

Korea Focus

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The Rise of South Korea's Soft Power in Europe – A Survey Analysis of Public Diplomacy

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Abstract:

This study evaluates public perceptions of South Korea in Europe through an expert survey. Utilizing the expert assessments in 19 European countries, the results of the survey present mixed images of South Korea. Europeans recognize the economic and technological development of South Korea generally positively, but opinions are more mixed regarding its standing in politics, cultures, and education. Moreover, we find evidence of undervaluation to a considerable degree, as South Korea is often perceived as a developing country without well-functioning institutions despite its actual position as a high-income democracy. Nonetheless, our survey also highlights several areas of South Korea's recent development that are viewed positively in Europe – such as high technology, growing cultural popularity of the Korean Wave, and the successful Covid-19 pandemic management. Additionally, our results reveal regional differences in the public perceptions of South Korea: more positive in Eastern Europe and English-speaking countries, mixed in Southern and Latin Europe, and more negative in Central and Northern Europe. The findings of this study underscore the importance of local communication and interaction to improve public opinions about the country abroad.

Keywords:

Public Diplomacy, Soft Power, Public Perceptions, South Korea, Europe, Expert Survey, Quantification

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, pluralism and multiculturalism have become essential values of the international community, different from of the 20th century which was characterized by the Cold War and hegemonic supreme power. Thereby, the role of middle powers is now more emphasized as important multiple actors who can connect countries and coordinate for common interests of their respective regions and world. In this regard, South Korea has emerged as a vibrant middle power that represents the newly developed world of East Asia with prosperity and democracy. Today, South Korea has become a member of the Groupe of 20 (G20) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Notwithstanding, South Korea is still often considered as a developing country with limited resources and contributions in many other countries. In fact, the so-called ‘Korea discount’, which originally appeared as undervaluation of South Korean stocks in international financial markets due to Korea-specific risks (e.g., conflicts with North Korea), is also observed in foreign public perceptions of the country. This problem can partly be attributed to the negative image created by separation and conflicts between North and South Korea that overshadow South Korea’s other achievements.

On the other hand, such undervaluation also discloses South Korea’s weakness in communicating with people in other countries. Communication with foreign publics is crucial to public (or people’s) diplomacy for a middle power which may not be able to effectively compete with great powers through official diplomacy or coercive means. As Cull (2008) suggests, listening to and communicating with the public in other countries is the first step to influence international opinions about the country in question. While South Korea has more actively been involved in public diplomacy through cultural exchange and advocacy activities in the last decade, its efforts to communicate with foreign publics have been limited (Kim et al. 2013). This limitation is particularly evident in Europe as South Korea has so far mainly focused on Asia and North America for its public diplomacy.

Thereby, our study endeavors to fill this gap by appraising public opinions about South Korea in Europe through an expert survey. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that evaluates public perceptions of South Korea in a wide range of European countries as part of public diplomacy and provides empirical evidence on various areas of the country’s performance. To do so, we recruited experts in the field of Korean studies who were employed at leading universities and research institutes in Europe, and they participated in the survey that assessed public perceptions of South Korea in their respective countries. The survey was structured with six key dimensions of South Korea’s performance for the evaluation: politics, economy and development, technology and science, contemporary culture, history and tradition, and education. In total, 34 experts in 19 European countries took part in the expert survey.

Through this survey, we aim to provide an evidence-based analysis of public perceptions of South Korea in Europe, which have been understudied in the literature. The findings of our survey reveal mixed images of South Korea perceived in European public minds. Generally speaking, South Korea is not yet a well-known or important country in Europe, but the public perceptions vary across the areas of evaluation. The European public perceives the economic and technological development of South Korea more positively, while opinions are more mixed

regarding its standing in politics, cultures, and education. Moreover, we find a considerable degree of undervaluation of South Korea's achievements. Despite its actual position as a high-income country with democratic institutions, about 20–30 percent of public opinions evaluated in this survey entitles South Korea as a developing country without functioning democracy. This result refers to the 'Korea discount' in Europe that the public image of South Korea is substantially worse than the country's tangible accomplishments.

Nonetheless, our survey also identifies several areas of South Korea's recent development that are viewed by Europeans positively – such as high technology, growing popularity of Korean popular culture (the Korean Wave), and the successful Covid-19 pandemic management. The positive public recognition in these areas may provide a basis for the improvement of the country's image in Europe in the future. In addition, our results show regional differences in the public perceptions in Europe, in that the public in Eastern Europe and English-speaking countries are more positive with South Korea, while the country's image is more negative in Central and Northern Europe and mixed in Southern and Latin Europe. Such differences can be attributed to varying degrees of exposure and multicultural acceptance inside Europe. Overall, the findings of this survey underline the importance of local contacts and interactions with people for the success of public diplomacy.

2. Public Diplomacy: Concepts, Policy, and Research

2.1. Conceptualizing Public Diplomacy

Most governments have great interests in improving their national images abroad. Efforts to realize this goal have typically been made through formal channels of government-to-government diplomacy. Not only this, but governments have more recently come to support endeavors to create favorable environments in civil society abroad that can influence wide ranges of public opinions about their countries. Such efforts are called public diplomacy or people's diplomacy. According to Tuch, public diplomacy is defined as: "*a government's process of communication with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies*" (Tuch 1990: 3).

Today, public diplomacy is not limited in governmental actions but incorporates broader spectra of efforts by various stakeholders. Snow and Cull (2020) update the definition of public diplomacy as: "*the processes by which international actors advance their ends abroad through engagement of publics*" (Snow and Cull 2020: xi). Stakeholders of public diplomacy include not only central governments but also other actors at various levels from local governments to international organizations. Furthermore, citizens form as major players of public diplomacy. In fact, civil engagement is considered desirable for the legitimacy of public diplomacy because it can enhance credibility of such activities and ensure self-criticism (Riordan 2005; Nye 2008). Participation of the so-called civil diplomats also enables governments to test and refine their strategies of public diplomacy inside their countries before implementing them abroad (Potter 2003; Riordan 2005).

Incorporating diverse stakeholders, *public diplomacy* is distinguished from simple state propaganda. The term public diplomacy first appeared in the 1960s when the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States sought a positive term to replace *intelligence* and *propaganda* (Cull 2020). Thereby, it is not surprising that some scholars like Manheim (1994) equate public diplomacy with propaganda. However, others emphasize substantive differences between public diplomacy and propaganda that keep the former away from negative implications. For instance, Nye argues, "*simple propaganda often lacks credibility and thus is counterproductive as public diplomacy. (...) [P]ublic diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies*" (Nye 2004: 107). From his perspective, public diplomacy should be understood as an official instrument to enhance *soft power* (Nye 2004; 2008; 2009), or "*the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments*" (Nye 2004: x). Today, soft power is considered outweighing propaganda in the discourse of public diplomacy, as Snow (2020) points out.

Building on current attempts to conceptualize public diplomacy, Nye (2004) proposes three dimensions of the practice of public diplomacy. The first dimension is daily communication, which includes activities such as governments' explaining the purpose of policies to foreign media or responding to rumors. The second is strategic communication that is characterized by more advanced campaigns – for example, hosting a symbolic event or promoting a national brand. The third dimension involves all endeavors to develop lasting relationships – such as providing scholarships, exchanges, trainings, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels. Cull (2008) further elaborates the scope of public diplomacy practices and enumerates listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting as its five elements. Ostrowski (2010) classifies activities of public diplomacy according to their continuity, ranging from political propaganda and advertising to persuasion, unilateral information delivery, and eventually to intermittent or continuous dialogues. Depending on the nature of activities, public diplomacy may target the general public or particular groups of people such as journalists or experts.

Today, an increasing number of countries are becoming actors and targets of public diplomacy. In the contemporary world, not only major powers (e.g., the United States, Japan, and Germany) but also middle powers (e.g., Australia, Norway, and South Korea) are active in managing programs of public diplomacy (MOFAT 2020). In the United States, the September 11 attacks prompted a revival of interest in soft power and public diplomacy after the end of the Cold War era (Nye 2004). Likewise, Japan's public diplomacy was motivated by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster (Ogawa 2020). In Germany, public diplomacy has been necessitated in order to overcome the negative national image associated with its Nazi past (Zöllner 2020). At the same time, the historical experience of the state-organized Nazi propaganda led West Germany to advocate the independence of civil actors and plurality of methods in pursuing public diplomacy. According to Lee (2014), such an approach of (civil) *decoupling* allowed West Germany to maintain cultural exchanges with East Germany that eventually promoted public opinions in the East favorable to the West's diplomatic agenda of reunification.

