

# Analysis of South Korea's Cultural Policies during Covid-19 Pandemic (2020-2022)

Kembaren Elisabeth Ermuliana<sup>1\*</sup>, Annisa Indah Febriani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> International Relations Program, Faculty of Humanities,  
Bina Nusantara University,  
Jakarta 11480, Indonesia  
elisabeth.ermuliana@binus.ac.id; annisa.febriani@binus.ac.id

\*Correspondence: elisabeth.ermuliana@binus.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

*This article examines South Korea's cultural policies in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022). From the standpoint of heterodox interventionist liberals (HILs), the government's involvement in cultural policy is indicative of a neoliberal approach, wherein cultural initiatives are associated with overarching economic objectives. This study uses a qualitative method which mainly originates from various press releases, publications and annual reports that are officially uploaded by the Ministry of South Korea. The study's findings show that the South Korean government consistently implemented a variety of cultural policies during the three-year pandemic period, including pandemic control, funding, increased consumption, lobbying, policy discussions, job creation and training. However, cultural art stakeholders play an important role in shaping cultural policies during this time.*

*Keywords: cultural policy response, south korea, covid-19, heterodox interventionist liberals*

## INTRODUCTION

The significance of culture in South Korea has grown since the late 1990s. In the midst of an economic crisis, the government started to highlight the importance of culture in boosting the economy during those time. The goal of cultivating culture as a national image has been to enhance South Korea's export activities and showcase its strengths, particularly under the administrations of Presidents Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-Hye (Ryoo & Jin, 2018). The Covid-19 pandemic, which began in 2019 and became a global pandemic in 2020, had a very significant impact on all aspects of life globally, including cultural aspects. The cultural aspect become one of the categories that affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and requires assistance from the government. These cultural policies that are needed are certainly different from the policies that were in place during the financial crisis in 1997 and 2007. It has forced policy maker to develop new and active policies as the result of the covid-19 pandemic (Lee et al., 2021).

There is a debate on cultural policy (Lee et al., 2021), where the policy is shaped by historical and socio-political contexts and reflects a unique combination of various socio-political factors, traditions, and events. It is important to note that this cultural policy is not static and is always developing in response to internal and external pressures. Moreover, cultural policy also highlights the role of policy actors and their agencies. We recognize the significant role that artists and cultural practitioners play as agents of change during this challenging time. Their involvement is crucial for maintaining the cultural industry, which is susceptible to loss, and for advocating for new policy directions that could contribute to its preservation.

Three influential East Asian countries respond differently to protect their cultural sectors, demonstrating the importance and interest of countries. Policy responses vary based on economic conditions and priorities, pre-pandemic societal and business tendencies, and national economic priorities (excluding arts and culture) (Betzler et al., 2021). In response to the pandemic, South Korea immediately implemented a variety of cultural policies, including financial programs (Lee et al., 2021). However, it appears to be maintaining the current policies. Japan appears to be less responsive, resulting in demands for policy reform via online campaigns by artists. Meanwhile, China is developing a centralized interpretation of how to handle the pandemic.

Table 1. Comparison Analysis of Cultural Policies Response in Three East Asia Countries 2020

Policies Category	China	Japan	South Korea
<b>Pandemic Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Together with radio and TV associations, limits activities and controls the production of cultural content.</li> <li>- Focus to established the centralized understanding of the Covid-19 pandemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implemented reviews, cancellations and restrictions on cultural implementation and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implemented social distancing regulations at cultural locations</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launched various financial and tax assistance (lending support, service support, financial assistance, fee waivers and travel insurance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided more than 70 trillion JPY to artist, cultural facilities and cultural organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established financial assistance programs for artists including performing arts organizations, arts education,</li> <li>- Financial assistance provided of more than 346.9 trillion won</li> </ul>
<b>Boosting Consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide guidance on increasing domestic market consumption (both online and offline) to promote cultural and tourism products.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided discount coupons for films, performing arts and exhibitions</li> </ul>
<b>Lobby</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many actors used an online petition campaign to advocate for policies in the art industry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two national associations in the cultural sector released reports on the losses felt in the cultural industry due to the pandemic and met with the minister of culture regarding additional budgets.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is not much space in the discussion regarding the reasons and objectives of cultural policies formulated by the government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held series of cultural response webinar</li> <li>- Companies and working groups conduct surveys and interviews with artists to inform policy proposals for the government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The culture ministry and other government agencies are holding online forums to discuss emergency aid and policy on art industry</li> </ul>
<b>Job Creation/ Training</b>	Employee training subsidies under financial aid policies		Providing training and employment opportunities for professionals and artists during the Covid-19 pandemic

\*Compiled from Lee H.-K., Chau, K. L.-F., & Terui, T (2021)

From the table above, it can be seen that the Chinese government is more concerned with controlling and preventing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic as a cultural policy response. The government, in cooperation with radio and television associations, regulates activities and controls the production of cultural content. All content must be in line with the government's interests. Strong propaganda justifies the lack of cultural policy discussion in China during the pandemic. In contrast to

the Chinese government, Japan was initially less responsive, prompting artists to launch online campaigns calling for policy reform. Public discussions with artists and workers in this industry provide valuable recommendations to the government.

