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The Government and Civil Society Collaboration against COVID-19 in South Korea: A Single or Multiple Actor Play?

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Abstract: This study examines, from a collaborative governance perspective, the public policy process of South Korea in responding to the global health pandemic. In many countries, attention has been focused primarily on governmental capacity and political leadership in containing the COVID-19 pandemic. In South Korea, however, the role of civil society as a collaborative partner to government is especially important. To analyze the comprehensive and substantive nature of government-civil society collaboration, this study assesses the response to COVID-19 along two dimensions: the level of civil society involvement in governance, and the stage in public policy development. The study reveals that the South Korean government was a coordinator of multiple actors and multiple sectors of society, including civil society, and that all three facets of civil society as described by Edwards (2004), were involved: associational life, civility, and engagement in the public sphere.

Keywords: COVID-19, civil society, South Korea, government and civil society collaboration, governance, public policy process

1 Introduction

Since the WHO Emergency Committee declared a global health emergency due to the growing number of cases of COVID-19 in January 2020, more than 37 million people have been infected, with more than a million deaths worldwide (World Health Organization n.d). As of this writing, these numbers are still rising, even in countries that successfully contained the virus at the beginning of the outbreak (Durkee 2020; Kuhn 2020).

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Unlike anything most of us have experienced in our lifetimes, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all parts of the world without exception (Maher and Hoang 2020). The profound humanitarian and economic fallout of this pandemic has brought unprecedented disruptions in every aspect of our social systems, including governments' crisis response capabilities, public health systems, infrastructure, cultural norms, mental and physical development, and other routine aspects of life (Maher and Hoang 2020; Grizzle, Goodin, and Robinson 2020; Shadmi et al. 2020; Shin and Lee 2020).

All units of society, including governments, for-profit organizations, nonprofit organizations, and individuals, are engaged in community mitigation strategies to minimize morbidity, mortality, and the social-economic impacts of COVID-19. Some countries implemented national or local lockdowns from the start of the outbreak. Other countries, mainly European countries, have avoided rigid physical and social controls to contain the epidemic, due to public privacy and human rights concerns (BBC 2020; Kaplan, Frias, and NcFall-Jonsen 2020; Tocci 2020).

While most countries have sustained either a robust lockdown model or a herd immunity model, South Korea deployed a different, unique model to contain COVID-19 (Lee, Heo, and Seo 2020; Moon 2020). In the second half of February and early March 2020, when South Korea became a global hot spot of COVID-19 infection cases (Shim et al. 2020), the government deployed an agile and adaptive approach, which involved testing, early isolation, and free treatment of positive cases with advanced technologies, in order to curtail the virus (Moon 2020) without any kind of lockdown (Ahn 2020; Park 2020; UN News 2020). Many businesses and institutions never changed the fundamental structure of their working arrangements, and local or central governments never issued any curfew during the COVID-19 outbreak in South Korea (Moon 2020; UN News 2020). Under the rigorous coordination of government, the for-profit sector, and civil society, the South Korean model has successfully curtailed the COVID-19 outbreak (Grizzle, Goodin, and Robinson 2020; Tocci 2020).

This study examines South Korea's response to the COVID-19 outbreak from a collaborative governance perspective. This perspective challenges the common view that countries have responded to the COVID-19 crisis primarily through government action, as if this were a single actor play with the government as the lone protagonist on stage. Rather, we observe that there is a hidden figure and missing partner in this scenario, namely civil society. Hence, this study incorporates perspectives of governance involvement by civil society in the public policy process in responding to the global health pandemic. In particular, we examine three complementary areas of activity: 1) the government's actions on COVID-19; 2) civil society's responses to COVID-19, and 3) government and civil society partnerships in COVID-19 response.

2 Empirical and Historical Background

2.1 COVID-19 Outbreak in South Korea

After the first confirmed case was reported in South Korea on January 20, 2020, South Korea witnessed a steep spike in confirmed cases in the weeks that followed. The number of confirmed cases abruptly increased from a rate of 20 per day to more than 200 new cases per day after a religious gathering in the Daegu Metropolitan City led to an explosive outbreak on February 18 (Lee and Lee 2020). Reaching a peak of new confirmed cases of 909 on February 19, South Korea became the second most infected country after China by early March (Shim et al. 2020). As of October 12, a total of 24,703 confirmed cases with 433 deaths were reported in South Korea (World Health Organization n.d.).

The South Korean government moved quickly to implement rapid and extensive approaches to flatten the curve and provide timely medical care to infected people in South Korea (Ahn 2020; Shin and Lee 2020). By coordinating all sectors' and actors' efforts towards a common goal, South Korea was able to curtail the epidemic quickly without any lockdowns, stay-at-home orders, or other stricter measures adopted by other developed countries (Ariadne Labs 2020). South Korea's response to COVID-19 earned global attention and became one of the most effective models against COVID-19 (Lee, Heo, and Seo 2020; Moon 2020; UN News 2020). In the following section, we discuss the keys to South Korea's success in the COVID-19 fight.

