

Article

The Significance of Cultural Policy—Case Study of South Korea

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Abstract: The main research problem that this article focuses on is: does a wide-ranging cultural policy contribute to the implementation of the idea of sustainable development in practice? This article aims to show, using the example of South Korea, the importance of the state's cultural policy as a factor that is conducive to economic success and an increase in the standard of living of a society. This policy leads to the evolution of society from one centered on the mass consumption of material goods to one centered on the mass consumption of cultural goods, which, combined with the development of creative industries, contributes to the implementation of the elements of sustainable development in practice. The research methods used in the work were the study of literature in the studied area, the analysis of documents and reports on cultural policy, and the development of cultural and creative industries. An assessment of the degree to which pop culture development in South Korea is a factor in the economic development of the country, given its commercial nature and its ability to increase the standards of living of an entire society, was also carried out. The example of South Korea shows the benefits for the national economy of promoting creativity and culture. Preferences and consumer attitudes are shaped in areas that have a minimal impact on the natural environment and the exploitation of natural resources.



Citation: Ścibiorska-Kowalczyk, I.; Cichoń, J. The Significance of Cultural Policy—Case Study of South Korea. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 13805. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132413805>

Academic Editor: Łukasz Wróblewski

Received: 23 October 2021

Accepted: 8 December 2021

Published: 14 December 2021

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Keywords: economics; economic development; globalization; cultural policy; creative industries; sustainable development; South Korea

1. Introduction

“South Korea is an example of a state which has seen popular culture as an opportunity to conquer global markets and strengthen its authority internationally” [1]. The country, which at the end of the twentieth century was nicknamed “an Asian tiger”, has used the recent forty years of its history to transform from a society whose living conditions were worse than those of poor African countries to one that is now the twelfth-richest economy in the world in terms of GDP [2]. The spectacular economic transformation of its indigenous industries, coordinated by the central government, has been continued in the new millennium with the implementation of well-thought-out cultural policies, which are aimed at stimulating local prosperity by offering support to creative industries, making the resultant Korean pop culture a national branding tool to popularize the positive image of South Korea as a democratic, highly developed and culturally attractive region, as well as an important actor in global politics.

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the significance of governmental cultural policies for achieving economic success and for improving the nation's standard of living by studying in detail the case of South Korea.

The analyses of the literature on the subject that were conducted in the article were aimed at answering the following research question:

RQ1. *Has the cultural policy pursued by the South Korean government influenced the economic development of the country?*

In the research procedure, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The classic factors of economic development that are based on the massive use of natural resources and their intense processing can be—at least partially—replaced by other factors that have minimal impact on the natural environment, which are also a significant driving force of economic development.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Creative industries with minimal demand for natural resources and energy, developed in line with the growing demand for cultural goods, could become the leading factors of economic development.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *The contemporary cultural policy of South Korea is conducive to the evolution of society from the mass consumption of material goods to the mass consumption of cultural goods.*

The article is aimed at representatives of the scientific community, employees of state institutions and people interested in issues relating to cultural policy.

The first part of the article presents the cultural policy pursued by South Korea until 1989 and the changes that took place after 1989. The second part discusses the methods of implementing the cultural policies. The last part of the article shows the empirical data indicating the economic growth taking place in South Korea and presents a discussion that also includes a literature review of the studied area.

2. Literature Review

According to R. Inglehart and M. Castells, research proves that globalization in the area of culture causes many, often contradictory phenomena, which influence the existing local cultures in various ways [3,4]. Some researchers, including R. Inglehart, C. Welzel and I. Oh, assume that the most important consequence of cultural globalization is the increased contact between different cultures, thanks to which certain elements of cultural behavior are mixed, disseminated, and sometimes similar [5,6]. At the same time, the expansion of Western culture through mass media (i.e., TV, radio, Internet), called Americanization, has a very strong influence on the unification of cultures, especially in the areas of fashion and music, as well as the system of values and lifestyle, through the promotion of its flagship products. Many researchers (including B.H. Chua, K. Iwa-buchi and C. Cho) see these phenomena as a threat to the existing local communities and their customs. A consequence of these processes is the growing resistance to the transformations into the European and American lifestyle and the search for one's own roots and identity [7,8].

One can agree with the claims of the authors of many scientific publications [9–11] that the Korean Wave fundamentally changed the perception of South Korea in the world. Initially, this phenomenon was limited to the pop culture of the Southeast Asia region, but the hallyu effect, which has continued for twenty years, has far exceeded the expectations of Korean cultural policy makers. Other authors also note [12–15] that the growing global popularity of Korean pop music stars, films and teledrama, as well as cultural tourism, and the growing interest in Korean high culture and literature, testify to the strength of the Korean Wave and the effectiveness of Korean cultural policy.

One can also agree with the view that the “Hallyu phenomenon” is a good example of a strategy for building a country's image based on mass culture, and one which is closely related to economic development and the export of manufactured goods to world markets. The essence of hallyu development is its attractiveness and the use of popular culture in South Korea as a market product, and this means that the entertainment industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of the national economy. Thanks to the hallyu effect, popular Korean culture is presently on a global scale [16].