Compared to China and Japan, in 2020 South Korea seems to have a sense of urgency in its cultural policy. Basically, cultural policy continues to change and adapt regardless of current conditions or situations, and it is also shaped by its history, traditions, and institutional arrangements (Lee et al., 2021). One of the characteristics of South Korea's cultural policy is its rapid implementation. The government has emerged as a key player in providing legal, policy, and financial support for the cultural industry (Ryoo & Jin, 2018). Even in its role as a source of finance, the government collaborates with venture capital firms to support the success of the culture and film industries through public-private fund raising, also known as cultural investment (Lee, 2021). Public investment is also required during the Covid-19 pandemic to distribute aid broadly while also preserving the cultural economy (Eikhof, 2020).

Only a few literatures that seek to explain cultural policy response during covid-19. First, this research is inspired by the study of Lee, H.-K., Chau, K. L.-F., & Terui, T (2021). They discuss a comparative analysis of cultural policy responses in South Korea, Japan and China during covid-19. However, the study only focused on the year 2021. Therefore, **we attempt to analyze South Korea's cultural policies response during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022)**. Second, we acknowledge other scholars have already discussed how the pandemic has affected other sectors. According to Doris Ruth Eikhof (2020), the pandemic's effects can also be seen in workforce diversity and income distribution (inclusion). It investigates the link between inclusive implementation and workforce participation. Woongjae Ryoo and Dal Yong Jin (2018) examine the government's role in cultural policy in light of the debate over neoliberal globalization and developmentalism, as well as the impact of the Korean Wave on key aspects of the President's leadership from 1993 to 2006.

This study utilizes the Heterodox Interventionist Liberals (HILs) as part of Neo-liberalism theoretical perspective. In general, Neo-liberalism has a close relationship with studies related to markets in the economy. This perspective has several currents that continue to develop, such as Orthodox Economic Liberals (OELs), who champion or support free markets and free trade, and **Heterodox Interventionist Liberals (HILs), who support more state regulation and trade protection to sustain markets** (Balaam & Dillman, 2014). The role of the state in a free market is generally to build freedom of enterprise and private ownership so that people can make their own choices to be productive. Both OELs and HILs ultimately believe that capitalism is a desirable system to maintain. However, there are differences in how they propose to reform globalization and tackle the problems of debt and inequality. In that sense, there seems to be a shared belief in the potential of markets to promote the values and interests of a significant proportion of the global population. Furthermore, Heterodox Interventionist Liberals (HILs) support more than a minimum amount of state intervention in the economy. This is done to protect the market and make it work better for most people (Balaam & Dillman, 2014).

Using the perspective of Heterodox Interventionist Liberals (HILs) helps us provide an analysis of South Korean cultural policy towards the cultural industry. It appears that the South Korean government is interested in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on cultural industry policymakers. This is understandable, given the global market presence of the South Korean cultural industry (Ryoo & Jin, 2018). Additionally, it seems that there is a reluctance to openly challenge existing neoliberalism in South Korean policy, particularly in the cultural sector (Lee, 2021). South Korea has developed cultural policy since the leadership of President Kim Young Sam (1993-1997) and provided positive results for the national economy at that time so that the cultural sector became the center of national economic growth, including Korean products on the global market (Kwon & Kim, 2014). South Korea's GDP itself will increase from 0.8% to 6.7% in 2021 (OECD, 2023). In this way, by maximizing the cultural sector, South Korea's national economy can experience growth and can be encouraged to move further forward.

## METHODS

This study employs qualitative data collection methods derived from official sources, including press releases, publications, and annual reports that are available and publicly accessible on the South Korean Ministry's website. Existing press releases, publications, and annual reports use Korean, but are available in English, with the exception of the Korean Artist Welfare Foundation (KAWF), which uses only Korean, so we only rely on Auto Google Translate. These ministries include the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST), the Korean Artist Welfare Foundation (KAWF), the Seoul Foundation of Arts and Culture (SAFC), the Korea Arts and Culture Education Center (Arte), the Arts Council Korea (ARKO), the Korea Film Council (KOFIC), and the Korea Arts & Culture Education Services (KACES). We gathered information from March to June 2023.

First, we tried to analyze and attempt to make a follow-up analysis of the same study with a focus on Korea after 2020 from the previous author in the journal *The Covid-19 crisis and 'critical juncture' in cultural policy: a comparative analysis of cultural policy responses in South Korea, Japan and China* by Hye-Kyung Lee, Karin Ling-Fung Chau & Takao Terui. Our study attempts to analysis the South Korea's cultural policies response during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2022). We were then inspired to conduct an analysis of the Korean government's cultural policy response. We collected all official information on the South Korean government's efforts to revitalize cultural activities through cultural policies that responded to the pandemic. The information was gathered over the course of the 3-year pandemic.

Second, we separated and compared the South Korean Cultural Policy Response in 3 years of the pandemic. Then, we created a series of categories using the information. We divided it into categories based on the following: (1) *pandemic control*, that refers to the government's actions to stop a pandemic disease; (2) *funding*, that refers money given by a government; (3) *boosting consumption*, that refers to boost economic growth and consumers behavior; (4) *lobbying*, that refers to a way of encouraging cultural stakeholders to continue their cultural activities; (5) *policy discussions*, that refers to exchange ideas on how to help cultural stakeholders survive and continue being productive during this pandemic; (6) *job creation and training*, that refers to government action to help creating new job opportunities and helping cultural artists improve their ability to adapt the new situations; (7) *bursaries*, that refers the government is giving out non-repayable support to boost cultural activity.