2.2. Public Diplomacy of South Korea: Policy Efforts and Research

Since the 2000s, interest in soft power and public diplomacy has increased in South Korea. This new development can primarily be attributed to the following three reasons. First, defining itself as a middle power, South Korea came to strive for soft, attractive power instead of concentrating on military or political one (Kim 2013). Examples of policy practice that South Korea has conducted in this regard are: increasing its official development assistance (ODA) budgets, active participation in peacekeeping operations (PKO), and the membership of the Group of 20 (Sohn 2012). Second, the growing global popularity of South Korea's popular culture (known as the Korean Wave or *Hallyu*) has become a driving-force of the country's soft power in recent years. For instance, the number of *Hallyu* fans worldwide surpassed 100 million in 2020, a giant leap from 22 million in 2014 (Korea Foundation 2021). Such successes in the cultural scenes have raised the country's confidence in its potentials to thrive soft power (Park 2020), despite criticisms on the earlier governmental intervention in promoting *Hallyu* that were met by negative reactions abroad (Lee 2011). Through the Korean Wave, South Korea has identified the area of its strength and developed cultural strategies for public diplomacy, accordingly. Third, as South Korea has only recently started focusing on public diplomacy, it has not yet fully maximized its comparative advantages (such as its popular culture and high technology) to establish itself as a soft power. Thereby, much of the country's potentials remain to be substantiated by conscious efforts in the future (Ju 2015; MOFAT 2020).

With respect to efforts to strengthen its soft power, South Korea has conducted several noteworthy institutional reforms in recent years. For example, the government of South Korea has instituted organizational supports for public diplomacy through the establishment of the National Image Committee during the Rho Moo-hyun administration and the Presidential Council on National Branding during the Lee Myung-bak administration (Kim et al. 2013). A further meaningful move that the government undertook was creating a new ambassadorial post for public diplomacy in 2011. More recently, in 2016, the National Assembly enacted the Public Diplomatic Act. In this legislation, public diplomacy is defined as "*diplomacy activities through which the State enhances foreign nationals' understanding of and confidence in the Republic of Korea directly or in cooperation with local governments or the private sector through culture, knowledge, policies, etc.*" (see Article 2, MOFAT n.d.). In accordance with the Act, the first Five Years' Basic Plan for Public Diplomacy was drafted in 2017, and the Public Diplomatic Committee was established for the implementation. In parallel, the budget for public diplomacy assigned for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) has significantly been increased from 1.5 billion Korean Won in 2010 to 31.6 billion in 2020 (MOFAT 2020).

Along with the institutional reform, research on South Korea's public diplomacy and soft power has also increased. Such research activities involve five areas, as suggested in Cull's taxonomy (2008), which was discussed in Section 2.1. First, in the field of *advocacy*, projects that review and correct inaccuracies in Korea-related descriptions in foreign textbooks have been pursued through the sponsorship of MOFAT. Also, MOFAT actively hosts and participates in forums and seminars on topics of peace, unification and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (Park 2020). Second, researchers are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of *cultural diplomacy* programs run by public diplomacy agencies such as the Korea Foundation, Sejong Institutes, and Korean Cultural Centers (Beon and Jung 2018; Hong and Yeo 2012; Ju 2016; Shin et al. 2016).

Third, researchers also take part in the assessments of *exchange programs* offered by the Korean Foundation and universities, and these programs have so far been evaluated generally positively (Park and Lee 2019). Fourth, South Korea's *international broadcasting channels* have prompted debates on their impacts as scholars have been divided in their evaluation: positive (e.g., Kim et al. 2013) and critical (e.g., Robertson 2018). Fifth, research activities are extended to measure public attitudes toward South Korea in foreign countries (Chung 2014; Lee 2011; Ko 2017; Kim and Lee 2019). *Listening* to foreign public opinions about South Korea is the way of assessing inward inflows of information in other countries that is as important as evaluating outward programs of public diplomacy disseminated by South Korea to foreign countries.¹

The current research is subject to two major limitations. The first weakness is biases in data collection especially in the field of listening (in specific, collection of public opinions about South Korea abroad). As Nye (2004) notes, soft power resources are context dependent and therefore, mindful listening to the public in a country or region is required for effective public diplomacy. However, existing studies on South Korea's public diplomacy have predominantly focused on English-speaking countries and Asian neighboring countries. In a study on the media coverage of promotional articles issued by the government of South Korea abroad, Kim et al. (2013) find very few or no coverage in European countries except the United Kingdom. This finding reveals that efforts to communicate with the European public have widely been neglected in the practice of South Korea's public diplomacy, notwithstanding Europe's important position in the international community.

The second limitation in the current research lies in the temporal shortage of data (Ju 2016). Given the early stage of South Korea's public diplomacy, research has relied on cross-sectional analyses without taking into account longer term effects of the programs. This shortcoming necessitates improvement in research and evaluation by accommodating longitudinal data in the future as time-series information will become more readily available in coming years.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Expert Survey

In this study, we aim to gauge public opinions about South Korea in Europe by providing empirical evidence. To do so, we employed a survey method, through which European public perceptions were evaluated by experts who worked in the field of Korean studies at universities and research institutes in Europe. For this, we recruited 34 experts in 19 European countries. The participating countries include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (UK). In more populous countries, the public perceptions were evaluated by a multiple number of experts, while smaller countries relied on one or two experts' opinions. Specifically, France, Italy, and the UK had four experts,

¹ In addition, policy evaluation on various other programs of public diplomacy has been conducted. For example, Song (2019) provides reviews on development aid, volunteer work, and training programs of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Lee (2019) advocates South Korea's PKO activities as a liaison between security and public diplomacy, and Shin (2019) identifies global health diplomacy as an area of emerging importance.

respectively, and Germany three. For the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Spain, two experts participated in the evaluation of each country. The public perceptions of the other countries were evaluated by one expert for each (see Appendix A for details).

The survey was conducted online in December 2020 and the experts were contacted by email invitation. Upon the completion of the survey questionnaire, a remuneration of EUR 100 was provided. The survey questionnaire comprises six parts including both hard and soft dimensions of a country's performance: namely, politics, economy and development, technology and science, contemporary culture, tradition and history, and education. Each dimension includes 4–7 questions and in total, 33 questions were asked in the survey (see Appendix C for the full questionnaire). All questions were made obligatory and therefore no question was left unanswered.

3.2. Validity of the Survey Outcomes

The major strength of an expert survey is to provide informed opinions that can elucidate public attitudes and perceptions in respective countries in an efficient manner, especially when surveys with broad ranges of general publics are unavailable or too costly. Nonetheless, this approach is inherently subject to a methodological challenge regarding whether and to what extent expert evaluation can represent public perceptions. In this study, the experts recruited for the survey are professors and researchers of good standings in Korean studies in leading academic institutes in Europe and therefore, the level of their expertise relevant to the scope of the survey is expected to be high. Furthermore, in the survey, they were explicitly requested and reminded to appraise public perceptions of South Korea in their countries with their best knowledge instead of providing their own opinions about South Korea. Such clarity of the survey likely reduced measurement errors caused by misunderstanding of questions. However, how precisely they evaluated actual public opinions remains as an issue. Especially, as the survey relied on a small number (1–4) of experts for each country, the outcomes are not free of personal biases. Thereby, we address this challenge in this section by examining the representativeness of the findings through various methods.

First, the consistency of the answers is inspected with the assumption that if the experts provided their answers in a more consistent manner, the survey outcomes would be less random and therefore more closely reflect the reality of the public perceptions. Accordingly, a correlation test is implemented in order to identify the degree of commonality in answers across the six dimensions of the survey, following Rodger and Nicewander (1988). The results show that the correlations of the answers of each expert are positive in all six areas: Pearson correlation coefficients $r = 0.20-0.78$ (see Table 1). These positive correlations corroborate that the expert evaluation was conducted in a consistent manner to a large extent. Moreover, as all six dimensions are positively correlated with one another, they are likely to share the common latent value of the public perceptions, enhancing the validity of the expert opinions.