2.2 South Korean Model against COVID-19

The South Korean government adopted and expanded the 3-T approach, known as "Triple T" (test, trace, and treat), to flatten the curve of COVID-19 infections (Ministry of Economy and Finance of Korea 2020; Park 2020; Yilmaz and Aydin 2020), leading to remarkable success in controlling the spread of the virus. The head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom, declared that the South Korean case shows the virus can be contained and that countries should be aware of the lessons from South Korea (Fisher and Choe 2020).

Early screening is the key to curbing the spread of COVID-19 (Her 2020). The South Korean government enforced proactive and widespread testing with more than 600 screening sites for COVID-19 deployed early in the epidemic. This included engaging formal public healthcare clinics, as well as innovative arrangements such as drive-through centers and walk-in screening sites (Lee and

Lee 2020). As of early March 2020, South Korea conducted 3692 tests per million people (Woodward and Gal 2020). The testing rate in South Korea was roughly 700 times higher than in the United States on March 8, despite the first confirmed cases being announced on the same day in both countries (Ahn 2020; Lee and Lee 2020).

The agile and widespread systematic measures were possible because of previous health crisis experiences in South Korea, such as the 2003 SARS, and 2015 MERS outbreaks (Moon 2020; Park, Choi, and Ko 2020; Shin and Lee 2020). When South Korea experienced the MERS outbreak in 2015, the South Korean government failed to curtail the epidemic because of a lack of expert resources, infection control infrastructure, and organized preparedness for a medical crisis (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2015; Oh et al. 2018). The central government's non-transparent stance in the case of the prior disease outbreaks was another fundamental cause of the failure (Moon 2020). Based on the lessons from previous experiences, the South Korean government implemented a rapid and agile testing system against COVID-19.

The low testing cost, or even free testing for COVID-19, boosted the testing rate in South Korea. Any individual and even foreigners in the country could be tested for free or less than KRW 150,000 (\$125) and the expense was reimbursed if the result turned out to be positive (Lee and Lee 2020; Shin and Lee 2020). Furthermore, the Korean government has covered all medical costs associated with COVID-19 (Ahn 2020). The cheap, easy, and equal access to the medical system enhanced participation in the screening test. It prevented individuals from resisting because of concerns over the costs of testing and treatment (Shin and Lee 2020).

In addition, extensive testing was possible because of the pre-developed testing kits for the coronavirus. The South Korean government had arranged the development of testing kits with medical companies even before the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in South Korea (Lee, Heo, and Seo 2020; Watson, Jeong, and Hllingsworth 2020). The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency approved the first testing kits of COVID-19 on January 27. An average number of 15,000 laboratory tests per day were conducted as of February 28, 2020 (Lee and Lee 2020; Terhune et al. 2020).

Tracking is another strategy that the South Korean government employed used to mitigate the outbreak, using advanced information technology to effectively trace the movement of infected people and potential transmissions of the virus (Park, Choi, and Ko 2020). In particular, the government developed two customized tracking apps, called the "Self-Diagnosis App" and the "Self-Quarantine Safety Protection App" to document where infected individuals visited and how the virus was progressing (KCDC 2020; Hwang 2020).

Immediate and adequate treatment of infected people is the third component of the "Triple T" strategy in South Korea. Confirmed cases were treated according to level of severity. The South Korean government built temporary hospitals and

resolved essential equipment shortages through centralized government purchasing (Ariadne Labs 2020). Care packages were also given to people who were in quarantine. The care package included hygiene essentials (e.g., face masks and hand-sanitizers), necessary fresh goods, instant foods, water, etc. (Judita n.d.).

More broadly, both technology and culture helped, the South Korean government successfully curtail the COVID-19 outbreak. For example, having the fastest Internet globally and a high percentage of smartphone usage (88.5% of the residents are using smartphones) contributed to success (Shin and Lee 2020; Waldeck 2020). The government communicated with the public via advanced technology infrastructures, so that citizens were able to adapt and cooperate with government policy (Park, Choi, and Ko 2020). South Korea is special in its nurturing of collective behavior and a shared sense of responsibility. Citizen participation and responsible citizenship, based on these social and cultural norms, are important contributing factors in mitigating the COVID-19 outbreak in South Korea. Cooperative and collective citizen behavior during the pandemic response reflects of these social and cultural norms. For example, the South Korean government has promoted social distancing and wearing face mask campaigns since the beginning of the outbreak. The majority of South Koreans have cooperated with the rules and guidelines to curtail the epidemic, such as mask-wearing, personal sanitization practices, and voluntary self-quarantine (Moon 2020; Her 2020). Moreover, South Korean efforts would not have been successful without substantial collaboration among government officials, experts, and citizens.

