

Economic Growth and Democratization in South Korea: Focusing on the Decentralization of Power in National Assembly Elections

Prof. Dong Woo Yoo (University of Ulsan)

Date: Wednesday, 29 January 2025

Time: 3-4 pm (NZDT)

Venue: Pat Hanan Room (Building 207 - Room 501)

Online available via Zoom: Registration required



Abstract

This study examines the relationship between South Korea's economic growth and democratization, focusing on National Assembly elections. While the South Korean economy grew rapidly and endured periods of dictatorship, it also achieved democratization. To extend their terms, presidents needed two-thirds of the National Assembly seats to amend the constitution. While winning presidential elections posed little challenge, securing the necessary seats was significantly more difficult, leading to repeated instances of controversial political actions. This aligns with comparative political science findings, which suggest that democracy flourishes under decentralized power but struggles under centralized control. National Assembly elections, with up to 300 members elected, inherently limit presidential influence. This decentralization of power played a crucial role in resisting authoritarianism and advancing democratization in South Korea. The election system's structure ensured that power was dispersed, fostering democratic development even in a challenging political environment.



About Prof. Dong Woo Yoo

Professor Dongwoo Yoo is a faculty member in the Department of Economics at University of Ulsan. Previously, he was an assistant professor at West Virginia University. His research focuses on institutions and economic development, incorporating AI methodologies. He also participates a global project on lessons from Korea's economic growth since 2021.

All are warmly welcome to the seminar room. Online joining is also available, but registration is required. Please scan the QR code above. For any inquiries, please contact ch.song@auckland.ac.nz.