Table 1.
Correlations of the Expert Evaluation across the Six Dimensions (n = 34)

	Politics	Economics and Dev.	Technology and Science	Contemporary Culture	Trad. and History	Education
Politics	1.00					
Economics and Dev.	0.65	1.00				
Technology and Science	0.54	0.78	1.00			
Contemporary Culture	0.47	0.29	0.29	1.00		
Tradition and History	0.25	0.20	0.21	0.48	1.00	
Education	0.40	0.53	0.55	0.31	0.35	1.00

Note: Pearson correlation coefficients are presented.

Second, the representativeness of each expert's opinion is tested by comparing the answers between experts from the same country. In this survey, the public perceptions in eight countries were assessed by more than one expert. Accordingly, their answers are examined by a correlation test. If within-country correlations are high, one can assure a high level of representativeness of each expert's evaluation. The results of the Pearson correlation test show that the correlations are higher than 0.50 in most countries: $r = 0.55$ - 0.68 for the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, and the UK. In other words, in these seven countries, different experts agreed on their evaluation on the majority of the questions examined. For the Netherlands, the correlation is somewhat lower: $r = 0.43$, suggesting that the two experts often provided conflicting views on the public perceptions in their country. Nonetheless, the generally high level of commonality in the evaluation within a country substantiates the representation of the expert evaluation to a fairly high degree.

4. Empirical Evidence

4.1. Aggregate Analysis of the European Public Perceptions

Public Knowledge about South Korea in Europe

We begin with the question about how well South Korea is known to the public in Europe. We asked the experts to evaluate the level of public knowledge about the country in general and in each of the six dimensions. As presented in Table 2, the general knowledge of the public about South Korea is not high in Europe. The majority of the experts rated the level relatively low – having ‘*know a little bit*’ as the most frequently answered category. Only one expert (Poland) evaluated it very highly and two (Bulgaria and Slovenia) relatively highly.

In the dimensional evaluation, however, the experts expressed relatively high levels of public knowledge about the economy, technology and science, and contemporary culture of South Korea. 29.4, 35.3, and 23.5 percent of the respondents, respectively, answered either ‘*know very well*’ or ‘*know relatively well*’. Especially, three experts (Bulgaria, Italy, and Ireland) assessed the level of public knowledge about the technology and science of South Korea in their respective countries very highly. In contrast, the estimated levels of public knowledge about the politics, tradition and history, and education of South Korea are low. No one found that the public knew about the politics and tradition and history of the country well. Only two experts (Bulgaria and Ireland) answered that the general public in their countries knew relatively well about education in South Korea.

Table 2.
Public Knowledge about South Korea in Europe

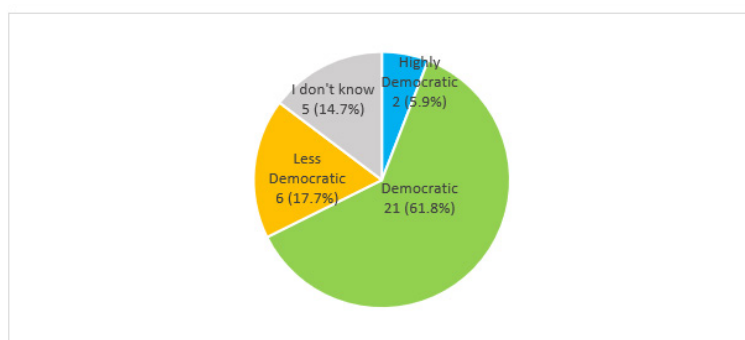
	General	Politics	Econ. and Dev.	Tech. and Sci.	Cont. Culture	Trad. and History	Edu.
Know very well	1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	0	3 (8.8%)	0	0	0
Know relatively well	2 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	10 (29.4%)	9 (26.5%)	8 (23.5%)	0	2 (5.9%)
Know averagely	9 (26.5%)	1 (2.9%)	9 (26.5%)	11 (32.4%)	10 (29.45%)	2 (5.9%)	7 (20.1%)
Know a little bit	21 (61.8%)	21 (61.8%)	14 (41.2%)	10 (29.45%)	14 (41.2%)	16 (47.05%)	16 (47.05%)
Know nothing	1 (2.9%)	12 (35.3%)	1 (2.9%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (5.9%)	16 (47.05%)	9 (26.5%)
No. Experts	34	34	34	34	34	34	34

Note: 19 countries, 2020.

Politics

Despite the low level of public knowledge, the political quality of South Korea is perceived relatively positively in Europe. First, most experts agreed on the public recognition of South Korea as a democratic country: 61.8 percent for ‘*democratic*’ and 5.9 percent ‘*very democratic*’ (see Figure 1). However, 17.7 percent suggested ‘*less democratic*’ as the public perception in this dimension. No one rated the perceived level of South Korea’s democracy as ‘*not democratic at all*’.

Figure 1.
Public Perceptions of South Korea’s Democracy in Europe



Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

Also, the majority of the experts evaluated the public perceptions of governmental responsiveness and citizen participation in South Korea positively. 61.8 percent answered that the government of South Korea was perceived as being responsive to its citizens' needs: 5.9 percent for *'highly responsive'* and 55.9 percent for *'responsive'*. Only 8.8 percent evaluated the perceived level of the responsiveness negatively, while about a third (10 experts) expressed *'I don't know'*. Meanwhile, 58.8 percent of the experts estimated that people in their countries regarded South Korean citizens as being active: 5.9 percent for *'highly active'* and 52.9 percent for *'active'*. 12 percent suggested either less or not active at all as their evaluation and 29 percent provided no evaluation (i.e., *'I don't know'*).

The experts further selected the most frequently named political themes of South Korea by people in their countries (Table 3). In this multiple-choice question, almost all experts – 33 out of 34 – chose *'conflicts between North and South Korea'* as the dominant political topic, followed by democracy movements (29.4 percent) and corruption (17.6 percent). This result shows that in Europe, inter-Korean tensions overshadow other political issues of South Korea. In open-end answers, three experts listed the health care politics and Covid-19-related governance of South Korea, reflecting growing public awareness of South Korea's pandemic management today.

Table 3.
Important Political Topics of South Korea Perceived by the Public in Europe

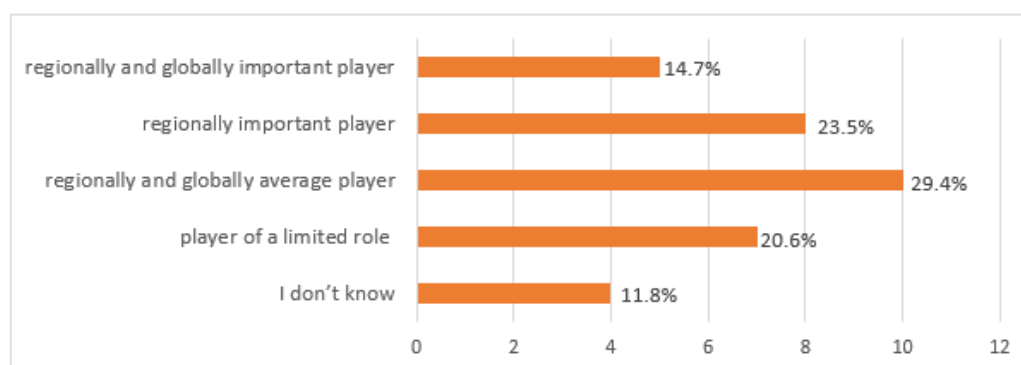
Topic	Number of Answers	Ratio
Democracy Movements	10	29.4%
Corruption	6	17.6%
E-Governance	2	5.9%
Conflicts between North and South Korea	33	97.1%
Other Answers	4	11.8%
	Health care politics, Covid-19 related governance (2), Catholic politicians (e.g., President Moon)	

Note: multiple-choice question, 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

In a related question, the experts were asked to estimate the public perceptions of South Korea's handling of inter-Korea relations. The overall evaluation ranges between neutral and positive; 52.9 percent of neutral (neither positive nor negative) assessments and 35.4 percent of either very positive or positive ones. Only one expert provided a negative evaluation and three reserved from evaluation (i.e., *'I don't know'*).

Lastly, the experts rated South Korea's perceived position in international politics (Figure 2). 38.2 percent suggested South Korea as a regionally and/or globally important player in their respective countries: 23.5 percent for *'regionally important'* and 14.7 percent for *'regionally and globally important'*. 29.4 percent evaluated that South Korea was perceived as an average player and 20.6 percent as playing a limited role. Presumably, this mixed result mirrors South Korea's ambiguous position as an emerging but not yet well-recognized middle power in regional and global politics.

