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# South Korea's Development Cooperation Policies – A Role Theoretical Approach

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## Abstract

This thesis explores South Korea's role within international development cooperation through a role theoretical analysis of the country's development cooperation policies. The purpose of this paper is to shed a light on the possibilities and benefits of applying role theory within the field of international development cooperation, while focusing on South Korea, as a case of an emerging and quickly advancing donor.

In order to reveal national role conceptions, as well as the alter's role prescriptions, the paper puts forward a qualitative content analysis, looking at documents issued by South Korea and the OECD that concern its development cooperation policies. Hereby, it becomes evident that South Korea's role is highly influenced by its own development experience and recent transformation from recipient into donor state. The experience the country has gained builds the foundation for its own perception as a donor, as well as for the expectations of other OECD Member countries and is, thus, translated into South Korea's development cooperation policies.

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# South Korea's Development Cooperation Policies – A Role Theoretical Approach

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Puzzle

International Development Cooperation is one of the key issue areas of International Relations (IR), connecting many different actors globally in their efforts to thrive towards a better world for all. Hereby, the question of how efficient development and development cooperation policies look like is central and still reason for ongoing debates (Kingsbury et al., 2016:52). South Korea represents an interesting case, as the country has only recently experienced the shift from a developing country to a recognized donor country and member state of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Because South Korea has achieved a successful economic development, its experience could give further indication of how efficient development could take place elsewhere and how it can be translated into development cooperation policies. This paper puts forward the research question “*What roles does Korea perform through its development cooperation policies within international development cooperation?*”. By looking at South Korea's roles a better understanding of its place and influence within international development cooperation can be gained. At the same time, it is possible to explore how lived development experiences influence a state's development cooperation policies.

### 1.2 Research Aim

This paper aims to explore South Korea's roles that become evident in its development cooperation policies through role theory. Those are strongly connected to South Korea's own development experience, which builds the foundation for South Korea's current engagement within the field. Most of the debate concerning South Korea's own economic development has circled around the contra camps of neoliberalism and the developmental state. However, there has not been reached a consensus on what factors have influenced South Korea's development the most, and neither on what factors impact its development cooperation policies. Therefore, this paper argues for a role theoretical approach that allows a more comprehensive analysis through looking at national role conceptions and role prescriptions. By doing so this paper moves away from the debate on the competing perspectives of neoliberalism and the developmental state, and is able to take a more inclusive approach. A role theoretical approach allows to answer the research question of this paper and to further

examine motivations behind decision-making processes. Through applying role theory, this research paper further aims at generating new knowledge concerning emerging donors and their roles within the field of international development cooperation and in turn encouraging further research regarding this issue area in the context of international relations. Hereby, the findings might not be generalized easily, as the paper focuses on the very specific case of South Korea. Nevertheless, the more general outcomes, concerning the application of role theory, can be applied elsewhere and give indications about the general structure of international development cooperation.

### 1.3. Disposition

Following this paper is going to embark on three key areas of literature discussing South Korea's economic development and development cooperation policies: 1) The general background of South Korea's development experience. 2) South Korea's current development cooperation policies. 3) The competing perspective of the developmental state and neoliberalism. 4) The justification for a role theoretical approach by this research paper. The sections discuss essential aspects of South Korea's development debate which have to be examined before embarking on an analysis of South Korea's roles within development cooperation. The paper further outlines the procedures of qualitative content analysis in its method section, that are being applied to South Korea's development cooperation engagements. Analysing and interpreting speeches and official statements issued by South Korea and other OECD/DAC members, the paper aims at revealing national role conceptions and role prescriptions which are ultimately influencing South Korea's development cooperation policies, and thus its role within international development cooperation. The paper ends with a summary of the results and a short conclusion.

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review is intended to create an understanding of the factors that are necessary to understand the further examination of the role conceptions and prescriptions. This paper argues that current development ideas are often based on lived development experience. This is especially true in the case of South Korea (hereafter Korea), as the general theme of its development cooperation revolves around learning from and sharing its own experience (Kim, 2017:1086). Consequently, in order to understand Korea's development cooperation policies and its roles, it is essential to first grasp an understanding of its own development experience. The following literature review outlines the basic background of Korea's development process. Moreover, in order to further establish the argument that Korea's development cooperation policies are based on its development experience, the

policies in question are presented and connected to its experience. Furthermore, the “contra-camps” of the developmental state perspective and neoliberalism are presented. The paper argues that a new perspective of role theory is beneficial in order to create a more comprehensive understanding of how Korea makes sense of its development in the context of current development cooperation policies. This perspective is introduced in the section following the literature review.

## 2.1. South Korea’s development experience

Korea is part of the East Asian states that have experienced rapid economic development throughout a short period of time. Korea’s economic development started in 1962. While still being under an authoritarian government, the state established central-economic planning, while committing high investment into infrastructure, communication and education (Turner et al., 2019:31). An export-oriented industrialisation was initiated, with financial allocation into the manufacturing sector. Specific industries as represented by big family-owned businesses (Chaebols), were highly subsidised. The Chaebols are now globally acting companies, such as Samsung and LG, and contributed a significant part to Korea’s development as well as to its global recognition (Lee, 2006). Throughout the years, starting in the 1990s Korea started opening up its economy to foreign direct investment (FDI), while the government reduced intervention into financial allocations (Pirie, 2017:146). The economic development becomes visible in the GDP that experienced an annual growth rate of 8.5 percent between 1980 and 1997 (World Bank, 2018). Furthermore, Korea became an actor within international development cooperation by 1977, and soon became a major donor country among non-DAC-member states (Chun et al., 2012:790).

Korea was one of the countries hardest hit by the Asian financial crisis in 1997. However, through both foreign financial assistance as well as a restructuring of their own economy, Korea was also able to recover by 2000 (Shin and Chang, 2005:409). That year further acted as a cornerstone for Korea as the country stopped receiving development aid (Schwak, 2019:304). Already in 1996 Korea had become a member state of the OECD, in 2010 it also got invited to join the DAC. Korea had transformed from a development aid receiver to a donor country. The entry into the OECD, that was encouraged by the fact that Korea did no longer receive development aid, and the admission into the DAC had strong significance for Korea. They implied that its economic development had been acknowledged as successful and that Korea had been accepted as a relevant actor within international development cooperation (Kim, 2017:1087; Chung et al., 2010:789).

Two essential aspects should be kept in mind for the proceeding analysis: Firstly, the fact that Korea had been able to transform from a recipient into a donor state through its economic development. This experience is still an important theme for the state and can be traced in its own development cooperation policies (Schwak, 2019:306), as will become evident later on throughout the paper. Secondly, the way Korea achieved its economic development, that is to say the specific sectors Korea invested into. Those were: (economic) infrastructure, education, and communication (Turner et al., 2019:31). They are factors that indisputably allow to draw an inference between Korea's own economic development and its current development cooperation policies, as they become evident in both. In the following, the paper thus presents Korea's development cooperation policies in order to establish a stronger connection between Korea's experience and the current policies.

## 2.2. South-Korea's Development Cooperation policies

This paper puts a focus on Korea's development cooperation policies in order to explore Korea's roles within international development cooperation. Since Korea's accession to the OECD/DAC the organisation has become a major channel for Korea's engagement within international development cooperation (Kim, 2017:1086). The DAC consists of those states that are considered "donor" states, that is to say they give out official development assistance (ODA) to states that are in need of assistance in their economic development (OECD, 2020). Hereby, the development cooperation policies become evident in the way Korea is giving out ODA. Therefore, in the following, Korea's ODA is presented in order to get an understanding of Korea's development cooperation policies.

Korea became an official member state of the OECD/DAC in 2010, marking only the second Asian member state, after Japan, and the first new member since the early 2000s (Kim, 2017:1093). Already before its entry into the DAC Korea had become an important actor within the international development landscape, as it started to provide development assistance in 1977 and soon became the largest donor state among non-DAC member states (Chun et al., 2010:790; Manning, 2006:373). The entry into the DAC had several implications for Korea: Firstly, and most importantly, it meant that Korea had been acknowledged as a "developed" state and accepted as such by other states of the same status (Chun et al., 2010:789). However, at the same time it meant that Korea was now obliged to follow the guidelines of the DAC in its ODA (Ibid).

Korea presents the foundation of its ODA to be sharing knowledge and advice while serving as a bridging state between the countries that can be considered developed and those that can be considered developing countries (OECD/DAC, 2018:26; GoK/a, 2014:3). Hereby,

Korean ODA is focused on the key areas economic infrastructure, innovation, rural development, education, and health systems (OECD/DAC, 2018:26). Korea focuses on channelling its ODA through government to government interaction, so that the ODA can be controlled by the respective partner government (OECD/DAC, 2018:50; Kim et al., 2013:314). The ODA takes the form of technical cooperation, meaning to give advice and provide capacities, as well as grants and highly concessional loans (Kim et al., 2013:330). Furthermore, an important aspect of Korean ODA is to focus on the actual requests and need of the partner states (OECD/DAC, 2018:40).

