

Preface and acknowledgements

From its conception, this book has evolved in a somewhat different direction. It was originally intended to be a comprehensive economic history of regional and urban policies on the Korean peninsula, but there have been so many dramatic changes in the past decade or so that the focus changed to recent events. The emphasis on the peninsula as a whole remained, so a significant part of the book deals with North Korea and the issue of reunification. How this will turn out remains unclear because of the instability in North–South Korea political relations, but a theme of the book is that eventually reunification will occur and that it will be in the best interests of all parties. The book has substituted selective discussion of major issues for a continuous narrative and has recruited the contributions of a few other scholars on specific topics. Chapter 10 is particularly noticeable because it barely touches on regional issues but addresses the controversy of whether North Korean statistics are reliable; the answer to this question is mixed but nevertheless valuable. Chapter 11 pays attention to a regional issue even if a narrow one: the geographical distribution of markets. However, it uses a different quantitative tool; satellite photography such as Google Earth. This enables us to illuminate North Korea's black hole. The method has also been used to check on the homes of recent defectors and, even more striking, the location of military installations from warships and submarines in seaports to the ring of mortars around Pyongyang.

A companion book has been published: *Reshaping Regional Policy* (Richardson et al., 2011) but the bulk of the contributors are from Europe, the United States and Japan, so the book focuses on how regional policies in other parts of the world have influenced policy development in South Korea. As a result, that book has very little to say about North Korea and the reunification issue.

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