapsulated in the statement "Cultural diplomacy, the linchpin of public diplomacy" (U.S. Department of State, 2005). The statement goes,

> Cultural diplomacy is the linchpin of public diplomacy; for it is in cultural activities that a nation's idea of itself is best represented. And cultural diplomacy can enhance our national security in subtle, wide-ranging, and sustainable ways… The erosion of our trust and credibility within the international community must be reversed if we hope to use more than our military and economic might in the shaping of world opinion. Culture matters.

Written shortly after the U.S. invasion on Iraq as a part of its War on Terror in the early 2000s, amidst negative foreign public opinion, the statement emphasizes the importance of culture as an instrumental tool to enhance trust and credibility of a nation. In calling for recognition of culture as a strategic power resource of influence alongside the commanding power of the military, the statement echoes Joseph Nye's soft power thesis.

In Korea, soft power thesis has gained currency during the first decade of the 21st century, which served the guiding concept for the development of the country's public diplomacy (Nye & Kim, 2013). Korea is actively engaged in governmental and quasi-governmental initiatives to brand and promote a repertoire of cultural elements to enhance national image abroad (Kang, 2012). It was within the discourse of soft power and nation branding that propelled the Korean government's exercise of cultural promotion abroad, which is encapsulated in the Korean Wave or Hallyu policy (Hong, 2014). While Hallyu began with overseas popularity of Korean dramas, it soon expanded to encompass popular music (k-pop), and in the last decade, has expanded as a comprehensive national brand under the label of K-pop, K-drama, K-food, and K-fashion, among others (Kang, 2015). Cultural elements and messages were strategically and centrally managed by the government, in terms of selection, packaging, and distributing cultural elements deemed to be in line with the country's desired national image (Kang, 2015).

Such government cultural policy is based largely on a transmission model that involves deliberate selection of cultural elements, which together, creates a unified national narrative of the country. Critical research has pointed to the ways in which cultural relations within the transmission model produces one-sided and nation-centric presentation of cultural elements (Ang, Isar, & Mar, 2015; Kang, 2015). However, PD scholars point out that rather than presenting transmission and relational models in juxtaposition to each other, they should be viewed as complementary, and transmission should be supplemented by relational mode of communication (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008; Entman, 2004; Golan, 2013).

Relational Model of Public Diplomacy

In light of greater interdependence and interconnection among nation states, emergence of non-Western PD actors, and spread of networked communication technology, more recent scholarship in PD recognize the limitation of the unilinear transmission of information. Furthermore, diversification of PD actors from the state to civil society and private sector stakeholders as well as ordinary citizens have created an environment where state control of information has become increasingly difficult (Castells, 2008). Such changes have led to a call for a more inclusive, multilinear approach toward public diplomacy.

Furthermore, both the PD actor and the public are seen to carry cultural baggage that affect their actions. Going beyond an understanding of culture as a set of tangible and visible markers, the realm of culture is broadened to intangible, "implicit" aspects, the values, beliefs and worldviews that a group shares and guides the ways in which people make sense of situations (Zaharna, 2012). According to historian, Akira Iriye (n/d),

> Cultural affairs are products of intangible factors such as a nations idea's, opinions, moods, and tastes. Symbols, words, and gestures that reflect its people's thought and behavior patterns comprise their cultural vocabulary in terms of which they relate themselves to other peoples.

Therefore, from vision to policy to practice, culture informs each stage of PD (Zaharna, 2012), and public diplomacy is seen as a "process" that involves cultivating connections and coordinating actions rather than as a "product" or producing material for distribution. Such approach to PD facilitates an understanding of culture not as a static element that is presented, but as "an ongoing process and inherently relational" (Ang et al., 2015, p. 377).

Based on such understanding of culture, awareness of one's own culture is just as, if not more, important than knowledge of the host culture. One of the most common misunderstanding arise due to ethnocentric tendency of people to use their own viewpoints and beliefs as the standard for evaluating the behavior of others. In fact, exposing oneself to a foreign culture generates an awareness of how one's own system works and puts into perspective one's own way of life. (Hall, 1959). Hence, the reflexive process of becoming self-aware of one's culture is essential to relational PD (Zaharna, 2012). The continuous process of reflexivity leading to mutual understanding is consistent with a constructivist approach to cultural relations.