Looking at the policies, and the areas that Korea is focusing on, it becomes evident that they are similar to what Korea has experienced in its own development. Where Korea's government had invested into economic infrastructure, innovation, rural development, education and health systems during its development throughout the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kim, 2017:1086), the state is now directing its ODA in those issue areas exactly. Furthermore, they focus on channelling it through the government of the respective states, similarly to how Korea has handled incoming development assistance in the past (Ibid).

At the same time, however, it is important to acknowledge that the big family-owned business in Korea, the chaebols, are also involved into Korea's ODA, as well as development assistance outside the ODA. There exists some negative critique that accuses the chaebols of using their involvement into the ODA for their own interest (Schwak, 2019:306). That is to say the ODA is issued in those areas that are of interest for the chaebols, and in a way that is beneficial for their profit, rather than for the economic development of the recipient country (Schwak, 2019:303). Arguably, this marks an aspect that deviates from Korea's own development experience. However, the subsequent section of the paper will shed a light on how arguments deriving from a neoliberal perspective claim differently.

Korea is seen by both Western developed states, as well as by current recipient states of ODA as a role model, and an example of successful development (Kim et al., 2013; Kim, 2017:1087). Especially recipient states value the experience that Korea has lived through, as it seems closer to their own development than that of Western donors (Kim et al., 2013:332). Altogether, Korea is seen as an important donor within the DAC, especially due to the perception as a development success. Nevertheless, its ODA practices and their practices are discussed frequently and there exists no consensus on their motives. In the following the two contra-camps of the developmental state and neoliberalism are presented, each claiming to provide the best explanation behind Korea's rapid development and the driving forces behind its current development cooperation policies. This paper argues, that while it is relevant to

understand both perspectives, neither of them is sufficient to explain Korea's engagement within international development cooperation. Therefore, this paper introduces a third perspective of role theory.

### 2.3. Neoliberalism versus Developmental State Model

When it comes to the debate on how a state is able to achieve the most efficient economic development two perspectives compete: the developmental state perspective and neoliberalism. Specifically, when discussing the economic development of East Asian states there is no consensus on what were the driving forces behind their successful economic development. The developmental state (hereafter DS) puts an emphasis on industrial policies and government intervention (Kim et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2019), while neoliberalism prioritizes a free and self-regulating market (Schwak, 2019; Williamson, 2004).

Notably, there does exist a general consensus that the early development experience of the East Asian states corresponds to the DS model. The model was originally used to describe the particular type of economic development as experienced by the East Asian states of Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore (Kim et al., 2013:315). The most essential aspect recognized in their development, as well as the foundation of the DS perspective is that "the state can play a central role in economic development" (Radice, 2008:1153). That is to say, the government is actively involved into the state's economic development. It puts forward strategic policies on how economic development should look like and claims ownership over domestic financial resources, as well as over foreign financial aid (Kim et al., 2013:314). Moreover, the government is heavily involved into financial allocations and the capital-labour relations (Chang and Andreoni, 2020:332). The state and its government are both embedded and autonomous (Weiss, 2000:23). Consequently, the state is controlling the domestic economy and its market, at the same time, however, it allows for some degree of liberalization and foreign investment within the domestic market (Kingsbury et al., 2016:89/90; Yeung, 2013). The liberalization and foreign investment, enable the state to participate in the competitive global market, which in turn brings more capital into the state. Still, government intervention is seen as indispensable, in order to prevent market failure (Lin and Chang, 2009:489). These are the basic ideas behind the DS that also significantly marked the development experience of the East Asian states, among them Korea. With the developmental state model, all the aforementioned states were able to complete an economic development that most Western states had taken two centuries for in the span of half a decade. In the case of Korea in particular, it becomes evident in its early development throughout the

1960/70s with the government putting in place an economic-planning strategy (Turner et al., 2019:31).

However, a second aspect needs to be discussed when talking about the DS, which is its current form and how it is presented as a model for efficient development. Scholars who are arguing for a DS perspective claim that most mechanisms of the DS are still deeply imbedded within the economic structure, as well as the political and social structures of the state, and relevant to further economic success of the states who have experienced it in the past (Stubbs, 2011:163; Stubbs, 2009:12). Although most scholars agree upon the fact that the states in question have shifted towards a more neoliberal model by liberalizing their economies (Wade, 2018), they still argue that the DS is an alternative to other mainstream approaches to development (Chang and Grabel, 2004; Chang, 2002). More explicitly, it is argued that a successful economic development through a rather high degree of government intervention is still possible in the current time. There exists some disagreement when it comes to the exact degree of government intervention (Lin and Chang, 2009). However, it is generally acknowledged that government intervention is not only possible but necessary for a successful economic development, especially in order to prevent a market failure (Lin and Chang, 2009:491). Moreover, it is implied that those states that arguably experienced a DS development should rely on the existing structures and practices established throughout the process of their development. The DS is presented as a strength that can be used for the states' future economic development (Shin and Chang, 2005).

Due to the fact, that the DS is not only used as a model to describe a particular form of economic development but continues to exist as a perspective on efficient economic development it becomes relevant to development cooperation policies. As such, the DS perspective can be incorporated into development cooperation policies through putting an emphasis on the aspects that are central to the DS, such as allocating financial assistance through the government, and putting in place industrial policies. It becomes, thus relevant, when discussing Korea's ODA and engagement within international development cooperation. From a DS perspective, it is argued that Korea's ODA is based on its early development experience, as it focuses on government-to-government interaction and specific sectors (Kim et al., 2013:330). Consequently, the driving forces behind Korea's development cooperation policies are assigned to its development experience as a DS. However, this view is contested by another string of literature, the neoliberal perspective.

The most distinctive discord between the DS and neoliberal perspectives is the role of the government throughout a state's economic development. Neoliberalism opposes the idea of

the government being in control of the state's economic development (Schwak, 2019:303; Williamson, 2004). This has several reasons. Government intervention opposes the very basic idea of neoliberalism, that is a free capitalist market as a driving force behind development. The free market is seen as a mechanism that allows development and distribution in the most efficient way possible (Kingsbury et al., 2016:67; Williamson, 2004:196). The capitalist market is presented as a self-regulating and all-knowing mechanism that goes beyond human understanding. Therefore, it is able to regulate the economy in a way that is most beneficial for the state and the society as a whole (Kingsbury et al., 2016:85; Deudney and Ikenberry, 1999:180). The role ascribed to the government by neoliberalism, consists of ensuring favourable structures for the establishment and persistence of a capitalist market (Kingsbury et al., 2016:85). Any market failure is mostly attributed to an extensive degree of government involvement (Ibid).

When it comes to the economic development of the East Asian states mentioned earlier, neoliberal scholars often disagree with the DS perspective. They argue that their successful development can mostly be attributed to a neoliberal shift within the states throughout the later part of their development (Pirie, 2017:146; Wade, 2018:524). That is to say through liberalization of their market and finances rather than government intervention. Specifically Korea is discussed extensively. It is claimed that a shift towards liberalization and an open market were the driving forces behind its successful development (Schwak, 2019; Pirie, 2017; Stubbs, 2018). These scholars put an emphasis on the early liberalization of the Korean market, before the Asian financial crisis and an even stronger liberalization afterwards (Stubbs, 2018:141/42; Weiss, 2000:39). They argue that through the liberalization and stronger FDI within Korea, the state was able to successfully compete in the global market, which resulted in its successful economic development (Pirie, 2017:146).

Furthermore, it is argued that the DS does not exist anymore, and certainly, would not be beneficial or efficient for the economic development of a state at this point in time (Chang and Grabel, 2004:277). Moreover, it is claimed that the DS experience cannot be recreated elsewhere, because it was bound to facilitating conditions that relate to a specific point in time and the specific characteristics of the East Asian states (Schwak, 2019:306). Relating these ideas to development cooperation policies, neoliberalism puts an emphasis on the facilitating role the government should play enabling a free capitalist market to develop (Williamson, 2004). Referring back to Korea's development cooperation policies and its ODA, the neoliberal perspective puts an emphasis on the role of the chaebols (Schwak, 2019:303). They act in their own interest and according to the competitive nature of the capitalist market, while

the state simply plays a facilitating role for their engagement in the recipient state (Schwak, 2019:313). Looking at the current development cooperation landscape, it is also important to note that there exists a strong assumption that the global structures are rather strongly characterised by neoliberal ideas. That is to say, they are based on a capitalist free market, that is regulating international affairs and interaction (Stubbs, 2018:138). It is argued that these neoliberal structures also determine the conduct of development cooperation. Consequently, even if Korea is presenting its development cooperation policies as different, the state is not able to establish a different code of conduct but has to conform to the neoliberal principles in order to be able to persist as an actor within international development cooperation (Schwak, 2019:313). This might have a further impact on Korea's role within international development cooperation as the state has to adhere to the characteristic structures of that environment.

Again, contrasting the neoliberal with the DS perspective, the most striking aspects are that neoliberal ideas refrain from any extensive government intervention into the economy and its development. They see a free market as a driving force behind development, and claim that this has been the case in the East Asian states, among them Korea. Furthermore, any future development and development cooperation policies should be based on supporting a free market, and aim at integrating the state into the global capitalist market.

