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Learning from the South Korean Developmental Success

Effective Developmental Cooperation and
Synergistic Institutions and Policies

Edited by

Ilcheong Yi
UNRISD

Thandika Mkandawire

London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

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In memory of
Alice Amsden (1944–2012)

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Foreword

South Korea's remarkable economic development is frequently presented as the post-war developmental success story *par excellence*. Widely divergent accounts of this success reflect the deep fault lines between market fundamentalists and proponents of strong, even authoritarian, developmental states. These diverse explanations for the growth of South Korea and other 'miracle' economies have, however, shared a common feature: they have neglected or downplayed the role of social policy in their analyses.

Previous United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) research drew attention to the important role played by social policy in the development and catch-up process, as it sought to narrow the gap between theories of welfare regimes and developmental states (Mkandawire 2004). Neoliberal interpretations, with their central message that the role of government should be limited to making markets work efficiently, firmly embedded the misperception of development as a natural consequence of economic growth. In this view, social policies are restricted to residual safety nets for those who fail to participate in the growth process. Developmental state theorists focused instead on a strong role for the state in economic and particularly industrial policy. Here, social policies were interpreted at best as the handmaiden of economic development within 'productivist' welfare regimes or as a means to maintain state legitimacy and buy social peace. National efforts to build policies that recognized the intrinsic value of social objectives, such as poverty reduction, equity and social cohesion, have been sidelined in both these narratives.

And yet careful examination of South Korea's developmental trajectory shows that its success owes much to institutions and policies intentionally designed to promote 'social' – that is, more equitable or (in current parlance) 'inclusive' – national development. In the complex processes of accumulation and investment that underpin any economic transformation, social tensions and distributive conflicts inevitably arise and need to be managed and resolved. This requires attention not just to production, but also to issues of distribution and protection. The failure of analysts to recognize such efforts by states in part arises from ideological biases noted above; but, additionally, the frame of social policy emanating from advanced economies has often blinded them

to the actual policies and institutional arrangements – described in this volume – which served as implicit or surrogate social policy or social protection by other means.

This volume provides a new perspective on South Korea's experience by analyzing the country's development through the lens of social policy, identifying key policy initiatives and their interlinkages. As the editors note, 'there are no automatic mechanisms for transforming economic growth into social welfare'. The objective of this book, rather, is to 'identify the implicit and explicit social policy measures behind what has been a virtuous circle of economic growth and human development' (p. 3). The book demonstrates that social policies were not only instrumental to production, with a strong focus on social investment (in infrastructure and human capital), but were also focused on intrinsic social goals through mechanisms of protection and distribution. The chapters also show how a complex set of interrelated policies for economic and social development evolved – whether with intent or through serendipity – in the South Korean case.

The findings presented in this volume also challenge a tendency in the development literature, and among donor countries eager to disseminate the lessons of their own experiences, to interpret successful development as composed only of good things, neglecting inevitable failures. The book aims to correct the tendency to interpret a developmental history full of trial and error as a case of mechanical causation, or to distort the past to win contemporary ideological battles. This correction is crucial to making international development cooperation effective and beneficial for developing countries.

Learning lessons, whether of success or failure, from any developmental experience is no easy task. It demands that 'learners' or late developers recognize the context, as well as understand possible distortions in the interpretation of history. It requires both a willingness and capacity to learn lessons – not so much imitating, but rather adapting, and where possible 'leapfrogging' forerunners. This volume aims to ease the burden of those later developers who are eager to understand, adapt and where possible leap frog Korea's development experiences.

The book is the outcome of a joint research project Making International Development Cooperation Effective undertaken by UNRISD and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). UNRISD would like to take this opportunity to thank KOICA for showing a genuine spirit of research partnership in every sense, as well as all the contributing authors, discussants and reviewers. The papers were presented at a workshop in May 2011 and an international conference

in October 2011, both held in Seoul and jointly organized by KOICA and UNRISD. Staff from both institutions participated in this project: You-ah Chung and Hyunjoo Rhee of KOICA and Olive Cocoman and Elizabeth Koechlein of UNRISD made a tremendous contribution with roles ranging from writing to editing, and project coordination. In Kim, Jiyeon Kim and Soomin Jeon of KOICA and Sungmi Kim, Ellie Seo, Emma Malcolm, Claire Petersen, Sarah Parker, Rewa El-Oubari, Barbara Walter and Subhash Ghimire of UNRISD have provided research and other assistance at various stages. Dr Raymond Chan, City University of Hong Kong, and Dr Sangheon Lee, International Labour Organization (ILO), generously reviewed the whole manuscript and provided valuable comments that improved the quality of the book. UNRISD appreciates the contributions and support of many other people who cannot all be named here.