3. Cultural Policies until 1989

Any observation of the markets for cultural goods and services reveals an obvious presence of the state. Governmental activities include both the universal business environ-

ment (legal regulations, financial support) and the unique activities related to the specifics of cultural goods. It is widely believed that culture—as an entire cultural heritage of any given community—and creativity have a positive impact on the society's quality of life: they build national identity, create desirable attitudes and systems of values, educate and instruct, while at the same time allow the self-fulfillment of individuals. At the same time, markets for cultural goods and services show significant shortcomings: their lack of interest in the production of public goods, including the problem of their valuation and unpaid consumption; incomplete and asymmetrical information on the quality or utility of cultural offerings; or the tendency for large business entities to predominate. The fear of failing to achieve a non-marketable, external positive impact with cultural activities as a result of imperfect market mechanisms is the main argument for governmental intervention and the reason for its social acceptability [17].

State intervention (based on state policy influencing individual sectors of the economy, including culture) in traditional arts is primarily driven by the desire to preserve the national heritage for future generations and to sustain the consumption of socially desirable goods that are not of interest to private entrepreneurs. With creative industries, which are attractive to individual investors, the government's role is the protection of intellectual property and supporting creative activities and the innovative character of the national economy, which translates into material economic benefits and increasing prosperity.

In the contemporary political and economic history of South Korea, the country's tradition of cultural policies is not too long. In the mid-twentieth century, when the country became liberated from Japanese occupation, the government's priority was to stabilize the situation on the peninsula. Although Korean museums and monuments of history were opened for the public at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s [18], with the continued armed conflict and the terrible conditions in which the state came to be rebuilt, no one gave much thought to cultural activities. As noted above, cultural goods meet the needs of a higher order and, therefore, the society, struggling against hunger and extreme poverty and anxious about its own security, hardly sought any contact with culture.

After the coup in the 1960s, intensive industrialization was undertaken to put the national economy back on track. During that time, all of the government's resources were directed to the development of manufacturing and to the support of its exports, again marginalizing the issue of creative activities, with only those relating to nationalism, which meant promoting South Korean independence, spreading an anti-Japanese stance, criticizing the North Korean communist system and alienation from Western influences, properly considered [19]. During the days of General Park's dictatorship, which limited civic freedoms, the creative industries could count on scarce financial help and even less freedom of expression—between 1965 and 1975, a total of 223 Korean songs and 261 western pop songs were blacklisted by censors [1]. As a result of the actions undertaken, Korean culture gained a political, pro-regime dimension, rejecting foreign trends as being contrary to the accepted ideology—for instance, in 1970 men's long hair was banned, and in 1973 short skirts were banned [20].

The military junta's restrictions faced increasing opposition from the younger generation. The social protests of the 1970s were brutally suppressed, but following General Park's murder in 1979 and demonstrations in Gwangju in the spring of 1980, during which over 200 people were killed [21], the new leaders agreed to partially liberalize their policies. The 1980s witnessed the culmination of the Korean economic miracle. The improvement of the nation's economic situation translated into an improvement of people's living conditions, ensuring the satisfaction of basic human needs, as a result of which the Koreans began to look for possibilities of self-fulfillment and aesthetic experiences.

The program, implemented by President Chun Doo Hwan—later on dubbed the 3S's (screens, sex, sports) policy—focused on the development of television, the reduction of arts censorship, and sports promotion. In 1981, when 98% of households had their own TVs, the first color TV show was broadcast. The medium's popularity and the debut of music programs on TV turned the Korean music industry into a provider of mass entertainment.

In the following years, restrictions on sexual contexts and on the presentation of intimate relationships in cinematography and literature were lifted. The curfew and the restrictions on dress and hairstyle were also revoked. In 1982, the first professional baseball league was established, and, a year later, football was formalized in the same way. By the mid-1980s, Korean culture was depoliticized [20]. Although the freedom of creative activities increased, they were still subject to governmental control—yet the intensification of the supply of cultural goods was met with a positive reception and gave rise to increased consumption.

4. Changes in Cultural Policies after 1989

In 1990, after the first democratic elections, a multi-year culture development plan was launched under the banner of “Culture for All”. The project was intended to establish a cultural identity, promote the fine arts, improve access to cultural goods, support regional culture, develop the media culture, and use culture as a means of reconciling both Koreas—this component was also emphasized with the so-called “Sunshine Policy” towards North Korea, maintained during the 1997–2008 period [22]. In the new millennium, the Act on Promotion of Artistic and Cultural Education was passed. The funds for social education in arts and high culture have also been increased.

At the same time, progressive globalization has highlighted the economic significance of culture—it was reflected in the cultural requirements that have been added to the cultural policy in order to facilitate international cultural exchange and improve the country’s image. In 1991, a non-governmental organization called the Korea Foundation was established with the aim of the worldwide promotion of the Korean culture and language and supporting the transnational flow of knowledge and artistic creations. The growing need for national branding has prompted Korean diplomats to actively seek the exchange of ideas, information and cultural goods on the international stage, and to reinforce the perception of South Korea as a democratic, technologically advanced, economically innovative country, open to other ethnic groups and full of tourist attractions [19].

In the early 1990s, an American political scientist, Joseph Nye, introduced the concept of soft power, or “the ability of a nation or country to gain allies and gain influence through the attractiveness of its own culture, politics, political ideals” [23]. This term was coined as the opposite of hard power, which involves using military coercion and threats, as well as economic sanctions, to gain support from other states and sway them toward believing in the legitimacy of the interventions made [24].

After the 1997 financial crisis, Korean society engaged all their resources into a rebound of the domestic economy. Korea does not have natural resources that could make its economy competitive, so the government’s corrective actions focused on developing human creativity, knowledge, technical skills and entrepreneurship.