Both Korea's own economic development, as well as its current development cooperation policies are discussed from each perspective in existing literature (Pirie, 2017; Schwak, 2019; Radice, 2008; Kim et al., 2013). There has not been reached a general consensus on what are the driving forces behind the economic development and how they might influence Korea's role within international development cooperation. Consequently, this paper proposes a different approach of role theory. Through exploring Korea's role within international development cooperation specifically, new insights on Korea's development experience and the relation to current development cooperation policies can be revealed. Moreover, this perspective is able to take into account both DS and neoliberal ideas, again, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of Korea's development and ODA.

### 3. Theoretical Framework: Role Theory

The aim of this paper is to gain a better understanding of Korea's role within international development cooperation. Thus, a role theoretical perspective naturally presents itself as a reasonable approach. Role theory has its origins in social and behavioural science and has mostly been applied through foreign policy analysis (FPA) within the field of international relations (Thies, 2017:663; Nabers, 2012:47). The theory is used to explain patterns of behaviour, originally those of human beings, within FPA those of states and other actors

(Holsti, 1970: 234, Thies and Breuning, 2012:1). The basic assumption here is that in their behaviour, patterns can be identified that respond to what an actor thinks is expected from him, that is to say they respond to a specific role the actor seems to have within certain systems and structures (Holsti, 1970: 237). This role can be analysed through looking at several different elements, as identified by Holsti. Those are the role performance, the national role conceptions, the role prescriptions, and the position of the actor. The role performance of an actor refers back to the actions and behaviour taken, as a result of their decision-making (Holsti, 1970:239). Thus, this paper is essentially exploring Korea's role performance within international development cooperation, as seen through its development cooperation policies which represent an action or result of the country's decision-making. National role conceptions describe how the actor perceives itself and its responsibilities, as well as expectations, in relation to surrounding structures and other actors (Ibid). Role prescriptions include expectations of the outside, that are usually bound to a specific position within the existing structures, and as such tied to the actor that finds itself in that position (Ibid). Consequently, in what position an actor finds itself in ultimately influences its behaviour as well. This position could be a specific job title, such as legislator, teacher, or union leader.

These concepts were originally used within social science in order to analyse human behaviour. In order to be applicable within the field of foreign policy and IR, Holsti altered the model according to international structures in contrast to structures of human interaction (see figure 1). As international structures do not necessarily prescribe a certain position to a state, the model uses the status, or more so, the rank of a state within international structures as its point of reference instead of a specific position. Furthermore, the role prescriptions from the outside (the alter) do not only have an influence on the status of a state but also on its own national role conception. National role conceptions, here, are defined in a more concrete way. They refer back to the policymaker's understanding of how a "state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional system" (Holsti, 1970:246). The national role conceptions are perceived as the most important influence on the role performance of a state. As visible in figure 1, alter's role perceptions have an influence on both the state's status as well as its national role conception, however not persistently at the same degree. The nation's status is influenced by national role conceptions and has an influence on the role performance, however not as strong of an influence as the national role conceptions themselves (Holsti, 1970:245). All this is due to the nature of the international system's structures which put an emphasis on sovereignty and lacks strong common norms

that would influence the state's role performance. Figure 1 should be kept in mind, as the objective of the analysis is to complete the figure with the specifics of Korea's role performance.

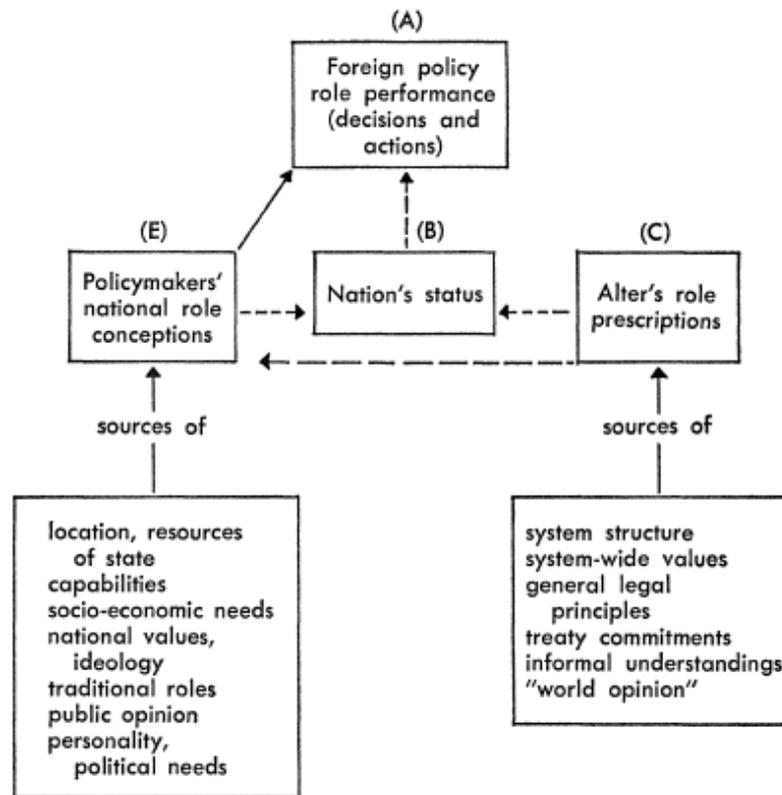


Figure 1. Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis (Holsti, 1970:245)

In his diagram, Holsti further identifies sources of the role prescriptions, as well as of the national role conceptions. This paper is going to put a focus on the national role conceptions, as those are arguably the most influential factors when it comes to an actor's role performance. Holsti has identified 17 different role conceptions in his work that a state can conceive (Holsti, 1970). The roles that are relevant for this analysis are the example, the bridge, the developer and the leader. The leader is a role that has not been identified by Holsti directly, as he simply referred to a regional leader. However, it can be found in the work of other scholars within role theory that build their work on Holsti, such as Bengtsson and Elgström (2012) who explore the roles of the EU in global politics. Therefore, it is relevant for this paper.

Throughout the analysis, the sources of those national role conceptions have to be considered as well, as they are fundamental to explain Korea's role performance. This paper moves away from the reoccurring debate of neoliberal and DS aspects as driving forces behind Korea's engagement within international development cooperation and allows a more

comprehensive understanding of the situation by considering a range of different sources for national role conceptions and role prescriptions. Through exploring national role conceptions, as well as the alter's role prescriptions a more in-depth knowledge about Korea's development approach can be generated.

It is important to consider that Holsti conducted his research during the time of the Cold War, and at a moment in time where international structures were not as extensive as nowadays. However, his model gives room to highlight the importance of system-structures and informal understandings. Consequently, through shifting the emphasis that is put on specific sources, the model can still be applied to foreign policy performances in current time. Moreover, Holsti is still the foundation for most current works of role theory like those of Thies (Thies, 2017; Thies and Breuning, 2018; Thies and Wehner, 2019) or Bengtsson and Elgström (2012), and has proven to remain relevant throughout a long period of time.

It has become evident that when analysing an actor's role performance, its role conceptions and the alter's role prescriptions are of particular importance. The terms conception and prescription already indicate that they can be found in the way a state is representing itself and is represented by others. That is to say, conceptions and prescriptions can be revealed through looking at language. Therefore, this paper suggests a qualitative content analysis.

Content analysis has a long tradition in role theory, as most research within the field is based on analysing language and narratives in order to uncover national role conceptions and prescriptions (Holsti, 1970:256; Thies and Wehner, 2019:721). Drawing from Holsti and Thies, this paper argues that role conceptions and perceptions can often be found in narratives issued by policy-makers. In their narratives policy-makers represent their state and the justification behind its decisions. This allows to draw inferences about a state's national role conceptions and its perceptions of other states, and how those connect to the decision-making processes. Following, this paper is going to dwell on the specifics of a qualitative content analysis when exploring the role performance of Korea.

## 4. Method

Restating the aim of this paper, the research addresses Korea's role performance within international development cooperation. In order to reach a comprehensive understanding, the national role conceptions and alter's role prescriptions need to be explored. This can be done through a qualitative content analysis. Based on the interpretivist ontology and epistemology of qualitative content analysis, scientific knowledge can be obtained through analysing and interpreting language (Halperin and Heath, 2012:355). Thus, content analysis consists of the action of analysing a body of documents, in order to uncover underlying meaning that become

visible through language (Ibid). That is to say the analysis consists of coding and interpreting language. The underlying assumption here is that, language is an essential feature of social interaction. It works not only as a mean of expression but further contains underlying meanings and motives (Fierke, 2016:164/16; Weber, 1990:11). Through interpreting language, it is possible to uncover an actor's motives and further the structures an actor perceives itself to be in. Through understanding those motives and structures, it is possible to explain decision-making processes, for example how a state came to decide for a specific development cooperation policy. There exist two forms of content analysis: qualitative and quantitative. While the quantitative content analysis focuses on counting words and drawing inferences from how often they are used, qualitative content analysis allows for more specific and in-depth analysis of the documents (Halperin and Heath, 2012:336). Consequently, this paper proposes a qualitative content analysis in order to explore Korea's specific roles and their sources.