2.3 Historical Review of the Government – Civil Society Relationship in South Korea

Civil society and its relationship with the state in South Korea is complicated because of Confucianism-oriented cultural embeddedness, political power and changes in governmental administration, and a perplexing legal framework (Kim and Jung 2019). The multi-faceted roles of civil society in South Korean development history have been distinctive. South Korean civil society organizations have played multiple roles as cooperative partners in a developmental state (Jeong 2015), adversarial advocates of democracy against authoritarian regimes in the context of social movements, and as professional and entrepreneurial participants in the policy process (Jeong 2013; Jeong and Kearns 2015; Kim 2006).

Kim and Jung (2019) documented the chronological development of the Korean nonprofit sector, identifying three stages: a rudimentary stage (1945–1987); a sophisticated stage (1987–2008); and an elaborated and transformed stage (2008–present).

Despite the modern state structures built in 1948, civil society in South Korea was severely repressed and restricted until 1987 under authoritarian and military regimes (Kim and Jung 2019). Korean governments tended to treat civil society as a supplementary element to deliver public policy and public services. As a result, only 102 nonprofit organizations were registered until the late 1960s in South Korea (Kim 1997). Most nonprofits were even government-sponsored organizations or quasi-government organizations, called *gwanbyeon danche* in Korean, which operated under strong government controls and regulations (Kim and Jung 2019).

During the sophisticated stage (1987–2008), political circumstances dramatically changed from an authoritarian to a democratic regime in the late 1990s, and civil society became more independent of government's requirements and regulations (Jeong and Kim 2019). In this stage, nonprofits in South Korea gained legitimacy and proactively engaged in economic justice, welfare policies, women's rights, and other political issues as key players (Kim and Jung 2019) based on legal and governmental supports. For instance, the democratic government enacted the Nonprofit Civil Organizations Promotion Act in 1999 to provide legal status for nonprofits. The Act boosted civil society's engagements in public policy and public service provision. Approximately 56% of South Korean nonprofits were established between late 1999 and early 2000 (Jeong and Kim 2019). In this stage, nonprofits became a legitimate partner in a complementary relationship with government (Kim 2014; Kim and Jung 2019).

In stage three (2008–2017), the nonprofit sector grew in size and broadened its scope, even though civil society experienced new regulations and pressures from conservative administrations, different from those in the first stage. In this period, the conservative government engaged with nonprofits based on market-based values such as self-interest, financial rewards instead of government subsidies, and private property rights rather than public benefits (Kim and Jung 2019). However, the Candlelight Revolution from 2016 to 2017 dramatically changed civil society's roles and responsibilities in South Korea. In the winter of 2016, more than 1,500 nonprofit organizations and 17 million people participated in the candlelight protests for President Park Geun-Hye's impeachment for bribery and corruption (Bryan 2019; Dudden 2017), and the impeachment was upheld by the Constitutional Court in March 2017. The current government in South Korea has followed with the support of proactively engaging civil society in social and political matters. Reciprocally, civil society has actively engaged with government and advocated for more effective government operations, creating new expectations for governance.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Images of Civil Society

Civil society is defined in various ways, with diverse images associated with (Edwards 2004). How we define civil society determines how we understand the relationship between the state and civil society. As Edwards pointed out (2004), civil society involves three different images: associational life, the good society, and the public sphere. The first image regards civil society as “a part of society (Edwards 2004, p. 20)” which includes diverse actors having their own interests and goals, competing and cooperating. This idea aligns with the liberal roots of civil society thinking (Howell and Pearce 2001), which emphasizes “self-determining individuals” and voluntary groups (p. 18). The second image considers civil society as “a type of society,” which is characterized as having “institutionalized civility” (Edwards 2004, p. 39). This image aligns with “classical republicanism,” which recognizes the notion of “political virtue” (Howell and Pearce 2001, p. 20). The third image treats civil society as an “arena for deliberation” where “civil society” and “politics” can be united (Edwards 2004, p. 59).

This study defines civil society as follows: a public sphere in which inclusive associational life and public deliberation coexist through participation in setting the rules. This definition is predicated on integration of Edwards’s three images of civil society. As Edwards noted (2004), the three images are mutually reinforcing and interactive, making it possible to formulate an integrated concept of civil society.

This definition reflects South Korean civil society’s development history as described in the previous section. In particular, over the last several decades, South Korean civil society has reflected multiple, varied images of associational life, civic virtue, and public deliberation. Specifically, South Korean civil society has engaged associational interests in various parts of the private sector in the democratic and post-authoritarian stage after 1987. At the same time, South Korean civil society has played critical roles in advocating social justice, human rights, social equity in the public sphere via the processes of public policy formation and deliberation.

Table 1: Thematic classification of government and civil society partnership.