Being aware of the fragility of the country’s position on the international stage, maintained solely thanks to the top performance of some of the biggest concerns in the country—a fact that was highlighted by the economic swing—the Koreans, having nothing to lose, were willing to take the risk of entering new, yet unstable areas of economic activity to diversify their sources of income—hence the huge investment in information technology. At the same time, attention was paid to the ease and intensity with which American cultural goods began to influence the views and behaviors of societies, driving consumer attitudes worldwide. Alongside American TV series and literature, the popular American lifestyle was also spreading, starting with fashion, through to the adoption of American-style leisure activities and interpersonal relationships, to American brands becoming global phenomena. These elements were becoming established in the minds of the public, not only creating an attractive image of the country, but also strengthening its position as an important business partner, political power and social trends creator. That is why the export of Korean pop culture was made one of the pillars of the post-crisis South Korean economy, also to become a secret weapon as part of the country’s diplomacy [25].

5. Methods of Implementing the Cultural Policies and Results

With the progress of civilization, the economic situation of countries and the living conditions of their inhabitants changed after the Industrial Revolution, which was initiated at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, increasing the importance of industry. From the second half of the 1990s, there has been a shift from the industrial economy—based on raw materials, manual labor, manufactured machines and energy—to an economy based on knowledge, information and creativity, in which the services segment takes the leading position.

The technological development that took place during these several hundred years resulted in an increase in the welfare of society, facilitating the satisfaction of its basic needs. The stabilization of the political situation in the world strengthened the sense of security and affiliation within local communities. The conditions created in this way gave the postmodern society an opportunity to reorient its decisions regarding choices related to self-realization and the expression of its own identity [26]. The desire to have knowledge, to experience new aesthetic impressions and a sense of fulfillment or gain respect and recognition has resulted in an increased demand for goods that are able to satisfy these needs. Education, performing arts, developing interests, communication or property management remain beyond the reach of material production—hence the dynamic increase in the share of the benefits from human labor in the real economy.

The consequence of the improvement of the material situation was also the shortening of the working time necessary to obtain a sufficient income and, consequently, the increase in the amount of free time. This surplus began to be used for pleasure and relaxation, with people looking for various forms of entertainment and finding themselves more and more often connecting with their culture. The increase in demand and the increasing readiness of people to pay for the goods that they consumed were the stimuli for the transformation of cultural goods and services into market products.

As a result of commodification, the products of art became the subject of interest for an increasing number of entrepreneurs, who saw them to a lesser extent as an opportunity for artistic expression, and above all as a promising source of profit. Creative activity has ceased to be guided by lofty ideas, the desire to moralize society or create its sense of aesthetics—contemporary culture has chosen a direction whereby it can meet the needs of its recipients, subordinating itself to the expectations of the general public—not the authors' ambitions or the high demands of the upper classes [27].

Commercialized art received more attention than its elite version. Thanks to its more accessible form, lighter subject matter and easier to understand message, it has become an attractive source of entertainment for the average and—importantly for the supply side—overwhelmingly represented audience. By adjusting it to the preferences of the audience, a salable product was created that attracted buyers who were willing to buy it.

The popularization of participation in culture was possible also thanks to changes on the social and political level. Pro-democracy movements led to the emancipation of the lower social classes, who were previously excluded from many environmental activities. Thanks to them, the position and capabilities of all members of local communities became equal, and their needs and aspirations began to be articulated by the voice of the majority. The scope of access to cultural content was also systematically increasing—as a result of compulsory education, the level of illiteracy decreased, facilitating the reception of artistic creativity. The costs of participation in culture itself also decreased [28]. Without democratization, it would not go beyond the circle of the elite.

Simultaneously to the marketization and accessibility of cultural goods, there was a lively development of the mass media, including radio, television, large-scale press and the newly created Internet network. Advances in information technology have facilitated access to mass audiences, also enabling real-time free communication. The improvement in the coverage of telecommunications channels and the expansion of their offerings contributed to an increase in the number of recipients, and thus the dissemination of broadcast content—including marketed cultural goods.

An important factor for cultural changes was—and has been so far—the process of globalization. The spread of patterns of behavior beyond the local community leads to the unification of norms and principles of action in all areas of human activity. This results in the unification of needs on a global scale, the global standardization of values and preferences, as well as an increased propensity of individuals to engage in similar, ubiquitous, compact forms of participation [29]. Due to this multifaceted integration, the artistic creativity of some cultural circles has become widely available and readable to others, further expanding the scope of its impact and the scale of consumption.

In the context of the massification of cultural goods and services, the processual nature of their consumption is not without significance. As previously noted, interest in art does not come down to autonomous, one-off acts of participation, but to the entire sequence of cultural activity—both within one category and more broadly—in the scale of the entire creative output—relying on progressive participation in various forms of expression [27]. An interesting film may encourage you to read the book that is its prototype, and a successful theater performance may convince you to visit the opera. In short, contact with one category of culture naturally entails increased interest in other areas—the consumption of some cultural goods generates consumption of others.

The combination of these four elements—the commercialization of artistry, media development, globalization and the self-propelling specificity of cultural activity—implied the transformation of single acts of creative activity, territorially limited and accessible to a narrow audience, into one powerful, dynamic creation, enjoying global recognition and use—pop culture.