Constructivist approach to cultural relations refers to "a dialogical process in which the participants attempt to critique existing norms and arrive at a more adequate set of norms which are capable of resolving the specific problems they face" (Evanoff, 2004, p. 439). A constructivist understanding employs a dialectical form of rationality which is not only self-reflexive but also able to engage itself with a variety of different cultural perspectives. As Evanoff (2004) explains, "While it cannot be assumed that individuals from different cultures will automatically arrive at a shared perspective

on the basis of shared understandings, values, or reasoning strategies, common ground can nonetheless be constructed through a dialogical process in which both sides critically reflect on what is positive and negative within their respective traditions" (p. 449). Relational approach to PD sees culture as constantly shifting and whose mutual understanding can be brought about through an ongoing process of self-reflexivity. As such, relational PD is a long-term strategy that aims to build mutual understanding based on two-way engagement.

Table 1 Cultural Perspective to Transmission and Relational Models of Public Diplomacy

Model	Transmission	Relational
Approach to cultural relations	Instrumentalist	Constructivist
Aspect of culture	Explicit	Implicit
Implementation strategy	Manage and control content	Coordinate and co-create content
Objective	Image enhancement	Intercultural understanding
Nature of cultural relations	Performative	Reflexive

Table 1 provides an overview of a cultural perspective to the two models of PD. It outlines how the notion of culture is approached (instrumentalist vs. constructivist), how culture is understood (explicit vs. implicit), implementation strategy of cultural mediation (manage and control vs. co-create and coordinate), and finally, the objective (image enhancement vs. relationship building), and nature of cultural relations in each model (performative vs. reflexive).

This study raises the question, how does the volunteer training program prepare volunteers for their dual role of promoting state interest and facilitating relationships with host counterparts? Based on the cultural perspective to transmission and relational PD models as analytical lens, this study engages in an interpretive analysis of cultural training in WFK volunteer program.

Methods

This study is a critical interpretive case study of the pre-departure cultural training program of WFK. A close reading of documents related to volunteer training is undertaken to understand the assumptions and conceptions of culture that, in turn, works to equip volunteers with particular cultural understanding. I began by looking for culture-learning topics and how they seek to enhance volunteer capacity to engage in intercultural interaction and the kinds of activities undertaken to foster cultural understanding. Because training programs vary according to the type of WFK program, I focused on WFK-KOICA volunteer program as this group of volunteers stay

in the field longer than any other volunteer programs, for up to 3 years. Therefore, it is expected that cultural-learning is the most rigorous for this group.

The data covered publications related to pre-departure training during the years of 2010, when WFK was consolidated as a unified brand, to 2018. Publications consulted included commissioned research, annual reports, volunteer satisfaction surveys, and training plans. The data was also supported by in-depth interviews with three former WFK volunteer coordinators who had served in Southeast Asia, North Africa, and Central America. The interview was initially recruited through a network of returned volunteers on social media, and additional interviews were recruited through snowball sampling method (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Volunteer coordinators were asked about the training process and cultural difficulties experienced by volunteers on the field. Because all three volunteer coordinators had once served as former volunteers, they were able to offer both perspectives from their prior experiences as volunteers as well as subsequent roles assumed as coordinators that managed volunteers serving in host countries. The interviews and document material were supplemented by data from WFK-KOICA Training Center blog and Facebook page. The supplementary material was used to triangulate findings from the primary analysis (Yin, 2003).

Making Friends with the World: Korea's International Development Volunteer Program

Prior to being sent abroad to their country of service, WFK-KOICA volunteers undergo pre-departure training, which involves eight weeks, or 310 hours of a diverse range of programs designed to prepare the volunteers for their assignment. The pre-departure training is designed to facilitate the vision of WFK volunteers, to "engage in service activities through which they can directly share their knowledge and experience to help accelerate progress in local communities while also serving as a bridge connecting the cultures of the host country with Korea" (World Friends Korea, 2013).

