



Privilege and Anxiety: Growing Inequality and Status Competition in South Korea in the Global Era

July 3, 2019 (Wednesdays) 6-8pm, Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

Prof. Hagen Koo (University of Hawaii, US)

Abstract:

After a long period of rapid income growth and equitable distribution in the earlier years, South Korea has experienced a drastic increase of income inequality and job insecurity in the current era of neoliberal globalization. This change has triggered intense competition for education, jobs, and status, making Korea a highly anxiety-ridden society in the 21st century. Professor Koo's talk describes several aspects of this social change and their social ramifications.

Hagen Koo is emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Born in Korea, he received his BA in Korea and worked as a journalist briefly before coming to America, where he received his Ph.D. at Northwestern University. He published extensively on social transformation in South Korea during the era of rapid industrialization. His major work includes *State and Society in Contemporary Korea* (1993), and *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation* (2001), which was selected as the Bestbook of the year by the Asia section of the American Sociological Association and has been translated into several languages. He has played an active role in promoting Korean studies in the United States and has been a visiting scholar at several international universities, including Harvard University, Australian National University, Yonsei University, Seoul National University, the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies, and most recently, Free University of Berlin. Currently, he is completing a book, tentatively titled, *Privilege and Anxiety: The Korean Middle Class in the Global Era*.