

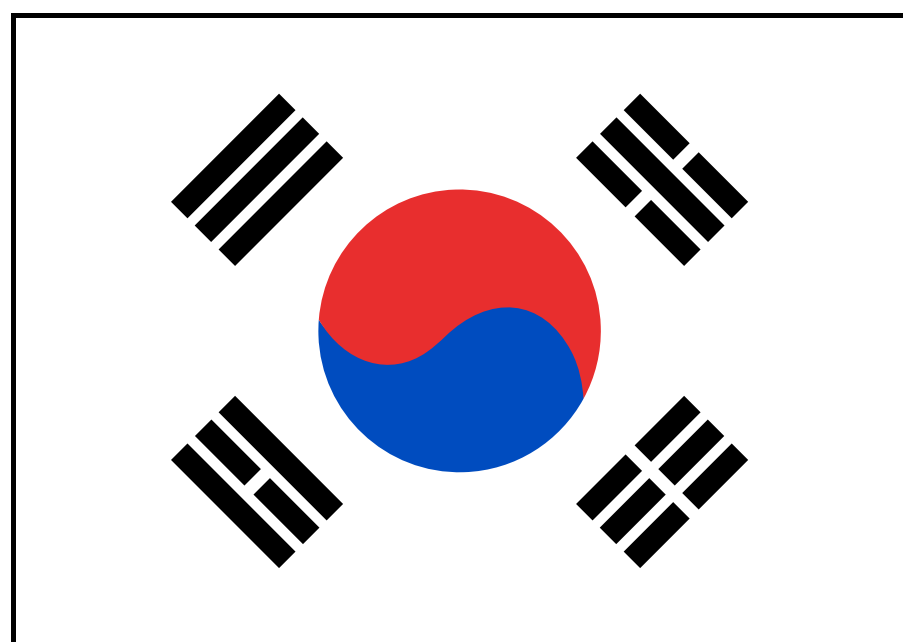
SOUTH KOREA

Country Profiles



This profile is a part of our Leading Multiculturalism: Canada's Impact on Global Diversity Policies series

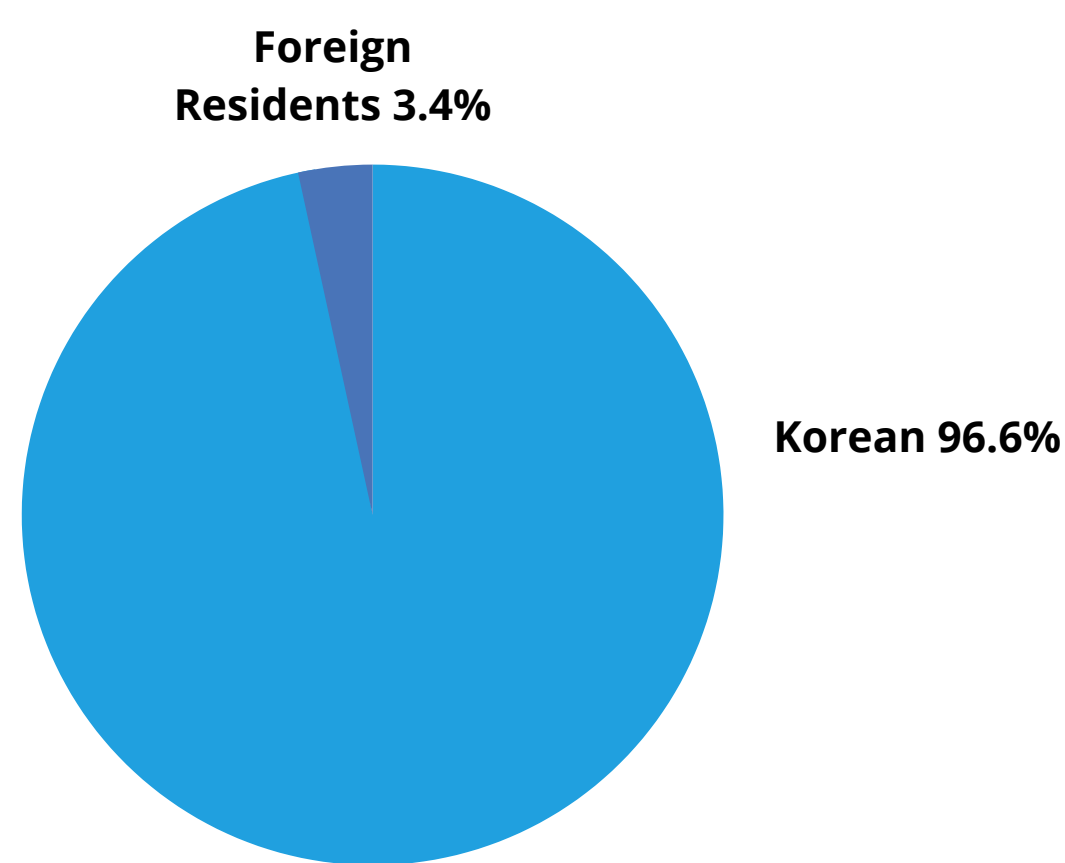
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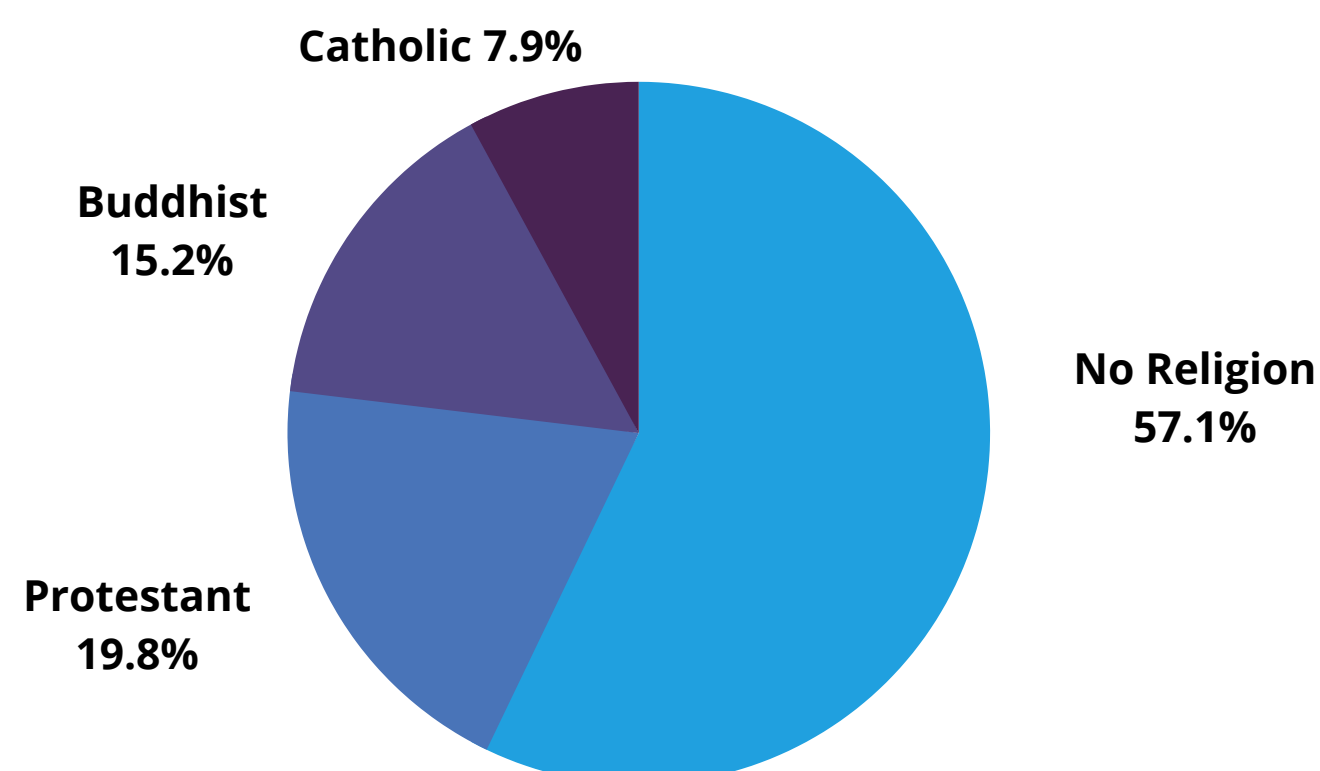
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) was established in 1948 with American support after 35 years of Japanese occupation. A rise in foreign-born immigrants and “migrant marriages” since the 1990s has increased the diversity of its population.

DEMOGRAPHICS



RELIGION



MULTICULTURALISM POLICY

- **Term:** Multiculturalism.
- **Approach:** Top-down. Government ministries have led multiculturalism efforts as a response to the increased foreign population.

DOMESTIC

- The Act on Foreign Workers' Employment (2007) created a council and committee dedicated to the protection of foreign workers' rights.
- The Act on the Treatment of Foreigners Residing in Korea (2007) encourages integration of migrants.
- The Support for Multicultural Families Act (2008) defines multicultural families and discourages discrimination. The subsequent 2010 plan also increases educational support for multicultural children.
- The constitution prohibits discrimination against any group.

INTERNATIONAL

Treaties

- ✓ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- ✓ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

South Korea

Background

- Population: 51.84 million in 2020ⁱ
- Demographics: Homogeneous, 3.4% foreign residents (in 2015) mainly Chinese citizens who are ethnically Koreanⁱⁱ as well as citizens of Vietnam, the US, Philippines and Thailandⁱⁱⁱ
- Languages: Korean and English (taught in schools)^{iv}
- Religion: 56.9% no religion, 19.7% Protestant, 15.5% Buddhist, 7.9% Catholic (in 2015)^v
- Terms: “Multiculturalism” (in discourse and recent acts, rather than the constitution)
- Approach: Top-down (led by relevant government ministries)

The Republic of Korea was included in this project for its recent dedication to prompting multiculturalism through various legislative acts and projects and its unique homogenous ethnic population. The Republic of Korea (referred to as South Korea) was established in 1948 with American support after 35 years of Japanese occupation.^{vi}

Despite being known for its largely homogeneous ethnic makeup, immigration to South Korea has risen in the last 30 years and foreign residents now make up about 3.4% of the country’s population.^{vii} Many of the immigrants are ethnic Koreans who hold Chinese citizenship, as well as citizens of Vietnam, the US (largely military personnel), the Philippines and Thailand.^{viii} With the increase of foreign-born immigrants, as well as “migrant marriages” in the 1990s, the number of multicultural families has risen in South Korea.^{ix} Foreign workers, migrant brides, multicultural families and North Korean refugees are the main beneficiaries of recent acts and programs led by the government to promote minority rights and multiculturalism.

Comparative Analysis: Domestic Legal

Approach

Government-led.

2003 Act on Foreign Workers’ Employment created a council and committee dedicated to the protection of foreign workers’ rights, establishes government support for foreign worker groups.^x

2007 Act on the Treatment of Foreigners Residing in Korea encouraged integration and created an obligation to produce a foreigner policy plan every 5 years.^{xi}

2007 Basic Plan for Immigration (2008-2012) increased support for multicultural families and children with a focus on children’s education and foreign women’s employment, rights of immigrant divorcees.^{xii}

2008 Support for Multicultural Families Act defined multicultural families (Korean national and married immigrant authorized for naturalization), creates an obligation for Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to survey multicultural families every 3 years, discourages discrimination.^{xiii}

2010 Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy (2010-2012) increases “educational support” for multicultural children and “marriage migrants, support for multiculturalism promotion.^{xiv}

2014 Act on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity (led by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) increased opportunities for cultural expression and emphasized the importance of diversity.^{xv}

Constitutional Protections

Constitutional Protections for Equal Rights (rev. 1987)^{xvi}

- Article 11(1) grants “equal[ity] before the law” and prohibits discrimination based on “sex, religion or social status”
- Article 11(2) prohibits the recognition of a “privileged caste”
- Article 20 grants freedom of religion, separates church and state

Note: no mention of languages, ethnic groups, immigrants, multiculturalism, diversity

Explicit Recognition of Multiculturalism

There is no explicit recognition of diversity or multiculturalism.

Comparative Analysis: Domestic Practical

Valuing and Active Promotion of Diversity

“Cultural projects for multicultural families and North Korean refugees”, artistic programs for women and disabled people under the 2014 Act on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity.^{xvii}

Culture City of East Asia project is an “art and cultural network” created with China and Japan.^{xviii}

Culture Voucher and Culture Sharing programs help excluded peoples to “enjoy culture.”^{xix}

Cultural Partnership Initiative provides support to developing Asian countries for art training/production.^{xx}

Multiculturalism as a Means to Integration

May 20 designated as “Together Day” under the 2007 Act on the Treatment of Foreigners Residing in Korea.^{xxi}

Comparative Analysis: International

International Treaties

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969) was signed and ratified in 1978

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) was ratified in 1990

International Promotion of Multiculturalism

No promotion in the international sphere.

ⁱ “South Korea,” The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ks.html>

ⁱⁱ “Number of foreign residents in S. Korea triples over ten years,” *Hankyoreh*, July 6, 2015, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/699034.html.

ⁱⁱⁱ “Migration Profiles,” Republic of Korea, UNICEF, accessed November 11, 2020, <https://esa.un.org/migmgprofiles/indicators/files/Korea.pdf>.

^{iv} Central Intelligence Agency, “South Korea.”

^v Central Intelligence Agency, “South Korea.”

^{vi} “South Korea,” History.com, last modified August 21, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/korea/south-korea>.

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- vii Hankyoreh, "Number of foreign residents in S. Korea."
- viii UNICEF, "Migration Profiles."
- ix Nari Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism (Damunhwa) Policy and Media Discourse," Tuft's University (April 2013): 10.
- x Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism Policy," 11.
- xi Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism Policy," 11.
- xii Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism Policy," 11.
- xiii Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism Policy," 11.
- xiv Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism Policy," 11.
- xv UNESCO, "Republic of Korea 2018 report."
- xvi "Korea (Republic of) 1948 (rev. 1987)," Constitute Project, accessed November 11, 2020, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Republic_of_Korea_1987?lang=en.
- xvii "Republic of Korea 2018 report," Periodic Reports, UNESCO, accessed November 11, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/periodic-reports/2018/republic-korea>.
- xviii UNESCO, "Republic of Korea 2018 report."
- xix UNESCO, "Republic of Korea 2018 report."
- xx UNESCO, "Republic of Korea 2018 report"
- xxi Shim, "Korea's Multiculturalism Policy," 11.