	Category	Contents
Governance involvement level	High-level governance involvement	NPO/NGOs in participatory governance (Coproduction; ownership; participation in the decision making)
	Low-level governance involvement	NPO/NGOs as part of contractual/transactional relationship with government agencies (NPO/NGOs in contracting out; simple service provision; third-party government)
Public policy stage	Public policy formation	Public policy agenda formation; policy issues generated by the activities of NPO/NGOs
	Public policy implementation	Social service provision by NPO/NGOs; function as extended arms for outreaching or public policy implementation

3.2 Classification Framework on Government and Civil Society Partnership

As shown in Table 1, the relationship between government and civil society can be classified along two dimensions: The level of involvement of civil society in governance, and the stage of its involvement in the public policy process. First, the governance involvement level is assessed by the depth of interactions within the government/civil society partnership. To what extent does civil society contribute to governance in this partnership? By assessing the depth of involvement, this study delves into the fundamental nature of the relationship between government and civil society. Second, civil society engagement can be characterized by the stage of the public policy process. Civil society can be part of the public policy formulation process or the public policy implementation process (or both). Depending on the issues involved, civil society can be invited into different stages of the public policy process.

In terms of depth of involvement, two levels can be suggested for analysis of the government/civil society engagement. The first is proactive contribution of civil society in public sector decision-making as well as in collaborative governance (John et al. 1994; Kettl 1993, 2017). This view incorporates democratic accountability through collaboration between public agencies and civil society (Kettl 2000). Here, civil society is involved in actual decision-making by providing information and alternative ideas to solve existing public policy problems. Coproduction is an example that belongs in this category. Through coproduction,

civil society and individual citizens assume proactive roles with ownership and contribute to the decision-making process (Brudney and England 1983; Whitaker 1980). Coproduction involves mainly three types of activities (Whitaker 1980): (1) citizens requesting assistance from public agents; (2) citizens assisting public agents; and (3) citizens and agents interacting to adjust each other's service expectations and actions.

The low-level governance case is where civil society organizations function as service providers either through contracting-out or simple transactional relationships. The phenomena of the hollow-state, new-street-level bureaucrats, or third-party government (Milward, Provan, and Else 1993; Milward, Provan, and Smith 1994; Salamon 1987; Smith and Lipsky 2009) reflect this level. Civil society provides privatized services through contracting-out. In this view, the key concern is how to manage networks of service providers in the most effective manner in the decentralized public administration system. Based on these two public policy engagement levels, the collaborations between government and civil society to contain the COVID-19 outbreak in South Korea were assessed.

4 Methodology

This study analyzed information on central and local governments' interventions against COVID-19. For the central government, this included initiatives against COVID-19 by the 19 ministries of the central government, documented in press releases and other documents on each ministry's official website. The keyword "COVID" was used to search the press release section of ministries' websites, where all COVID-related announcements were collected and filtered for relevant information. For the local governments, this study collected data on governments' actions and measures from all seven metropolitan governments of South Korea. However, we only used the interventions against COVID-19 of five metropolitan governments in South Korea because of limited information from two metropolitan governments (Daejeon and Ulsan). The five metropolitan governments included Seoul, Busan, Daejeon, Incheon, and Gwangju. The selected list of metropolitan governments is also geographically balanced by reflecting the East, West, and Central parts of the country.

This study applied a broad definition of civil society to capture comprehensive aspects of South Korea's response to COVID-19. Civil society actors included associations of corporations and individual citizens beyond the narrow scope of organizational actors, as well as individual: nonprofit organizations or non-governmental organizations. Therefore, this study can portray multi-level

phenomena, incorporating individual-level, organizational-level, and community-level actions.

For civil society interventions against COVID-19, this study examined two sources: Major NGO/NPOs' websites and their reports in South Korea; and news media reports on civil society's response to COVID-19. As a sampling framework, these sources may serve as an alternative to reflect ongoing actions in government and civil society organizations.

Government and civil society's joint or separate initiatives against COVID-19 were analyzed based on three approaches: The central and local governments' direct response, civil society's engagement, and collaborative responses between the government and civil society. Government interventions against COVID-19 were analyzed in terms of whether they engaged or did not engage civil society. We analyzed government engagements with civil society along the two lines of government involvement level and stage in the public policy process.

Local governments' actions and measures taken against COVID-19 were further categorized by whether they involve or did not involve civil society partnership. As in the central government's data analyses, simple medical emergency updates, such as statistics updates on confirmed cases and death tolls, were excluded from the data.

The forgoing methodology has the following limitations: First, the coding process of classifying press-release articles and events under the dichotomy framework involves a subjective assessment of events and actions. Although two research assistants and two co-authors cross-checked coding results, this study may not have entirely avoided bias arising from this coding process. Second, given that this study relies on governmental and organizational documents as the main data source, the interpretation of the interactions among actors were only minimally described.

