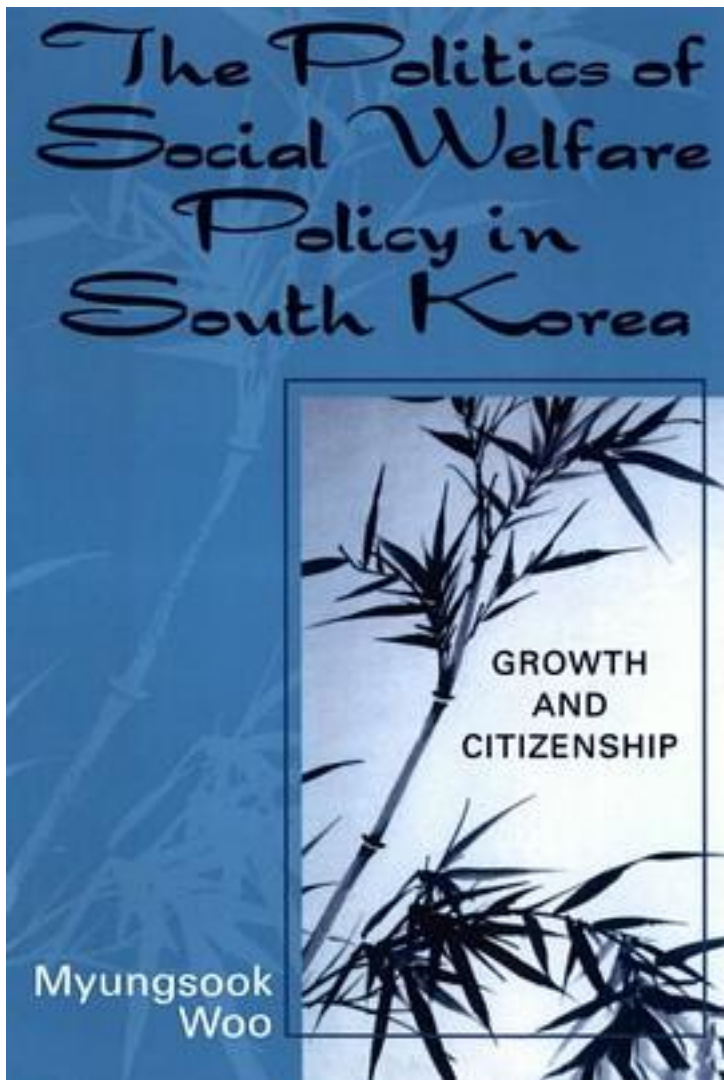


The Politics of Social Welfare Policy in South Korea



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The Politics of Social Welfare Policy in South Korea explains, in a comparative perspective, South Korea's ungenerous welfare policies. Building on welfare state theories underlining class politics and state actions, the theoretical framework also incorporates an institutional perspective. The state's ability to coordinate business and labor was the most important factor in shaping South Korea's welfare policies. In recent years, stronger labor union movement played a key role in extending welfare rights to the broader population. However, South Korean unions have used their newfound strength largely for promoting company welfare. Author Myungsook Woo believes the geopolitical context disfavors South Korean welfare policy and that the international economy generates mixed results on welfare policy. Although a full-scale South Korean welfare reform has been launched, comprehensive social protection is limited by constraints within the international economy. These mixed results, according to her, can be traced back to the domestic power constellation and the history of the state-sponsored system of economic coordination.

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