Content analysis presents itself as an unobtrusive method (Halperin and Heath, 2012:345), and specifically in the context of role theory it is possible to directly analyse the statements of policy makers and their views on the role of their state (Holsti, 1970:256). The language used by policymakers representing their state enables the researcher to understand national role conceptions and prescriptions which ultimately allows to explain their decision-making processes. Furthermore, content analysis, makes it possible to analyse a large body of texts over a broad time span. The fact that the method is unobtrusive in its nature also guarantees that there is less bias throughout the research process, as compared to interviews that rely on both the honesty of the interviewees and neutral questions of the researcher (Halperin and Heath, 2012:345/46).

It is important to note, however, that a qualitative content analysis is based largely on interpretations of the researcher himself. Consequently, in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher has to present the processes of his inferences clearly and comprehensible (Halperin and Heath, 2012:336). Moreover, the findings can hardly be generalized, as they rely on the interpretation of the researcher. In order to prevent bias and random inferences, this paper is thus presenting a systematic approach that allows to retrace the conclusions made by the researcher: Before going into the analysis several steps have to be taken. Firstly, the body of texts that are going to be the object of the analysis needs to be identified. Secondly, the specifics of how the interpretation of those texts is carried out need to be presented in order for the analysis to be comprehensible and reasonable.

Concerning Korea's national role conceptions, the ODA White Papers from 2014 and 2017 build the foundation for the analysis (GoK, 2014; GoK, 2017). They are documents issued by the government of Korea (GoK) that present Korea's overall ODA performance, as well as strategies and objectives of the ODA. As their function is to outline Korea's ODA to a broader public, the White Papers consequently indicate how Korea's sees its own role as a donor country, which allows for further analysis of the sources of its role performance through qualitative content analysis. Furthermore, speeches held by Korean representatives at significant conferences and events concerning international development cooperation are analysed. They enable a more direct examination of how Korea's role is perceived and presented by its official policy-makers, and consequently enrich the analysis substantially. All documents this paper intends to analyse are issued by high ranking policy-makers of Korea and member states of the OECD, in order to make sure that they are truly representing governments' perceptions. The time span was selected according to Korea's official admission as a DAC member in 2010, until the present day. This is due to the fact, that the DAC membership marks the moment in time when Korea had gained recognition as an important donor country through other important actors within the field of international development cooperation (Chun et al., 2010:789). Thus, it was at that point in time that Korea's development cooperation policies gained greater attention of the international community, and became more important to Korea itself which makes them more relevant for the analysis.

Concerning the alter's role perceptions, the OECD/DAC peer reviews of 2012 and 2018 build the basis of the analysis (OECD/DAC, 2012; OECD/DAC, 2018). They are the equivalent to Korea's ODA White Papers, as they directly review what Korea presents in the White Papers and in its ODA policies more generally. The DAC peer reviews are issued by the OECD/DAC in order to assess the performance of its members every four years. That is to say, Korea's ODA is summarized and evaluated according to DAC standard and the commitments the country in question has made. As the document contains an evaluation by the OECD/DAC, it is possible to recognize how Korea's ODA policies are perceived. In order to make the analysis more valid, speeches held by other actors within the context of international development cooperation are included, mostly remarks from other OECD member countries, at the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum in Busan. They give a more concrete indication of how individual countries perceive Korea and how that influences Korea's status and own role conceptions.

Those documents will be coded thematically according to certain national role conceptions. In order to establish a more effective analysis, this paper is going to examine already established national role conceptions in the research of other scholars and identify those who would arguably apply to Korea based on the literature review. Again, Holsti's work will be the foundation for the analysis executed in this paper. Holsti has outlined a range of different role conceptions that include all different kind of issue areas (see figure 2). Consequently, in order to conduct a focused and effective analysis, it is firstly necessary to identified those role conceptions that are relevant to the case of Korea's development cooperation policies. As mentioned earlier these roles are example, bridge, developer and leader. They become evident in the following ways:

1. The example is presented as a rather passive role by Holsti that relies purely on domestic policies. Through those domestic policies a state would be able to gain influence and prestige internationally (Holsti, 1970:268/69). As in the case of Korea, it has become an example through its successful economic development. However, Korea might actually put forward a more active role performance as an example using the role for justifying decision-making in development cooperation.

2. The bridge emphasises the quality of being a communicator between two blocks of different cultures that might have trouble comprehending each other. The bridge can become a messenger, and makes the communication between the two easier. Often the bridge is able to perform such a role due to the fact that it has a connection to both parts already (Holsti, 1970:266/67). In the case of Korea, it has already become visible that the state might be eligible for this role, as they have experienced the transition from receiver to donor country and can be seen as a bridge between developing and developed countries (Kim, 2017:1086).

3. The developer refers to a state that perceives its role as having a responsibility towards other states to help them in their (economic) development. This sense of responsibility or rather duty is often based on the claim that the state has already acquired a specific skill or advantage that makes it suitable to support other states (Holsti, 1970:266). This national role conception is chosen due to the fact that Korea has experienced a rapid economic development on their own, and have started early on to provides aid to other states. As such they could qualify as a developer.

4. The leader is an actor that succeed in a specific issue area relatively better than other actors. Based on that characteristic, the actor is able to influence other actor's decisions (Bengtsson and Elgström, 2012:96; Nabers, 2011:88). Korea has been

claimed to be a leader during specific negotiations within international development (Kim, 2017:1091).

The identified national role conceptions are the starting point of the analysis. The collected documents will be coded in themes according to the national role conceptions. The themes become visible through the use of specific language that is associated with the roles. This includes the use of emotional language as well as the placement of specific words and statements. For the roles specifically, the use of the word role directly, as well as the use of words connected to the different functions of the roles, reveal the importance that is given to them. Hereby, repetition and combination of the same words can give a further emphasis to specific roles. As this is a qualitative content analysis, words will not be counted, however, it will still be noted if specific words or themes are used more often than others. The roles, their definition and operationalization, as well as the coding are summarized in figure 2 below. The analysis will proceed in the same way when looking at the alter's role prescriptions and the nation's status. Consequently, it can be explored whether or not Korea's national role conceptions are also part of the alter's role prescriptions or if different factors further influence it.

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Example	Prestige through domestic policies	Words/Sentences, such as 'exemplary' etc.	R1
Bridge	Connecting two camps of actors	Words/Sentences implying connection; 'bridge'	R2
Developer	Supporting the development of other actors	Words/Sentences that signal the intention of giving development assistance	R3
Leader	Influencing the decision-making of other actors	Words/Sentences that imply guiding/influencing other actors	R4

Figure 2. The national role conceptions, definition and operationalisation.

Combining Role Theory with a qualitative content analysis, knowledge about role conceptions and prescriptions can be gained from the use of language. As all documents are issued by high ranking policy-makers of the respective country, their use of language when

representing their own state and referring to other actors, indicates national role conceptions and prescriptions held by the state. Thus, through uncovering the national role conceptions and the alter's role perceptions in this manner, Korea's role performance within international development cooperation can be explored.

## 5. Analysis

In order to answer the question *What roles does Korea perform through its development cooperation policies within international development cooperation*, these aspects have to be explored: The sources of both the national role conceptions and the alter's role prescriptions, how they influence each other and ultimately the policy output, further the nation's status has to be defined in relation to the aspects mentioned. Therefore, the analysis is divided into several parts. Firstly, the paper is going to elaborate on the national role conceptions, as analysed through documents issued by the Korean government or a representative. The four different roles identified early are going to be presented and analysed, in order to reveal their sources and their impact on the role performance. Following, the alter's role prescriptions are displayed, based on the analysis of documents issued by other states within international development cooperation. Hereby, the same roles are the basis for the analysis while additional factors are also considered. Moreover, the nation's status in relation to the alter's prescriptions is explored.

Figure 3 visualizes what should be achieved throughout the analysis: Completing the now empty fields of the figure through analysing the collected documents. The Figure is taken up and completed in the conclusive segment, where the different parts of the analysis are connected in order to be able to explain their relation to each other and to Korea's role performance within international development cooperation.