Figure 2.
South Korea's Role in International Politics Perceived by the Public in Europe



Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

Economy and Technology/Science

The dimension of the economy of South Korea incorporates questions on the country's developmental and economic status and commercial products. In evaluating the public perceptions of South Korea's developmental status (Figure 3), most experts (76.5 percent) rated South Korea perceived as a well-developed country with wealth and functioning institutions. However, 14.7 percent estimated the public perceptions of South Korea as a developing country with remaining developmental agendas. No one suggested '*South Korea as being impoverished and underdeveloped*'.

In a follow-up question about South Korea's income level (wealth and life quality), the expert evaluation provides similar results. 61.8 percent assessed South Korea perceived as a high-income country with decent life quality, while 32.4 percent suggested a middle-income country as public appraisal in their countries. No expert found South Korea perceived as a low-income country. Overall, South Korea is generally regarded as a well-developed, high income country but it is still treated as a middle-income country to a considerable degree (by almost a third of the expert assessments). This contradicts South Korea's actual status as a high-income country designated by the World Bank since 1994 with its per capita income level of USD 44,292 (purchasing power parity) that ranked the country 24th in the world in 2019.² This finding may provide evidence of the undervaluation of South Korea's current status, which may have been caused by delayed update of information and/or cultural biases against the country in Europe.³

When the experts were inquired to evaluate the perceived position of South Korea in the global economy (Figure 4), the majority agreed on its importance (58.8 percent). However, about a third of the experts (32.4 percent) estimated the perceived importance as an average level and 5.9 percent as small. None of the experts selected '*highly important*' or '*unimportant*'. While the overall perception of South Korea's economic position is positive in Europe, more than a third of the experts (38.3 percent) do not endorse its perceived importance, despite the significant economic size of the country (South Korea is the 10th largest economy⁴ in the world according to the World

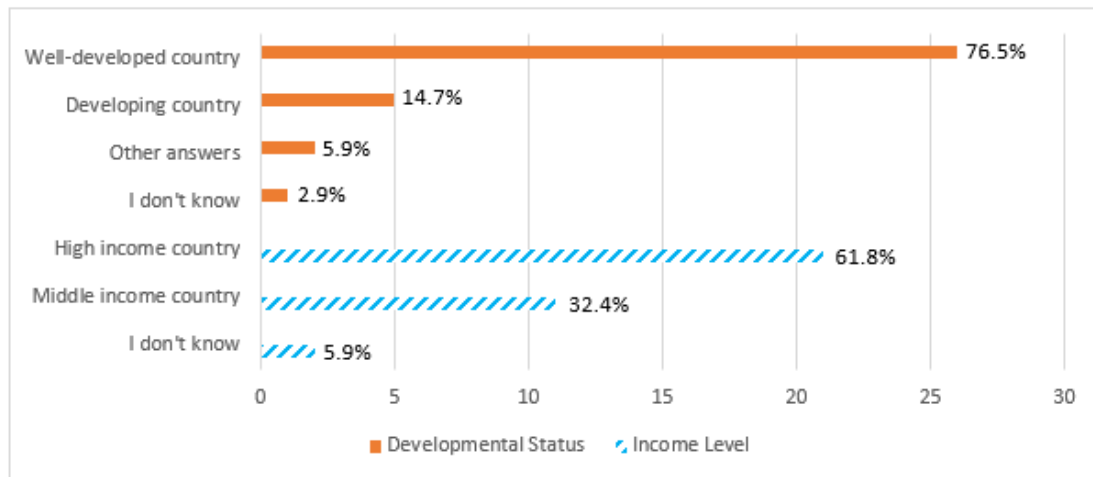
² According to the estimates of the International Monetary Fund, South Korea's income level (purchasing power parity) is higher than that of the United Kingdom (USD 44,288, 25th) and Japan (USD 41,637, 28th). The World Bank ranks South Korea somewhat lower at 31st with the per capita income of USD 43,143 – just below Japan

³ Alternatively, people in Europe may not clearly distinguish between North and South Korea and thus, the undervaluation of South Korea's economic status can partly be attributed to such confusion in public minds.

⁴ South Korea is ranked 10th in the nominal term and 14th in the purchasing power parity term.

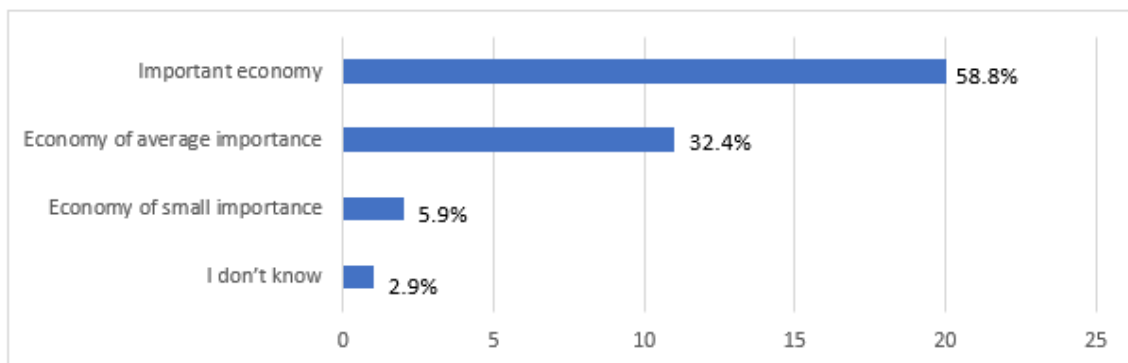
Bank, 2019). Alike to the assessments on South Korea’s development and income level above, the underestimation of the country’s status remains noticeable here.

Figure 3.
Public Perceptions of South Korea’s Development and Income Level in Europe



Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

Figure 4.
South Korea’s Position in the Global Economy Perceived by the Public in Europe



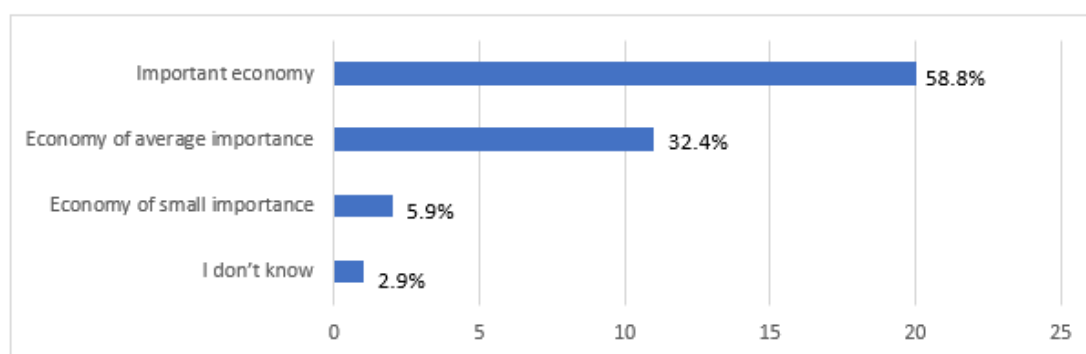
Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

In addition to the macroeconomic conditions such as wealth and economic size, the experts further evaluated public perceptions of the commercial and corporate aspects of the country. In the question about commonly well-known products ‘made in Korea’ (multiple choice), most experts selected computer and information-communication technology (ICT) products including smartphones (91.2 percent), followed by household appliances (e.g., TV, washing machines, and refrigerators, 76.5 percent), automobiles (73.5 percent), cultural goods (e.g., music recordings, films, and books, 58.8 percent), cosmetic (44.1 percent), clothes (2.9 percent), and processed foods (e.g., Kimchi, 5.8 percent). Evidently, South Korea is regarded as a technology-driven producer in Europe. At the same time, it is also perceived as a cultural creator, probably facilitated by the growing recognition of South Korea’s popular culture – the Korean Wave (Cho 2021). In addition,

South Korean products are overall seen as having good quality with relatively low prices (64.7 percent). About a third of the experts (32.4 percent) suggested South Korea as having both high quality and high price. No one assessed South Korean products perceived as overpriced or low quality-low priced ones.

In the evaluation of technology and science (see Figure 5), South Korea is generally seen as having a high level of technological development (79.4 percent). Only five experts (14.7 percent) estimated that the public in their countries did not perceive South Korea as technologically advanced or they were unaware of its technological development. In a related question on the quality of South Korean technological products (e.g., cars, computers, ICT goods, machinery, medical devices, etc.), the expert evaluation exhibits similar findings. 73.5 percent suggested South Korean technological products perceived as having high quality in public minds. Only 26.4 percent selected the assessments of low quality or public unawareness of South Korean technology.