Popular culture does not have a precise definition. This is due to the fact that it is a relatively new phenomenon, ubiquitous and strongly diversified internally in terms of form, and at the same time subject to constant changes. In addition, it takes place in separate fields of art, often going beyond them and directly touching various spheres of human activity [30].

Pop culture, as the name suggests, is a popular culture—popular, common, addressed to the people and practiced by them. There are no strict criteria that artistic creativity must meet in order to qualify for this trend. The only condition that unites all popular culture goods is in fact their popularity—that is, increased, observed public interest. In this light, the elements of pop culture will be a song at the top of the charts, a box office movie or a bestseller, as well as a frequently visited tourist attraction, a recognizable opera aria and a famous work of art.

Often, however, popular culture is presented as an antagonism of elite culture—high culture, intended for a selected group of recipients. Comparing both categories, it must be admitted that typical pop culture deals with much easier topics. It also represents a lower artistic value, taking on a simpler, more understandable form. It is precisely the lower requirements with regard to public engagement that ensure the lightness and accessibility of this category of artistic activity.

A distinctive feature of pop culture is its strictly entertaining character. Although many of its goods represent certain values, their main function remains, however, to provide their recipients with an opportunity for undemanding fun. In addition, the desire to attract a wide audience entails the need to standardize the content and form of communication so that it is attractive and understandable to the entire cross-section of society, regardless of social position, knowledge and taste. For this reason, pop culture is often viewed as an inferior, less valuable form of expression. However, it should be remembered that simplifications are the basis of all popularizing activities, and pop culture itself—in all its diversity—is a mixture of heterogeneous styles [28]. Popular culture differs from other fields of art also by the specific ways that its products are distributed and the non-traditional form of contact between the sender and the recipient. The first issue relates to popularizing content through mass media. Due to the wide range of recipients created in this way, popular culture is interchangeably referred to as mass culture—addressed to the masses, and thus reflecting the most mass-oriented, universal preferences. A series broadcast by

a nationwide broadcaster automatically gains more publicity than a theater play staged in front of a closed audience, which is why TV productions are intuitively accepted as an object of pop culture. However, performing arts—with proper promotion—can also form a part of the general consciousness.

In addition, in contrast to traditional forms of art, which are based on direct contact between the sender and the recipient, in popular culture, a specific type of communication prevails, in which the recipients act as viewers, communing only with the virtual message of their work [28]. The scene watched in the film does not happen in real time, the music listened to from the players is not played live every time, and the plot in the book being read is reported by the author on an on-going basis. The registration of cultural goods on physical carriers enables participation in creative activity at a time and place that is convenient for the public, directly transferring into an increase in its popularity. Hence, pop culture is dominated by products that are made available in multiple copies, not unique events. However, the barriers to the accessibility of individual objects can also be removed—for example, paintings, sculptures or architectural structures can be easily popularized thanks to their reproductions or presence in other works.

The strong focus on meeting the needs of mass audiences has resulted in a clearly high degree of commercialization of creative activity. A TV program, an adventure novel or a new collection of clothes is intended to attract the interest of the widest possible audience, and, in order to do so, it must match their tastes and expectations.

As previously noted, the emergence of mass culture was motivated by the desire to make a profit. Popular culture has ceased to be an act of inspiration—it has become a planned, mechanized and specialized mass production [29], producing what is demanded by current demand. With the technological advancement of civilization, the factors that determine further economic development have also changed. While in the initial stages these were favorable climatic conditions and human labor, followed by access to raw materials and the accumulation of cash, modern realities have created a demand for knowledge and information in the markets. Thus, the departure from the material consumption of production in favor of non-material resources has changed the perception of human capital—it has ceased to be only a workforce, and has become a source of innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity in the current economy.

With regard to creativity and artistic abilities, it was not only the form of the benefits for the end consumers, but also the benefits for enterprises, which could also become their buyers, that began to be noticed. The intensification of the competitiveness of the current economic model made it necessary to distinguish the conducted activity from the competition. Advertising, architecture and spatial development, interior design, computer software or functional design have become the subject of increased demand from the business segment. The growing demand once again contributed to the formation of a new area of culture—creative industries.

The so-called cultural industries deliver marketable cultural goods. According to UNESCO's definition, this term refers to industries that revolve around the creation, production and commercialization of intangible and cultural content, customarily protected by copyright [31]. The creative industries, on the other hand, are a slightly broader view of the production of culture. This term is defined as all industries that have their source in individual creativity, skills and talents, the functioning of which carries the potential to generate wealth and jobs through the use of intellectual property [32]—therefore, creative industries are those types of activities that do not necessarily involve traditionally understood artistic creativity, however, they are based on the same creative potential.

The narrower category includes cultural goods that are aimed at mass reproduction, the consumption of which is an end in itself—films and videos, music, television, radio, press, books and computer games. Creative industries would, in turn, include these goods and services, which are part of further production processes, and thus have a more individualized production profile—advertising, architecture and, broadly understood, design [33].

Due to the vagueness of some creative goods (is computer office software a consumable item or a factor of production?) and thus the fluidity of the cited division, many ways of defining the production of culture have emerged. For example, the British government—which began to conceptualize the issue early on—distinguishes between thirteen industries within a single, interconnected branch of the economy: advertising, architecture, art and antiques market, craftsmanship, design, fashion design, film and video recording, computer games, music, performing arts, the market for publishing, programming and the radio and television broadcasting market [17].