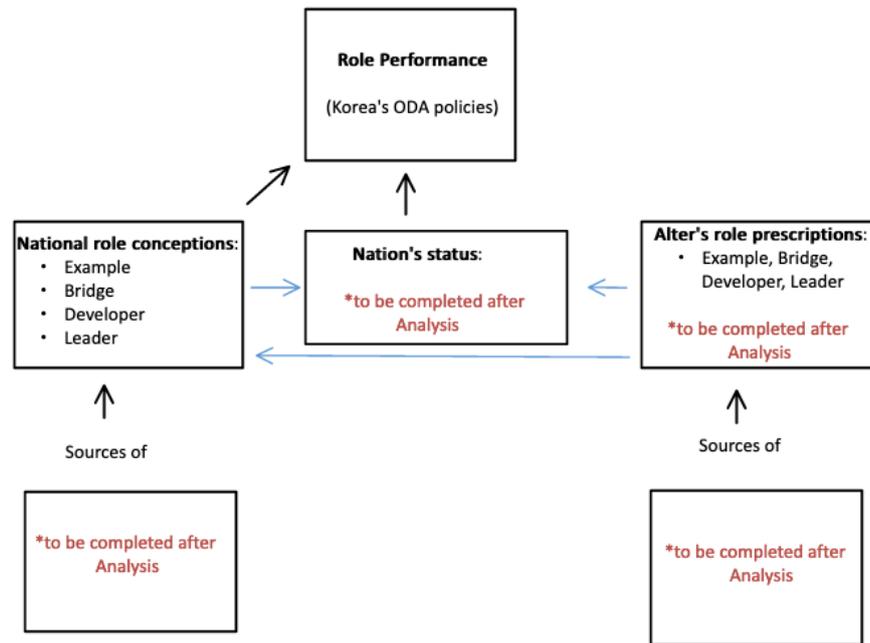


Figure 3. Holsti's Model modified towards Korea's Role Performance

### 5.1. Korea's National Role Conceptions

Overall, the four roles identified before the analysis, become evident in the documents. The role that is referred to the most, is that of the "example". This gives a first indication that the role of the example is slightly more important for Korea's role performance than its other role conceptions. Furthermore, it is notable that the roles rarely are mentioned by themselves. Most of the time several roles are interconnected. For instance, while in the role of a developer, Korea represent an example for successful development at the same time. Being an example, here, functions as the basis for being a developer, that is to say as a developer Korea shares the knowledge it has gained through its own development.

Following a role theoretical analysis, in order to reveal national role conceptions and alter's role perceptions, the sources of each have to explored (see figure 1, Holsti 1970:245). This analysis starts by exploring the source of Korea's national role conceptions. Hereby, the most striking aspect, when examining the documents issued by Korea is the consistent mention of Korea's own development experience. It is presented as a successful development, sometimes even a "remarkable achievement" (Gok, 2014:20). A specific emphasis is put on the fact that Korea is "the only country that transitioned from an ODA recipient to a major donor" (GoK, 2014:20). Therefore, Korea's development experience distinguishes the state from other donor countries. Korea's development experience is mentioned in relation to all four roles. Consequently, this paper argues that the development experience becomes a source of Korea's national role conceptions. Furthermore, Korea perceives its own development

experience as a comparative advantage towards other countries, making it an even stronger source of the national role conceptions. This becomes visible in several ways:

First of all, it is important to note that Korea's development experience is presented as successful while at the same time the success can mostly be attributed to the Korean government itself. To classify the development as successful, is the basic condition in order to be able to further suggest it as a comparative advantage. Based on the fact, that Korea was able to successfully develop in a short period of time, the country is now able to contribute to international development cooperation. The classification of their development becomes evident throughout the body of texts in different forms. Most evidently, it is almost always directly called 'successful development' (GoK, 2014; GoK, 2017; Chun, 2010). If not successful, other words are used to describe Korea's development, such as "distinctive" (GoK, 2014:74), "remarkable" (GoK, 2017:1), or "unique" (Chun, 2010; Kim, 2011). The use of those positively connoted adjectives, indicates the importance Korea gives to its development experience. Moreover, the continuous mention of the fact that Korea is the first recipient-turned-donor country (GoK, 2014:3; GoK, 2017:1; Chun, 2010; Yun, 2015) makes clear that Korea's development is also one that is special, and makes Korea different from other (donor) countries. Consequently, Korea has a comparative advantage to other donor countries.

The fact that Korea recognises the development experience as a comparative advantage, will become more evident when analysing the roles as each of them is connected to it. However, it is even directly stated by the Korean Government, that the development experience is seen as a comparative advantage, and as such it becomes the essential foundation for Korea's development cooperation policies (GoK, 2017:98). It is further implied, when Korea's efforts are compared to those of other countries. For instance, when stating that "Korea has greater empathy with developing nations than many other donors" (GoK/a, 2014:3), Korea is presented as a more favourable partner for recipient countries. Moreover, when emphasising that "the trend of scaling up Korea's ODA starkly contrasts with that of other advanced donor countries" (GoK, 2014:32), Korea's efforts within the DAC are highlighted as stronger than those of other member countries.

While looking at how Korea presents its development experience, it becomes evident that specific aspects of its development are identified and emphasized. While it is not explicitly stated what Korea identifies as driving forces behind its development, it is still emphasised that it is indeed a development achieved by the state and its government. For instance, Korea's president Lee said in 2011 at the Busan High Level Forum that "Korea rebuilt itself

[...], transforming itself from a least developed country to a developed country” while the “Korean government effectively used the aid it received” (Lee, 2011). This statement makes clear that it is Korea itself and its government that stirred the development. Therefore, referring back to the debate of the literature review of neoliberalism versus developmental state, Korea itself seems to attribute characteristics to its development that are typically connected to the developmental state model. This will become important, when looking at the definition the alter puts forward, which is presented later on in the analysis.

The national role conceptions are always tied to Korea’s development experience. Due to the positive connotations given to the development experience it can be used as the basis for Korea’s engagement within international development cooperation, and consequently becomes a source of Korea’s national role conceptions. As identified prior to the analyses the most striking role conceptions are those of the example, the bridge, the developer, and the leader.

#### 5.1.1 Korea as an Example

In the analysed documents, there exists a reoccurring theme of Korea being an example for both, recipient countries as well as donor countries. The role conception is based on its own development experience and the transition from recipient to donor country. In that sense the role of an example also includes a notion of transformation. Because Korea was able to transform from a recipient to donor country, it is now able to serve as an example for other countries. The role of the example is the one most frequently used throughout the analysed documents. Therefore, it can be analysed more extensively than the other roles.

Both ODA White Papers start with stating that Korea is the only country in the world that was able to transform from a recipient to donor country (GoK, 2014:3; GoK, 2017:1). The fact that this is very first statement of both White Papers, already indicates that Korea puts an emphasis on this transition as an important characteristic in the context of its engagement within international development cooperation. Further throughout the two documents, Korea’s development experience is often connected to word such as ‘sharing’, ‘disseminate’, or ‘harnessing’ (GoK, 2014; GoK, 2017; KOICA, 2019). Those words clearly indicate that learning from Korea’s development experience is an important part of its development cooperation. Consequently, the role conception as an example becomes a foundation for the development cooperation policies.

As mentioned earlier, Korea’s development experience which is also the source for the role conception as an example, is seen as a comparative advantage. “Korea is the prime example of a least-developed-country-turned-donor. As such, we know from experience what it takes

to overcome poverty and promote sustainable development” (Yun, 2015). This statement both supports the point made earlier, arguing for the role as an example being a foundation of Korea’s policies. And further, by presenting Korea as a prime example, the country is compared to other donor countries, and prioritized because of its development experience.

Korea perceives itself as an example specifically for its developing partner countries. It is presented as a “source of inspiration for those developing countries that aspire to graduate one day from the ranks of aid recipient states into donor countries” (Chun, 2010) and wishes “to share Korea’s development experience and the know-how with partner countries” (GoK, 2014:74). This implies that Korea perceives its own development experience as something that can be replicated by other countries, and consequently it is Korea’s responsibility to share its knowledge. This also goes for the donor countries, as “Korea’s ODA provides a unique example” (GoK, 2017:24) marked by strong commitment and quick growth. Consequently, Korea is able to be an example for other donor countries as well.

Looking at Holsti’s conceptualization of the example, it is usually a rather passive role, with some sort of domestic experience being the legitimacy for recognition by others (Holsti, 1970:268/69). However, in Korea’s case the role of the example is actively performed, as it is put forward constantly as a part of its development cooperation policies. Therefore, it becomes even clearer, that Korea’s role conception as an example has a strong influence on Korea’s role performance within international development cooperation.

In order to get a comprehensive understanding of the national role conceptions, their source needs to be considered. The source for this national role conception is Korea’s own development experience, specifically the fact that the country was able to transform from a recipient into a donor country. Based on that transformation, the country perceives itself as an example for recipient countries when it comes to achieving efficient development, and as an example for donor countries when it comes to structuring their ODA most efficiently for their partner countries. This source ultimately influences Korea’s role performance, that is to say its ODA policies. The role conception becomes evident in Korea’s ODA mainly through its knowledge sharing programs that are based on helping partner countries through applying lessons learned from Korea’s development experience (GoK, 2014:54). Hereby, another aspect is essential. Korea perceives itself as an example for how a state can achieve a successful development, through its own efforts. Consequently, the example is not mainly tied to how a country can use foreign aid most but rather to how the country’s own efforts help to achieve development. This is important to note, as it ties back to the discussion of Korea’s own development mentioned in the earlier section. Due to the fact, that Korea defines its

experience as driven by the state, this is a factor that Korea perceives itself as an example of and that, consequently, is translated into its overall role performance.