Figure 5.
The Level of South Korea's Technological Development
and the Quality of its Technological Products Perceived by the Public in Europe

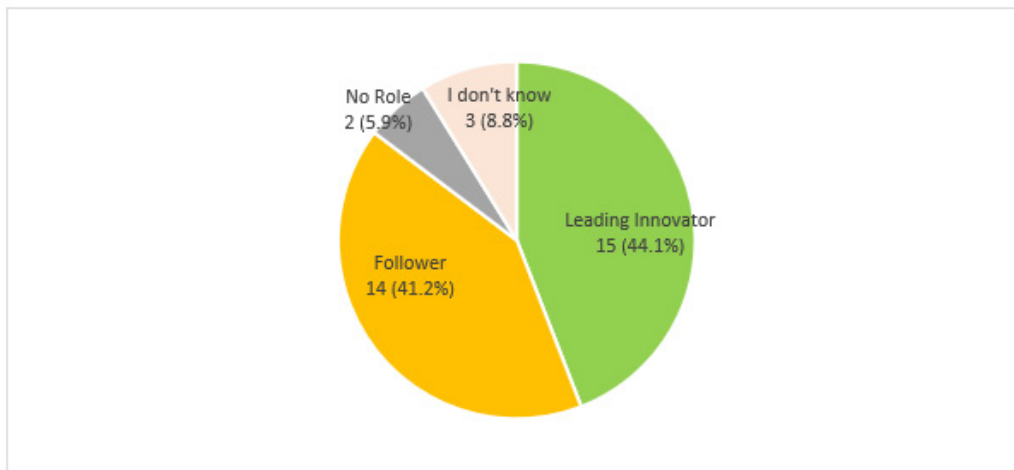


Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

Additionally, the experts suggested the followings South Korean technological products as well recognized by the public in their countries: ICT (94.1 percent), flat screens and displays (70.1 percent), automobiles (67.6 percent), and semiconductors (35.3 percent) – all of which are high-value added products requiring high levels of technology.

While South Korea is commonly accepted as a technologically advanced country, public opinions on its role in innovation are divided (Figure 6). 44.2 percent of the experts rated South Korea perceived as undertaking a role as a leading innovator (*proactive role*) in the fields of science and technology, but 41.2 percent evaluated its perceived role as a follower (*reactive role*) instead of a lead role. The almost evenly divided assessments between the two positions may signal South Korea's transition in its role in the global economy: having started as a late comer but currently emerging as a technological trendsetter.

Figure 6.
The Role of South Korea in Innovation Perceived by the Public in Europe



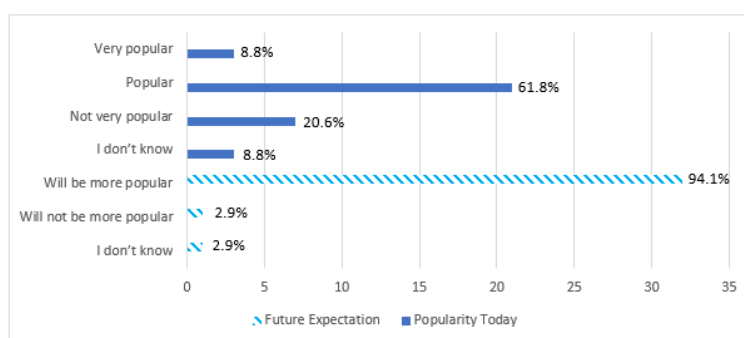
Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

Contemporary Culture, Tradition/History, and Education

This section presents the results of the expert evaluation on the public perceptions of South Korea’s cultural aspects: contemporary culture, tradition and history, and education. The findings disclose a contrast in European public perceptions between South Korea’s contemporary and traditional culture. In Europe, the contemporary culture of South Korea is relatively well received but recognition on its tradition is low. 70.6 percent of the experts answered that South Korean contemporary culture was (very) popular in their respective countries (see Figure 7). Especially, three experts rated its popularity very highly: two experts in the United Kingdom and one in Romania. On the other hand, 20.6 percent found it not very popular, but none of them rated the level of popularity as ‘not popular at all’.

In a related question, most experts (94.1 percent) predicted that the contemporary culture of South Korea would become more popular in their countries in the future, signaling growing interests in South Korean culture in Europe. This is corroborated by the following question on the popularity of South Korean contemporary culture among young people, in that 85.3 percent rated the level of its popularity relatively positively (medium to very high).

Figure 7.
The Popularity of South Korean Contemporary Culture Today and in the Future Perceived by the Public in Europe



Note: 34 experts, 19 countries, 2020.

However, the results show that the contemporary culture of South Korea did not receive a high level of media coverage despite its popularity. None of the experts evaluated the level of media attention as *'very high'* or *'high'*. Instead, the majority (85.3 percent) found it *'low'* or *'very low'*. 14.7 percent estimated the level as *'medium'*. This low level of media coverage in European countries is probably responsible for the low level of public knowledge about South Korea presented in Table 2.

In evaluating specific genres of South Korean contemporary culture (multiple choice), most experts (91.2 percent) suggested K-Pop as popular, followed by movies (61.8 percent), TV programs (55.9 percent), food (44.1 percent), computer games (41.2 percent), fashion and beauty (38.2 percent), and comics (including Webtoon, 17.6 percent). The genres evaluated as popular correspond to the composition of Korean Wave contents. In contrast, the popularity of non-Korean Wave genres is generally low: classic music (2.9 percent), literature (5.9 percent), sports (2.9 percent), and traditional music (0).

Unlike the popularity of contemporary Korean culture, Europeans are generally not interested in Korean tradition and history, according to the experts. In this dimension, most experts (73.5 percent) evaluated the level of public interests low (either not much interested or not interested at all). Only 23.5 percent estimated that people in their countries were interested in Korean tradition and history, but no one suggested a very high level of public interests.

Such a low level of public interests can partly be attributed to the low level of accessibility of Korean traditional and historical artifacts, as well as limited media coverage on Korean tradition and history in European countries. 79.4 percent of the experts appraised that Korean artifacts (e.g., museum collections, exhibitions, etc.) were not accessible to the public in their countries. 20.6 percent answered that they were accessible but not highly accessible. The level of media coverage on Korean tradition and history was estimated even lower in European countries. Most experts (67.6 percent) evaluated it very low and 29.4 percent suggested low. Only one expert rated it as a medium level and none of them estimated a high or very high level of media coverage. This finding reveals the areas of weaknesses in South Korea's public diplomacy in Europe – i.e., local media contact as a communication tool with the public.

Lastly, the experts evaluated public perceptions of education in South Korea. Unlike the other dimensions, the evaluation in education entails too many answers of *'I don't know'* (between 20 and 35 percent).⁵ This suggests that South Korean education is relatively unknown in Europe, somewhat surprising given the country's rigorous education systems and high performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In specific, 53 percent evaluated the perceived quality of higher education in South Korea as either very high (5.9 percent) or high (47.1 percent). 20.1 percent chose an *'average level'* and 5.9 percent *'low quality'*. None of the experts evaluated it as *'very low quality'*. However, a fifth (20.1 percent) expressed that they were unable to evaluate (i.e., *'I don't know'*).

In further questions on educational equity and internationalization of universities, the results are more mixed. Slightly more experts evaluated the public perceptions of educational equity⁶ in South Korea as *'relatively equal'* (35.3 percent), compared to the negative perceptions of *'relatively unequal'* (20.6 percent) and *'very unequal'* (8.8 percent). No one suggested *'very equal'* as the public perception. Nonetheless, more than a third of the experts (35.3 percent) did not provide assessments by choosing *'I don't know'*. In contrast, the evaluated public perceptions of the

⁵ Note that experts who chose *'I don't know'* as their answers indicated that they were unable to evaluate how the public perceived education in South Korea (this answer does not mean that the experts themselves were unaware of education in South Korea).

⁶ Hereby, educational equity is defined as providing equal opportunities for everyone regardless of social class, gender, family background, etc.

internationalization of South Korean universities⁷ are somewhat more negative: ‘not well-internationalized’ (38.3 percent) vs. ‘international’ (32.4 percent). No one selected an answer at either extreme (‘very international’ or ‘not international at all’). However, 29.4 percent did not provide their evaluation (i.e., choosing ‘I don’t know’).

