Capítulo 7

South Korea-Colombia Cooperative Relations: A Perspective from Ocean Governance*

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Abstract: *Ocean governance theory* marks a new milestone in the thinking and development of maritime theory, as the sea is viewed as a genuine development space for the State. The Colombia-Korea relationship, when examined from historical, economic, and political angles, reveals significant contrasts that deserve attention in future projections and developments. In the Asia Pacific, various associations and integration areas have been established since 2004, featuring new strategic, dual-action, and economic cooperation configurations, along with regional free trade areas. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, comprising 21 economies, is recognized as the primary platform for formal dialogue on trade liberalization, economic cooperation, trade facilitation, and investment in open regionalism. The Pacific Alliance represents a deep integration initiative formed by Colombia, Chile, Peru, and Mexico, aiming to create a free trade area and extend influence toward the Asia-Pacific region.

Keywords: Asia Pacific; Colombia; trade; Korea; economy; ocean governance

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RELATIONS BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND SOUTH KOREA: AN ANALYSIS OF COLOMBIAN FOREIGN POLICY AS A GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, seas and oceans have sparked an unusual interest, driven by various factors, primarily political, economic, social, ecological, and environmental. From Alfred Mahan (1840–1914), the first geopolitician and geostrategist to establish the link between maritime power and national politics throughout the twentieth century, various authors from different nations have taken theoretical positions on the use and misuse of the oceans. In the early 1980s, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was promulgated, establishing the legal framework for oceanic spaces and making new contributions to sustainable use and exploitation, reflecting the growing maritime awareness of the ecological and environmental preservation of the seas and oceans, the development of new technologies, changes in ocean governance, overexploitation of natural resources such as fishing, maritime pollution, the consequences of ongoing climate change, and other anthropogenic effects, which compel humanity to reflect on the ocean's importance for its survival.

The ocean governance theory, developed in the early 1990s by Jorge Martínez Busch, represents a significant milestone in the evolution of maritime thought and theory, as the sea is acknowledged as a genuine space for state development. The concepts of this theory continue to be discussed in the twenty-first century, often referred to as the century of the seas and oceans.

It is worthwhile to examine the relationship between Colombia and South Korea from an *ocean governance* perspective, as both countries are fundamentally maritime: Korea is bordered by three seas, while Colombia is considered a bi-oceanic country. Additionally, both nations boast extensive coastlines along the Pacific Ocean, the largest ocean on the planet.

Colombia and South Korea are sister countries, a result of a long-standing friendship between the two nations, highlighted by Colombia's participation as the only Latin American country in the Korean War (1950–1953). The deployment of Colombian combat troops represented a significant diplomatic action that strengthened the ties between South Korea and Colombia. The Colombia Battalion, which fought in defense of South Korea, was distinguished by its courage and heroism, recognized by the United Nations (UN) forces. The following frigates also participated: ARC "Almirante Padilla," with two turns; ARC "Capitán Tono," with two turns; and ARC "Almirante Brion," with one turn.

After sixty years of rapid and surprising economic development, South Korea's short-term economic and technological advancements have attracted the attention of nations worldwide. Among them, Colombia aims to leverage these developments to benefit its own progress.

The friendship with South Korea, where diplomatic relations are categorized as a *Country Partnership Strategy,* and the formal establishment of a free trade agreement (FTA) between Colombia and South Korea make economic and trade cooperation more effective, benefiting both countries with practical effects.

With Colombia's growing international presence in the Asia-Pacific region, the country is regarded as part of the East Pacific basin from an ocean governance analysis perspective. In line with its foreign policy, it aims to connect with this region, which is considered the most dynamic for trade and economic development in the current century. Colombia is a participant in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and utilizes the Pacific Alliance (AP, according to its acronym in Spanish) as a bridge, which includes Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Colombia—the first three being members of APEC.

From an ocean governance viewpoint, *is the cooperative relationship between South Korea and Colombia a foundational element for Colombia's integration into APEC?*

Methodology

The research methodology relied on consulting secondary documentary sources, including books, articles, and academic databases like Google Scholar and Redalyc, from 2010 to 2022.

From the theory of ocean governance as a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary science, it seeks to address international economic cooperation relations. No

studies on ocean governance, international cooperation, and ocean activity fields, as well as their applications in South Korea, were found.

The research employed an exploratory-descriptive approach, focusing on ocean governance, and utilized a qualitative logic for description and analysis.

Ocean Governance

The sea has been, is, and will continue to be a crucial factor in the development of humanity within the context of international relations among countries that comprise the international system of nations. In the twenty-first century, the oceans and seas face various challenges related to climate change, global warming, pollution, illegal fishing, and overfishing, all of which impact the marine ecosystem. Furthermore, these issues impact human prosperity and well-being, as the health of the oceans suffers. The increase in carbon pollution leads to higher levels of acidity, which are detrimental to many marine species, and plastic pollution has reached catastrophic levels, according to the UN (2017).

On the other hand, the aspirations and interests of States and various organizations converge in maritime and international relations, resulting in configurations of power relations that facilitate multipolar, multi-conceptual, and multi-explanatory analyses. These analyses, guided by different theories, aim to clarify and explain the behavior and influence of various actors in the international system.

The sea has played a leading role in development and exploitation. For Solis (1997), the importance of the sea for trade and human development remains valid and has recurring applications with deeper roots and greater projection in the twenty-first century. In this regard, he points out that today, the oceans serve as the umbilical cord of commercial exchange in an increasingly globalized world. They also represent a vast reserve of living and non-living resources necessary for ensuring the survival of humanity. For this reason, they are the scenarios where the interests, aspirations, and expressions of power of the vast majority of nations converge.

The concept of ocean governance has its theoretical precursor in Admiral Jorge Martínez Busch, a former Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy. In his work, *La oceanopolítica: una alternativa para el desarrollo,* published in 1993, he analyzes historical, strategic, and geopolitical events, international relations, and maritime interests, among other factors. He emphasizes the sea as a key element that serves as a true space for the growth and development of the State. He specifically refers to the southern scenario and proposes it as a topic for reflection

and discussion, highlighting it as a task for the new generations in determining the future of Chile. For Colombia, a sustainable bi-oceanic power, this work serves as a reference for analysis and discussion.

In this sense, Martínez (1993a) proposes the following conceptual relationship as a definition of ocean governance: The sea must always be in the minds of rulers. They have a duty to consider the presence of the ocean and its impact on the country's geographical environment when formulating their policies. By doing so, they can contribute more effectively to its development and growth, and therefore achieve the specific purpose of the State, the common good. *This consideration of the ocean's existence within the geographical environment and its influence on political decisions is referred to as "ocean governance"* (p. 135).

Similarly, when referring to geopolitical analysis with respect to the sea and the oceanic spaces, Martínez (1993a) establishes a conceptual difference, stating that ocean governance must enable rulers to pursue the common good, considering the sea and oceanic spaces as a platform for the development and growth of the State. Ocean governance is not equal to the concept of maritime policy or ocean policy. The latter attempts to address the issue of land space development through maritime space, as viewed from the classical geopolitical perspective, i.e., a communication route, and focuses on aspects related to the development of maritime spaces adjacent to the continent. *Ocean governance, on the other hand, enables the occupation of oceanic space as a true space for the development and growth of the State. This conception is a step beyond maritime consciousness* (p. 135).

The central purpose of ocean governance is to ensure that political management appreciates the influence of the sea in the life cycle of the State (Martínez, 1993b).

For Martínez (1993b), ocean governance, along with *geopolitics,* encompasses three key elements that define its political study, particularly the relationship among the *State, power,* and *political relations,* with the State being the primary focus, representing the authority that constitutes, sustains, and exercises power through political relations. However, the oceanic space is distinct: it is governed and shaped by unique conditions and characteristics of the marine environment. In this context, the existence of the State and its relationships with the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, management, planning, and development fields constitute the focus of ocean governance, which aims to create a political landscape typical of an ocean nation and its interactions with other countries at national, regional, and international levels.

The man-space-State relationship is also valued, with maritime territory conceptualized in four dimensions of occupation and action: *maritime surface, ocean mass, oceanic soil, and oceanic subsoil* (Martínez, 1993b). This four-dimensional territory will face increasing exploitation and use, necessitating rules and regulations for sustainable use to maintain oceanic security, balance, life, and wealth (Martínez, 1993b).

Similarly, there is a complex and interconnected relationship among factors influencing the reality, gravitation, and strategic value of oceanic spaces, especially in light of potential tensions arising in this maritime context due to the diversity of interests at stake and power dynamics among various States in the international system. These contributing factors and the potential tension situations correlate with some general principles of ocean governance, highlighting their impact on the State's life cycle. Table 1 lists these conceptual variables related to ocean governance (Martínez, 1993b).

According to Rodríguez (1997), we can appreciate another definition of ocean governance, which addresses the relationship between nation-States and seas. Ocean governance views itself as a *rationalization of the processes and relations involving the nation-State (as a programmatic political actor) and the seas and oceans*. From this perspective, maritime and oceanic spaces are seen as relational, theoretical-practical fields where the political objectives and significant purposes of States are at stake (p. 6).

In the same vein, complementary to the definition, Rodríguez (1997) states that, in its most basic and fundamental form, *ocean governance concerns politics in the sea and the oceans*. The term itself suggests a meeting point, a synthesis between the *political phenomenon* and the *oceanic phenomenon,* as both dimensions converge in reality from the dawn of human history (p. 6).

It should be noted, based on the previous definition, that ocean governance involves the analysis and scientific study of the relationships recognized over time between maritime and oceanic spaces and certain political actors. According to this orientation, Rodríguez (1997) maintains that the foundation of ocean governance theory lies in a systematic and scientific understanding and rationalization of a certain relationships, which can be classified into two basic types: a) the relations established between States and other political actors regarding maritime and oceanic spaces, which occur in the international sphere; b) the relations established between States and the maritime and oceanic spaces, which are generally situated in the national sphere due to their legal nature and political content (p. 7).

This definition, of course, follows that maritime spaces constitute a superimposed and interdependent diversity of arenas or relational fields. Here lies the objective rationality of ocean governance phenomena: these are processes and phenomena that are empirically observable and verifiable, where seas and oceans serve as the substrate element, the founding and explanatory basis of the relationship, and where States and other political actors are the active and dynamic elements (p. 7).