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Last but not least, staff and friends of UNRISD would like to express our sincere appreciation for the work of the late Alice H. Amsden, Barton L. Weller Professor of Political Economy at MIT. Professor Amsden was an active and enthusiastic participant of this project and her contributions are greatly valued. Professor Amsden sadly passed away in 2012 during the course of this project. She was a true intellectual giant, bringing a formidable rigor to research coupled with an indomitable passion for creating a better world. This book is dedicated to her memory.

Sarah Cook
Director, UNRISD

Notes on the Contributors

Alice H. Amsden held the position of Barton L. Weller Professor of Political Economy in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT, until her untimely passing on 14 March 2012. She began her career as an economist at OECD and taught at the University of California Los Angeles, Columbia University, Harvard Business School and The New School. She researched a wide range of issues in political economy, in particular the role of the state and industrial policy, and her seminal work *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* (1992, Oxford University Press) – one of the most cited works on East Asian development – challenged dominant perspectives grounded in theories of comparative advantage and neoliberal thinking.

Moo-Kwon Chung is Professor of the Department of Global Public Administration at Yonsei University, Wonju, South Korea. His areas of expertise are social policy, comparative political economy and development, and public administration. He received his PhD in political science from Indiana University. He recently served as president of the Korean Association of Social Policy. He has written widely on the Korean welfare state and the public sector and organizations. Currently, his research areas are comparative studies of the development of welfare regimes and social policies in East Asian countries, the dynamics of social risks, and the social investment welfare state.

You-ah Chung joined KOICA in 2000 and is Director of the ODA Research Office. Her research interests include aid effectiveness and comparative studies on aid systems of bilateral donors.

Olive Cocoman is a Research Consultant at the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health at the World Health Organisation. She has been a Research Analyst at UNRISD where she assisted in the management of research projects and conducted research investigating the economic and social policies in emerging economies. Previously, she developed education partnerships in low- and middle-income countries. She holds undergraduate degrees in Geography and Economics from the National University of Ireland, an MSc in Social Development Practice from the Development and Planning Unit, University College London.

Mike Douglass is Professor and Leader of the Asian Urbanisms Cluster at the Asia Research Institute and Professor in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. He is Emeritus Professor and former Chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and former Director of the Globalization Research Center at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He is co-editor of the *International Development Planning Review*. He received his PhD in Urban Planning from UCLA. His experience in South Korea began as a Peace Corps Volunteer at Dong-A University in the 1970s. He has carried out research in Asia for many years and has been a consultant for international development agencies and national and local governments.

Peter Evans is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology, University of California Berkeley, Senior Fellow in International Studies at the Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, and Board Member of UNRISD. He is best known for work on the comparative political economy of national development, exemplified by his 1995 book *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* and a series of articles on the Twenty-first Century Developmental State. He has recently been researching the ways in which social movements can mobilize transnationals to build a 'counter-hegemonic globalization'. Among these movements, the global labor movement is a key actor.

Taewook Huh is Research Fellow of the Korean Women's Development Institute, Seoul, South Korea. He holds a PhD in Social Policy from the University of Bristol. He was secretary of the Korean Association of NGO Studies and lecturer in public administration at Ewha Womans University, Konkuk University, Dankook University, and the Graduate School of International and Area Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. He was a research fellow at the Seoul Institute and the Presidential Committee on Balanced National Development. His research interests are governance, citizen involvement, sustainable development and environmental policy, and international development and cooperation.

Eun Mee Kim is Dean and Professor at the Graduate School of International Studies and Director of the Institute for Development and Human Security at Ewha Womans University. Her publications include *Adapt, Fragment, Transform: Corporate Restructuring and System Reform in South Korea*; *Multicultural Society of Korea*; *The Sociology of the*

Economic Crisis: Transformation of the Developmental State and Business Group Networks; *Big Business, Strong State: Collusion and Conflict in South Korean Development, 1960–1990*; and *The Four Asian Tigers: Economic Development and the Global Political Economy*. Her current research interests are development cooperation (foreign aid), political economy of development, globalization and multiculturalism.

Taekyoon Kim is Assistant Professor of International Development at the Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University. Previously, he taught at Waseda University and Ewha Womans University, and was Visiting Professor at the University of Paris IV–Sorbonne. He has published extensively on international development cooperation, comparative social policy, international political sociology, state–society relationships and global governance.

Jinock Lee is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Science, Sogang University. She holds a PhD in Politics and International Studies and has research interests in the political economy of reproduction and gender and politics. Her recent publications include *Revisiting the Developmental State within the Framework of Social Reproduction* and *A Study of the Interplay between Female Presidentship and Women's Representation*.