Sometimes the cultural markets also include fragments of classic segments of the economy that are related to the production of equipment that enables the use of creative goods, both productive and recreational. A wide range of goods is mentioned here, from professional devices used in recording studios, to CD players and pianos for home use, to painting accessories.

The position of economists on the precise separation between creative activity and cultural activity is not unanimous. Moreover, due to the dynamic nature of the analyzed markets, it is constantly changing. Pop culture itself introduces considerable confusion: the cinematographic, phonographic and publishing industries are indisputably associated with popular culture. However, it cannot be ignored that the results of the work of creative industries, such as fashion, interior styling or image creation, also play an important role in pop culture.

Although mass culture is the subject of frequent criticism, with some critics accusing it of being worthless trash, nowadays it is the most frequently represented, most widespread and most extensive form of creative activity—and, in the light of economics, also the most profitable category of art, generating added value for the entire economy, and thus improving the welfare of the society living in it.

In order to develop Korea's soft power, President Kim Dae Jung, who took office in 1998, has set up a special fund to provide additional funding for the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), a government agency established in 1978 by the Ministry of Culture to support the production and marketing activities of creative industries, including television and radio broadcasting, computer games, animated series, comics, films, music, fashion design and licensing the rights to use the images of culture celebrities. KOCCA is also responsible for the global expansion of cultural goods, the development of human capital, support for the implementation of new technologies and the incubation of entrepreneurship [34]. The Agency's initial budget was USD 50 million, and now it amounts to nearly USD 500 million annually, making it the core of the country's soft power. These measures, however, proved insufficient to meet Korean ambitions. In 2005, an investment fund was set up to be coordinated by the Korea Venture Investment Corporation and to deal only with projects in the cultural markets (mainly film and television productions). Approximately 20–30% of the capital comes from the state budget, and the rest is provided by private investors [25]. The size of the fund in mid-2015 exceeded USD 1.8 billion [35].

Another instrument of South Korea's cultural policies to promote national culture is the series of Korean Cultural Centers, located abroad. The first of them was created in 2009—nowadays, as many as 31 operate in 28 countries worldwide, including the one at the Korean Embassy in Warsaw, which was opened in January 2010. The organization's aim is to strengthen friendly relations between peoples through exchanges in the fields of culture, art, sports and tourism, making encounters with the nation's culture easier [36]. The centers' offerings include free language courses, taekwondo lessons (a national sport and a traditional Korean martial art), folk music concerts, various shows, exhibitions, meetings and workshops. The most popular among the Korean Wave fans are the annual Korean culture festivals that provide all-day attractions which are frequently attended by visitors coming straight from Asia. For example, in 2015, one of the top K-pop boy bands, Boyfriend, was invited to participate in an event organized in Poland, and their arrival and performance was paid for by the organizers so that the audience could enjoy their show for free.

Another popular event is an international dance competition, K-POP Dance Cover Festival, where teams of fans try to imitate the choreography of their favorite K-pop clips. Each region selects its best team to participate in the final competition in Seoul through a series of eliminations. It is also worth noting that the finalists' flight, accommodation, meals and transportation on site are paid for by the organizers. However, it is only the competition laureates—usually dreaming of visiting Korea—who receive a week of free vacation in Korea, including tourist tours, meetings with show business representatives, dance workshops, and much more. The fun is financed by government agencies. In this year's edition, nearly 2500 teams from all over the world have registered to take part in eliminations [37].

Korean idols are also involved in the promotion of other components of national culture that are not related directly to their own activities.

At the initiative of Korean government, in the years 2009–2017 there was a promotion campaign for local cuisine abroad, *hansik*, which intended to turn Korean cuisine into one of the most popular regional cuisines globally. The project included the opening of a few thousand of Korean restaurants abroad, the standardization of dish terminology and recipes, and the organization of Korean cooking courses at reputable catering schools all over the world. From the very beginning, the show business participated in the project, fuelling the interest of potential clientele—from individual artists, appearing in advertising spots and at official events, through to recording special-purpose travel and culinary programs, to the very recognition of traditional dishes as a pop culture export. By popularizing Korean food and arguing for its nutritional and culinary values, *hansik* has become the culinary power of the state, utilizing the universal appeal of good food and the positive connotations of food preparation [38].

In South Korea itself, an idol's testimonial is a powerful piece of support for the cultural and economic policies of the country. In many entertainment programs, which are based on the rivalry of invited stars, the main prize is a portion of Korean pork or some other dish made of local produce. Show business promotes many native products, including the aforementioned food, electronics, cosmetics, clothing or tourist attractions. During each election, singers and actors use social media to upload their own photos that have been taken in front of the polling stations, thus confirming their participation and encouraging others. Twice a year, members of the most popular K-pop girl bands and boy bands meet in a stadium, competing in various athletic disciplines and team sports to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles among fellow citizens.

One of the latest projects to form part of the nation's cultural policies is the 2016–2018 Visit Korea Year campaign, which promoted tourist visits to the country. The initiative, adopted in anticipation of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games, aimed to attract 20 million foreign tourists, which would surpass the 2015 figure of 13.2 million [39]. Interestingly, the vision of the venture was not to encourage one-off visits during the Games, but to make the country so attractive that, following such a visit, "the world should keep returning to Korea" [40]. The Olympic Games itself was considered to be a unique opportunity to promote Korean culture—the official profiles of the event in social media were dominated by the local cuisine, language and tourist attractions, as well as news from Korean pop stars, supporting the preparation for sports rivalries.