Table 1. *Ocean Governance. Oceanic Factors, Tension Situations, and General Principles*

OCEANIC FACTORS
Maritime transport
Linking oceanic spaces with food (fishing)
Value of existing energy resources in oceanic spaces and on the coast
Wealth of mineral deposits in the oceanic spaces
Regulatory system (constituted by maritime international law)
Scientific-technological capacity of nations in the development of sea sciences
Political-strategic element (naval power)
RELATIONSHIP WITH PROBABLE TENSION SITUATIONS, UNDERSTANDING THEIR CAUSES
National security problems
Fishing affairs
Aspects of maritime borders among States
Political-legal aspects referring to the interpretation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, including the future mining exploitation of the deep ocean
Issues related to maritime commercial law
Application of the Code of Conduct of Maritime Conferences
Maritime transport policy
Distribution of limits for naval construction
SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF OCEAN GOVERNANCE
Collective ocean governance attitude
Oceanic territory
Prior development level

Sensitivity to the life cycle of the State
Action and occupation on four levels
Legal division and coding of activities
Non-renewable, decomposable, and degradable resource
National ecological code
Adaptation to state management
Focus on education

Source: Own elaboration based on Martínez (1993a; 1993b).

The dynamizing element of ocean governance relations is *maritime consciousness.* According to this perception and value, Rodríguez (1997) points out that ocean governance relations are not only in the objective and empirical sphere of political, diplomatic, and strategic processes but also manifest in an imaginary and cultural environment—in other words, in a *symbolic dimension:* that of maritime consciousness. At the core of the culture of people living by the sea and of nations with a maritime vocation (actual or potential) is *maritime consciousness.* Maritime consciousness precedes national consciousness; however, in modern society, characterized by a historical synthesis between a State and a nation, both tend to converge into a single body of beliefs and values (p. 7).

Ocean governance is a multidisciplinary field that arises from the convergence of various social sciences. It is characterized by a relationship of understanding and conceptual contribution among the diverse social sciences, each maintaining its own specificity. In this context, Rodríguez (1997) points out that ocean governance encompasses two interconnected fields of interdisciplinarity: a first circle consisting of three social science systems—political science, international relations, and strategic studies. Simultaneously, a second, complementary circle includes natural sciences, environmental sciences, marine sciences, law, and political economy (p. 58).

It can be affirmed that ocean governance introduces a significant shift in the perspective of analysis and vision regarding key international, political, strategic, diplomatic, and other phenomena that occur in the seas and oceans, providing insights for land-based observation to support decision-making about the sustainable use of oceanic spaces.

Justification

Observing geographical reality, the Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean, with an area greater than 155 million square kilometers and an average depth of 4,000 meters. Thus, it is not only the most extensive but also the deepest (GeoEnciclopedia, 2022). Various authors agree that its basin serves as a site for commercial exchange, growth, development, reserves of renewable and non-renewable resources, and a means of survival for humanity in the twenty-first century. From an ocean governance perspective, it also represents the scenario in which the interests, aspirations, and expressions of power of a vast majority of States converge. Given the diversity of these competing interests, tensions are likely to arise.

Colombia and South Korea are nations located in the Pacific Basin on opposite "shores." The distance between the port of Pusan in South Korea and Buenaventura is 14,913 kilometers (dateandtime.com, 2002). Similarly, for the transport of consolidated maritime cargo, the transit time for a ship traveling from Busan to Buenaventura is approximately 35 days (DVS, 2022). Ninety percent of global transport and imports are conducted by sea, as this method allows for the transfer of large cargo volumes over extended distances. It is essential to note that commercial exchange, which drives the world economy, takes place by sea.

Figure 1. *The Pacific Ocean*

Source: Expedición Oriente. https://expedicaooriente.com.br/por-que-o-oceano-pacífico-tem-esse-nome/

Figure 2. *South Korea-Colombia*

Source: 123RF Map of Korea - CCO Schematic Map of Colombia.

The friendship between South Korea and Colombia began with Colombia's participation in the Korean War (1950–1953). The deployment of Colombian combat troops became the most significant diplomatic action that united the two countries. Colombia was the only country in Latin America that sent troops to the conflict: 5,314 soldiers, of whom 213 were killed, wounded, or missing. The Colombia Battalion, which fought in defense of South Korea, distinguished itself by its courage and heroism, recognized by the UN forces. The following frigates also participated: ARC "Almirante Padilla," with two turns; ARC "Capitán Tono," with two turns, and ARC "Almirante Brion," with one turn.

An Ocean Governance Reflection

South Korea, with maritime features such as the Yellow Sea on its west coast and the Sea of Japan, referred to as the Eastern Sea by Koreans, along with the southern coast of the Peninsula in the Korean Strait, facing Japan, represents a maritime scenario of great complexity for its own security and the advancement of its national and maritime interests. This complexity has led to the development of a significant South Korean naval power with a deterrent purpose, reflecting its fine naval diplomacy in alignment with Korean foreign policy. This occurs amid ongoing tensions and in direct relation to the interests of nearby countries, including North Korea, China, and Japan.

Colombia, a bi-oceanic country, has established the National Policy for Ocean and Coastal Spaces (PNOEC, as per its acronym in Spanish), updated in 2018. It has also formulated the policy "Colombia: Sustainable Bi-Oceanic Power by 2030," as outlined in the National Council of Economic and Social Policy (CONPES) document 3990 of 2020. In 2021, it published 18 Colombian Maritime Interests. For the first time, the National Development Plan (PND 2018-2022) recognizes the Ocean Region Pact and Colombia's strategic location between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as a bi-oceanic country. From a multidisciplinary perspective on ocean governance, these documents serve as pillars for Colombia's maritime development as a sustainable bi-oceanic power while promoting a national *maritime consciousness* within Colombian society.