Third, we recognize that this study has some limitations. Some South Korean government news or posts are not available in English, especially on the KAWF website, so we only rely on Auto Google Translate. We also realized that because all the information we got came from the official South Korean government website, it was biased in favor of the Korean government's perspective.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. South Korean Cultural Policy Response in 2021-2022

Since Moon Jae In launched the New Southern Policy (NSP) in 2017, South Korea's relations with ASEAN and India have continued to strengthen, especially in economic, political and socio-cultural fields (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, 2020). NSP can be seen as the effective tools to expand the influence of South Korean culture. Numerous support programmes for the cultural and creatives industry have been integrated into the government's programme. When pandemic hits in 2020, South Korea's government immediately release series of cultural policy response. Similar to 2020, in 2021 various cultural policies are also released to speed up the recovery from the crisis caused by pandemic.

Table 2. South Korean Cultural Policy Response in 2021

Date	Key actors, decisions and activities	Notes
January 7	Ministry of Employment and Manpower providing 3rd Emergency Employment Guarantee Subsidy assistance (Via KAWF)	Funding
January 19	MCST and the Tourism Development Institute (TDI) launch virtual tour "K-Tour Top 10"	Boosting Consumption
January 29	MCST and KACES holding cultural arts education training	Training
January 31	The South Korean government enforces <i>social distancing</i> on Seollal (South Korean New Year) activities	Pandemic Control
February 1	MCST holding 22 local and international sports competitions	Funding, Pandemic Control
February 8	KAWF held a project 'Artist Social Insurance Fee Support'	Funding
February 19	KAWF held a project 'Creative Reserve Fund Support Project-Creative Stepping Stone'	Funding
February 23	KAWF starting the 'Corona 19 Special Loan' loan assistance	Funding
March 25	MCST and KAWF carrying out a survey for artists affected by Covid-19	Policy Discussion
April 1	KACES, Korea Culture and Arts Center Association, Korea Museum Association, Korean Cultural Center Association, Korean Culture House Association sign a cooperation agreement	Lobby
April 8	MCST and Korea Anti-Doping Agency (KADA) will perform the '2021 Play True Day Ceremony'	Pandemic control, Lobby
April 16	KACES and Korea Copyright Commission sign the relevant MOU regarding copyright	Lobby
May 17	MCST and KACES held '2021 World Culture and Arts Education Week'	Policy discussion
May 18	KAWF under MCST provided initial assistance of 720 Million KRW to 600 artists	Funding
June 3	MCST together World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Korea Copyright Protection Agency and 28 countries attend '2021 Virtual Workshop on Copyright System in Support of Creative Start-up Companies: Practice and Experience of the Republic of Korea'	Policy discussion, Lobby
June 9	MCST and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) initiate 'Travel Bubble'	Boosting Consumption
July 21	SFAC and Seoul Street Art Creation Center held competition Covid-19 Art Support - Street Art Circus Creative Support Project (Production Support) & (Circus Creative Support Business)	Funding
July 21	SFAC form a program 'SEARCH - Artistic Distancing Method'	Funding
July 21	SFAC held project 2021 Covid-19 Art Support (Art Must Go On)	Funding
August 10	Hwang Hee, minister of MCST attending the G20 meeting in Italy	Policy Discussion
September 10	MCST provides support for The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize	bursaries
October 6	MCST, the National Institute of Korean Language (NIKL) and the National Hangeul Museum (NHM) holding the '2021 World Convention of the Korean Language' conference	Policy Discussion, Lobby
October 15	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) collaborating with Singapore regarding Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL)	Policy Discussion
October 27	MCST together with 5 ministries and 9 public companies held the 'K-EXPO' event	Policy discussion
November 1	MCST and Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) hosted the '2021 OECD Global Forum On Tourism Statistics, Knowledge and Policies'	Policy Discussion



Date	Key actors, decisions and activities	Notes
November 3	MCST, Busan Metropolitan City and the Busan Contents Market Organizing Committee carry out 'Busan Contents Market 2021' with theme 'Connection the world through content'	Lobby
November 5	MCST and WHO implementing the 'Korea Wellness Tourism Festa' with the motto "Healing and Traveling"	Bursaries, Boosting Consumption
November 29	MCST in collaboration with KDI School of Public Policy and Management (KDIS) on 'Global Forum for Culture and Youth 2021'	Policy discussion, Lobby
2021	Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency implementing support programs for arts and culture education through learning videos	Bursaries
2021	Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency opened 8,620 arts and culture classes in 17 regions	Bursaries, Job Creation

\*Compiled from various press release (MCST, KAWF, SFAC, ARTE and news sites The Korea Herald News & Korea.Net)

In 2021, government *funding* dominates policy through programs and aid packages for artists developed in partnership with the central government through the MCST and other institutions. The *policy discussion* takes place every two or three months. In addition to policy discussions, cultural institutions such as the Korea Culture and Arts Center Association are *lobbying* the government to engage in dialogue and prepare for implementation. This includes signing cooperation agreements and creating joint programmes to support cultural activities. Furthermore, the next policy is to promote consumption (*boosting consumption*), which is the government's strategy for ensuring that the cultural sector remains easily accessible to all levels of society affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, thereby increasing cultural sector activity and sales. Then there's pandemic control. The government continues to implement social distancing measures, such as cultural celebrations and health checks at organized events. *Bursaries and training* also support cultural activities, such as the provision of free courses and arts training. This demonstrates that in 2021 the government will pay more attention to financial support, as many activities have been halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic; through this financial support, the government hopes that artists can continue their creative activities as before.

