



## **Two-Track Democracy in South Korea: The interplay between institutional politics and contentious politics**

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### **Abstract:**

The recent South Korean democracy is witnessing an ironic phenomena that cannot be succinctly explained by existing theories of political development or democracy. Since its democratic transition in 1987, the evaluation of South Korea's political system by external institutions has steadily improved, and it has been classified as a "full democracy" since the 2000s. Nonetheless, people's trust in the nation's political system continues to decline. Conversely, unlike Western democracies, voter turnout of citizens has increased continuously since 2010, even in the face of political distrust. After democracy was established, political participation and the political influence of citizens has gradually been strengthened. However, the political influence of civic organizations that fostered the initial democratization movement in the 1980s has weakened, parallel to the decline in citizens' confidence in these organizations.

Why is South Korean democracy experiencing those ironic phenomena? We seek these answers within the framework of a two-track democracy, that is, the interplay between institutional and contentious politics.

**Seongyi YUN** is a Professor of Department of Political Science at Kyung Hee University in Seoul. He obtained a state doctorate at Ohio State University in USA. His Dissertation was "Politics of Democratization in South Korea: Social Movements and Their Political Opportunity Structure." His Major fields are Korean Politics, Comparative Politics, Digital Politics.