

# **The Political Economy of the Asia Pacific**

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Huck-ju Kwon · Min Gyo Koo  
Editors

The Korean Government  
and Public Policies  
in a Development Nexus,  
Volume 1

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# Foreword

A successful transition from a pre-modern, poor, and divided society to a modern, affluent, and integrated democracy is a very elusive goal that few countries so far from the non-Western world have achieved. Japan was the first, followed by the Asian Tigers such as Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. Of developing countries today, China and Brazil are most determinedly implementing catch-up strategies with an impressive record of economic growth for the last two decades. For many developing countries, there must be a great deal of lessons to be gleaned from each of these successful stories.

This book is designed to look into the case of Korean development experience. Over the last five decades, Korea has successfully moved from a traditional labor-based economy to a knowledge-based one, while effectively consolidating democracy. The first-ever female President of the country took office in 2013 and Samsung competes with Apple all over the world. The welfare state in Korea has become more inclusive with a wide range of social protection programs such as public health care, pensions, and a variety of social services. The Korean experience is very much unique even among the successful transition cases to the extent that the country has achieved not only economic but also political and social development.

If one defines the development as structural transformation, the Korean case must stand out as an apt illustration. Certainly, there is a depth of the literature on the Korean development experience, but the analytical angle has been focused only on economic dimensions. A major value added of this book is that it pays particular attention to the Korean government and public policies and that it offers new insights on how the Korean government has worked effectively to drive the country forward.

The book is the first volume of a series on development and public policies that the Asia Development Institute (ADI) plans to publish for both academic and practitioner readers in the coming years. The ADI was established in 2004 with a vision to share the development experience and knowledge, and has conducted many research projects and provided high-quality trainings for policy practitioners from developing countries. The editors of this book, Dr. Huck-ju Kwon and Dr. Min Gyo Koo, also serve as ADI's Deputy Director and Research Director, respectively. Thanks to their efforts, the book benefits from the distinguished chapter writers and their in-depth research.

I anticipate that many students of development studies will read this book. One of the first cohorts of this book will be the foreign students at the Graduate School of Public Administration (GSPA), Seoul National University where the ADI is housed. In collaboration with the Korea International Cooperation Agencies, the GSPA launched a Global Master of Public Administration (GMPA) program in 2011 for future policy leaders from over 20 developing countries. A book to be widely read by future policymakers must be the one that all public policy scholars desire to write. I congratulate the authors of this book on their very stimulating and interesting contribution to our knowledge on economic and social development and am proud that the ADI plays a significant role in such a dissemination effort.

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