6. Discussion

Initially, the Korean Wave was a surprise for Koreans themselves, who could not imagine that their native entertainment could become a sought-after export product. It was quickly realized that, thanks to the Wave, it is possible to achieve not only international recognition and popularity, but also to achieve measurable economic success [18].

Selected empirical indicators show the dynamics of South Korea's economic growth and productivity (Figure 1) and income and consumer spending (Figure 2), which was influenced by the policy pursued in the analyzed country. Noteworthy are the strong increases in the rates of media's share of GDP, Internet infrastructure and the number of IP

addresses, which testifies to the intensive development of the digital economy in South Korea (Figure 3). The slowdown in the growth of traditional Korean industries is also visible—there was no increase in steel production and a decrease in the number of cars produced in recent years (Figure 4) [41]. On the other hand, there is a steady increase in products made by the creative industries. The forecasts indicate the expected intensive development of digital media (Figure 5) [42].

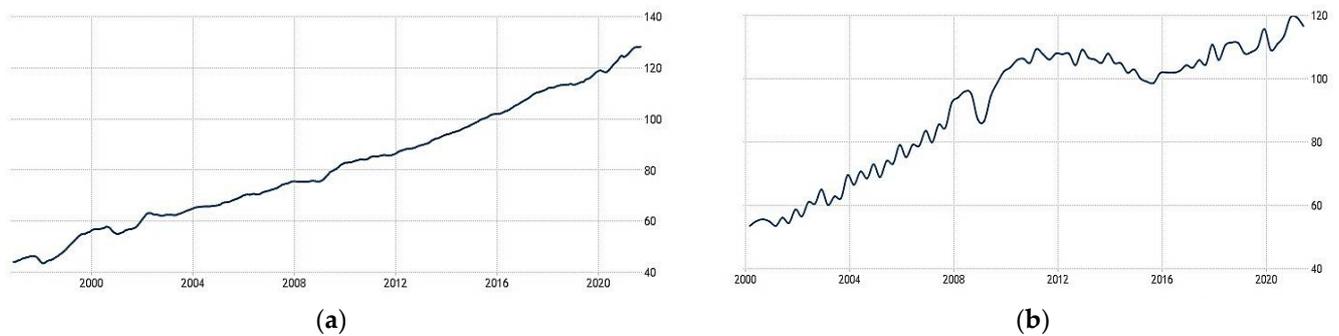


Figure 1. Economic growth indexes in South Korea: (a) leading economic index (points); (b) productivity (points).

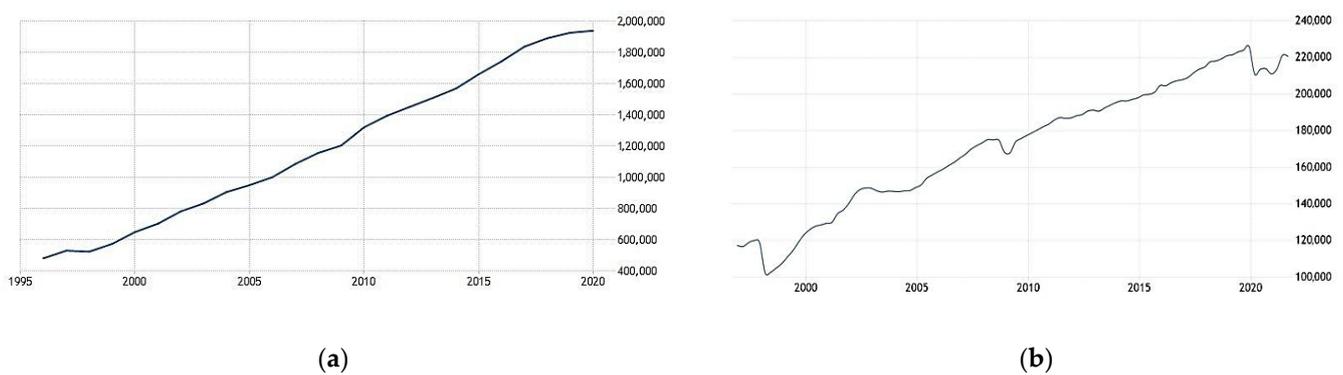


Figure 2. Consumer potential in South Korea: (a) disposable personal income (KRW billion); (b) consumer spending (KRW billion).

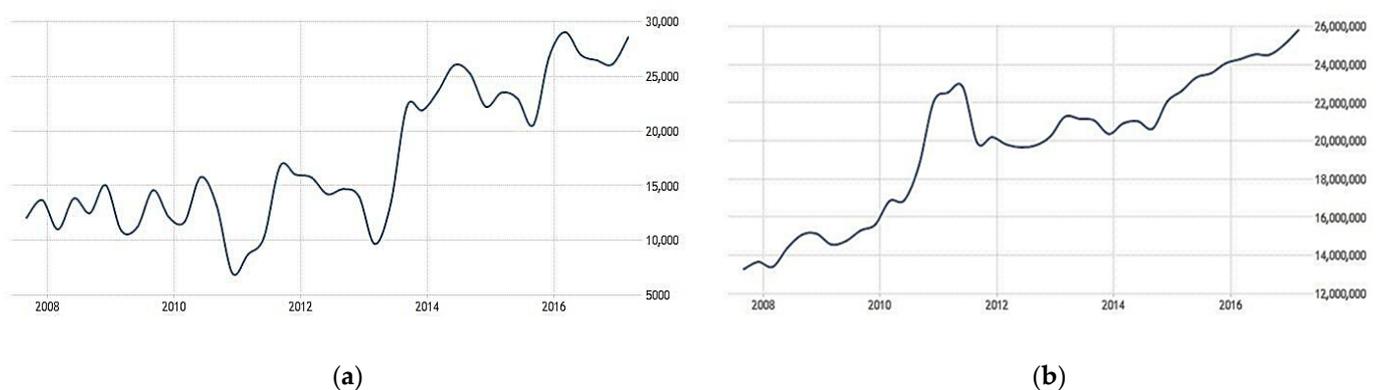


Figure 3. Digital transformation indicators in South Korea: (a) Internet speed (KBps); (b) IP addresses (count).

