

This article was presented at Busan Culture Conference
hosted by Busan Cultural Foundation (2023.10.13.)

C-lobalization platform for inter-city cultural collaboration

- case of joint research projects by the Regional Culture Policy Institute of
The National Assembly of Foundations for Arts & Culture

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1. Inter-city exchange and collaboration through culture ... The deeply rooted desire to become a global cultural city ?

- I will introduce examples of inter-city cultural exchange and collaboration within Korea. However, before presenting the examples, I would like to touch upon the appropriate direction and key success factors of inter-city cultural collaboration.
- Cultural exchange and collaboration among global cities has not always been driven solely by outwardly stated noble reasons. Behind the scenes, there is often a desire to secure corresponding outcomes in return for the considerable energy invested in it.
- Historically, cities that attracted people from around the world were able to gather resources and power as political and economic centers. Therefore, in the early 2000s, during the boom of discussions around creative cities and creative economies, cities competed with each other to see whose cultural appeal could attract the so-called global creative class.
- Ultimately, even with those political and economic effects in mind, isn't the image of a "global cultural city" what cities want to achieve through cultural exchange on the world stage?

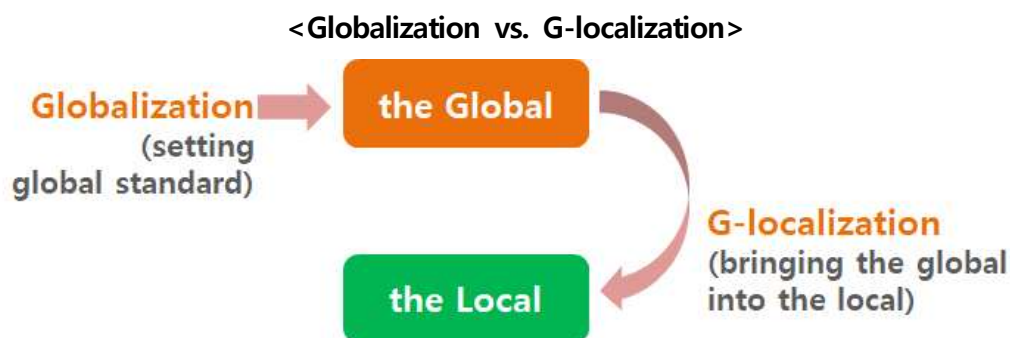
2. The Meaning of "Being Global" - Setting "Global Standards" to follow or Providing "Global Values" to share?

- So, what does it mean to be "global"? Firstly, it implies being well-known among people worldwide. However, being considered globally significant doesn't mean becoming widely recognized as the worst city by people all over the world.
- I think that 'being global' is a state where an entity possesses the power to influence the others to emulate it, ultimately leading to a convergence of similarity like it.
- In order to thrive in the global market on a worldwide scale, adherence to "global standards" is imperative. These global standards, such as those enforced by organizations like the WTO and through FTAs, extend beyond the sovereignty of individual nations, resulting in increased interdependence and institutional similarities not only in the economic realm but also in politics and culture among nations. Such changes driven by an undeniable force can be described as "Coercive Isomorphism", a concept within DiMaggio and Powell's 1983 model of institutional isomorphism."¹⁾
- On the other hand, presenting values that many global citizens living in the same era share and aspire to is also a "global" state. This, too, is a condition that exerts the power to make others become similar to oneself. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) referred to the phenomenon of becoming similar in pursuit of shared norms among expert groups as "normative isomorphism." Therefore, by appropriately presenting contemporary cultural values that make other cities aspire to emulate them as "normative isomorphism," we can say that a global cultural city has acquired cultural power. Busan has advocated "Peace through Culture" as a shared contemporary value through the UNESCO Forum, and I believe it is a sufficiently substantial global value that can be embraced collectively with other cities.