Table 3. South Korean Cultural Policy Response in 2022

Date	Key actors, decisions and activities	Notes
January 13	KAWF starting 'Corona 19 Special Loan' assistance	Funding
March 3	MCST and KAWF will help 21,000 artists by providing support of 18,000 for general artists and 3,000 for new artists.	Funding
March 14	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) relocated 3,000 workers to tourist attractions	Job creation, Pandemic control
March 28	KAWF providing help through 'Corona 19 Chinese Poetry Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund' or 'Covid-19 Temporary Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund'	Funding
April 12	KOFIC and Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival held a discussion 'Suggestion for the Sustainable Future of Independent and Art Film Exclusive Halls	Lobby, Policy Discussion
April 15	KOFIC carry out a discussion on 'Debate on how to overcome the crisis in the Korean film industry'	Lobby, Policy Discussion
May 17	MCST and KACES held a discussion at the '11th World Culture and Arts Education Week' (Viauntil)	Policy Discussion
June 13	MCST and Korea Arts and Culture Education held a discussion with the theme 'Culture and Arts Education Opinion'	Policy Discussion

Date	Key actors, decisions and activities	Notes
July 19	KOFIC held 'Human Resources Support Project for Film Production to Overcome COVID-19'	Job creation, Funding
July 21	KAWF arrange 'Second Corona 19 Chinese Poetry Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund' or 'Second Covid-19 Temporary Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund'	Funding
July 22	KAWF providing assistance to 3,400 artists who cannot participate in the 'Second Covid-19 Temporary Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund'	Funding
August 5	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) provides cultural policy direction to President Yoon Suk Yeol	Policy discussion
August 18	MCST attended the 11th APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok	Policy Discussion
August 24	Seoul Culture and Arts Forum held a discussion forum 'Post_COVID-19 Culture and Art Prospect and Seoul's Cultural Strategy' (Via SFAC)	Policy Discussion
November 19	MCST carry out health safety checks at the 'G-STAR 2022' event	Pandemic control
January-December	Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency implementing support programs for arts and culture education through learning videos	Bursaries
January-December	Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency opened 8,620 arts and culture classes in 17 regions	Bursaries, Job Creation

\*Compiled from press release of MCST, KAWF, SFAC, ARTE dan KOFIC

Quite different from 2021, in 2022 policy launched by the government is on funding, policy discussion, lobby, pandemic control and job creation. Funding is still the category most frequently used by the government in cultural policy. This shows that in the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic the Korean government still has a focus on the funding sector. However, policy discussion in 2022 are also done by the government that carry out a lot of involvement from artists both in the film industry, arts and culture education and people who work in the cultural sector with the aim of seeing what policies can be prepared and implemented after the Covid-19 pandemic ends.

On timeline In 2022, the first three months of the funding category dominates policy through the Corona Special Loan program which was formed in 2021 and the 'Corona 19 Chinese Poetry Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund' or 'Covid-19 Temporary Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund' (KAWF, 2022). The next six months are policy discussion with the first discussion held by KOFIC on 'Debate on how to overcome the crisis in the Korean film industry' (KOFIC, 2022), MCST and KACES in '11th World Culture and Arts Education Week' (ARTE, 2022), Culture and Arts Education Opinion (ARTE, 2022), 'Post\_COVID-19 Culture and Art Prospect and Seoul's Cultural Strategy' (SAFC, 2022), attending the 11th APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok (MCST, 2022) and providing South Korean cultural policy direction to President Yoon Suk Yeol through the Master Blueprint which includes five initiatives, namely the Blue House as a place to actively enjoy culture and art, Boosting the economy through K-Content, enlivening free and creative values in the environment, fair access to culture and regional balance through culture (MCST, 2022). The discussions held were aimed at finding out the challenges and difficulties felt by each party during the Covid-19 pandemic to find solutions and consider mitigation policies after the Covid-19 pandemic ends (KOFIC, 2022).

## **B. South Korean government's cultural policy reflect a neoliberal approach in which cultural initiatives are linked to broader economic goals**

Since the start of the pandemic, South Korea has released a series of cultural policies that have been categorized as measures to control the pandemic, boost consumption, engage in lobbying, facilitate policy discussions, encourage job creation and training, and provide bursaries. From the perspective of Heterodox Interventionist Liberals (HILs), it appears that the South Korean government is taking steps to address the impact of the pandemic on the cultural industry, recognizing its significant role in the nation's economic and social landscape. The South Korean government's cultural policy is understood

to be a means of promoting economic recovery and growth. Policies implemented during the pandemic, such as funding and increasing consumption, appear to reflect a neoliberal approach in which cultural initiatives are linked to broader economic goals. The emphasis on funding and policy discussions highlights a strategic alignment between cultural policy and economic imperatives, suggesting potential contributions of the cultural sector to national economic resilience.