Table 2. *Geographical Categories of Colombia and South Korea*

OFFICIAL NAME	Republic of Colombia	Republica of Korea
AREA (KM²)	2,070,408	99,538.70
COASTS (KM)	4,171	2,413
PORTS	In the Caribbean Sea: La Guajira, Santa Marta, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Golfo de Morrosquillo, Golfo de Urabá, and San Andrés In the Pacific: Buenaventura and Tumaco.	Chinhae, Inchon, Kunsan, Masan, Mogpo, P'ohang, Pusán, Tonghae-hang, Ulsan, Yosu.
MARITIME BORDERS	Bi-oceanic country; maritime territory defined by treaties Maritime borders in the Caribbean Maritime borders in the Pacific.	12 miles (territorial sea), 200 miles (exclusive economic zone) Yellow Sea to the West, Sea of Japan to the East, and the Korea Strait, south of the Peninsula .

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	32 departments	9 provinces (subdivided, in turn, into 137 districts) .
CAPITAL	Bogotá D.C. (founded in 1538)	Seoul (founded in 1394)
CURRENCY	Colombian peso, EUR = 4,187	Korean Republic Won, EUR = 1,375
LANGUAGES	Official: Spanish and 69 mother tongues	Official: Korean; non-official: Chinese
NATIONAL HOLIDAY	July 20, August 7, and November 11	August 15, Liberation
NUMBER OF INHABITANTS	51.27 million	51.74 million
DEMONYM	Colombian	South Korean
TIME ZONE	UTC−5	UTC+9

Source: Own elaboration based on Expansión / datosmacro.com. Colombia-South Korea.

The Participation of the Colombian Navy in the Korean War: A Naval Historical Reference

The first relationship established with South Korea came through the sea: Colombia's participation in the Korean War (1950–1953) as part of the multinational force led by the United States, under a UN mandate, supported South Korea, which was attacked by North Korea, backed by the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union.

The government of President Laureano Gómez offered the participation of a Colombian frigate, ARC "Padilla." Through Decree 3230 of September 23, 1950, this Naval Unit was allocated to the service of the UN Joint Forces. On October 30, with Decree 3296, the crew was assigned as follows: 13 officers and 177 non-commissioned officers and naval officers (Barona, 2003).

The ARC "Padilla" sailed on November 1, 1951, toward the port of San Diego, California, United States, to undergo minor repairs, which turned into major repairs, as the ship was not in operational condition to join a naval force. Once the repair phase was completed on February 28, 1951, it departed from the Naval Base San Diego to the Naval Station Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, arriving on March 21, 1951. Later, on April 30, it arrived at U.S. Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan. On May 5, it

sailed to the Sasebo Naval Base, arriving on May 7, 1951. The unit was assigned to Task Element T.E. 95.13, part of Task Force 95 (Blockading and Escort Force), marking the beginning of Colombian participation in the Korean War through naval operations off the coast of Korea in the Yellow Sea (Reyes, 1993).

To maintain its commitment to the UN and support the ARC "Padilla," the Colombian government received a frigate from the United States reserve fleet at the port of Yokosuka on February 12, 1952. This frigate was named ARC "Capitán Tono." Its crew traveled from Cartagena aboard an American troop transport to Yokosuka, supplemented by volunteers from the experienced crew of the frigate ARC "Almirante Padilla," who expressed their desire to remain in Korea. The frigate's crew underwent intense training, and the vessel completed sea trials until April 19, 1952, when it arrived at the Sasebo Naval Base to integrate into the command of Task Group 95.5, under whose operational control it fell (Barona, 2003).

The third Colombian flagship that participated in the Korean War was the frigate called ARC "Almirante Brion." Like its predecessor, the ARC "Capitán Tono," the "Almirante Brion" was transferred from the United States' reserve fleet to the Colombian Navy and underwent major repairs. During this process, its engine was reconditioned, and its weapons, detection, and communications systems were modernized. The entire crew of the unit participated in these repairs. On June 26, 1953, it was officially received at U.S. Fleet Activities Yokosuka, and on July 18, it sailed to Sasebo Naval Base. Naval operations began on July 29, 1953, as a member of Task Force 95.0 (Barona, 2003).

The frigate ARC "Capitán Tono" made a second turn during the Korean War, arriving at the port of Yokosuka on March 26, 1954. On April 2, part of the ARC "Almirante Brion" volunteer crew came on board. From this date until June 15, the unit continued with enlistment, repairs, and training. On July 3, it set sail for the Sasebo Naval Base. On July 9, 1954, it resumed naval operations as a member of Task Force 95.0 (Barona, 2003).

The frigate ARC "Almirante Padilla" made a second turn during the Korean War. On January 12, 1955, it arrived in Yokosuka, where it underwent repairs and tests, as well as training alongside units of the United States Navy. On June 9, 1955, the unit commenced naval operations as part of Task Force 95.0. On October 11, 1995, it sailed to Colombia, officially ending the contribution of the Colombian Navy to the United Nations Force that participated in the Naval Campaign of Korea (Barona, 2003).

South Korea-Colombia Bilateral Relations Support

As noted earlier, since Colombia's participation in the Korean War, a solidarity relationship has existed between Colombia and South Korea. There is an environment in which formal and diplomatic ties indicate a strengthened future relationship. It is important to highlight the commitment to enhancing bilateral support for business activities and relations between the two parties, adopting a "win-win" and prospective management approach to development in various fields of collaboration. One way to emphasize the relations between Colombia and South Korea from a historical and evocative perspective is to present, as a recapitulation, the main manifestations or milestones of particular friendship, intercultural, business, and diplomatic relations that have occurred (Table 3).

Table 3. *Some Events of Intercultural and Friendship Manifestations between South Korea and Colombia*

1951-1953	The Colombia Battalion and three Colombian frigates participated in the Korean War in support of the South Korean government.
1962	Diplomatic relations were established without the presence of permanent ambassadors.
1962	Korea began its industrialization and economic internationalization process, known as "The Miracle on the Han River."
1964	Taekwondo teaching began in Colombia.
1967	A trade agreement was signed.
1970	A pagoda-shaped monument, donated by Korea as a gesture of gratitude for Colombia's participation in the Korean War, was originally erected in Bogotá at the intersection of Calle 100 and Carrera 15.
1973	The Korean Embassy in Colombia (Ambassador Ahn Jim-sang) was established.
1978	The Colombian Embassy in Korea (Ambassador Virgilio Olano Bustos) was established.
1986	The Colombo-Korean Chamber of Trade and Industry was founded.
1987	President Virgilio Barco made a state visit to South Korea.
1994	A pagoda-shaped monument, donated by Korea as a gesture of gratitude for Colombia's participation in the Korean War, was moved to the facilities of Escuela Superior de Guerra.
2007	There was interest on the part of Korea in supporting Colombia's entry into APEC.

2009	Negotiations for the FTA started.
2010	The Quindío coffee San Alberto was awarded for its quality in South Korea.
2011	President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón made a state visit to South Korea.
2011	The Proexport Colombia-Korea Importers Association agreement was signed.
2011	The Association of Korean Studies was founded in Colombia.
2012	Lee Myung-bak, president of South Korea, made a state visit to Colombia.
2012	The Expo Corea "50 years of friendship towards prosperity" fair was held.
2012	The drafting of the South Korea-Colombia FTA was completed.
2012	Fifty years of diplomatic relations between the two countries were completed.
2013	The FTA between the two countries was signed.
2014	The Colombian Congress approved the FTA.
2015	Park Geun-hye, president of South Korea, made a state visit to Colombia.
2021	President Iván Duque Márquez made a state visit to South Korea.

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected by Zitzmann and Gómez (2015, pp. 17–19).

The Republic of Korea was proclaimed on August 15, 1948. Syngman Rhee, its first president and known as "The Father of the Nation," was tasked with navigating the challenges of the Korean War. Afterward, his devastated country had to embark on a process of national reconstruction, with immediate goals including the recovery of agriculture, rebuilding cities, repairing the destroyed infrastructure, laying the foundations for an industrial economy, and restoring the social fabric (Zitzmann & Gómez, 2015).

The South Korean economy is based on large businesses known as conglomerates or *chaebols*. Most of these are family-owned businesses, currently very diversified, and primarily include companies in the electronics, chemical, construction, and commerce sectors. The most prominent chaebols include Hyundai, Samsung, LG, Hajin, SK Group, and POSCO (Zitzmann & Gómez, 2015).

As a tool to enhance economic stability, successive South Korean governments have implemented five-year development plans focused on a process of industrialization through import substitution, aimed at boosting exports of products and services. This approach has facilitated strict control over significant

economic development, as shown in Tables 4 and 5. The plans, their functional concept, and the factors contributing to success and competitiveness in the South Korean economy are detailed.

Table 4. *Korean Planning Tool. Five-Year Plans*

First Five-Year Plan (1962)	To establish key basic infrastructure industries, electricity, soil resources, and means of transport and communication
Second Five-Year Plan (1967–1971)	To prioritize light industry and exports, and lay the foundations of the Korean electronics industry
Third Five-Year Plan (1972–1976)	To push forward chemical and heavy industries
Fourth Five-Year Plan (1977–1981)	To support industrialization and strengthen the country's defensive capabilities
Fifth and Sixth Five-Year Plans (1982–1986 and 1987–1991)	To emphasize fiscal prudence, education, and social welfare
Seventh Five-Year Plan (1992–1996)	To strengthen industrial competitiveness
Eighth Five-Year Plan (1997–2001)	To expand welfare spending and advance the knowledge economy
Ninth Five-Year Plan (2002–2006)	To harmonize growth and well-being

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected by Zitzmann and Gómez (2015, p. 67).

Table 5. *Critical Success Factors that Affect the Competitiveness of the Korean Economy*

1. Religion	Special Confucian orientation; also, by its nature, importance given to education
2. Discipline and, therefore, dedication to the nation	A broad patriotic sense of belonging due to its fight against colonialism, which did not erase the local identity
3. Relative political and social stability	Development search, which provided access to a great capacity for negotiation, credibility, and risk minimization
4. Abundant and qualified labor	Excellent human resources, together with significant job training that provide an advantage in production costs
5. Rise in domestic savings, which allows for a high level of investments	Internal resources constitute an integral part of working capital, enabling a decrease in financial costs and enhancing competitiveness in terms of the cost of capital

6. Orientation to markets abroad	Vision that enables market penetration even before the globalization paradigm. Important strategic alliances that determine its current high negotiation position
7. Quick absorption of technology	Anticipation of the managerial paradigms of globalization and standardization of processes such as benchmarking, outsourcing, etc.
8. Use of the economy of scale	Optimal production volumes
9. Increased educational opportunities	Which led to great social mobility and increased productivity
10. Use of intensive labor	In addition to other factors, it has enabled cost minimization
11. Exercise of power by the government	Importance of government position regarding private companies; the maneuvering margin generates speed, flexibility in policies, and concentration of influence on rapid decision-making
12. The external threat	Initially, North Korea has become a destabilizing factor in the cohesion process, as South Korea's survival feels threatened
13. Science and Technology Development Policy	In all five-year plans, emphasis is placed on investment as a dynamic factor

Source: Data taken from Granados (2004, pp. 28–30).