The training takes place in World Friends Korea Training Center, located in Yŏngwŏl, Kangwŏn Province, where volunteers are housed for the duration of the program. Each day, the training program begins around 7 a.m. with daily morning exercises followed by a rigid schedule that continues on until nightfall. While the training curriculum varies by generational factor (youth vs. senior) and types of jobs that will be performed on site, a report on WFK domestic training (KOICA, 2017) indicates that pre-departure training is broadly categorized into four areas: Development cooperation; health and safety; cultural relations; and job-related knowledge. Development cooperation introduces volunteers to the history of international aid, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and Korea's history of receiving and giving aid. Health and safety programs prepare volunteers for possible emergency situations, such as natural disasters, health complications, and self-defense strategies through hands-on emergency management training. Job-related training offers a variety of exercises and lessons that help volunteers to plan out and discuss with other volunteers job-related activities to be undertaken on the field. Finally, cultural training consists of culture-learning topics to help volunteers acquire intercultural competence in bridging the sending and host cultures.

Cultural training included language courses, area studies (learning about the particular country to which the volunteer is assigned), and Korean culture. Language course was given the greatest importance. The volunteers underwent an average of three-hours of language training each day, and at the end of the course, were administered an examination to test their language acquisition.

Cultural activities consisted of visits to cultural heritage sites and museums. This included orienting with host culture in the World Friends Village, which is an extension of the volunteer training center that displays cultural artifacts and information of countries to which WFK volunteers are deployed. WFK blog postings show images of volunteers visiting the Museum of Musical Instruments of the World and African Museum of Art. The objective of these field trips was to encourage volunteers to "learn about the lives of the people in their respective countries through traditional musical instruments" and to "learn about the diverse cultures of Africa" ("KOICA volunteers visit Korea's cultural sites," 2014). In addition to field trips, the training program consisted of modules in which volunteers formed study groups according to their country of service and conducted research on the history, customs, demography, geography, food, and arts of the host country (WFK Training Center, 2017).

Out of the range of culture-learning modules offered, the most noteworthy is hands-on training of a diverse range of Korean cultural repertoires. During training, volunteers are taught to perform various cultural activities. This includes writing traditional Korean calligraphy, making traditional masks (tal), practicing Ganggangsullae and samullori , designing traditional Korean fans, and making kimchi (salted and fermented cabbage). Volunteers are encouraged to introduce and promote traditional cultural elements during their service abroad through cultural exchange events and by integrating cultural elements into their educational programs. The interviewees commented that such skills come in use for volunteers on the field, when many volunteers either assist in various cultural events hosted by the Korean embassy in the host country or organize cultural events hosting Korean language proficiency contests or K-pop performances.

Visits to sites of cultural display and hands-on training of Korea's performative culture demonstrates how the notion of "culture" is understood and, in turn, how such understanding guides the ways in which cultural relations is envisioned and cultivated through training. The following section discusses the dominant assumption of the training program in regard to cultural relations. Findings indicate that while the volunteers undergo a tight, demanding training process prior to their departure, the range of programs is largely restricted to an instrumentalist understanding of culture with a dearth of programs that facilitate a constructivist approach to building cultural relations.

Culture-Learning as Performative: An Instrumentalist Understanding

        The kinds of activities that are taken up in pre-departure training sets the context for the topics and issues that the volunteers should be aware of and be concerned about before embarking on their assignment. The repertoire of their performative training – dance, music, and art – aligns

with the broader cultural diplomacy policy of Korea that centers around Hallyu, or export of domestic popular and traditional culture to foreign countries. The performative repertoire in which the volunteers engage consists of the "explicit" side of culture, composed of cultural forms endorsed by the government to be exported abroad (Presidential Council of Nation Branding, 2013). The consistency of culture-learning in WFK training to the government's cultural policy agenda reflects Appadurai's claim that the state exerts "taxonomic control over difference" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 39). In other words, the training program sets the parameters of cultural relations and mobilizes volunteers to enact the government vision of appropriating cultural content as a strategic tool for improving cultural attractiveness of the nation through mediated forms of cultural spectacle. In that such performative activities set the parameter of cultural exchange, the volunteer program can be seen as an extension of the government to manage and control the national image. As such, the performative activities of the "explicit" side of culture is premised on an instrumentalist understanding of culture.