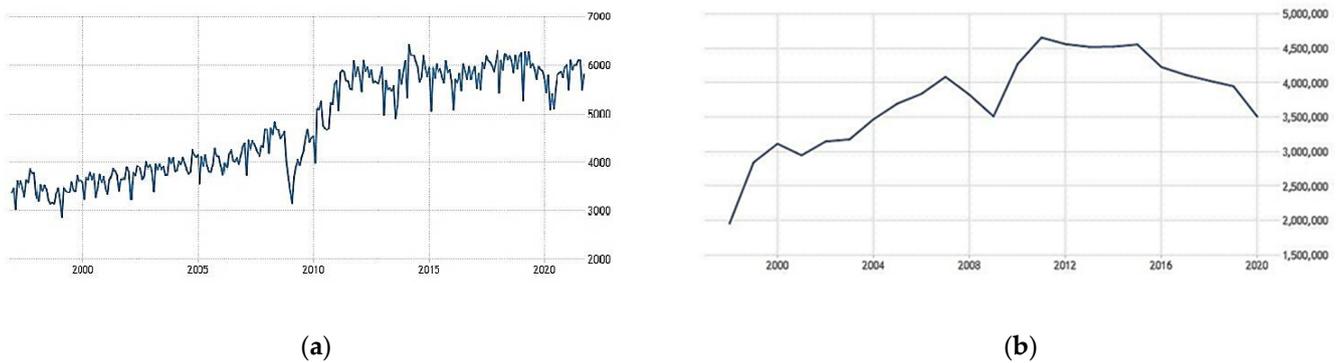


Figure 4. Traditional industry representatives in South Korea: (a) steel production (thousand tonnes); (b) car production (pcs).

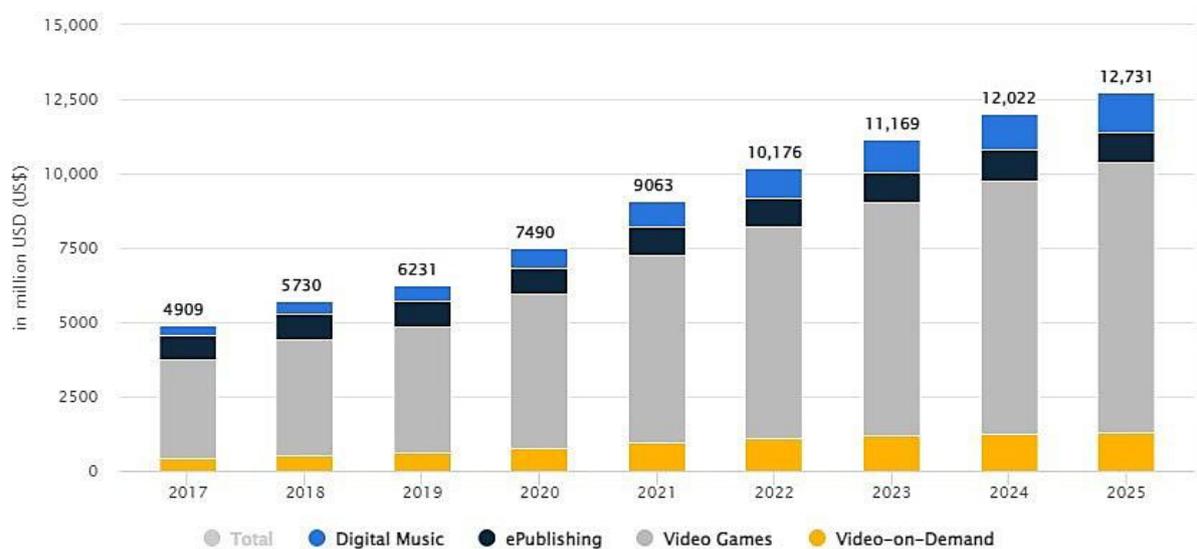


Figure 5. Digital media growth in South Korea—forecast for next five years.

A canonical element of the culture of later modernity has become the essence of alternative development, defined by the term “sustainable development”. A new ethics is emerging, based on the principles of equality, fairness in access to and use of environmental resources, and responsibility for a dignified life and the sustainable satisfaction of all human beings [43]. As J. Kłoczowski, the former Chairman of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO, claimed, “The profound changes taking place today in the world, which is changing its form as never before in history, affect in a very wide range issues of culture, education, knowledge, and the formation of people. We are witnessing a general crisis of traditional cultures and sudden changes that are accompanied in many fields by dangers that even threaten the existence of humanity. Hence the need for a comprehensive, wise and effective effort to ensure that in the present situation of the world all people are able to form their balanced, responsible, modern personalities and personal cultures open to others. Creating conditions for a very broadly and wisely understood sustainable development in all fields is a sine qua non condition for the success of this great program, how ambitious and difficult, but necessary” [44].