5 Analysis and Results

5.1 Government Policies and Interventions

Beyond the "Triple T" strategy to contain the COVID-19 outbreak in Korea, multi-dimensional measures by the central, provincial, and metropolitan governments have been extensively taken. Table 2 shows the central government departments' interventions in response to the outbreak with and without civil society partnership. Nineteen government departments took actions in response to the pandemic. In total, 756 different interventions were announced by the central government ministries from January 20, 2020, to July 31, 2020. Among the total interventions, 80%

were governments' actions without the partnership with civil society, such as beefing up primary health care services, emergency public service programs for low-income families, childcare assistance for people in self-quarantine, and other financial/educational support. About 20 % of the government initiatives took place with civil society partnerships. Governance and coordination with civil society were essential in adhering to the extensive "Triple T" model of Korean government strategy. This collaborative governance approach included brainstorming to develop public policies and services for the post-COVID-19 era and establishing task force teams to coordinate a referral system to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare was most aggressive in taking actions and making announcements in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. In total, 16.3% (123 out of 756) of all central government level interventions were led by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Based on awareness of mental health considerations for children and adolescents in quarantine, the Ministry provided guidelines for coping with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, hosting an online briefing on COVID-19 for children while cooperating with civil society organizations, such as Korea Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Korean Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (KACAP 2020; KSTSS 2020).

The Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning (63%), the Office for Government Policy Coordination- Prime Minister's Secretariat (48.0%), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (44.4%) broadly collaborated with civil society partners in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The success of the South Korean government's strategies to curtail the epidemic clearly benefited from this collaboration between the government and civil society.

The Office for Government Policy Coordination- Prime Minister's Secretariat, as the central public policy coordinating entity, held various meetings with private sector experts and associations. Those committees include the International Development Cooperation Committee, the Public-Private Regulatory Innovation Policy Council, the Government Affairs Evaluation Committee, and the National Government Strategy Meeting. In addition, specialized committees consisting of academics, corporate representatives, and civil society organizations' representatives conducted professional reviews of various government policies at the time of the pandemic.

In addition to the central governments' interventions to contain the outbreak, the major metropolitan governments in South Korea executed comprehensive measures to respond to COVID-19. Most of the major metropolitan governments' interventions were associated with the COVID-19 quarantine and prevention, in partnership with the central government. However, metropolitan governments devoted themselves to providing supplementary resources and services, following

Table 2: COVID-related public policies, programs, and directives (civil society partnership status).

	COVID-related public policies, programs, and directives		
	Total (N)	Without a partnership with civil society [N (%)]	With a partnership with civil society [N (%)] ^a
Ministry of Health and Welfare	123 (100%)	115 (93.5%)	7 (5.7%)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	63 (100%)	52 (82.5%)	11 (17.5%)
Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries	60 (100%)	52 (86.7%)	8 (13.3%)
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy	55 (100%)	48 (84.3%)	7 (12.7%)
Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning	54 (100%)	20 (37.0%)	34 (63.0%)
Office for Government Policy Coordination – Prime Minister’s Secretariat	50 (100%)	26 (52.0%)	24 (48.0%)
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport	49 (100%)	45 (91.8%)	4 (8.2%)
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	36 (100%)	20 (55.6%)	16 (44.4%)
Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Startups	32 (100%)	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Ministry of Justice	31 (100%)	21 (67.7%)	10 (32.3%)
Ministry of Education	30 (100%)	29 (96.7%)	1 (3.3%)
Ministry of Environment	28 (100%)	27 (96.4%)	1 (3.6%)
Ministry of National Defense	27 (100%)	23 (85.2%)	4 (14.8%)
Ministry of the Interior and Safety	25 (100%)	20 (80.0%)	5 (20.0%)
Ministry of Employment and Labor	25 (100%)	21 (84.0%)	4 (16.0%)
Ministry of Strategy and Finance	26 (100%)	18 (69.2%)	8 (30.8%)
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism	24 (100%)	24 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Ministry of Gender Equality and Family	13 (100%)	12 (92.3%)	1 (7.7%)
Ministry of Unification	5 (100%)	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)
Total	756 (100%)	605 (80.0%)	150 (20.0%)

Official announcements from the respective ministries. ^aThe number of cases includes partnerships that engage nonprofits and for-profit organizations at the same time. In other words, this number includes three-sector partnerships as well as two-sector.

conventional public policy in response to the health emergency. These measures were made either with or without civil society partnerships. Table 3 shows the frequency of collaborations to respond to COVID-19 with or without civil society by the major metropolitan governments, based on the official announcement data collected from the metropolitan governments' websites.

The majority of metropolitan governments' efforts were associated with COVID-19 quarantine and prevention. Examples include the provision of emergency quarantine supplies such as sanitation facilities, preventive emergency measures in workplaces and residential areas with a high risk of group infection, the organization of social distance in life campaign, the offering of COVID-19 response simulation training, and distribution of quarantine-related manuals and guidelines for residents.