The Colombia-Korea relationship, viewed from historical, economic, and political perspectives, reveals significant contrasts that must be considered for future projections and developments. Trujillo et al. (2021) highlight that in the 1960s, Colombia exported eight times more than South Korea. Fifty years later, Korea ranks as the world's 10th-largest economy in terms of GDP and is among the top 10 countries exporting globally. The economic miracle of Korea involved a shift from an intensive labor-based economy to an intensive capital- and technology-based economy in the 1980s and 1990s, later evolving into a knowledge economy in this century. This country places education at the center and focuses on the adoption of technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, and the promotion of market creation and green industries (p. 6).

Relations between Colombia and South Korea, which date back to Colombia's participation in the Korean War, have always been characterized by fraternal friendship. In this century, this relationship has evolved into a new stage of understanding, marked by partnership and a focus on trade and economic

development. Trujillo et al. (2021) also assert that in 2011, Korea elevated diplomatic relations with Colombia to the Country Partnership Strategy category, the second most important category for this country, presenting both opportunities and challenges for planning the Korean cooperation agenda in the short, medium, and long term with Colombia. The support of Korea was crucial for the approval of the Colombian FTA with the United States in the Colombian Congress, and a few years later, it would become a key factor in Colombia's access to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (pp. 6–7).

The phenomenon of globalization necessitates an examination of the realities that influence trade and economic development within the global environment. Colombia is no stranger to this situation. The FTA with South Korea is, in fact, a response to the dynamic global behavior of commercial activities. It not only expresses reciprocity in opportunities, obligations, and commitments but also allows for the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the trade relationship between both countries. This agreement strengthens trade ties with the Asia-Pacific region, promotes and attracts productive investment, and enhances exports. It enhances the free movement of goods and services, engages the business sector in developing innovative alternatives for production processes, proposes mutually beneficial business conditions, reduces tariff barriers, and facilitates knowledge exchange for investment projects that enhance competitiveness and drive the structural transformation of the economy. In short, it represents a prospective agreement of understanding between the two countries, a win-win (Avellaneda, 2016; Herrera et al., 2020; Murillo, 2019).

Thus, the FTA must, in practice, become a long-term state policy due to its representativeness in economic and trade development, motivating both the public and private sectors to create consistent strategies for the optimal performance of the Colombia-South Korea FTA. Trujillo et al. (2021) state that the FTA envisions granting cooperation to contribute to its implementation and better utilization, aiming to optimize its results, expand opportunities, and maximize its benefits. According to the FTA, particular attention should be paid to cooperation initiatives aimed at: i) stimulating production synergies, creating new trade and investment opportunities, and promoting competitiveness and innovation; ii) supporting the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises; iii) strengthening institutional capacities for implementation and effective use of the agreement; and iv) addressing the cooperation needs identified in other chapters of the agreement (p. 21).

The Asia Pacific: Development Scenario in the Twenty-First Century

In relation to what it represents and the scope of the Asia Pacific, the bibliography is varied. Some sources are connected to the concept of the *basin or the geographical framework of the Pacific Ocean,* while others relate to developments in the twenty-first century in areas such as politics, culture, education, history, trade, economy, international relations, foreign policy, ocean governance, and multilateral, bilateral, or regional agreements, as well as the scope of study and application, whether particular or general, etc. Thus, economic and trade integration serves as a catalyst for growth and development.

According to Rodríguez (2014), various associations or integration areas have been established in the Asia-Pacific region since 2004. Examples include the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP), the free trade area of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations + 3 (China, Japan, and South Korea), APEC, and AP, which focus on new dual-action strategic subregions. Furthermore, fostering more robust economic cooperation in regional free trade areas within the Pacific Rim generates new dynamics that could alter power relations and rivalry. These transformations are closely linked to the specific interests of major powers in the region, such as the United States and China, and their regional influence (Rodríguez, 2014).

Economic and trade integration and cooperation in the Asia Pacific are characterized by a weak formal structure and a limited connection among a few legal institutions and mechanisms. Although complex in certain ways, its organization has established a completely institutionalized supranational body under a mechanism of understanding that exhibits low commitment and lacks official agreements. Economic, production, trade, and financial relations are developed within this framework, which some have called a *silent and real relationship.* Unlike Europe and America, trade schemes are not driven by governments or other regional formal institutions; rather, their outcomes arise from the cooperation and efforts of the business sector and economies. This does not imply that governments are excluded from the cooperation and integration process, as they lay the groundwork for direct investment conditions in both receiving and exporting countries (Molina & Regalado, 2014).

The unique nature of trade and economic integration in the Asia Pacific differs from that of other regions in the world. Molina and Regalado (2014) argue that Asian countries adopted a multilateral approach to their foreign trade policy,

initially through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and later through the World Trade Organization (WTO), which has been referred to as *open regionalism*. Another characteristic that distinguishes intra-regional relations is pragmatism, allowing for cooperation among countries with varying degrees of economic development, socioeconomic systems, cultures, and religions. Regional and subregional cooperation agreements, which exhibit varying levels of integration, functions, and visions, coexist, enabling countries to participate in multiple initiatives simultaneously (p. 5).

