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***NORTH KOREAN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
IN THE POST-COVID ERA***

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16:00-18:00

ROOM LAB.2 (III FLOOR)

ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL
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SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA
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KOREAN STUDIES**

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Professor Gray's research interests relate to the political economy of development, with a regional focus on East Asia. He has researched widely on the region, and in particular, on the political economy of both North and South Korea. He also has interests in Gramscian approaches to international relations and in theories of late development and state formation. His research has been published in *Review of International Political Economy*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Pacific Review*, *North Korean Review*, *Globalizations*, *New Political Economy*, *Third World Quarterly* and *New Left Review*. He is also the author of *Korean Workers and Neoliberal Globalisation* (Routledge, 2008), *Labour and Development in East Asia: Social Forces and Passive Revolution* (Routledge, 2015). Most recently, he is co-author (with Jong-Woon Lee) of *North Korea and the Geopolitics of Development* (2021). ISO - PhD Curriculum in African and Asian Civilizations

THE LECTURE

In this lecture, **Professor Gray will explore how the Covid pandemic caused a shift in North Korean economic policy, moving away from market-driven strategies and back towards a state-centered approach.** Following the economic collapse of the 1990s, North Korea had adopted market reforms to aid recovery and strengthen key industries, with the state selectively using market forces to support its self-reliant development model. However, the pandemic's border closure disrupted foreign trade, weakening the market's role in the economy. Observers have noted a shift in rhetoric towards a state-directed economy, with less emphasis on reform, and new policies like the 20x10 Regional Development Policy suggesting greater state control. North Korea's growing partnership with Russia also points to a potential move away from market-oriented external exchanges. However, this talk will also consider whether this shift away from marketization is truly irreversible, given the structural constraints that still support market forces in the country.