In this section, an effort is made to draw parallels between the cultural policy analysis carried out by the South Korean government in dealing with the three-year pandemic. The following table offers an overview of a series of cultural policies. First, there appears to be a shift in the evolution of the government's primary concerns from first year to the next. In 2020, for instance, existing policies were seen to be affected by the obligation of social distancing, which led to activities being conducted online, as well as the issuance of an emergency package program. In 2021, cultural activities gradually transition to an offline format, with regulations that will allow for a limited number of attendees and adjusted activity hours. These measures are being implemented in a spirit of support for cultural activities, with the understanding that they may need to adapt to the circumstances. Lastly, in 2022, activities have been seen to be moving towards a new normal where wearing a mask in open spaces is no longer mandatory, but cultural assistance activities continue to take place in a measured and consistent manner.

Table 5. Comparison of South Korea's cultural policy during the 2020-2022 pandemic

Policies Category	2020	2021	2022
<b>Pandemic Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social distancing in cultural places policies</li> <li>- Online Cultural activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social distancing at cultural events</li> <li>- Slowly start cultural activities in offline with regulations limiting the number of attendance and limiting activity hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase the number of workers to organize and maintain tourism locations by 3,000 workers</li> <li>- Collaborate with public and private organizations to carry out health checks before attending cultural activities.</li> <li>- It is not mandatory to wear a mask in open spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide various emergency package program and provide more than 346.9 billion KRW assistance</li> <li>- ARKO supports 6 programs with total support of 15.9 billion KRW (revitalizing the creation of performing arts, theater specializing arts performances, theater rentals, subsidize young artists, subsidize space exhibitions and expanding the online arts scene)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Ministry of Employment and Manpower provides the 3rd Emergency Employment Security Subsidy assistance of 500,000 KRW per person</li> <li>- Establishing the 'Corona 19 Special Loan' program every month</li> <li>- Implementing various Covid-19 assistance programs (Artist Social Insurance Fee Support, Creative Reserve Fund Support Project-Creative Stepping Stone, Covid-19 Art Support - Street Art Circus Creative Support Project</li> <li>- KAWF provided assistance amounting to 720 Million KRW to 600 artists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing the 'Corona 19 Special Loan' program and other programs established in 2021</li> <li>- Developing new Support Fund program with assistance of 2 million KRW per person</li> <li>- Providing assistance of up to 46.6 Billion KRW for industry film</li> <li>- MCST and KAWF provided assistance of up to 3 million KRW per person to 21,000 artists</li> </ul>
<b>Boosting Consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing discounts for art performances of 1.8 million KRW, exhibitions of 1.6 million KRW, visitors of 3.4 million KRW and discounts for films</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide discounts of 30% and provide free classes in cultural programs</li> <li>- ARKO provides consumption support for exhibition and art performance ticket prices of 21.1 billion KRW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MCST and ARTE distribute 42 videos in the field of dance, music and art (36 videos for users and 6 videos for the public) to healing experience due to pandemic (which can be accessed anytime and anywhere)</li> </ul>
<b>Lobby</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two national associations (Yechong dan Minyechong) held discussions with the Minister of Culture regarding the budget, issued a joint statement, released a report on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Korea Museum Association, Korean Cultural Center Association and Korean Culture House Association signed a collaboration with ARTE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Barunson E&amp;A attended a discussion with KOFIC on 'Debate on how to overcome the crisis in the Korean film industry'</li> <li>- Indie Space, Inha University's</li> </ul>



Policies Category	2020	2021	2022
	losses of 60 billion KRW in cultural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Korea Copyright Commission signed a cooperation/MOU with MCST regarding copyright regulations, also held discussions with the World Intellectual Property Organization, Korea Copyright Protection Agency and invited 28 countries in the Asia Pacific, Africa, Arab, Latin America and Caribbean regions</li> <li>- Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) held discussions with MCST regarding the 'Travel Bubble'</li> </ul>	Department of Theater and Film held a discussion with KOFIC on 'Suggestions for the Sustainable Future of Independent and Art Film Exclusive Halls'
Policy Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carrying out an online discussions in arranging <i>emergency package</i> and cultural policies that will be implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held a discussion dan cooperate with KDI School of Public Policy and Management, Korea Tourism Organization, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Korea Copyright Protection Agency.</li> <li>- Held a K-EXPO event with 5 ministries and 9 companies and attended the G20 in Italy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizing national and international discussion forums with individual representatives of the film industry and between cultural ministries such as MCST, KACES, Seoul Culture and Arts Forum.</li> <li>- MCST met with President Yoon Suk Yeol regarding the next direction of cultural policy</li> </ul>
Job Creation/ Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opened more than 10,000 jobs through established programs and trained 700 film professionals who lost their jobs</li> <li>- ARKO opens up 3,0000 jobs in the performing arts sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruited 5,006 teachers for arts and culture classes in 17 regions and provided 130 training classes attended by 11,550 participants</li> <li>- ARKO creates 5,500 job opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-employ 3,000 staff at tourist attractions affected by Covid-19</li> <li>- Recruit 1,000 employees to work at a film company for 6 months</li> </ul>
Bursaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing scholarships to more than 7,725 artists including freelancers (<i>freelance</i>)</li> <li>- Opened School Art Instructor Support Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opened 8,620 arts and culture classes in 17 regions. Distribute learning videos.</li> <li>- Support organizations that promote literacy among students who have dropped out of school due to the Covid-19 pandemic</li> </ul>	Continuing the program to open free arts and culture classes in 17 regions. The 8 class subjects that are open include traditional Korean music, dance, film, theater, photography, design, animation and crafts