### 5.1.2. Korea as a Bridge

Besides the role conception of an example, Korea further presents the role conception of a bridge, that is to say a communicator between two camps that have difficulties understanding each other (Holsti, 1970:266/67). This role conception becomes very evident, as Korea explicitly states that it “plays a role as a bridge between developing and developed countries” (GoK, 2014:110; Chun, 2010; Kim, 2011). Moreover, it is stated that “Korea acts as a bridge between donors and partner countries as well as between advanced donors and newly-emerged donors” (GoK, 2014:136). This bridging role is further emphasised by the fact that Korea is highlighting the importance of developing countries and South-South cooperation when addressing other donor countries (Chun, 2010; Kim, 2011; Cho, 2016). For instance, when talking about Korea as the chair of the G20 Summit, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Chun, states that “Korea will consult with G20 partners and reach out to other partners outside the G20” (Chun, 2010), which implies an active performance as a bridge between developing and developed countries.

Again, the source of this role conception can be found in Korea’s own development experience. As stated by Kim, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011, “this development experience enables us to play a bridging role between developing and developed countries” (Kim, 2011). That is to say, Korea is able to play a bridging role between recipient and donor countries because it has experienced the transformation from one to the other. Furthermore, the country is able to connect advanced donor countries and newly-emerging donors, because Korea has found itself in the position of a newly-emerging donor and is currently transitioning into an advanced donor country (GoK, 2014:136). This role conception becomes evident in its ODA and development cooperation policies, through different multilateral and triangular cooperation, as well as the effort to share its own experiences with partner countries: “Korea established the Korean ODA Model [...] to share Korea’s development experience and the know-how with partner countries” (GoK, 2014:74). Through this statement explicitly, it is shown that Korea’s national role conception of a bridge, directly influences its role performance and ODA policies as it becomes their foundation.

### 5.1.3. Korea as a Developer

In addition to the example and bridge, Korea further presents the role conception of a developer, that is to say it perceives a responsibility to support other countries in their development. This sentiment becomes most evident when stating that “Remembering the help

it received in times of need, Korea is now returning the gratitude to the international society” (GoK, 2014:3). Therefore, due to its own successful development, that was also partly based on ODA, Korea now has the responsibility to give back to the international community through its own ODA in the role of a developer. Generally speaking, the developer role is something that applies to all donor countries as the overarching aim of international development cooperation is to support countries in their transition from developing to developed country (Kingsbury et al., 2016:53). Consequently, the developer role consists throughout all analysed documents issued by Korea, as the sentiment of responsibility to support another country's development is always a motive behind ODA policies.

However, Korea further connects its role of the example and bridge with that of the developer in the way that acting as a developer is based on the fact that Korea is also an example and a bridge. For instance, when talking about rural development, Korea aims to “produce a policy toolkit that we can share with our development partners, based on an analysis of Korea’s rural development strategies in the 1970s” (Cho, 2014). Thus, the ambition to produce a policy toolkit steams from the conception as a developer, and is then connected to the example, as it is based on Korea’s own domestic experience. That is to say the policies that are inspired by Korea’s sentiment of responsibility to support the development of other states are constructed around Korea’s own experience and the sharing of said experience with partner countries. Consequently, whenever Korea’s efforts in helping other countries to develop are mentioned, they are always directly drawing from Korea’s own experience, which also implies the notion of Korea being in the role of an example and bridge.

Therefore, the source of the role conception of a developer, once again, is Korea’s own development experience. It is presented as the foundation for all of Korea’s ODA policies and further put forward as a reason that makes Korea’s ODA and role as a developer better than those of other donor countries: “Based on its experience of taking a large step forward from recipient to a donor country, Korea is well aware of the development cooperation in which the partner country is able to exercise ownership” (GoK, 2014:128). Hereby, the role conception of a developer is connected to Korea’s development experience as a foundation. Moreover, the developer is directly tied to the aspect of ownership, which was an essential aspect for Korea’s experience and is now translated into its ODA policies. As the general role conception of a developer becomes evident simply through the fact that Korea gives out ODA, the more specific notion of being an exceptional developer can be identified in the way

that Korea present the motivations behind its ODA, namely through its own development experience.

#### 5.1.4 Korea as a Leader

The last national role conception is that of the leader. The role of the leader implies that an actor is able to influence or guide other actors' decision-making (Bengtsson and Elgström, 2012:96). In the case of Korea this becomes relevant, as it is specifically stated in several documents that Korea has played a leading role throughout the G20 Seoul Summit 2010, as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum of Aid Effectiveness in Busan 2011, and ultimately had a strong influence in establishing the new development cooperation paradigm following those events (GoK, 2014:112; GoK, 2017:176). Yet again, whenever Korea's leadership role is mentioned it is directly connected to the fact that Korea was able to transform from a recipient to a donor country, for instance when stating that "Korea played a leading role for setting the agenda of effective development based on its successful development experiences" (GoK, 2014:112).

Notably, however, the leadership role is only presented within the context of the negotiations of the G20 Seoul Summit and the Busan High Level Forum, therefore it cannot be identified as a role conception throughout Korea's ODA more generally. It is more so a leadership in specific issue areas that are related to Korea's own development experience, as well as to extraordinary efforts made by Korea. Nevertheless, this paper argues that the emphasis that is given to this leadership role by repeating it several times throughout the ODA White Papers, implies that Korea aims to further establish a role of leadership within the context of international development cooperation. This argument is encouraged by the fact that the ODA White Paper 2017 directly states that "the Korean government is committed to leveraging the capacity it has developed to take a leading role in changing the development cooperation landscape" (GoK, 2017:176). The fact that Korea aims to become a leader role, implies that the country perceives a sentiment of ambition to have a comparatively better status within international development cooperation than other donor countries. Here the argument of this paper comes in: In order to succeed over other donor states, Korea needs to establish a comparative advantage. This comparative advantage is Korea's own experience, both as a recipient-to-donor transformed country, as well as a newly-emerged donor transitioning into an advanced donor. It becomes evident in Korea's national role conceptions, that are based on its own experience, and is expressed in Korea's ODA policies as well.

Thus, coming back to the research question of this paper "*What roles does Korea perform through its development cooperation policies within international development*

*cooperation?*”, a first conclusion can be drawn: Korea’s role performance is highly influenced by its national role conceptions as an example, a bridge, a developer, and a leader. All of those role conceptions are based on Korea’s own development experience that is presented as a comparative advantage towards other donors and thus used as the foundation for Korean ODA in order to succeed over other donor countries. Hereby, it is essential to consider how Korea defines its own development experience, namely as achieved through its own efforts. These conclusions will be visualized in the final part of the analysis through a graph as taken from Holsti (1970). The graph aims at making the connection between the national role conceptions, the alter’s prescriptions, their sources, the nation’s status clear and further show how those factors influence Korea’s role performance and ODA policies.

## 5.2. The Alter’s Role Prescriptions

Throughout Korea’s ODA White Papers there is several times mention of Korea having to live up to international expectations (GoK, 2014:136; GoK, 2017:140, 145, 151). Further it is stated by Korea that “the international community has great interests in Korea’s distinctive development experience” (GoK, 2014:74). This tells us several things. Firstly, Korea puts forward those international expectations as a motivation behind stronger engagement within international development cooperation: “As part of its efforts to live up to international community’s expectations, the Korean government voluntarily unveiled its yearly conference and training plans” (GoK, 2017:145). That is to say the international expectations have an influence on Korea’s own national role conceptions and further on the nation’s status, as has been explained earlier through Holsti’s model on FPA and role theory (see Figure 1 in this paper). In Korea’s case specifically, the expectations influence the role conceptions of example, bridge, developer and leader which were identified earlier. Thus, they ultimately influence Korea’s ODA and development policies and the country’s overall role performance within international development cooperation. Therefore, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of Korea’s role performance, the expectations and the sources thereof have to be explored further. Looking through a role theoretical perspective, those expectations are part of the alter’s role perceptions (Holsti, 1997:246). Consequently, how other countries perceive Korea, and the expectations tied to those perceptions need to be examined as to grasp their influence on Korea’s role conceptions.

In the same way the national role conceptions have been analysed the sources of the alter’s perception have to be explored. Similar to the national role conceptions, the paper argues that the dominant source of the alter’s prescriptions once again is the development experience of Korea. However, there is one important difference: While Korea represent its successful

development as based mainly on its own efforts, other donor countries and the OECD represent it as mainly achieved through effective aid (Gurria, 2011; Ban, 2011). For instance, when welcoming Korea as a new member of the OECD/DAC in 2010, its development is described as Korea relying “heavily on foreign assistance to rebuild its economy” (OECDa, 2010). Further aspects of liberalisation are mentioned as important factors for Korea’s development, as well as for its recognition by other OECD member states and the international development cooperation community (OECD Observer, 2016), which opposes Korea’s own perception with the government as an essential driving force. Consequently, the alter’s prescriptions to the various roles become different, as the source diverges in its definition from that of the national role conceptions. This will become evident in the following, as the same roles that were used for the analysis of Korea’s national role conceptions are to be employed when analysing the alter’s role prescriptions. It is examined how the definition of Korea’s own development experience influences the alter’s prescriptions. Further another important aspect is explored, which is the nation’s status and how it is connected to the alter’s role prescriptions. Hereby, the prescriptions may move beyond the roles, towards more general issues. It is important to look beyond the roles, in order to guarantee a comprehensive analysis, as factors that go beyond Korea’s own national role conceptions might influence its policies as well.