4.2. Comparative Analysis across 19 European Countries

In this section, public perceptions are further analyzed for each European country and the results are compared across the countries. To do so, we rate the level of public perceptions of each of the six dimensions for each country by quantifying the answers in the following way. Answers to each question are measured on a five-point scale that reflects the degree of positive perceptions – i.e., a higher score corresponds to a more positive answer. Accordingly, when a question offers five choices of answers, the answers are scaled as {5, 4, 3, 2, 1}, ordered from the most positive to the least positive one. With four choices of answers, the scale is adjusted to {5, 3.7, 2.3, 1}, and with three choices, it is {5, 3, 1}. In the process of quantification, we exclude (multiple-choice) questions that do not determine the degree of positive or negative perceptions (they are Q.5 in politics, Q.5 in economy and development, Q.5 in technology and science, and Q.3 and Q.4 in contemporary culture, see Appendix C). Hence, the numbers of questions used for the scoring are: $\{N_{poli} = 6, N_{econ_dev} = 5, N_{tech_sci} = 4, N_{con_cul} = 4, N_{trad_his} = 4, N_{edu} = 4\}$. Using the quantified outcomes, we compute the country score of each dimension as formulated in Equation 1 below.

$$Score_{d,c} = \sum_i \sum_q Score_{i,q} / i \cdot q \quad (1)$$

, where d (dimension) = {1, ..., 6}

c (country) = {1, ..., 19}

q (number of questions) = {1, ..., 6}_{poli}, {1, ..., 5}_{econ_dev}, {1, ..., 4}_{tech_sci, con_cult, trad_his, edu}

i (number of experts for each country) = {1}, {1, 2}, {1, 2, 3}, {1, 2, 3, 4}

Each question in each dimension enters the equation with an equal weight. When a multiple number of experts evaluated the public perception of a country, the country score takes the average score of all experts. This survey includes no missing answers (as all questions were obligatory to answer), but the answer choice of ‘I don’t know’ is treated as a missing value which is imputed as an average value of all answered questions of expert i in dimension d. As the country score of each dimension is computed as an average score of all questions in the respective dimension for the respective country, it ranges from 1 (most negative) to 5 (most positive).

The overall country score of public perceptions is the average score of all six dimensions for each country that is rescaled on a 100-point scale (i.e., 5×20), as denoted in Equation 2 below.

$$Overall_Score_c = [\sum_d Score_{d,c} / 6] \times 20 \quad (2)$$

, where d (dimension) = {1, ..., 6}

c (country) = {1, ..., 19}

⁷ Hereby, internationalization of universities is evaluated by the degree of welcoming and providing opportunities for international students.

As public perceptions were assessed by a small number of experts for each country, the country scores are subject to measurement errors caused by personal biases and thus require caution in generalizing them. Hence, we provide conservative estimates by equating countries of which overall scores lie inside the 95 percent confidence interval ($= \pm 3.67$). Accordingly, countries in this interval are placed in the same rank and the rankings are grouped into four tiers: tier 1 (high level of public perception), 2 (high-middle), 3 (low-middle), and 4 (low). The overall country scores range from 30.58 to 77.81 with a mean score of 60.15. Thereby, the countries with a score above the mean are classified as tier 1 (a score of 70 or higher) or 2 (between 60 and 70), and the others below the mean as tier 3 (between 50 and 60) or 4 (below 50). The actual range of scores in each tier does not exceed the 95 percent confidence interval (i.e., $3.67 \times 2 = 7.34$), except tier 4 that includes only two countries with the two lowest scores (see Table 4). By and large, the four tiers correspond to positive, above-average, below-average, and negative perceptions, respectively. The detailed country scores and rankings are provided in Appendix B for further information (caution is required in interpreting the full rankings, as discussed above).

As presented in Table 4, four countries are classified as tier 1 with a high level of public perceptions: Portugal, Bulgaria, Ireland, and Poland. These countries show relatively positive public perceptions in most dimensions analyzed. Tier 2 includes six countries – Lithuania, Romania, the UK, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and France – whose answers are either positive or neutral on average. The groups of the lower rankings consist of seven countries (Italy, Austria, Sweden, Slovakia, Spain, Germany, Belgium) for tier 3 and two (the Netherlands and Denmark) for tier 4. Overall, Eastern European countries tend to express more positive opinions about South Korea (with the exception of Slovakia), while perceptions are generally more negative in Northern and Central Europe. Public perceptions in Southern and Latin Europe are mixed: positive (Portugal, tier 1), relatively positive (France, tier 2), and relatively negative (Italy and Spain, tier 3). The two English speaking countries – Ireland and the UK – show more positive public opinions about South Korea (tier 2). Such varying degrees of public perceptions in Europe are likely related to different levels of countries' exposure to and acceptance of South Korea (we will discuss this point more in detail in Section 5).

Table 4.
Overall Country Tier-Rankings of Public Perceptions of South Korea in Europe
(19 countries, 2020)

Tier (score range)	Countries
Tier 1: high (72.65–77.81)	Portugal, Bulgaria, Ireland, Poland
Tier 2: high-middle (67.53–61.32)	Lithuania, Romania, UK, Slovenia, Czech, France
Tier 3: low-middle (52.54–57.68)	Italy, Austria, Sweden, Slovakia, Spain, Germany, Belgium
Tier 4: low (50 or lower)	Netherlands, Denmark
Mean (Std. Dev.)	60.15 (1.80)

Table 5 presents country rankings in each of the six dimensions. The countries are sub-grouped into one of the four tiers based on their sub-scores measured on a five-point scale (see Equation 1): tier 1 (a score of 4 or higher), 2 (between 3 and 4), 3 (between 2 and 3), and 4 (a score of 2 or lower). In politics, the majority of the countries (11) are ranked as tier 3 or 4 with less than positive public perceptions. However, positive opinions also coexist to a considerable degree: in eight countries, the evaluation is (relatively) positive (tier 1 or 2). Especially, the public perceptions in Portugal and Bulgaria are most positive, in that people there regarded South Korea as having democracy with well-functioning institutions (tier 1). In contrast, the Netherlands and Denmark exhibit the most negative public perceptions (tier 4).

In the domains of the economy/development and technology/science of South Korea, public perceptions in Europe are most positive as presented in Section 4.1. In fact, all countries, except Denmark, are ranked as tier 1 or 2 for both dimensions, with half of them in tier 1 (nine countries for the economy/development and ten for the technology/science).

Table 5.
Tier-Rankings of Public Perceptions of South Korea in Europe, by dimension
(19 countries, 2020)

Tier (score range)	Politics	Economy and Development	Technology and Science
Tier 1: high (4–5)	Portugal, Bulgaria	Bulgaria, Poland, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, Romania, Czech, Sweden, Lithuania	Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, France, UK, Italy, Czech, Sweden
Tier 2: high-middle (3–4)	Poland, Slovenia, Romania, Czech, UK, Ireland	Austria, France, UK, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands	Slovenia, Spain, Romania, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Slovakia, Netherlands
Tier 3: low-middle (2–3)	France, Austria, Lithuania, Italy, Spain Slovakia, Belgium, Sweden, Germany		
Tier 4: low (1–2)	Netherlands, Denmark	Denmark	Denmark
Mean (Std. Dev.)	2.83 (0.14)	3.81 (0.12)	4.00 (0.13)
Tier (score range)	Contemporary Culture	Tradition and History	Education
Tier 1: high (4–5)			Ireland
Tier 2: high-middle (3–4)	Portugal, Romania, UK, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Poland, Ireland	Portugal	Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, Austria
Tier 3: low-middle (2–3)	Czech, France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Slovakia, Austria, Spain	Ireland, Poland, Lithuania, Denmark, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech, Slovenia, UK	Sweden, Spain, France, Czech, UK, Slovenia, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium
Tier 4: low (1–2)	Sweden	Germany, Sweden, Slovakia, Italy, Romania, Netherlands, Austria, France, Spain	Denmark, Slovakia
Mean (Std. Dev.)	2.83 (0.12)	1.93 (0.08)	2.63 (0.15)

In contrast, fewer countries are ranked highly regarding their public perceptions of South Korean culture, tradition, and education. No country reported the high level of public perceptions (tier 1) in the domains of contemporary culture and tradition/history, while it is Ireland only for education. For the contemporary culture and education, most countries are ranked in the middle (tier 2 or 3) – 18 countries for contemporary culture and 16 for education. On the contrary, in the dimension of tradition and history, 18 countries are placed lower with negative perceptions (tier 3 or 4) and only one (Portugal) with a relatively high rank of tier 2.