\*Compiled from various source

Second, as seen in the table above, funding became a top policy priority during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic followed by policy discussion and lobby. *In funding category*, there is an increase in the amount of financial assistance provided by the government every year, both through direct assistance programs and through competition programs as can be seen in the comparison table above. According to ARKO's 2020 annual report, the emergency support project increased by up to 90% in Theater compared to 2019. The project also set sustainability funding 2.4 times more for 2021 and secured 9.68 billion KRW for convergence assistance online in 2022 (ARKO, 2020). In 2021, support funding increased by 73.2% in total funding and 32.6% in total program support (ARKO, 2021). *Then, in the policy discussion category*, there are differences in the agenda being implemented. In 2020, the agenda is to create many emergency packages and programs (Lee et al., 2021) as a form of cultural policy that can be said to be quite hasty. In 2021, policy discussions began to take place, with stakeholders meeting to discuss potential further policies. In 2022, the agenda is to develop policies to deal with the effects of the pandemic. *In the lobby category*, there are clear differences in the actors involved and the agenda they're pursuing. The discussion agenda in 2020 is dominated by two domestic actors, namely Yechong and Minyechong. Yechong itself is a non-profit company and federation that

promotes Korean cultural exchange and the development of arts and culture as well as the rights and interests of artists. Yechong operates in 10 cultural sector associations namely architecture, Korean music, writers, dance, art, photography, theater, entertainment, film and music (Yechong, 2023). Yechong and Minyechong are important actors in holding discussions with the government regarding the budget needed in the cultural sector affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, this is supported by data that Yechong and Minyechong published (Lee et al., 2021).

Third, there was no obvious change in the other categories during the three years of the pandemic. However, it can be said that South Korea is focused on helping the cultural industry survive. This is an example of a neoliberal approach, which means that cultural initiatives are linked to broader economic goals. The South Korean government's role in cultural policy during the Covid-19 pandemic shows the close connection between the state's role in the national economy through the cultural sector. This is done by the government so that the cultural sector can continue to carry out its activities in a sustainable manner. This method is a step that South Korea has long implemented in developing the country's economy since the reign of President Kim Young Sam (1993-1997).

## CONCLUSION

At that time, the global world is facing a new pressure and situation due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This includes South Korea, which needs to create new policies to help all existing sectors. Recognizing the pivotal role of the cultural industry in South Korea's economic landscape, the government has meticulously crafted cultural policies from 2020 to 2022. This research study examines South Korea's cultural policies in response to the 3-year pandemic (2020-2022). These policies are classified into several categories, including *pandemic control, funding, boosting consumption, lobbying, policy discussion, job creation and training, and bursaries*. From the standpoint of heterodox interventionist liberals (HILs), the government's involvement in cultural policy is indicative of a neoliberal approach, wherein cultural initiatives are associated with overarching economic objectives.

## REFERENCES

- Arin, K. (2021, January 31). COVID-19 curfew, gatherings ban to extend through Seollal. The Korea Herald.  
[https://news.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210131000256&md=20210203003239\\_BL](https://news.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210131000256&md=20210203003239_BL)
- ART (2021, January 29). [Press release] Specialized training course in cultural arts education <2021 Arte Academy> begins full-scale operation in February. Press release.  
[https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData\\_BoardView.do](https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData_BoardView.do)
- ART. (2021, April 1). Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency signed a business agreement with major cultural infrastructure to revitalize the activities of culture and arts educators and cooperate with each other. [Press release] Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency signed a business agreement with major cultural infrastructure to revitalize the activities of culture and arts educators and cooperate with each other.  
[https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData\\_BoardView.do](https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData_BoardView.do)
- ART. (2021, April 16). Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency signed a business agreement with the Korea Copyright Commission. [Press release] Korea Arts and Culture Education Promotion Agency signed a business agreement with the Korea Copyright Commission (April 16). [https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData\\_BoardView.do](https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData_BoardView.do)