In addition to hands-on learning of Korean traditional culture, cultural-learning included visits to Korea's heritage sites as well as visits to museums displaying artifacts from the host country. Cultural understanding as something that is fostered by exposure to displays of cultural artifacts reflects a very passive understanding of cultural mindset. Culture is essentialized as a collection of explicit tangible, visible, elements "that people can observe, listen to, or talk openly about (Zaharna, 2012). Essentialization has the effect of detaching culture from the political and social context, making it a form of product for consumption. It can cement a narrow understanding of culture as something that is limited to the performative and therefore, something that is static and therefore something that can be consumed.

Such assumptions of culture as an essentialized repertoire of traditional performances constrains the potential of the volunteers as citizen diplomats and encourages a very limited understanding of cultural relations as exchange of traditional markers rather than substantive exchange. This is in line with Koichi Iwabuchi's argument that drawing on such cultural forms may carry over to a trivial identification with the idea of the nation, which while facilitating some understanding and intercultural exchange, fails to seriously engage with and promote cross-border dialogue (2015).

Limitation of the Instrumentalist Understanding of Culture

Examining cultural policy of the Korean government from the early 2000s to present, Kang (2015) suggests that adverse reactions to the government's explicit promotion of Korean Wave abroad has brought about a decentralized exercise in cultural exchange programs. And against the shifting international sentiments, people-to-people relations were perceived to be much more credible and less interest-driven than mass mediated cultural projection. The influence of concepts of soft power, public diplomacy, and nation branding coalesced into the promotion of Hallyu through various decentralized channels, which "mutually reinforced both organizational interests and national agenda" (Kang, 2015, p. 441).

Essentialization of culture into a set of performative repertoires envisions cultural relations as exchange-based rather than mutual understanding based on intercultural communication. As such, volunteering as a relationship-building initiative calls for cultural training that more fully incorporates culture-learning as a basis to facilitate relationship-building with people in the host country. The lack of intercultural communication training may work to increase the difficulties faced by volunteers in negotiating cultural differences during volunteer work. In fact, evaluations of the volunteer program have indicated that volunteers lack coordination skills to negotiate cultural conflict that arise during job performance. Based on a survey administered to returned volunteers that asked about the most challenging aspects during their service, 31 percent responded as insufficient local language skills followed by 20 percent of volunteers who indicated the difficulty of overcoming cultural differences (Lee, Lee, Shin, & Song, 2011). My own interviews with volunteer coordinators have found that culture shock and cultural conflicts frequently emerge on the field, which substantially contributes to volunteer attrition (personal interview, 2017). In this regard, learning about the host country's culture through performative and entertaining activities such as fashion shows has also been met with criticism by former volunteers for their little relevance on the field (Lee et al., 2011).

Taking such complaints into consideration, cultural training's skewed focus on cultural forms of display becomes questionable. Cultural competence drives the day-to-day engagement with the host people including co-workers, the chair of the institution to which they are placed, and also networking with volunteers from other countries. And cultural competency goes beyond training volunteers as cultural exchange, but it also in honing their relational communicative potential to facilitate their roles as educators and project managers.

