Research Seminar


By: Dr Hunjoon Kim, Research Fellow, Griffith Asia Institute.

Over the last three decades, over one hundred states have experienced transition from nondemocratic regimes to democracy or from domestic armed conflicts to peace. Among many transitional justice measures, states increasingly adopt a truth commission, which is an official government body temporarily set up to investigate a past human rights violations. In this paper, I tried to answer two interrelated questions regarding the global expansion of truth commissions using the cross-national statistical analyses of 100 transitional countries between 1974 and 2004. First, I explore why and when states create a truth commission after transition by testing eight key hypotheses and found evidence for a strong regional contagion effect, the role of domestic advocacy groups, and the effectiveness of international pressure. Second, I study whether truth commissions have the capacity for decreasing future human rights abuses in transitional societies. I found that truth commission in general lead to improvements in human rights protection. However, I also found that the effect of truth commission is not uniform across different types of human rights violations and across the region in the world.

Dr Hunjoon Kim (Research Fellow, GAI/CGPP, Griffith University) received his Ph.D. in 2008 with a dissertation Expansion of Transitional Justice Measures: A Comparative Analysis of Its Causes. His dissertation was selected as the winner of 2009 APSA Best Dissertation Award (Human Rights Section). He had publications in Global Governance, International Journal of Transitional Justice, and Journal of Human Rights and has forthcoming article at International Studies Quarterly (“Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Trials (with Kathryn Sikkink.) His research interests include: international norms and institutions, democratization and consolidation, East Asian politics, transitional justice, and international human rights.

→ Wednesday 3 November 2010
→ N72, Room -2.12
→ Nathan campus
→ 12.30 -1.50pm

To RSVP, please contact Natasha Vary on (07) 3735 5322 or n.vary@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Monday 1 November 2010.