- ART (2022). Support for school art instructors. Korea Arts and Culture Promotion Agency. Retrieved June 10, 2023, from <https://www.arte.or.kr/business/school/tutor/intro/index.do#none>
- ARTE. (2022, June 13). [Press release] 'Culture and Arts Education Opinion Sharing Talk' website launched. Press release. [https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData\\_BoardView.do](https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData_BoardView.do)
- ARTE. (2022, October 24). [Press Release] <2022 Art Healing Anywhere> Dissemination of non-face-to-face content, healing time with art anytime, anywhere. Press release. [https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData\\_BoardView.do](https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData_BoardView.do)
- ART. (2022, May 17). [Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism press release] Discussing recovery and transformation of cultural arts education after COVID-19. Press release. [https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData\\_BoardView.do](https://www.arte.or.kr/information/report/ReportData_BoardView.do)
- Balaam, D. N., & Dillman, B. (2014). Introduction to International Political Economy. Pearson Education.
- Betzler, D., Loots, E., Prokupek, M., Marques, L., & Grafenauer, P. (2021). COVID-19 and the arts and cultural sectors: investigating countries' contextual factors and early policy measures. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 27(6), 796-814.
- Couldry, N. (2008). Reality TV, or The Secret Theater of Neoliberalism. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 30(1), 3-13.
- Dayoung Ahn. (2021, Maret 22). 16,000 applications for artist creation reserve support in the first half of the year, a 12.7% increase. KBS News. <https://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=5144336&ref=A>
- Eikhof, D. R. (2020). COVID-19, inclusion and workforce diversity in the cultural economy: what now, what next? *Cultural Trends*, 29(3), 234-250.
- Foreign Policy of Community Indonesia. (2022). New Southern Policy | Indonesia-South Korea NSP Young Professionals Lab. Indonesia-Korea SSP Young Professionals Lab. Retrieved May 27, 2023, from <https://www.sspyoungprolab.com/about-nsf>
- Jin, D. Y. (2014). The Power of the Nation-state amid Neo-liberal Reform: Shifting Cultural Politics in the New Korean Wave. *Pacific Affairs*, 87, 71-92.
- KACES. (2021). The Moon Jae In Administration's Policy Task Performance Over The Past Four Years. Korean Culture and Information Services. <https://www.kocis.go.kr/ebook/ecatalog5.jsp?Dir=378&eclang=en>
- KAWF. (2021, January 7). [Notice] Information on the 3rd Emergency Employment Stability Support Fund (including artists). Korean Artist Welfare Foundation. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub01View.do?selIdx=15536>
- KAWF. (2021, January 7). [Notice] Information on the 3rd Emergency Employment Stability Support Fund (including artists). announcement. <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub01View.do?selIdx=15536>
- KAWF. (2021, February 8). [Press release] More than 100,000 people have completed artistic activity certification. Media reports. Retrieved June 13, 2023, from <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub04View.do?selIdx=15997>

- KAWF. (2021, February 8).[Notice] 2021 『Social Insurance Premium Support for Artists』 Project Notice. Korean Artists Welfare Foundation. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub01View.do?selIdx=15996>
- KAWF. (2021, February 19). Announcement] Announcement of 『Creative Reserve Fund Support Project - Creative Stepping Stone』 in the first half of 2021. Korean Artists Welfare Foundation. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub01View.do?selIdx=16176>
- KAWF. (2021, February 23). [Notice] Notice on implementation of 2021 COVID-19 special loan. Korean Artists Welfare Foundation. <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub01View.do?selIdx=16256>
- KAWF. (2021, Mei 18).2021 Artist Dispatch Support Project, expansion of support to overcome COVID-19 crisis. Media reports. <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub04View.do?selIdx=16738>
- KAWF. (2022, March 3). [Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism press release] Creative reserve fund of 3 million won for general artists and 2 million won for new artists. Media reports. <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub04View.do?selIdx=17581>
- KAWF. (2022, March 28). [Notice] 2022 『COVID-19 Temporary Cultural Artist Activity Support Fund』 project announcement. Korean Artists Welfare Foundation. <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub01View.do?selIdx=17643>
- KAWF. (2022, November 17). [Press release] Forum held to diagnose 10 years of artist welfare policy. Media reports. <http://www.kawf.kr/notice/sub04View.do?selIdx=18027>
- COFFEE. (2022, July 19). KOFIC Prepares for COVID-19 Pandemic & Endemic Simultaneously.
- KOFIC News.  
[https://www.koreanfilm.or.kr/eng/news/kofic\\_news.jsp?pageIndex=1&blbdComCd=601007&seq=1811&mode=VIEW&returnUrl=&searchKeyword=](https://www.koreanfilm.or.kr/eng/news/kofic_news.jsp?pageIndex=1&blbdComCd=601007&seq=1811&mode=VIEW&returnUrl=&searchKeyword=)
- Korean Cultural Center New York. (2020). Korea Information - Culture and the Arts — Korean Cultural Center New York. Korean Cultural Center New York. Retrieved August 4, 2023, from <https://www.koreanculture.org/korea-information-culture-and-the-arts>
- Korean Cultural Center NY. (2019). Korea Information - Economy — Korean Cultural Center New York. Korean Cultural Center New York. Retrieved August 4, 2023, from <https://www.koreanculture.org/korea-information-economy>
- Kwon, S.-H., & Kim, J. (2014). The cultural industry policies of the Korean government and the Korean Wave. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20(4), 422-439.
- Lee, H.-K. (2021). Supporting the cultural industries using venture capital: a policy experiment from South Korea. *Cultural trends*, 47-67.
- Lee, H.-K., Chau, K. L.-F., & Terui, T. (2021, June 25). The Covid-19 crisis and ‘critical juncture’ in cultural policy: a comparative analysis of cultural policy responses in South Korea, Japan and China. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 145-165.
- Lee, H.-K., & Zhang, X. (2021). The Korean Wave as a source of implicit cultural policy: Making of a neoliberal subjectivity in a Korean style. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 24(3), 521-537.

- MCST. (2021). MCST Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Welcome to the website of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea. Retrieved August 4, 2023, from <http://www.mcst.go.kr/english/statistics/statistics.jsp>
- MCST. (2021, January 19). Enjoy the K-Tour Top 10 from Home. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=43>
- MCST. (2021, February 1). International Competitions linking Regions and Sports, shall be made as representative products. Press Releases. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=44>
- MCST. (2021, April 8). Commitment Brought Together to Achieve Clean Sports without Doping. Press Releases. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=45>
- MCST. (2021, June 3). Sharing Korea's copyright system and experiences with 28 countries around the world. Press Releases. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=52>
- MCST. (2021, June 9). Korea aims to restart international tourism through promoting safety protocols. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=48>
- MCST. (2021, September 10). UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize Winners for 2021 Limitless Horizons Ixil in Guatemala (LHI), National Institute of Open Schooling in India (NIOS), Paku Children's Literature Foundation in South Africa. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=56>
- MCST. (2021, October 6). 2021 World Convention of the Korean Language. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=62>
- MCST. (2021, October 15). Quarantine-free Travel Opened to Singapore from 15 November. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=65>
- MCST. (2021, November 1). 2021 OECD Global Forum on Tourism Statistics, Knowledge and Policies. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=70>
- MCST. (2021, November 5). The 1st 2021 Korea Wellness Tourism Festa held in Gangwon. Press Release. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=72>
- MCST. (2021, November 29). "Global Forum for Culture and Youth 2021: Youth, Culture, and Innovation for Future" live-streamed on Dec 1. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=77>
- MCST. (2021, August 10). Minister Hwang Hee Attends the first G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=53>
- MCST. (2022, Maret 14). Three Thousand Workers to be Located to Make Safer Tourist Attractions. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=95>
- MCST. (2022, November 19). MCST Vice Minister Conducted Preliminary Safety Inspection for G-STAR 2022 and Handed Out Prizes at 2022 Korea Game Awards. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=192>



- MCST. (2022, August 5). MCST Policy Briefing to President Yoon Suk Yeol. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=141>
- MCST. (2022, August 18). MCST to Discuss the Strategy of Recovering Korea Tourism Industry for Post Pandemic Era. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=151>
- MCST. (2023, January 10). Korean Art Market Sales Surpass KRW 1 Trillion. Press Release. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=212>
- MCST. (2023, January 25). K-content, the new powerhouse on the front line of exports, to gain wings with policy financing support of KRW 790 billion, the largest amount in history. Press Releases. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=217>
- MCST. (2023, February 17). Share Korea's intellectual property-based economic growth know-how with the world. Press Release. <https://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/pressView.jsp?pSeq=222>
- OECD. (2023). GDP and spending - Nominal GDP forecast. OECD Data. Retrieved June 24, 2023, from <https://data.oecd.org/gdp/nominal-gdp-forecast.htm#indicator-chart>
- Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy. (2020). THE NEW SOUTHERN POLICY (NSP). Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. Retrieved June 8, 2023, from [https://dkiapcss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Republic\\_of\\_Korea-New\\_Southern\\_Policy\\_Information\\_Booklet.pdf](https://dkiapcss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Republic_of_Korea-New_Southern_Policy_Information_Booklet.pdf)
- Ryoo, W., & Jin, D. Y. (2018). Cultural politics in the South Korean cultural industries: confrontations between statedevelopmentalism and neoliberalism. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 31-45.
- SEE. (2020). Annual Report Arts Council Korea 2020. SEE. <https://www.arko.or.kr/eng/about/reports>
- SEE. (2021). Annual Report Arts Council Korea 2021. SEE. <https://www.arko.or.kr/eng/about/reports>
- SFAC. (2021, July 21). The detailed notice is in attached file 'Attachment 1.' Please refer to the 'Notice'. [Contest] Information on the COVID-19 Arts Support Contest. [https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice\\_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123499&type=](https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123499&type=)
- SFAC. (2021, July 21). [Contest] COVID-19 Art Support <Street Art Circus Creative Support Project (Production Support)> Contest Information. announcement. [https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice\\_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123509&type=](https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123509&type=)
- SFAC. (2021, July 21). [Contest] COVID-19 Art Support <Street Art Circus Creative Support Project (Production Support)> Contest Information. announcement. [https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice\\_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123509&type=](https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123509&type=)
- SFAC. (2021, July 21). Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture COVID-19 Arts Support Project Notice <SEARCH\_How to End Artistic Distancing>. [Contest] Information on the COVID-19 Arts Support Contest. [https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice\\_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123504&type=](https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=123504&type=)
- SFAC. (2021, August 25). 2021 <COVID-19 Arts Support> Information on the final deliberation results of the 『Street Art and Circus Creation Support Project』. [Result Announcement]

Announcement of the final deliberation results for the COVID-19 Arts Support <Street Art Circus Creation Support Project (Production Support)>. [https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice\\_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=124204&type=](https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=124204&type=)

SFAC. (2022, August 24). <1st Seoul Culture and Arts Forum> held 'Post-Corona Culture and Arts Outlook and Seoul's Cultural Strategy'. announcement. [https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice\\_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=133262&type=](https://www.sfac.or.kr/opensquare/notice/notice_list.do?cbIdx=955&bcIdx=133262&type=)

World Health Organization. (2023). Republic of Korea: WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard with Vaccination Data. WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard. Retrieved May 22, 2023, from <https://covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/kr>

World Health Organization. (2023). World Health Organization. WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard | WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard With Vaccination Data. Retrieved May 22, 2023, from <https://covid19.who.int/>

Yechong. (2023). Purpose of Establishment. Yechong. <http://www.yechong.or.kr/01/since.php>

In Press