Metropolitan governments have also continued their conventional services with supplementary actions to respond to COVID-19. For example, 33.6% of the Seoul Metropolitan government's initiatives were classified as traditional services with supplementary action for COVID-19 response (18.2% without civil society partnership and 15.4% with civil society partnership). Notably, a substantial portion of interventions and initiatives were launched and implemented based on government-civil society partnership. The Seoul Metropolitan Government, for instance, held the first online public hearing to prepare for the post-COVID era in concert with multiple civil organizations in Seoul on May 18, 2020.

Table 3: COVID-related public policies, programs, and directives.

Metropolitan region	Total (<i>N</i>)	Conventional actions & measures (Responding to COVID-19)		COVID-19 quarantine & prevention
		Without a partnership with civil society	With a partnership with civil society	
Seoul	358 (100%)	65 (18.2%)	55 (15.4%)	238 (66.5%)
Incheon	316 (100%)	32 (10.1%)	8 (2.5%)	276 (87.3%)
Gwangju	247 (100%)	17 (6.9%)	4 (1.6%)	226 (91.5%)
Daegu	226 (100%)	16 (7.1%)	1 (0.4%)	209 (92.5%)
Busan	106 (100%)	27 (25.5%)	14 (13.2%)	65 (61.3%)

Official announcements from the respective metropolitan government websites. The press release page of the Daejeon Metropolitan Region and Ulsan Metropolitan Region provided information on the total collaboration cases, respectively 20 and 43. Still, their websites do not offer the overall cases related to COVID-19. Therefore, we did not include these two metropolitan regions.

5.2 Civil Society Interventions

Civil society in South Korea has experienced enormous challenges in this global pandemic. According to a nationwide survey, about 70% of nonprofits have had to reduce or discontinue their existing programs or activities (Beautiful Foundation 2020; Kim 2020). In another national survey conducted right after the COVID-19 outbreak, more than 90% of nonprofits responded that their programs have shrunk (Public Interest Management Center 2020). Nonprofits experienced both revenue decreases (61.5%) and program expenditure cuts (58.1%). Nonprofits have been making efforts to overcome this crisis with operational, program, and strategic actions. In the latter survey, respondent nonprofits answered that they have been planning to introduce new methods of conducting their work (53%) and new revenue/finance stabilizing measures (46.2%) as urgent tasks after this COVID-19 breakout. A large portion of nonprofits (36.8%) answered that they created or are planning to create special emergency funds as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Public Interest Management Center 2020).

Despite unprecedented challenges, civil society organizations in South Korea have made extraordinary efforts to serve the community and vulnerable populations, including the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, and children without proper care and support. For example, the Beautiful Foundation, one of the most renowned philanthropic nonprofits and community foundations in South Korea, provided cash support for emergency living expenses before the government's disaster subsidies became operational. Beautiful Foundation has also provided services to citizens in blind spots excluded from the public support system, such as migrants (Beautiful Foundation 2020).

The Community Chest of Korea prioritized its funding to areas with a high proportion of confirmed cases and quarantines, through coordination with the government and related organizations. It also utilized its network with public-private partners to distribute its fund for on-site support. It placed priorities on emergency support and support of vulnerable and high-risk groups, such as the elderly, the disabled, and the homeless (Community Chest of Korea n.d.).

While civil society organizations focused on providing services to vulnerable populations the virus infections were growing, they have started to re-focus on their advocacy roles, calling for structural changes in public policy and socio-economic systems, in the post-expansion stage after late April 2020. For example, a coalition of 530 civil society organizations in South Korea came together to call for a structural change on the public policy level by creating the Civil Society Counter-measure Committee to the COVID-19 Societal and Economic Crisis. This coalition aimed to protect the economically vulnerable population by, expanding

the societal safety net and public health support, and transforming the existing system into a more sustainable economic structure (The Hope Institute 2020).

In terms of philanthropy, donations have shown a significant increase in response to the unprecedented pandemic situation. The Community Chest of Korea launched a COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund and provided support for increased needs (Table 4). Quarantine and sanitation support (49.89%) received the highest fund allocation, followed by vulnerable community support (27.22%), social welfare service gap support (10.29%), and healthcare workers, volunteers, and patients support (12.60%).

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety reported that as of July 21, about 760,000 people from 246 volunteer centers participated in volunteer work in the first half of the year. The number of people who benefited from this was estimated to be 2.33 million (Ministry of the Interior and Safety 2020). In the first half of 2020, COVID-19 volunteer activities were divided into quarantine disinfection, publicity campaigns, support for quarantines, and distribution and production of goods. In the early stage of the crisis, volunteers made masks, sharing them with people, and sending support messages to medical staff. Many citizens also participated in self-quarantine and disinfection activities, mainly in areas with large mobile populations such as community or multi-use facilities. Volunteers adapted their activities by incorporating various new ideas such as drive-through agricultural products marketplaces, SNS sales of foods and kimchi in cooperation with food integrated support centers, and kimchi packaging volunteering activities to save local farmers. Volunteers also assisted with distributing alternative meals and delivering lunch boxes to elderly people and other recipients, replacing the free food service centers that were suspended as a result of COVID-19.