1) P. J. DiMaggio & W. Powell, "The iron cage revisited" institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields", *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1983),

3. Long-standing and futile debate ... the dichotomy between L and G

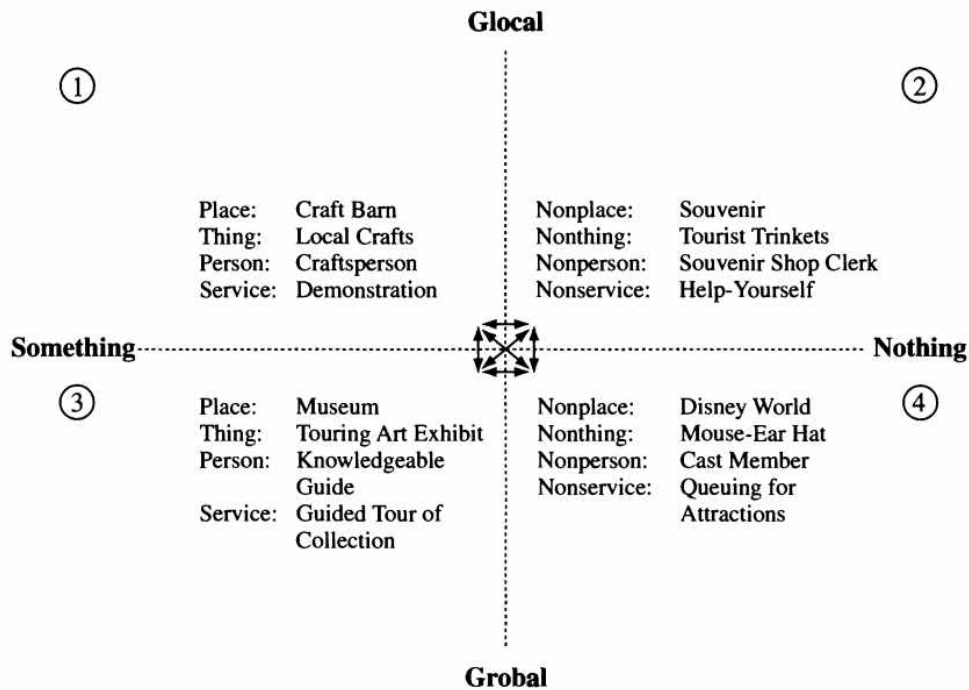
- Are global citizens willing to abandon their localities in favor of the global, the values of others, and becoming more like them? And the recent emphasis on the importance of locality is certainly a departure from the blind worship of globalization in the past.
- There is also a significant negative perception associated with the term "global." This is largely due to historical experiences of political and military colonialism, as well as economic exploitation by multinational corporations. These experiences have led to the understanding that global standards are established primarily by certain hegemonic powers, creating a dependent relationship in which locals are expected to unilaterally adopt these standards. In the era of relentless global competition and globalization, activities like the creation of universal standards by organizations such as the WTO and ISO, known as "globalization," have led nations to engage in busy "localization." This involves bringing these global standards to their own regions and adapting and implementing them locally.



- Even the term "g-localization," which refers to the importance of local, is met with both positive and negative perceptions. Sociologist George Ritzer(2003)²⁾, who coined the phrase "McDonaldization" to describe a form of globalization, analyzed that the popularity of G-localization theory is due to "hostility to Western-centered theories of modernization". He still saw it as a subset of globalization, and coined the term "Grobalization"

2) "Rethinking Globalization: Glocalization/Grobalization and Something/Nothing" (Ritzer, George , Sociological Theory Vol. 21, No. 3, 2003)

because it was inappropriate to describe globalization, exploitation, and colonization by force as G-localization (Ritzer, 2003).



**Interpreting the relationship between glocal-grobal and something-nothing by Ritzer
(source : Ritzer(2003))**

- Many scholars, including Prof. Ritzer, try to differentiate the meaning of G-localization by attaching positive notions such as connection, interaction, convergence, and diversity to it in order to overcome the negative effects of globalization.
- Once upon a time, there was a prevailing discourse that praised globalization as the ultimate good. However, in recent times, there has been a counter-discourse that places the local in a positive light while attempting to diminish the significance of the global. Some have even argued for the removal of the negative "gl" from the word "glocal," advocating for "lobal" to emphasize a more positive "local" orientation.³⁾ To summarize, it's the age-old battle between L (locality) and G (globality). However, in the end, they both fail to move beyond dichotomies such as "right-or-wrong" and "like-or-dislike.

3) 류영재 (2006.11.16.) '글로벌'과 '로벌'의 작지만 큰 차이 (머니투데이) ("The Small but Significant Difference Between 'Glocal' and 'Lobal'" (Money Today).

- In politics and economics, hegemony and growth discourses certainly fit into some binary perceptions and analyses. On the cultural level, however, it is increasingly difficult to see a phenomenon of one-way accommodation of culture, except for the political phenomena such as colonial assimilation policies. An interpretation that places L solely in opposition to G is no longer adequate.
- The rise of local, especially during the coronavirus, can only be understood in the context of the phenomenon of "hyper-locality," where local is amplified through global online platforms. This is largely due to the fact that people have rediscovered the value of their own locality, which they had been unaware of, by returning the praise for local distributed through global platforms. In this way, the L resonates and symbiotes with the G.
- Prof. Kang, Soo-dol said at the Roundtable on Locality at Busan University (February 25, 2010), "When thinking about locality, it is very important to think in terms of seeing the big in the small...(like the Buddhist Indra network)...It is desirable to go to the relationship where all things in this world are interconnected, and each enters into the other." This kind of Eastern thinking is more helpful in interpreting what is happening now.

4. The era where being "C-lobal" is the mainstream... From the success of Hallyu to the innovation of chat-GPT

- We now observe the phenomenon that things containing local cultural identity (cultural) and very trivial everyday things (close = local + intimate) are gaining global popularity. The global services provided by digital platforms are also individualized according to the context of the recipient. In this way, things that are both local and global, global and local, or "C-lobal," are gaining popularity. Something "C-lobal" is very close to our daily life(close, local, intimate) and global at the same time.
- C-lobal = {close, cultural, contextual} × {global}
- A personal, intimate, and very local content that can reach a global audience through an online platform can become popular and global in a moment. But if the local-ness, or core appeal, is not maintained, the popularity is fleeting.

- As another example, the music of K-pop stars become more popular because of global fan challenge videos shared on social media. There is no hierarchy between the local and the global, between the propagators and the receivers. They just resonate with each other. K-pop fandom is not just a consumer of content, but an active participant and a driving force behind the creation of new K-pop content through localization.



- This active interaction of local actors connected to each other on a global online platform to create global change is different from previous one-way globalization or g-localization. I've named this phenomenon "C-lobalization".

<G-localization vs. C-lobalization>

	G-localization	C-lobalization	key words of being C-lobal
Relationship between Global & Local	Hierarchical (dependency)	Non-hierarchical (parallelism)	Close
	Macro & Global is more important	Same emphasis on micro, everyday Locality	
Critical Factors for Success	Universal system	Actors producing unique content	Cultural
	Rational Control	Divergence of Affection	
Aspects of change	One direction (strategy execution, application of general principles)	Two directions (well responding feedback, contextual adaption)	Contextual
	Universalization (standardization)	Individualization (diversification)	

- The cause of this phenomenon is, first of all, that we are now interacting globally on a platform of digital algorithms. It has changed our concept and sense of the local and global in this age of “Culture as Algorithm”. And it changed the sense of scale that recognizes the physical geography in the real world and virtual worlds. And also this is because fewer people see the center and the periphery in a hierarchical relationship than before.
- In fact, in all areas of society, not just culture, this C-lobalization is succeeding and is already becoming mainstream. Even computer hardware is moving from cloud service that relies on centralized server resources to on-device edge computing. It can be interpreted that the machine learning technology itself, which has broken through the problems of the early artificial intelligence technology, was a transition from the G-localization method to the C-localization. The computer does not rely on only the universal principle set by the human programmer, but it continues to revise its computation principle while finding the most appropriate statistical output with training by many cases.

5. A "C-lobalization" platform where numbers and more are shared, and principles are refined by cases.

- When applying this societal phenomenon to inter-city cultural exchange, it becomes evident the platform that facilitates such "C-lobalization" among cities are so valuable. These platforms should not only highlight and preserve the "L" (locality) of individual cities that aspire to become global cultural cities but also create and share a "G" (globality) that enables effective communication among them.
- Of course, when it comes to becoming a global cultural city that attracts many tourists, the global platform of choice is undoubtedly internet-based social media services. How to effectively utilize these platforms to transform them into "C-lobal" cultural information platforms that tourists cherish is a challenge that cultural city promotion and marketing professionals should contemplate.
- However, it is rare to find a policy platform where cultural policy

experts can communicate with each other about the issues they are concerned about and the values they value, as well as share data in the context of each city's policy. I believe that the World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF) is a representative case of C-lobalization platform.

- Since its inception, WCCF has been publishing the World Cities Culture Report(WCCR), a platform for cultural statistics on cities around the world, because numbers are the universal language for global communication of policy. As a member of WCCF's Research Advisory Committee, I have emphasized the need to add social context to the numbers from the very beginning. In 『Culture Counts: new approaches to evidence-based cultural policymaking in World Cities』, published by WCCF in 2021, they propose "Make it more than numbers" as the sixth of the "Six principles of policy research".⁴⁾
- Not only 『WCCR』 but also reports like the 『Transformational Cultural Projects Report』(WCCF, 2014) irregularly published by WCCF effectively globalize the cases of member cities by faithfully presenting them with stories.
- I think this policy platform can be sustained because it shares "other city's case" from overseas as only an example of implementing contemporary "global value" according to their own context, but does not impose it as a "global trend" or further "universal value" that everyone should adhere to.
- This is the "C-lobal policy attitude" that can maintain not only "diversity of culture" but also "diversity of cultural policy." It is an approach that does not inject global or centralized policy principles into local cases, but rather reflects cases of local practices to change central, global policy principles. To achieve this, it is important to interpret the meaning and value of local cases through diverse value frames rather than a centralized frame.

4) 『Culture Counts : new approaches to evidence-based cultural policy making in World Cities』(2021)

6. Case of The National Assembly of Foundations for Arts & Culture(NAFAC) ... Platform for normative isomorphism through joint research on contemporary cultural policy issues

- In Korea, the two key public actors that deliver public cultural services are the Arts Centers and the Regional Culture Foundations. By the policy keynote of de-centralization, Regional Culture Foundations founded by local governments have emerged as the most important actors in the implementation of cultural policies of central and local governments. As of December 2022, there are 262 Arts Centers and 141 Regional Culture Foundations across the country. The Arts Centers, which have been built nationwide by the central government since the late 1990s, are the main infrastructure for cultural decentralization. On the other hand, Regional Culture Foundations, which boomed since in the early 2000s with the funding of local governments, are key players in delivering various cultural services to the local areas.
- NAFAC (National Assembly of Foundation for Arts and Culture) is a federation consisting of cultural foundations from 17 metropolitan cities across South Korea. It was founded on October 26, 2012, with the establishment of the "Representatives' Meeting of Metropolitan Cultural Foundations," a policy coordination body aimed at promoting regional cultural development through collaboration and solidarity efforts. In May 2016, it officially formed the NAFAC and was registered as a nonprofit corporation in January 2017.
- The Korean Regional Culture Policy Research Institute, an affiliate of the NAFAC, has been conducting collaborative research projects every year since 2020, where member institutions work together to address policy issues they face.
- The research conducted in 2022 aimed to share insights into the changing "image" (象, 想, 相) of Regional Cultural Foundations amidst the evolving societal landscape. The ongoing research in 2023 is focused on the transition towards a "social turn of cultural policy," which has been recently emphasized.
- This collaborative research involves staff members from member institutions becoming researchers, sharing their cases through

workshops, and jointly preparing reports. Through this process, cultural foundations from different regions can showcase their distinctive projects while also collectively recognizing contemporary values to be shared as cultural foundations. I believe that this type of research can achieve the effect of the "normative isomorphism" mentioned earlier, where public institutions, which tend to bureaucratize easily, can proactively adapt to the changing times and align with global standards in a more autonomous manner.

Joint Research projects by the NAFAC
in 2023 : (working title) 『Socially Engaged Cultural Policy _ Cases and Implications』 (now in progress)
in 2022 : 『A Study on the Current Status and the Direction of Change for Regional Cultural Foundations in Korea』
in 2021 : 『Research of current status analysis and future change of culture centers run by the metropolitan cultural foundations』
in 2020 : 『Research on the Development of Statistics and Indicator System for Regional Cultural Foundations』

- And, rather than "reporting" successful and innovative regional cases that effectively implemented central government policies, we hope to "illuminate" enough excellent and original local cases to influence the central government's policy direction by reflecting on them. This is the "c-lobal" policy attitude that fits the times, changing principles with cases. This is how cities' cultural policies co-evolve through exchanges and collaboration.
- In this way, the NAFAC and its policy research institute aim to be a "C-lobalization platform" that supports communication, collaboration, and co-evolution in cultural policies among 17 metropolitan cities in Korea.

※ For more information on "De-globalization" and "C-lobalization", please refer to "Be C-lobal - An Epistemological turn for Cultural Policy in the Age of New Normals" (Hae-Bo Kim, 2022, <https://brunch.co.kr/@seaokof/59>).