Culture-learning needs to accommodate volunteer reflections on the assumptions and values of both the volunteer and the host culture. On the field, volunteers express fluctuation in emotions and undergo highly charged affective states, particularly during the early stages of their service. There are moments that volunteers express frustration and anger upon engagement with the host. However, it should be pointed out that what one finds to be surprising, shocking, or offensive all depends on the environment to which volunteers themselves have been acculturated. In both the Peace Corps and JICA, cross-cultural communication training involves exploration of a range of theories of culture which places not only the host culture but one's own cultural tendencies as a subject of critical reflection (Lee et al., 2011; Storti & Bennhold-Samaan, 1997). In analyzing cross-cultural training in the Peace Corps, Bennhold-Samaan (1997) writes, "learning as much about their own culture as about their host culture … is one of the greatest legacies of the Peace Corps experience" (p. 382). Learning about one's own culture involves making particular things that were once taken for granted and becoming aware of the cultural basis for one's perceptions and actions toward the counterpart.

Relational Approach to Culture-learning: Toward a Constructivist Understanding

Situated in a relational model, culture-learning takes a constructivist approach that focuses on critical reflection of the implicit, unspoken side of culture, which encompasses immaterial forms such as values, beliefs, and worldviews based on which people make meaning and perceive what happens around us. The objective of culture-learning here is to promote mutual understanding.

Informed by the constructivist approach toward culture-learning, I looked for modules in the pre-departure training program that encourage volunteers to become aware of norms, values, and beliefs guiding their worldviews and actions. In contrast to programs that train volunteers with skills in explicit cultural forms, the list of modules incorporated into the pre-departure training program offered very little in terms of fostering a constructivist understanding of culture.

The WFK volunteer training program offers one module, "understanding other cultures," which addresses cultural self-awareness as a part of its curriculum. The module, which is conducted in lecture format by an outside instructor, introduces topics of stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and understanding and accepting another culture. Volunteers are encouraged to reflect on their own cultural identity and social position. While it seems that modules such as "anthropological understanding of Korean culture" have been offered in the past, they seem to have been closed over the years (KOICA, 2011; KOICA World Friends Training Center, 2012). My interviewees pointed out that such topics are perceived to be overly philosophical and less accessible by volunteers. One interviewee explained that because volunteers are exhausted from the tight and demanding daily schedule, they tend to lose focus particularly in lectures. Thus, despite the nature of these courses that invite reflexive process, just how far it stimulates volunteers to engage in a critical reflection of their own cultural awareness is questionable.

Self-reflexivity is "having an ongoing conversation with your whole self about what you are experiencing as you are experiencing it" and is "a crucial skill for interculturalists" (Nagata, 2005). This process begins during pre-departure training and is sustained throughout the volunteer service and even after the volunteer returns home (Bennhold-Samaan, 1997). In fact, guided reflection increases intercultural competency among volunteers as they learn to handle outbursts of emotions such as distress, outrage or guilt at the way the host cultures handle situations (Lough, 2010). Pre-departure training should constitute the beginning of sustained training that guides reflexive processes of volunteers. Without this process, making sense of the host people and their behavior through the lens of volunteers' cultural assumptions may very easily lead to cultural conflict.

A number of courses adopted and engaged volunteers in introductory self-reflexivity training. "Stress management" is a three-hour module that is carried out in a role-playing skit form. It presents possible situations arising from cultural conflict, interpersonal conflict, and trauma. It asks volunteers to act out each situation, with two volunteers playing the role of the characters and the other four volunteers as the four dimensions of consciousness: "mind" "emotion/feeling" "spirit" and "body." The skit is designed to provide a conceptual basis for developing each dimension of consciousness in a balanced way and becoming aware of which dimension needs to be further developed. Such personal training is used as a basis to meta-communicate, or communicate about communicating in interpersonal interactions (Wood, 2015).

Another course, named "communicating together" is designed to demonstrate the importance of various non-verbal communication cues that play a weighty role in communicating and how difficult communication would be without knowledge of such verbal cues. The module engages students in an experimental activity. Two volunteers sit with their backs against each other. There are Lego blocks in placed in front of each volunteer. One volunteer takes the role of assembling the blocks and explaining to the other volunteer how she/he is assembling the blocks. The other volunteer's role is to replicate what the partner is making, by listening to instructions. Volunteers rely only on hearing to give orders and follow the command. To many volunteers' surprise, the instructions are not interpreted as intended by the speaker, resulting in two different block structures. Through the experiment, volunteers realize that the encoding and decoding process of communication is not as flawless as it seems.