A variety of other activities and contributions were also made by civil society. For example, Rotary International of Busan Metropolitan City and Live Right Movement Busan Metropolitan City contributed donations to the Busan Social Welfare Community Chest of Korea. These donations provided urgent quarantine

Table 4: COVID-19 community response and recovery fund allocation (as of August 11, 2020).

Special fund allocation	Amount (South Korean Won, KRW)	Proportion (%)
Quarantine and sanitation support	51,152,338,501	49.89%
Vulnerable community support	27,908,639,351	27.22%
Social welfare service gap support	10,548,723,158	10.29%
Healthcare-workers/volunteers/patients support	12,919,585,559	12.60%
Total	102,529,286,569	100%

Community Chest of Korea (2020).

supplies in the early part of the pandemic through the Busan Social Welfare Community Chest (Busan Metropolitan Government 2020). Additionally, the Lions Club of International Lions Association, regional corporate associations, and individual companies in the Gwangju Metropolitan region helped underprivileged groups to protect themselves in the COVID-19 pandemic by providing hand sanitizers to the Gwangju Volunteer Center (Gwangju Metropolitan Government 2020).

5.3 Government Civil Society Collaboration

As previously noted, collaborations and partnerships between the central government and civil society were analyzed along two dimensions: involvement of civil society in governance and different stages of public policy making. The governance involvement level was measured as a dichotomy: absence and presence. If any process encompassed civil society's opinion and inputs, the case was marked as involving governance. If no inputs from civil society were involved in the interaction other than one-way delivery of governments' decisions and guidelines as part of service delivery, the case was marked as not involving governance. The public policy process was divided into two parts: public policy formation and public policy implementation. Public policy formation includes the public policy agenda-setting stage and stakeholders' inputs to public policy decision-making. The public policy implementation stage implies that civil society organizations are invited for simple service delivery rather than exercising their voices or suggesting their ideas.

Based on the top government departments' data, the Office for Government Policy Coordination-Prime Minister's Secretariat allowed the highest rate (66.7%) of civil society involvement in its decisions by providing meeting opportunities to collect civil society's and private sector's inputs and opinions. The Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy and the Ministry of Health and Welfare also exhibited high rates at 57.1%. In terms of the public policy stage, the Office for Government Policy Coordination-Prime Minister's Secretariat showed the highest rate of civil society involvement in the formation (62.5%). In contrast, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (90.0%) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (87.5%) exhibited very high levels of involvement in the implementation-stage (Table 5).

The largest portion of government-civil society partnership cases occurs in the low-level governance involvement of civil society at the policy implementation level. This implies that civil society's role has been complementary, assisting governments and public agencies in the way their public service interventions are delivered to local level residents and marginalized groups. These include collaborative service delivery of necessities to support livelihoods, cooperation in

Table 5: Civil society involvement & public policy process: Top 10 government departments.

	Governance involvement		Public policy stage	
	Yes	No	Formation	Implementation
Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning	4 (11.8%)	30 (88.2%)	14 (41.2%)	20 (58.8%)
	34 (100%)		34 (100%)	
Office for Government Policy Coordination, Prime Minister's Secretariat	16 (66.7%)	8 (33.3%)	15 (62.5%)	9 (38.5%)
	24 (100%)		24 (100%)	
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	1 (6.3%)	13 (81.3%)	2 (12.5%)	14 (87.5%)
	16 (100%)		16 (100%)	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3 (27.3%)	8 (72.7%)	1 (9.1%)	10 (90.9%)
	11 (100%)		11 (100%)	
Ministry of Justice	1 (10.0%)	9 (90.0%)	3 (30.0%)	7 (70.0%)
	10 (100%)		10 (100%)	
Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)	2 (25.0%)	6 (75.0%)
	8 (100%)		8 (100%)	
Ministry of Strategy and Finance	2 (25.0%)	6 (75.0%)	4 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)
	8 (100%)		8 (100%)	
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)
	7 (100%)		7 (100%)	
Ministry of Health and Welfare	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)
	7 (100%)		7 (100%)	
Ministry of the Interior and Safety	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)
	5 (100%)		5 (100%)	

Official announcements from the respective ministries.

the delivery of medical services, as well as connection of professional associations to their organizational and individual members for purposes of delivering government services and treatments. For example, the Korean Psychological Association (Corona 19 Special Countermeasure Committee) collaborated with the South Korean government to provide counseling services by its professional members and experts. As another example is the collaboration of the Social Enterprise Promotion Agency and local social enterprise councils to provide masks to vulnerable groups in Daegu and Gyeong-sang Province (Ministry of Employment and Labor 2020).

