



Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

Wednesday July 19th, 2023, 18:00 c.t., Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

Will Korea Become an Immigration Country and a Multicultural Society? - Trends in International Migration and Challenges to a Multicultural Society

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In-Jin Yoon is professor of Sociology at Korea University and currently a visiting professor of Korean Studies at the University of Tübingen. He now serves as the director of the Asian Migration Research Center, Korea University. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago and taught at the Asian American Studies Department, University of California, Santa Barbara. His research interests include social psychology, international migration, immigration policy, and overseas Koreans and Korean diaspora. He is the author of books such as *Koreatowns and Korean communities Abroad* (2019), and *The Next Generation of Overseas Koreans and Mainstreaming* (2019).



Abstract

Large-scale international migration to Korea began in the early 1990s and continued to increase until recently. The population of an immigrant background accounts for 4% of the total population, rapidly transforming Korea into an immigrant society. The largest group of immigrants is migrant workers, followed by marriage migrants and international students.

Although Korea is changing demographically into a multi-ethnic society, Korean laws and systems have not changed in the direction of accepting immigrants as equal members of society. And many Koreans still insist on the idea of a single ethnicity and a single culture, so they are unwilling to recognize migrants as actual members of society and live together. It is inevitable and only a matter of time for Korea to become an immigration country and a multicultural society. What we need to ask at this point is not whether Korea will become an immigration country or a multicultural society, but how to make it a more desirable and well-functioning immigration country where cultural diversity is respected and recognized as an asset.