Cultural heritage and natural heritage have traditionally been regarded as non-economic factors in land-use planning. However, treated as a resource, they can be transformed into capital that can play an important role in the strategy of sustainable development, both at the local and national level. It can become the basis for promotional activities, starting from the local level, and ending with the promotion of the entire country [45]. The main discovery of the last decades is that culture as an object and means of

development can be the vehicle and generator of prosperity. Cultural industries already make a significant contribution to the national product of many countries. These are elements that interactively co-create the next phase of human development, leading us towards a knowledge-based economy. At the same time, it should be emphasized that this form of economy is characterized by the fulfillment of the principles and the whole essence of sustainable development. It is not too burdensome for the natural environment, it generates many jobs, supports the processes of social cohesion and, what is particularly important, strengthens and broadens the existing culture [43]. The aim of education at various levels should be to provide long-term benefits for local communities, increasing social cohesion and activity, deepening democratic processes and benefits for the country's economy resulting from sustainable development in which culture plays a binding role. It is expressed in the landscape, the material and non-material heritage, as well as in the goods of contemporary culture [46]. On the other hand, however, the rules governing the functioning of states must be changed. Postmodern states, apart from individual responsibility towards their societies, must bear collective responsibility for life on Earth. They must be the custodians of the common life of citizens of all countries, *inter alia*, through the continuous and lasting expansion of the canonical elements of culture [43].

7. Conclusions

Cultural policies and the creative activities that are coordinated by them play an increasingly important role in the development strategies of present-day economies. Along with the advancement of civilization, the drivers of further economic development have changed—during the period of industrialization, the material stimulants of production (such as land, labor and capital) were of crucial importance, but at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it is knowledge, information distribution and modern technological solutions that are most important. In recent years, however, these elements have also become less important, and have been replaced by creative activities as the key drivers. Discussions focus more and more on the transition from a knowledge-based economy to a creative economy which exploits the economic potential of the consumption of cultural goods and services [47]. With this trend in mind, President Park Geun Hye, who took office in early 2013, has initiated the establishment of a new governmental unit—the Ministry of Science, Information Technology and Planning for the Future—whose vision is to make knowledge, technology and telecommunications the cornerstone of the nation's creative economy and enhanced social welfare [25].

It might be stated that contemporary South Korean cultural policies have two main goals—the development of creative industries and the global promotion of Korean culture.

The first aspect translates into measurable economic benefits: it creates many attractive jobs and thus employment growth and stimulates the development of new technologies and the production of unique cultural goods to meet the everlasting demand from society, which guarantees long-term income.

On the other hand, the promotion of the Korean Wave is rooted in the belief that the more aware the potential consumers are of the country's vibrant economic development, and the better they are acquainted with Korean pop culture, the more value they will assign to Korean products and the more willing they will be to buy them [19], thus strengthening the country's position on the international scene as a significant and respected member of the global economy.

The export of Korean television series, initiated in the 1990s, triggered the rapid market expansion of other Korean pop culture goods and services. This growing trend, nicknamed by foreign journalists as the Korean Wave, within a dozen or so years spread over not only Asia, but also Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, attracting millions of viewers and billions in revenue.

Entry barriers in the cultural industries are much lower than in other sectors of the economy. Engaging in creative business requires no capital, advanced technology, extensive infrastructure, access to raw materials or convenient geographic conditions.

Here, the main factor of production is human creativity and skills, which are not subject to material limitations. At the same time, creative products enjoy demand and bring revenues comparable to the traditional industries. For a region without any resources to naturally uphold its economic position, the human factor becomes the sole driver of economic development.

With the example of South Korea, you can see the benefits available to a national economy that fosters creativity and popularizes local culture. From purely market-like aspects, such as job creation, national income generation, enhanced entrepreneurship and business innovation, or the stimulation of foreign trade, through to the overall impact of artistic offerings on the functioning of society, shaping its preferences and the intensification of consumer attitudes, to the use of pop culture as the government's tool of soft power in diplomatic engagements.

The research conducted by the authors was aimed at checking the hypotheses presented in the introduction. Based on the historical analysis of the development of the South Korean economy, there is a visible shift from an economy based on heavy industries that use large natural resources of deposits to an economy based on creative industries. As a consequence, this change minimizes the negative effects on the natural environment and connects the three main principles of sustainable development, i.e., social, economic and environmental. South Korea's cultural policy has an impact on the greater public interest in cultural goods.

The authors believe that creating a policy based on the development of creative industries in the future may favor the further economic development of South Korea and it may be treated as a recommendation for further actions, and may also be implemented in other countries.

Based on the research, the authors of the article intend to analyze the importance of popular culture in the process of economic growth by presenting the origins and essence of the Korean Wave phenomenon, as well as the characteristics of the Korean entertainment industry and its contribution to building an attractive investment image of the country.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, I.Š.-K. and J.C.; methodology, I.Š.-K.; software J.C.; validation, I.Š.-K. and J.C.; formal analysis, J.C.; investigation, I.Š.-K.; resources, J.C.; data curation, J.C.; writing—original draft preparation, I.Š.-K. and J.C.; writing—review and editing, I.Š.-K.; visualization, J.C.; supervision, I.Š.-K.; project administration, I.Š.-K.; funding acquisition, I.Š.-K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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