Even at lower levels, civil society is found to have substantial involvement in governance. Public hearings and expert meetings were frequently used by Ministries of the central and local governments as the primary source of private and civil society's inputs and contributions. Examples include council meetings with the trade unions and representatives of business owners organized by the Office for Government Policy Coordination, COVID-19 New International Cooperation

Taskforce Private Advisory meetings arranged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Development Cooperation Committee meetings organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Private-Public Policy Council meetings for establishing the K-quarantine Prevention Model coordinated by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

Various cases demonstrate civil society's deep involvement at the policy formation stage. These include a public-private collaboration to improve COVID-19 test speed and convenience, involving a professional association to develop a medical test model. In another case, South Korea launched a joint public-private government support group to underwrite more intensive development of vaccines to prevent COVID-19.

In other instances, the Ministry of Interior and Safety cultivated innovative channels to gather ideas and suggestions from civil society. For example, the Ministry used an open communication forum online and offline to engage participants from academia, youth groups, YouTube celebrities, and civil society organizations including the Citizens' Alliance for Administrative Reform. These participants were invited to submit novel perspectives on "the direction of policy change" after COVID-19 (The Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2020).

6 Summary and Discussion

Searching for key factors contributing to the effective containment and prevention of COVID-19, this study focused on the roles of government, civil society, and partnerships between government and civil society in response to COVID-19 in South Korea. The South Korean government has been recognized for its agile, effective, and transparent response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its response model has been lauded by the global community. This study found that the South Korean government's response to COVID-19 was not just that of a single (government)-actor or director. Rather, important roles were played by government, private actors, citizens, and civil society, as partners. Significantly, rather than being just a monolithic enforcer of stringent quarantine measures, the South Korean government was a coordinator of multiple actors and co-directors, including citizens and civil society, by encouraging voluntary inputs from counterpart partners on the central and local levels. While monitoring the progress of the virus and its containment, the South Korean government maximized opportunities and opened channels for civil society to contribute its resources and inputs, while coordinating the tasks and priorities of its various Ministries and institutes. Moreover, local governments also engaged civil society partners in response to COVID-19.

The majority of interventions by both central and local governments focused on COVID-19 quarantine and prevention. Civil society's contributions complemented quarantine measures by supporting vulnerable groups and reaching out to local communities. Donations and volunteerism reached historical levels during the pandemic.

Beyond working with government on COVID-19 quarantine and prevention measures, civil society's roles and contributions became more central and significant during the pandemic. Although most work of government ministries proceeds with a low-level governance involvement by civil society, civil society succeeded in substantially contributing to policy formation by providing innovative ideas, suggesting alternatives, and backing policy decisions, through various mechanisms including public hearings, expert meetings, councils of central governments' ministries, and local government forums. In particular, the Office for Government Policy Coordination's public hearings and council meetings, COVID-19 New International Cooperation Taskforce Advisory meetings, and Private–Public Policy Council meetings for K-Quarantine Prevention Mode demonstrated private and civil society partners' contribution to the long-term and strategic response to COVID-19.

The three images of civil society identified by Edwards (2004) are reflected in South Korea's COVID-19 response: Associational life was revealed through the voices and requests made by respective associations and representatives of sub-groups, including nonprofits, associations of private companies, trade unions, interest groups, and other specialized interests, online and offline. These voices and inputs were incorporated into the public policy process through the South Korean government's open, transparent, and innovative channels and platform for civil society and private actors. Institutionalized civility was reflected in South Korean citizens' mature and voluntary observance of quarantine rules and guidelines. Most South Korean citizens and residents voluntarily observed the rules, not just from fear of enforcement of government policy, but from a sense of civic duty to protect society and to ensure public safety and health. Without this responsible behavior, the government's policy might not have been effective. Civil society organizations' support for vulnerable groups and advocacy coalitions' calls for social justice and equity at risk under this global pandemic also reflect this institutional civility. Finally, the image of civil society as a public sphere for deliberation was observed through the multitude of deliberative online and offline spaces that were open for government and civil society communications throughout the whole period of the pandemic response. Online and offline meetings for experts' inputs and citizens' voices were wide open channels for public policy formulation.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic on a country level is comprised of the whole set of actions by multiple actors and sectors. This research investigated how

this response played out in South Korea, one of many stages on which the COVID-19 pandemic has played out in 2020 around the world. The success and effectiveness of the South Korean government's response to COVID-19 have been attributed to multiple factors: the government's committed and effective leadership, learning from its experience, well-produced government's public policy product (3T: Test, Trace, and Treat), and well-coordinated implementation of public policy. This study suggests that a fourth T needs to be added to the list: Teamwork. The play on South Korea's stage did not feature a single-actor one. Civil society is playing a critical role in controlling the pandemic. The ultimate success of the play requires the effective participation of this heretofore hidden figure. The 3-T approach is incomplete. Four T's have been required for the play to succeed in South Korea.

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