### 5.2.1. The national role conceptions and the Alter’s prescriptions

National role conceptions are always tied to them being recognized by other as well. Without an acknowledgement of the roles, they cannot be conceived in the first place (Thies and Sari, 2018:401). Consequently, the alter’s prescriptions need to be explored in relation to the roles of the example, the bridge, the developer and the leader. Overall, all these roles can be found in the OECD/DAC peer reviews, as well as in other documents, that reflect on Korea’s role within international development cooperation.

Starting with Korea’s role conception as an example, the state is also perceived as such by the international community. This becomes visible in several ways, both in the OECD/DAC peer reviews (OECD/DAC, 2012; OECD/DAC, 2018) and in speeches by other policy-makers. As Gurria the general Secretary of the OECD stated in 2011: “We can all learn from Korea’s experience” (Gurria, 2011). Moreover, Korea is described as one of those “countries whose successes we can all learn from” (Rania Al Abdullah, 2011). Hereby, Korea is not always perceived as the same kind of example that becomes evident in the national role conceptions, as the sources of its own development experience are defined differently. Instead of being an example of how a state can stir its own development, Korea is presented as “one

of the greatest examples of the power of effective aid” (Gurria, 2011). That is to say it is assumed that foreign aid played an important role throughout Korea’s development, and Korea is also in the position of an example because of that. Thus, highlighting the importance of foreign aid through its development cooperation policies is expected of Korea by the international community. As stated by Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General, in 2011: “Millions of people have been lifted from poverty. With such success comes responsibility. This is your chance to assume your new leadership. I urge to increase your role as donors, as our host Korea has done” (Ban, 2011). This statement makes clear that Korea has to assume some kind of responsibility as a donor country, due to the fact that it has been supported by the international community in its own development.

The alter’s prescription have implications for Korea which are different from those deriving from the national role conceptions. While the national role conceptions are directly influencing the Korea’s role performance, the alter’s prescription are indirectly influencing it, mainly having an impact on the national role conceptions themselves (Holsti, 1970:239). In the case of the example, the fact that Korea is often cited as an example of successful development, further strengthens Korea’s own conception as such. Furthermore, expectations are created that put pressure onto Korea to continue being an example to others, and to actively use the experience it gained for the engagement within international development cooperation. Hereby, the factor of foreign aid as an important aspect of development has to be included, as it is brought up through the alter’s prescriptions. Consequently, the alter’s prescriptions of Korea being an example, encourage the state to translate its experience into its current development cooperation policies.

The second national role conception as outlined by the analysis is that of the bridge. Once again, the role conception is also recognized by the international community and becomes evident in the alter’s prescriptions. In both DAC peer reviews Korea is being described as “able to play a central role on the global stage as a bridge between rich and poor countries in key international negotiations” (OECD/DAC, 2018:16). Further “Korea leads by example, sharing knowledge and building bridges between rich and poor countries” (OECD/DAC, 2018:26). Both times Korea is acknowledged as an important actor within international development cooperation, and both times this acknowledgement is tied to its function as a bridge which yet again is based on its own development experience. That is to say the alter’s prescriptions consist of the expectations towards Korea to act as a bridging state because of its experience and the capacity to share knowledge.

The third national role conception of the developer cannot be explicitly used for the alter's role prescriptions, due to the fact that being a developer is an indispensable attribute of every donor state, and thus is not commented on by others. However, it is interesting how Korea is presented as a rather exceptional donor, with specific qualities that are tied to its roles and its status. As with the role conception, the developer is always tied to the example and the bridge, and thus Korea becomes a donor with special characteristics, which are to share its development experience and being a bridge. That is to say, Korea's engagement as a donor is often characterized as "shar(ing) its own impressive development experience with others" (OECD/DAC, 2018:4) and the central aspect of its ODA is presented as "building Korea's own development experience into capacity building efforts" (OECD/DAC, 2012:29), as this is what "developing countries are interested in" (OECD/DAC, 2012:29).

The fact that Korea, in the role of a developer, is presented as different from other donor countries, reemphasised the argument previously made, that Korea perceives its own development experience as a comparative advantage. Due to the fact, that this notion is reflected by the alter's role prescriptions as well, and even specifically stated as "Korea's own development experience distinguishes it from other donors" (OECD/DAC, 2012:82), the comparative advantage can be seen as recognized and, moreover, reinforced in Korea's national role conceptions.

The last national role conception of Korea is that of the leader which can be found in the alter's prescriptions as well. As stated in the DAC Peer Review (OECD/DAC, 2012:11) "The country played a leading role in hosting and facilitating the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness at Busan [...] and helped pave the way for the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation by serving as a bridge between DAC members and the BRICS countries", thus the role as a leader is internationally recognized. This quote further shows that similarly, to the national role conception, the leader is once again connected to Korea's other roles, as they build the basis for Korea's ability to serve as a leader. Furthermore, Korea's leadership role is merely applicable to specific issue areas and negotiations. That is to say, "Korea is recognized globally for its leadership in hosting the Green Climate Fund and the Global Green Growth Institute" (OECD/DAC, 2018:29); and further "under Korean leadership, a G20 development agenda was delivered at the Seoul Summit"(OECD, 2010). Therefore, higher expectations are connected to the specific issue areas of effective development cooperation, which was the subject of the G20 Seoul Summit, and green growth. This further provides an insight into Korea's role performance that revolves around achieving a leadership in those areas.

These higher expectations lead to another aspect, that became evident while exploring the alter's role prescriptions going beyond the already identified roles. Both DAC Peer Reviews, express a continuous critique of Korea's implementations domestically, regarding commitments the country has made internationally: There seem to be "ongoing tensions between Korea's expanding role on the global stage and its capacity to uphold its own commitments [...] through national implementation" (OECD/DAC, 2018:27). While the DAC Peer review of 2018 puts a focus on the need to implement international commitments domestically, the 2012 Review still had emphasised that Korea needs "to translate its commitments into practice" (OECD/DAC, 2012:83). These statements indicate that Korea is perceived as unable to live up to its commitments in some areas, which puts higher pressure on the country to include those factors into its development cooperation policies.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the role of Korea as a member of the OECD specifically. "For the organisation, welcoming a new Asian member country was a major step forward in consolidating its own opening and outreach in a burgeoning and increasingly important region" (OECD Observer, 2016), consequently the accession of Korea had been of great significance for the OECD. Moreover, "Korea has brought knowledge and diversity [...] and has been a vital ambassador in the Southeast Asian region in helping the OECD to reach out and become more global, inclusive and effective" (Gurria, 2016). As the OECD emphasises Korea's importance, based on its geographic position, this creates further expectation upon Korea to maintain an active relationship between the countries of the region and the OECD. This can be identified as a factor for Korea's engagement within international development cooperation, targeting many countries within its own region.

The aspects that go beyond the roles identified prior, are important to acknowledge, however, the most essential part that should be taken from the analysis of the alter's role prescriptions is that of Korea's development experience as a source and how it is defined, as that has the biggest impact on Korea's role performance. Connecting it back to the literature review, this paper argues, that the alter's role prescriptions are based on a rather neoliberal definition of Korea's development while also focusing on the role of foreign aid specifically. As the alter's prescriptions directly influence the national role conceptions, those factors then also have an influence on Korea's role performance within international development cooperation. As Korea is prescribed as a development success based on foreign aid and liberalisation, these aspects are included into Korea's role performance and development cooperation policies.

### 5.3. The nation's status

As outlined by Holsti (1970), the nation's status is another important factor that influences the policy outcome and role performance, and connects to both the national role conceptions as well as the alter's prescriptions. The nation's status can be broadly described as the position an actor occupies within international structures and in relation to other actors (Holsti, 1970:239). Therefore, the nation's status may give an explanation for structural restraints an actor faces, and how that might influence the policy outcome and its role performance. Throughout the analysed documents, several statements are made that give a strong indication of how Korea perceives its own status and how it is perceived by others. This together allows for a rather comprehensive understanding of Korea's status generally, as it present itself as a combination of the two.

In the DAC peer review, Korea is referred to as "a leading middle-sized power" (OECD/DAC, 2018:26). This view is reflected in Korea's ODA White Papers, describing Korea as "an exemplary middle-power donor country" (GoK, 2017:142) and as "playing a leading role as an exemplary middle power country" (Ibid:150). Consequently, it becomes evident that Korea is seen as a middle power country, and perceives itself as such. The status of a middle power has already been applied to Korea throughout existing academic literature, looking at different implications of the classification for its foreign policy (Thies and Sari, 2018). What is important for Korea's role within international development cooperation, is the way that Korea is characterized, as a 'leading' or 'exemplary' middle power, which makes it different from other middle power countries. This also implies different expectations towards Korea, and consequently also has an influence on the policy outputs. The distinction of Korea from other donor countries is evident in further statements by the OECD, for instance when talking about the admission of Korea to the DAC: "when many countries are holding back, Korea is signalling the way forward, as it has done in many areas" (OECD, 2010). Further when talking about Korea's engagement as a donor country it is emphasised that "Korea became a DAC member only in 2010 but has already built a strong reputation as a development co-operation actor" (OECD/DAC, 2012:23). These statements imply that Korea is perceived as an extraordinary country for its size, as it is even stated that Korea is "achieving influence beyond its size" (OECD/DAC, 2018:26). This gives Korea more influence within the field of international development cooperation, at the same time it is met with higher expectations. Again, the distinction also highly relies on Korea's own development experience: "Korea's own development experience distinguishes it from other donors" (OECD/DAC, 2012:82). Thus, not only the national role conceptions and alter's role prescriptions but also the Korea's status is highly influenced by its own development

experience. In the case of the status, the development experience is what distinguishes Korea from other middle-power countries, as well as from other donor countries.

#### 5.4. Summary of the Results

In order to gain a clear and comprehensive picture of the collected findings, they are gathered in form of a graph, drawing from Holsti (see figure 1 and 3 of this paper). Following Holsti's general graph, the different components which are specific to Korea will be inserted.

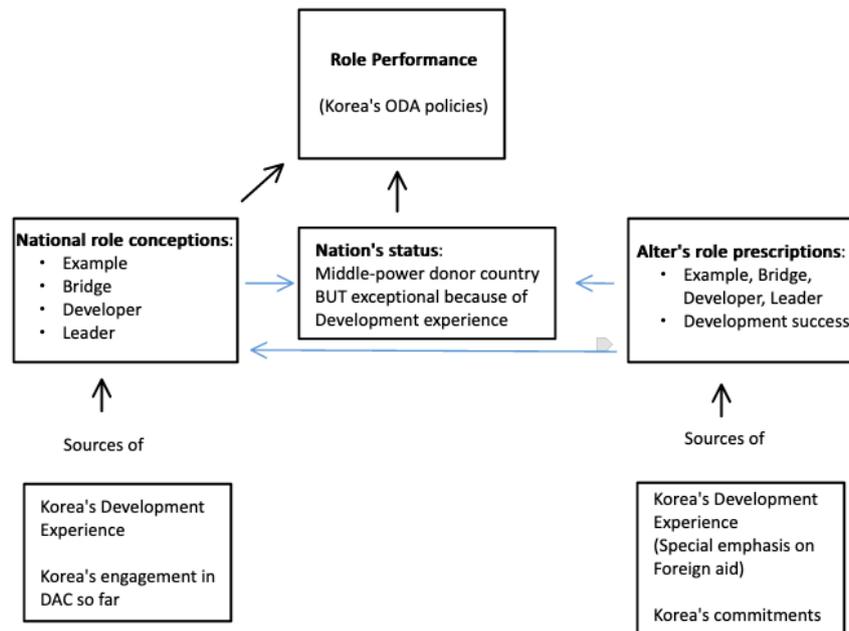


Figure 4. Korea's ODA through Role Theory

The graph aims to explain Korea's role performance that take the form of its development cooperation policies. As described and argued by this paper the strongest influence on the policies comes from the national role conceptions. Those, are consecutively highly impacted by the alter's role prescriptions. The nation's status presents itself as from lesser importance in Korea's case specifically and for the question of this research paper, due to the fact that the status as a middle-power donor country cannot be directly connected to striking aspects of Korea's role performance. Furthermore, the aspect that makes Korea's status interesting, which is its distinction from other countries of the same rank through its development experience, is mainly a result of both the national role conceptions and the alter's role prescriptions, and thus explained by those.

Throughout the analysis, the national role conceptions of the example, the bridge, the developer, and the leader have been identified, their sources being Korea's recipient-donor-transformation and Korea's engagement in the DAC so far. The role conceptions influence

Korea's role performance in so far, as they determine the areas covered by the Korean ODA, which are mainly based on Korea's own development experience. The alter's role prescriptions back up and enhance Korea's role conceptions, as they are creating expectations that Korea wants to live up to through its policies. Their sources are Korea's development experience, as well as the commitments made by Korea concerning its engagement within international development cooperation. As the alter's prescriptions create expectations towards Korea, they influence both the national role conceptions, as well as the nation's status.

The sources of the conceptions and prescriptions are of special interest for this paper. This paper argues that the role conceptions and prescriptions allow to answer the question "*What roles does Korea perform through its development cooperation policies within international development cooperation?*". Korea performs those roles that become visible in their national role conceptions, which are the example, the bridge, the developer, and the leader. They are revealed in Korea's development cooperation policies.

This paper puts a specific emphasis on Korea's own development experience as the source for both the role conceptions and the alter's prescriptions. It argues that, despite it being the same source, the defining aspects of Korea's development experience are conceptualized differently. This argument can be reconnected to the discussion of the literature review on the competing camps of neoliberalism and the developmental state. When it comes to Korea's development experience, this paper argues that both elements can be found in Korea's role performance. While Korea in its national role conception, puts an emphasis on the fact that successful economic development was mainly achieved through its own efforts, the OECD in the alter's role prescriptions focuses on the role of foreign aid throughout the development. Each definition can be tied back to factors of the developmental state (Korea, who sees the state as responsible for a successful development) and to neoliberal aspects (the OECD who argues for a bigger role of foreign aid and accession to the global market). Both have an influence on Korea's development cooperation policies and can be identified as defining for Korea's role within international development cooperation. Consequently, a role theoretical perspective allows to connect neoliberalism and the developmental state. Hereby, it is not essential to find a definite answer on what were the driving forces behind Korea's development, but rather the exploration of what Korea perceives as the important factors. Korea's perception of what is important, ultimately influences the current orientation of its ODA. The same goes for the alter's prescriptions: It is fundamental to understand what is

perceived as the driving force of Korea's development, as that is what becomes evident in the prescriptions, which in turn influence Korea's role conceptions and performance.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has shed a light on Korea's role within international development cooperation. Starting from the more general puzzle of how efficient development can be achieved within the context of international development cooperation, Korea presents a case of bigger interest, due to its recent formation from recipient to donor country. In order to gain a better understanding of Korea's approach to international development cooperation, this paper has thus put forward the question *"What roles does Korea perform through its development cooperation policies within international development cooperation"*.

Firstly, existing literature on South Korea's development cooperation policies has been explored. Throughout, the body of literature it has become evident that South Korea's policies and role are strongly connected to its own development experience. Therefore, further literature on Korea's development has been presented. Concerning the development, two contra camps exist: Neoliberalism and the developmental state model. Each theory claims different factors to be the driving force behind Korea's development, as well as Korea's development cooperation policies. Economic liberalisation and the accession to the global market on the one side (neoliberalism), and an intervening government with strategic policies on the other side (developmental state). As no consensus has been reached currently, this paper has suggested a role theoretical approach, that allows to include both arguments into the debate.

Through the role theoretical analysis, this paper has identified Korea's national role conceptions as key for Korea's role performance. Korea's national role conceptions are those of the example, the bridge, the developer, and the leader. Each of them deriving from Korea's own development experience as a source. Hereby, it is essential how Korea itself defines its development, namely with a focus on ownership of the state which arguably includes notions of the developmental state model. Moreover, the emphasis on Korea's development experience derives from the fact that Korea identifies it as a comparative advantage towards other donors, and consequently, as central to its development cooperation policies.

Another important aspect, to understand the role of Korea are the alter's role prescriptions, as they have an impact on the national role conceptions as well. They reflect and thus further enhance the national role conceptions, especially those of the example, the bridge and the leader. The alter's prescriptions place expectations on Korea, that the state is trying to live up to through its policies and role performance. Again, the source of the alter's prescriptions is

Korea's own development experience, however, it is defined differently by those actors that constitute the alter. They put forward aspect of liberalisation as main driving forces behind Korea's development, and emphasis the role of foreign aid, thus, rather neoliberal notions.

As the alter's prescriptions and national role conceptions come together, both definitions of Korea's own development have an impact on its role within international development cooperation. Therefore, this paper argues that the role theoretical approach reveals the importance of how a process is perceived rather than reaching a consensus on what are the exact driving forces behind it. For Korea's role and how it's impacted by its own development experience, it's not a definite driving force that matters, but rather what is recognized as one. The factors that are perceived as essential, are those that ultimately influence the role conceptions and prescriptions and, consequently, Korea's role performance.

This research has further shown that an application of role theory within the field of international development cooperation is possible and beneficial. Exploring the role conceptions and the alter's prescriptions of a state allows to shed a light on underlying factors concerning its engagement within international development cooperation and helps to gain a better understanding of the decision-making processes behind the development cooperation policies. Therefore, this research paper should be seen as a starting point for continuous application of role theory within the field of international development cooperation specifically concerning emerging donors, such as South Korea.

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