Similarly, there is a formal cooperative and complementary relationship through bilateral and subregional commercial exchange agreements that enhance and connect more active subregional participation among neighboring countries, resulting in the so-called *growth zones or triangles* (Molina & Regalado, 2014); examples of this relationship are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. *Economic Growth Zones or Triangles*

1.	The Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore growth triangle for the development of Johor in Malaysia and the Riau Islands in Indonesia
2.	The Baht area (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam)
3.	The economic zone of the large area of southern China (Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Chinese provinces of Guangdong and Fujian)
4.	The Yellow Sea Economic Zone, including the coastal areas of China, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan
5.	The Economic Zone of the Sea of Japan, including the coastal areas of the Northeast of China, the East of Russia, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan
6.	The northern triangle of growth (Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia)
7.	The Eastern Growth Triangle (Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei)

Source: Abe (1997), as cited in Molina & Regalado (2014, p. 6).

Colombia formally initiated its intention, at the government level, to engage in the Pacific through a foreign policy strategy aimed at establishing effective connections in this development area. In 2007, a working group was formed to coordinate the agendas of the Foreign Ministry, the Embassies, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Tourism, the National Planning Department (DNP, according to its acronym in Spanish), the National Association of Industrialists (ANDI, according to its acronym in Spanish), and Proexport (the entity responsible for promoting

international tourism, foreign investment, and non-traditional exports in Colombia). In 2008, the "strategy" was presented, which was approved the following year by the Foreign Policy Council, identifying the areas of action and application: cooperation, economic-trade, political, and cultural (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2013).

For 2010, the National Investment Project "Implementation of the Insertion Strategy of Colombia in the Asia Pacific 2011–2014," with code 1187000320000 of the National Investment Project Bank (BPIN, according to its acronym in Spanish), has a general objective to coordinate and bring together the insertion initiatives in the Asia Pacific in the cooperation, economic-trade, political, and cultural fields, guaranteeing a comprehensive strategy that allows the country to capitalize on the opportunities offered by the region, the world's geopolitical and economic epicenter (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2013, p. 3).

In a similar vein, Latin America's relationship with the Asia-Pacific region has been neither strong nor consistent. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2013) notes that during the period from 2004 to 2006, five countries contributed to 92 % of Latin America's exports to the Asia-Pacific: Brazil, 35 %; Chile, 28 %; Argentina, 14 %; Mexico, 9 %; and Peru, 7 %. Conversely, the Asia-Pacific has not been a significant destination for Colombian exports or foreign investment. The Asia-Pacific's share of total exports was 3.5 % between 1995 and 1998, below 2.3 % between 2001 and 2004, and subsequently increased to a modest 3.2 % between 2005 and 2008, before rising to 7.25 % by the end of 2011 (p. 4).

Colombian foreign policy shows a significant interest in engaging with the Asia Pacific, demonstrating Colombia's goal to attain political and economic prominence within the region while also positioning itself as a strategic partner in trade and economic activities.

APEC as a Relational Element of the Colombia-Korea Trade

One of the most important and representative mechanisms for the potential economic development of the Asia-Pacific region is APEC, which combines the interests of the region's economies and the growing interdependence in managing capital flows, goods, and services. This promotes sustainable, participatory, innovative, and balanced economic growth, enhancing the availability of opportunities for businesses and commercial activities that benefit their residents. Delfín-Ortega and Navarro-Chávez (2021) claim that APEC includes 21 economies: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand,

the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Peru, Russia, and Vietnam. In 2014, its participants together accounted for 54 % of the world's GDP, 50 % of international trade, and 40 % of the planet's population.

Figure 3. *APEC-21 Economies*

Source: WordPress (2015).

Given the emergence of new economies in the Asia Pacific, APEC is recognized as the thematic forum for formal dialogue on trade liberalization, economic cooperation, trade facilitation, investments, and *open regionalism*, where participation is structured by economies rather than States. However, it remains an intergovernmental consultation forum aimed at reinforcing the growing complexity of interdependence among economies, particularly within the region. Decisions are made by consensus, facilitating flexible economic integration, which some have referred to as spontaneous integration, where commitments are voluntarily taken since there is no formal treaty (Cepeda, 2011; Richard & Gamboa, 2012; Translocheros, 2019).

With reference to the structure and functional relationship of the economies that comprise APEC, Rodríguez (2014) maintains that its nature has been informal and characterized by a lack of a rigid institutional structure, where States do not

participate directly but economies do, and no signed agreements or treaties exist. Rather, APEC has a dynamic structure in which each economy participates on equal terms, decisions are made by consensus and communicated through official statements, all under the goal of concerted unilateral liberalization expressed in the four founding principles: promoting the growth and development of the region, contributing to greater liberalization of the world economy, reinforcing the positive effects resulting from growing economic interdependence, and reducing barriers to the trade of goods, services, and investments.

Colombia, in its pursuit of integration in the Asia Pacific as part of its foreign policy, identified a pressing need to formally join APEC in 1995. However, the 21 economies have limited the admission of new members. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2022) states that Colombia is not a member economy of APEC and has sought membership since 1995, although the institutional moratorium on considering the entry of new members ended in 1997 with the acceptance of Peru, Russia, and Vietnam as the last members in 1998. Currently, there is consensus among the 21 economies that further expansion is not advisable. Nevertheless, Colombia participates institutionally in APEC through two mechanisms: as a guest in five working groups (WGs) of APEC, renewed until December 2023, namely the Tourism WG, Services WG, Investment Experts WG, MSMEs WG, and the Subcommittee on Customs Procedures.