Overall, European public perceptions are more positive with the economy and technology of South Korea, probably as a result of the country's fast economic growth and technological advancement. The mixed opinions about South Korean politics, contemporary cultures, and education may reflect its emerging but not yet established position in Europe, as the country has started gaining recognition only recently, for instance through its candlelight rallies and participatory democracy, the Korean Wave, and high educational attainments. The negative perceptions of South Korean tradition and history likely mirror unfamiliarity with South Korea's past in European countries.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the expert survey unveil a mixed picture of South Korea in Europe. Generally speaking, South Korea is neither very well-known to nor perceived as important by the European public. Nonetheless, the public perceptions of South Korea in the different areas of performance vary to a considerable degree. While the public recognizes the economic and technological development of South Korea relatively well, the country's perceived standing in political and cultural areas is more mixed and not very high in public minds in Europe. The findings of our analysis offer several implications on South Korea's public diplomacy in Europe.

First, our analysis reveals the undervaluation of South Korea in key areas of performance. For instance, nearly a fifth of the experts suggested South Korea perceived as less democratic in their countries, despite its standing as full democracy evaluated by the Global Democracy Index 2020 (Economist Intelligence Unit 2021) with a global ranking of 23rd. Furthermore, its economic wealth is underestimated to a considerable degree. A third of the evaluators entitled South Korea as a middle-income country, in contrast to its high-income level ranked 24th worldwide (see Section 4.1). This undervaluation hints at the 'Korea discount', in that the public image of South Korea abroad is often substantially worse than the country's actual achievements. Moreover, about 50 percent of the experts did not find South Korea perceived as politically important and almost 40 percent of them did not endorse its perceived economic importance in public minds. Particularly, North Korea affairs overshadow most other agendas in politics, which likely impair the country's image abroad. This evidence of the 'Korea discount' signifies South Korea's challenges in elevating itself as a recognizable international player in the world.

Second, our study, nonetheless, suggests several positive signals. In 2020, South Korea successfully managed Covid-19 pandemic and its pandemic governance has internationally been recognized (Cho et al. 2020). Such recognition is also reported in this survey – for example, several experts named South Korea's pandemic management as an important theme of its governance.

Whether this can have a lasting effect and to what extent South Korea can utilize this gained recognition to improve the country's public image in the future is to be seen. Also, this survey corroborates the positive public perceptions of South Korea's recent successes in technology and popular culture, highlighting the areas of the country's strengths that can be used to build its public image as an innovator and cultural creator.

Third, our results disentangle regional differences in Europe. South Korea is more positively perceived in Eastern Europe and English-speaking countries, while public opinions are mixed in Southern and Latin Europe and negative in Central and Northern Europe. Such varying degrees of recognition can partly be attributed to different levels of exposure to South Korea. At the same time, it can also be explained by different levels of multicultural acceptance to the emerging Asian country in different parts of Europe. Thereby, one can find public diplomacy as an interactive outcome of actions and reactions on both flip sides of sender and recipient countries.

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Appendix A. List of Participating Countries

Country	Number of Participants
Austria	1
Belgium	1
Bulgaria	1
Czech Republic	2
Denmark	1
France	4
Germany	3
Ireland	1
Italy	4
Lithuania	1
Netherlands	2
Romania	1
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	2
Spain	2
Sweden	1
Poland	1
Portugal	1
United Kingdom	4
19 countries	34

Appendix B. Public Perceptions of South Korea in Europe, Country Rankings (19 Countries, 2020)

Country	Overall		Politics		Economy/Dev.		Tech./Sci.		Cont. Culture		Tradition/His.		Education	
	Score (1-100)	Ranking	Score (1-5)	Ranking	Score (1-5)	Ranking	Score (1-5)	Ranking	Score (1-5)	Ranking	Score (1-5)	Ranking	Score (1-5)	Ranking
Portugal	77.81	1	4.07	1	4.40	3	4.50	5	3.68	1	3.35	1	3.35	5
Bulgaria	76.81	2	4.02	2	4.60	1	5.00	1	3.43	4	2.15	6	3.85	2
Ireland	74.85	3	3.05	8	4.40	3	5.00	1	3.18	5	2.60	2	4.23	1
Poland	72.65	4	3.42	3	4.60	1	4.75	3	3.18	5	2.25	3	3.60	3
Lithuania	67.53	5	2.83	11	4.00	9	4.75	3	3.18	5	2.25	3	3.25	6
Romania	66.49	6	3.28	5	4.14	6	3.75	12	3.50	2	1.68	15	3.60	3
UK	64.57	7	3.22	7	3.91	12	4.31	7	3.50	2	2.00	10	2.43	12
Slovenia	63.57	8	3.40	4	4.17	5	3.88	11	3.18	5	2.03	8	2.43	12
Czech	63.44	9	3.25	6	4.14	6	4.25	9	2.81	9	2.03	8	2.58	11
France	61.32	10	2.91	9	3.92	11	4.38	6	2.72	10	1.63	18	2.87	10
Italy	57.68	11	2.83	11	3.87	13	4.27	8	2.50	14	1.72	14	2.13	15
Austria	57.57	12	2.85	10	3.94	10	3.50	14	2.33	16	1.65	17	3.00	7
Sweden	57.33	13	2.43	15	4.14	6	4.00	10	1.83	19	1.90	12	2.90	8
Slovakia	56.94	14	2.62	14	3.74	14	3.25	17	2.33	16	1.90	12	1.00	18
Spain	56.14	15	2.80	13	3.64	15	3.75	12	2.33	16	1.45	19	2.88	9
Germany	53.71	16	2.38	17	3.45	16	3.42	15	2.70	11	1.99	11	2.18	14
Belgium	52.54	17	2.43	15	3.18	17	3.33	16	2.68	12	2.15	6	2.00	16
Netherlands	46.09	18	1.28	18	3.14	18	3.25	17	2.51	13	1.67	16	2.00	16
Denmark	30.58	19	1.00	19	1.00	19	1.50	19	2.43	15	2.25	3	1.00	18
Mean (Std. Dev.)	60.15 (1.80)		2.83 (0.14)		3.81 (0.12)		4.00 (0.13)		2.83 (0.12)		1.93 (0.08)		2.63 (0.15)	

Appendix C. Survey Questionnaire

Annual Survey on South Korea's Public Diplomacy

This survey aims to investigate how the general public in Europe perceives South Korea's images and performance in key areas of society. To do so, we ask Korea experts in Europe to provide their assessments on the public perceptions in their countries. The areas of the evaluation include six focal aspects: (1) politics, (2) economy, (3) technology, (4) contemporary culture, (5) tradition and history, and (6) education.

The survey is managed by the KDIS-FU IKS Korea-Europe Center at the Institute of Korean Studies, Free University of Berlin (Director: Prof. Dr. Eun-Jeung Lee) and supported by the Korea Development Institute's School of Public Policy and Management. This survey will be conducted and updated on an annual basis. Questions related to the survey can be forwarded to Dr. Seo-Young Cho (scho@zedat.fu-berlin.de).

All questions are required to be answered.

Disclaimer: The results of the survey will be used for academic purposes only. Anonymity will be strictly observed, and the data collected will be treated strictly confidential.

Note: **The focus of this survey is to provide expert evaluation of public perceptions. Therefore, please evaluate based on your best knowledge and observations: how the general public in your country perceives South Korea in the respective aspect of the question, instead of expressing your own perceptions.**

General

In your observation, how well do people in your country know about South Korea?

- (1) Know very well
- (2) Know relatively well
- (3) Know on the average level
- (4) Know a little bit
- (5) Know nothing
- (6) I don't know.

I. Politics

1. **In your observation, how well do people in your country know about South Korean politics?**
 - (1) Know very well
 - (2) Know relatively well
 - (3) Know on the average level
 - (4) Know a little bit
 - (5) Know nothing
 - (6) I don't know.

2. **How do people in your country perceive South Korea's democracy?**
 - (1) Highly democratic
 - (2) Democratic
 - (3) Less democratic
 - (4) Not democratic at all
 - (5) I don't know.

3. **To what extent do people in your country perceive the government of South Korea as responsive to its citizens' needs?**
 - (1) Highly responsive
 - (2) Responsive
 - (3) Less responsive
 - (4) Not responsive at all
 - (5) I don't know.

