

Lecture by:

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Network Democracy and New Political Culture in South Korea

Since the democratic transition in 1987, South Korea has been one of the most vibrant democracies in East Asia. If the first phase of democratic consolidation was driven by vocal civil movement organizations, the second stage has been driven by fluid citizen networks that defy any organizational label. South Korea's two major popular protests in 2002 and 2008 were mobilized through internet communication. In recent years, on-line political participation has translated into off-line election vote alliances. With an advanced digital infrastructure, Koreans are rapidly moving from Web 1.0 to Social Network communication. Multi-hub networks such as Facebook or Twitter have emerged as a politically-influential social space. In using these channels, public demands have placed pressure on both the government and the national assembly to be more responsive and accountable. The emerging political culture in South Korea is now focused on emphasizing better communication and empathy between citizens and elected representatives. This talk examines the emerging network democracy in South Korea and assesses both its positive and negative impact upon South Korean democracy.