The Pacific Alliance as a Bridge in Relations between South Korea and Colombia

The AP is a deep integration process involving Colombia, Chile, Peru, and Mexico that aims to establish a free trade area and project toward the Asia-Pacific region, thereby enhancing existing trade agreements among its members. On an intra-regional scale, the trade relations among these four countries is not very deep; however, since the 1990s, regional agreements have indicated that, due to the low volumes of exports and reciprocal imports, along with the low levels of intra-industrial trade, open trade policies within the scope of the AP have led to favorable trade (Hernández & Muñoz, 2015).

Regarding Colombia's insertion into the Asia Pacific, a key element is its participation in the AP, which serves as an effective bridge to APEC and allows for proper engagement in the dynamic economic, trade, and political landscape of the twenty-first century. The Asia Pacific and the countries in the AP are maritime States

that exemplify maritime development: Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Colombia. The first three are also members of APEC and serve as models for Colombia's strategic leverage in economic and trade development on the Pacific stage. The AP is the most significant regional trade agreement for Colombia; this strategic initiative represents a new dynamic approach to deep regional integration, promoting free trade, trade and economic liberalization, and aiming to unify political, economic, cooperative, and competitive coordination as a bloc in operational harmony with potential partners in the Asia Pacific scene (Ayala, 2022; García, 2018; Montoya-Uribe et al., 2016; Tremolada, 2014; Valencia & Pinzón, 2021).

Colombia's participation in the AP, as a key resource for leveraging its goal of joining APEC and as a significant player in the Asia Pacific, would help identify both strengths and weaknesses for its insertion into the Asia Pacific. This is crucial as initiatives in the aforementioned development region are weak and insufficient, requiring a stronger institutional push. Apart from the *Free Trade Agreement between the Republic of Colombia and the Republic of Korea*, the country lacks other active preferential agreements in the Asia-Pacific region. Tremolada (2014) indicates that among Latin American countries supplying goods to the Asia Pacific, Colombia ranks eighth with a share of 1.9 %, surpassed by Brazil at 37.1 %, Chile at 20.6 %, Mexico at 10.1 %, Argentina at 8.4 %, Venezuela at 7.7 %, Peru at 6.3 %, and Costa Rica at 3.6 %. Colombia only exceeds Panama and Uruguay, which each have a 0.8 % share. Considering the shares of ASEAN as suppliers alone, Brazil represents 35.1 %, Argentina 18.5 %, Venezuela 12.5 %, Mexico 11.2 %, Costa Rica 7.6 %, Chile 7.3 %, Peru 1.9 %, Colombia 1.8 %, and Panama and Uruguay 1.1 %.

Table 7. *Pacific Alliance (AP) Countries*

Alianza del Pacífico							
Países	Población	PIB anual	PIB Per Capita	IDH	Deuda total (M.€)	Deuda (%PIB)	Déficit (%PIB)
Chile [+]	18.729.160	252.035M.€	13.457€	0,843	64.507	25,56%	-1,47%
Colombia [+]	49.834.000	289.239M.€	5.804€	0,747	146.114	52,16%	-4,68%
México [+]	124.738.000	1.124.447M.€	9.014€	0,774	554.636	53,62%	-2,20%
Perú [+]	32.162.184	190.826M.€	5.933€	0,750	49.880	26,15%	-2,00%
~ TOTAL: Alianza del Pacífico	**225.463.344**	**1.856.547M.€**	**8.234€**		**815.138**	**43,91%**	

Source: datosmacro.com (2020). Pacific Alliance.

The AP and the four countries, as an influential bloc, have developed leadership with government synergy and cooperation among business and academia to

achieve their objectives on a regional scale, aiming to establish themselves as a prominent trade and economic development bloc in the Asia Pacific. They also promote what has been referred to in the UN as *sustainable creative development.* In this regard, Sistema de Información sobre Comercio Exterior (2022) highlights that the objective of the Pacific Alliance is to create a deep integration area that fosters greater growth, development, and competitiveness among its member economies through the progressive pursuit of free movement of goods, services, capital, and people. It also seeks to serve as an economic and trade integration platform with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Panama and Costa Rica have expressed interest in joining the bloc. In Puerto Vallarta, the 16th Presidential Summit, held on January 22, 2022, concluded with the signing of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Singapore and a Declaration on the Creative Economy.

The APEC-AP relationship serves as a trade coordination platform, where South Korea will play a significant role based on bilateral agreements signed with APEC countries, including Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Colombia.

Conclusions

Ocean governance is a science that proposes an approach and balance between political and economic relationships and phenomena, depending on the planet's ocean reality. The vision for ocean governance regarding trade and political relations between South Korea and Colombia, particularly concerning maritime conditions, requires effective deepening and application.

The cooperative relations between South Korea and Colombia, facilitated by the FTA, will not only enhance the longstanding friendship of seven decades but also foster greater operational synergy in achieving the objectives established in the agreement. This, in turn, will strengthen the ties between strategic partners and allies committed to shared goals.

The inclusion of Colombia in the Asia Pacific is not merely an opportunity; it is an imperative necessity, considering the significant political, economic, and trade development occurring in this region of the world in the twenty-first century.

The AP has become a crucial mechanism and a regional integration process that will drive economic and trade development for the country and its people. For Colombia, it serves as a point of leverage or bridge in its goal of entering APEC, with support not only from Mexico, Peru, and Chile, as members of the organization, but also from South Korea, a founding member.

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