While neither of the two courses described above directly address culture, the first module on stress management addresses the ways in which one engages in self-reflexivity to develop relational versatility. The second class resembles an intercultural communication class that introduces students about potential communication barriers. These courses can easily incorporate and be extended to more fully address self-reflexivity and intercultural communication as a part of culture-learning.

Both previous reports and personal interviews have noted that volunteers expressed dissatisfaction with training programs related to culture of host country (WFK Training Center, 2014). According to returned volunteers, training modules that focus on culture as forms of display, such as fashion shows of traditional wear, came to little practical use when they were on the field (Lee et al., 2011).

Such guided reflection has been found to enhance intercultural competence of volunteers (Lough, 2011) and increase the satisfaction of volunteers in partaking in volunteer work (Yashima, 2010). Taking account of intercultural conflicts leading to volunteer attrition and lack of satisfaction of volunteers, both Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the U.S. Peace Corps have incorporated intercultural communication as a category of pre-departure training. The courses serve to promote both practice as well as theory-based cross-cultural training approaches (C. H. Lee et al., 2011; Storti, 2017). This study suggests that the training program utilize the eight weeks of camp-based training to engage volunteers in a sustained self-reflexive process. Edward Hall writes, "If one is to prosper in this new world without being unexpectedly battered, one must transcend one's own system" (Hall, 1976, p. 51). This is an exercise that should begin in training and continue throughout the duration of volunteer work.

Conclusion

This study examined culture-learning as a part of the making of Korea's citizen diplomats through an interpretive analysis of WFK pre-departure training program. The findings suggest that culture-learning in the training program foregrounds an instrumentalist understanding of culture. Such understanding is reflected in the kinds of modules that place emphasis on hands-on practice of

traditional cultural forms, such as Korean dance, script, painting, music, and food as well as visits to museums and heritage sites that display cultural artifacts. Such instrumentalist approach to culture provide resources to engage in a transmission-oriented practice of PD.

On the other hand, the volunteer training program places much less emphasis on modules that reflect a constructivist understanding of culture, in terms of fostering awareness of the cultural values and beliefs of oneself as a starting point to engage with host constituents. The range of modules offered do not adequately support building relationships and fostering mutual understanding. While the promotional activities add to the practical resource on the field, the range of programs is perceived to be limited in preparing volunteers for coming to contact with a new culture.

Citizen diplomacy programs are valued for their potential to forge mutual understanding based on face-to-face relationships. Citizen diplomacy is perceived to be credible by host nationals in comparison to mass mediated forms of communication. And through this study, I suggest that the way to further support such relationship building initiative is to foster an awareness of culture from a constructivist approach.

As a citizen diplomacy initiative, international development volunteering is uniquely positioned in that being immersed in the host country for an extended period of time while engaged in local capacity building programs has great potential to build enduring relationships based on trust and mutuality. The international development volunteer program serves not only the host country people but also volunteers themselves as citizens. International volunteer experience has been found to enhance international awareness, intercultural competence, build international social networks, and resilience in character. These qualities are oftentimes seen as central to flourish in a globalized world (Barker, 2000; Matveev & Milter, 2004). Further preparing more Koreans for such international engagement is of critical importance, given the increased interdependence of nation states and heightened cross-border flows of people that make both domestic and international PD accountable to developing a country's image.

Domestically, Korea is struggling with an unprecedented number of foreign migration into Korea. Marginalization of and violence toward migrant workers and foreign brides in Korea work to tarnish the image of Korea (Jung, 2017). In this vein, volunteer training can potentially be valuable far beyond technical skills acquisition to instilling intercultural sensitivity, respect, and understanding that can serve as a source of soft power beyond one-way form of attraction towards mutual respect.

This study was exploratory in that it looked at one particular case of government-sponsored citizen participation program. Having said, further research that incorporates cultural analysis to PD research is required to gain a more nuanced understanding of PD as a process that is constantly being shaped and re-shaped by cultural underpinnings.

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