4. **How do people in your country perceive citizens' participation in South Korea?**
 - (1) Highly active
 - (2) Active
 - (3) Less active
 - (4) Not active at all
 - (5) I don't know.

5. **When people in your country think about South Korean politics, which topics are most likely to be thought of? (multiple choice)**
 - (1) Democracy movements
 - (2) Corruption
 - (3) E-Governance
 - (4) Conflicts between North and South Korea
 - (5) Other answer: please specify_____
 - (6) I don't know.

6. How do people in your country perceive South Korea's management of inter-Korea relationship (i.e., North Korea affairs)?

- (1) Very positive
- (2) Positive
- (3) Neutral (neither positive nor negative)
- (4) Negative
- (5) Very negative
- (6) I don't know.

7. How do people in your country perceive South Korea's role in international politics?

- (1) South Korea is an important player both regionally in Northeast Asia and globally.
- (2) South Korea is an important player in the Northeast Asian region but is less important in the world politics.
- (3) South Korea is an average player regionally and globally.
- (4) South Korea plays a limited role regionally and globally.
- (5) I don't know.

II. Economy and Development

1. How well do people in your country know about the economy of South Korea?

- (1) Know very well
- (2) Know relatively well
- (3) Know on the average level
- (4) Know a little bit
- (5) Know nothing
- (6) I don't know.

2. How do people in your country perceive South Korea's developmental status in general? Which description best represents the public perceptions?

- (1) South Korea is perceived as a well-developed country with wealth and functioning institutions.
- (2) South Korea is perceived as a developing country which has many remaining developmental agendas.
- (3) South Korea is perceived negatively as being impoverished and underdeveloped.
- (4) Other answer: please specify_____
- (5) I don't know.

3. How do people in your country perceive South Korea's economic position in the global economy?

- (1) South Korea's economy is highly important in the global economy.
- (2) South Korea's economy is important in the global economy.
- (3) South Korea's economy is an average player among all economies worldwide.
- (4) South Korea's economic importance is rather small.
- (5) South Korea's economy is unimportant and exercises no influence in the global economy.
- (6) I don't know.

4. How do people in your country perceive South Korea's wealth and life quality?

- (1) South Korea is a high-income country with decent life quality.
- (2) South Korea is a middle-income country. People are neither impoverished nor wealthy.
- (3) South Korea is a low-income country. A considerable number of people live under poverty.
- (4) I don't know.

5. When people in your country think about 'made in Korea', which products are more likely to be thought of? (multiple choice)

- (1) Computer and information-communication technology products (including smartphones)
- (2) Household appliances (e.g., TV, washing machines, refrigerators, etc.)
- (3) Automobiles
- (4) Clothes
- (5) Cosmetics
- (6) Processed foods
- (7) Cultural goods (such as music recordings, films, books, animation, character, etc.)
- (8) Other answer: please specify_____
- (9) I don't know.

6. How do people in your country perceive South Korean products?

- (1) High-end products (high quality, high price)
- (2) Products of good quality with relatively low prices
- (3) Products that are overpriced for the quality
- (4) Low quality-low priced products
- (5) I don't know.

III. Technology and Science

1. How well do people in your country know about South Korean technology and science?

- (1) Know very well
- (2) Know relatively well
- (3) Know on the average level
- (4) Know a little bit
- (5) Know nothing
- (6) I don't know.

2. How do people in your country perceive South Korea's technological development in general?

- (1) South Korea is considered as a country of high technology.
- (2) South Korea is not regarded as technologically advanced.
- (3) People in my country are unaware of South Korea's technological development.
- (4) I don't know.

- 3. To what extent do people in your country recognize the quality of South Korea's technological products?
(e.g., cars, computers, ICT goods, machinery, medical devices, etc.)**
- (1) People recognize the high quality of South Korean technological products.
 - (2) People do not think that South Korean technological products have high quality. People may buy them for low-price levels instead of quality.
 - (3) People are unaware of the quality of South Korean technological products (no interest or not well-known).
 - (4) I don't know.
- 4. How do people in your country associate South Korea with innovation in science and technology?**
- (1) South Korea is seen as a leading innovator (proactive role) in the field of science and technology in general.
 - (2) South Korea is not considered as a leader in innovation but seen as a late comer or follower (reactive role) in the field of science and technology in general.
 - (3) South Korea is not seen as playing any role in innovation in the field of science and technology.
 - (4) I don't know.
- 5. If South Korea is perceived as playing an important role in science and technology, with which field(s) do people in your country associate? (multiple choice)**
- (1) Computer and information-communication technology products (including smartphones)
 - (2) Flat screens and displays
 - (3) Automobiles
 - (4) Medical devices
 - (5) Machinery in general
 - (6) Semiconductors
 - (7) Ships
 - (8) Electric/Lithium batteries
 - (9) Chemical products
 - (10) Steel products
 - (11) Other answer: please specify_____
 - (12) I don't know.

IV. Contemporary Culture

- 1. How well do people in your country know about South Korean contemporary culture?**
- (1) Know very well
 - (2) Know relatively well
 - (3) Know on the average level
 - (4) Know a little bit
 - (5) Know nothing
 - (6) I don't know.

2. How do people in your country perceive the popularity of South Korean contemporary culture?

- (1) Very popular
- (2) Popular
- (3) Not very popular
- (4) Not popular at all
- (5) I don't know.

3. Which elements of South Korean contemporary culture are popular among people in your country? (multiple choice)

- (1) Popular music (e.g., K-pop)
- (2) Traditional music (e.g., Pansori, Gukak)
- (3) Classic music (e.g., orchestra)
- (4) Visual arts (e.g., classic paintings, video arts)
- (5) Comics and animation (e.g., manhwa, Webtoon)
- (6) Literature
- (7) TV programs (e.g., K-drama)
- (8) Movies
- (9) Games (computer, online, video, etc.)
- (10) Sports
- (11) Fashion and beauty
- (12) Food
- (13) Other answer: please specify _____
- (14) I don't know.

4. In your opinion, is South Korean contemporary culture likely to become more popular in your country in the future?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No
- (3) I don't know.

5. How would you rate the level of media coverage on South Korean contemporary culture in your country?

- (1) Very high
- (2) High
- (3) Medium
- (4) Low
- (5) Very low
- (6) I don't know.

6. How would you rate the popularity of South Korean contemporary cultural contents among teenagers and young adults in your country?

- (1) Very high
- (2) High
- (3) Medium
- (4) Low
- (5) Very low
- (6) I don't know.

V. Tradition and History

1. How well do people in your country know about Korean tradition and history?

- (1) Know very well
- (2) Know relatively well
- (3) Know on the average level
- (4) Know a little bit
- (5) Know nothing
- (6) I don't know.

2. How much are people in your country interested in Korean tradition and history?

- (1) Very much interested
- (2) Interested
- (3) Not much interested
- (4) Not interested at all
- (5) I don't know.

3. In your opinion, how accessible are Korean traditional and historical artifacts (e.g., museum collections, exhibitions, etc.) to people in your country?

- (1) Highly accessible
- (2) Accessible
- (3) Not much accessible
- (4) Not accessible at all
- (5) I don't know.

4. How would you rate the level of media coverage on Korean tradition and history in your country?

- (1) Very high
- (2) High
- (3) Medium
- (4) Low
- (5) Very low
- (6) I don't know.

VI. Education

1. **How well do people in your country know about education in South Korea?**
 - (1) Know very well
 - (2) Know relatively well
 - (3) Know on the average level
 - (4) Know a little bit
 - (5) Know nothing
 - (6) I don't know.

2. **How do people in your country perceive educational equity in South Korea? (in terms of equal opportunities for everyone regardless of social classes, gender, family backgrounds, etc.)**
 - (1) Very equal
 - (2) Relatively equal
 - (3) Relatively unequal
 - (4) Ver unequal
 - (5) I don't know.

3. **How do people in your country perceive the quality of higher education in South Korea?**
 - (1) Very high quality
 - (2) High quality
 - (3) Average level
 - (4) Low quality
 - (5) Very low quality
 - (6) I don't know.

4. **How do people in your country perceive the internationalization of South Korean universities in terms of welcoming and providing opportunities for international students?**
 - (1) Very international
 - (2) International
 - (3) Not well-internationalized
 - (4) Not international at all
 - (5) I don't know.

Please indicate the country where you current work:-----

Thank you very much for your participation.

