

**Soh Jaipil Lecture Series, “*Dictator’s Modernity Dilemma:
Development and Democracy in South Korea, 1961-1987*”**



(Photo: Korea Democracy Foundation Open Archives)

Speaker: Joan Cho, Wesleyan University

Monday, January 25, 2021

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. ET

Virtual Event

◇ **Event Description**

Dictator’s Modernity Dilemma: Development and Democracy in South Korea, 1961-1987 aims to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory views regarding Korea’s path to modernity and democracy. At first blush, South Korea illustrates the basic premise of modernization theory: economic development leads to democracy. However, under Park Chung Hee (1961-1979) and Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1988), Korea’s political system became increasingly authoritarian alongside the growth of the national economy. These South Korean autocrats sought legitimacy of their coup-born regimes by holding legislative elections and investing in economic development. In this book project, I argue and demonstrate that the structural foundations of modernization (industrial complexes and higher education in particular) had an initial stabilizing effect on authoritarian rule by increasing regime support, but also contributed to the development of mobilizing structures for anti-regime protests in the 1970s and 1980s. By highlighting the differential impacts of modernization structures over time, this research shows how

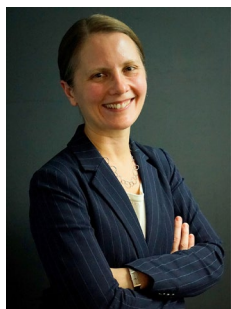
socioeconomic development acted as a “double-edged sword” by stabilizing the regimes at first, but destabilizing the dictatorship over time.

◇ **Speaker**



Dr. Joan Cho is an Assistant Professor of East Asian Studies and Government at Wesleyan University. Cho specializes in authoritarianism, democratization, social movements, and authoritarian legacies in Korea and East Asia. Her research on authoritarian regime support, South Korean democracy movement, and electoral accountability in post-transition South Korea are published in *Electoral Studies*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, and *Routledge Handbook of Korean Culture and Society*. Cho’s other writings have appeared in the *Pacific Affairs* and *The Conversation*. Dr. Cho received her Ph.D. and A.M. degrees in Political Science from the Department of Government at Harvard University and a B.A. (cum laude with honors) in Political Science from the University of Rochester. She is an Associate-in-research of the Council of East Asian Studies at Yale University, Executive Secretary of the Association of Korean Political Studies, and a 2018-2019 U.S.-Korea NextGen Scholar. Cho previously held visiting fellow positions at the Asiatic Research Institute at Korea University, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, and the Center for International Studies at Seoul National University.

◇ **Moderator**



Celeste Arrington is Korea Foundation Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at GW. She specializes in comparative politics, with a regional focus on the Koreas and Japan. Her research and teaching focus on law and social movements, the media, lawyers, policy processes, historical justice, North Korean human rights, and qualitative methods. She is also interested in the international relations and security of Northeast Asia and transnational activism. She is the author of *Accidental Activists: Victim Movements and Governmental Accountability in Japan and South Korea* (2016) and has published in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Law & Society Review*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, and the *Washington Post*, among others. She received a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, an MPhil from the University of Cambridge, and an A.B. from Princeton University. She is currently writing a book that analyzes the role of lawyers and legal activism in Japanese and Korean policies related to persons with disabilities and tobacco control.

This event is on the record and open to the public.