Jooha Lee is Assistant Professor at Dongguk University. He holds a PhD in Social Policy from Oxford University and previously was Head of the Research and Policy Development Team at the United Nations Project Office on Governance. His main research interests are comparative social policy, welfare politics, governance and policy implementation. He is co-author of *The Korean State and Social Policy* (2011, Oxford University Press). His English publications also include 'Another Dimension of Welfare Reform' (2009, *International Journal of Social Welfare*) and 'Mixed Governance and Welfare in South Korea' (2011, *Journal of Democracy*).

Thandika Mkandawire is Chair in African Development at the London School of Economics and Olof Palme Visiting Professor, Swedish Research Council. Previous positions include Director of UNRISD; Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen, and Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa. He has taught at the University of Stockholm and University of Zimbabwe. He has published broadly on the social sciences in Africa and on problems of policy making, social policy, adjustment

and democratization. He holds a PhD in Letters from Rhodes University. In 2011, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki.

Manohar Pawar is Professor of Social Work at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Charles Sturt University, New South Wales, Australia, and is President of the Asia-Pacific branch of the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD). He has over 30 years of experience in social research and education. Inter alia, he has received the citation award for outstanding contributions to student learning from the ALTC (2008) and the Quality of Life Award from the ACU (2001). His interests and publications include *International Social Work* (2013, second edition), *Sage Handbook of International Social Work* (editor, 2012), *Social Development* (editor, 2010), *Community Development* (2010) and *Water and Social Policy* (2014).

Hyunjoo Rhee is a Research Specialist for the Asian and Pacific Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development at UN ESCAP. Previously, she was a Policy Researcher at KOICA, where she led research on aid effectiveness and development effectiveness from 2008 to 2011, after she was a consultant at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), UNICEF and the UN Secretariat. She holds an MA in International Relations from the University of Paris IV–Sorbonne. Her publications include *Catalyzing Development: A New Vision for Aid* (2011, chapter author).

Jae-jin Yang is Professor of Public Administration at Yonsei University. His areas of expertise are welfare state theory, social policy and comparative political economy. He has served on the editorial boards of *Korean Political Science Review*, *Korean Public Administration Review* and *Social Security Review*. He has written extensively on structural adjustments and social welfare issues. His publications include 'Parochial Welfare Politics and the Small Welfare State in South Korea (*Comparative Politics*, 2013) and 'Korean Social Concertation at the Crossroads: Consolidation or Deterioration?' (*Asian Survey*, 2010). He is author and editor of many books, including *Retirement, Work and Pensions in Ageing Korea* (Routledge, 2010).

Ilcheong Yi is Research Coordinator at UNRISD. Having researched and taught at Seoul National University, Oxford University, Bergen University, Malaya University and Kyushu University, he joined UNRISD in 2008. His research interests are issues related to the developmental state, social policy in developing countries and macrolevel

development strategies. His recent publications are mainly related to the welfare state and health policies in developing countries, and is currently doing research on a variety of issues related to social policy such as new directions in social policy, social security in emerging economies and social policy regime building in post-conflict countries. He holds a PhD in Social Policy and Administration from Oxford University.

List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BNDES	Brazil State Owned Development Bank
BRICs	Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China
BRICKs	Brazil, Russian Federation, India and Republic of Korea
CEO	chief executive officer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CRIK	Civil Relief in Korea
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECA	Economic Cooperation Agency
EOI	export-oriented industrialization
EU	European Union
FDI	foreign direct investment
FOE	foreign-owned enterprise
FPMC	Family Planning Mothers' Clubs
GARIOA	Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product
HCI	heavy chemical industrialization
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HYV	high-yielding variety
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICA	International Cooperation Agency
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	import substitution industrialization

IUD	intrauterine device
KAIS	Korea Advanced Institute of Science
KAIST	Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
KAVA	Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies
KDI	Korea Development Institute
KEPB	Korean Economic Planning Board
KIET	Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade
KIFP	Korea Institute of Family Planning
KIST	Korea Institute of Science and Technology
km	kilometer
KNCW	Korean National Council of Women
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MNC	multinational company
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NBLSS	National Basic Livelihood Security System
NCSUMK	National Council of the <i>Saemaul Undong</i> Movement
NGO	non-governmental organization
NHIS	National Health Insurance Service
NIE	newly industrializing economy
NOC	national oil company
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFDI	outward foreign direct investment
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCSD	Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development
PL 480	US Public Law 480
POE	privately owned enterprise
PPFK	Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea
PSPD	People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy
R&D	research and development

SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SNU	Seoul National University
SOE	state-owned enterprise
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNKRA	United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USAMGIK	United States Army Military Government in Korea
USGAO	US Government Accountability Office
USOMK	US Operations Mission to Korea
USTR	Office of the United States Trade Representative
VAT	value added tax
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization