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**Regional Development
and
Decentralization Policy
in
South Korea**

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Regional
Development
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Published by
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Pasir Panjang Road
Singapore 119596

Internet e-mail: publish@iseas.ac.sg
World Wide Web: <http://www.iseas.ac.sg/pub.html>

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Cataloguing in Publication Data

Schätzl, Ludwig.

Regional development and decentralization policy in South Korea /
Ludwig H. Schätzl, Karin Wessel, Yong-Woo Lee.

1. Regional planning--Korea (South).
2. Korea (South)--Economic conditions--1960-
3. Korea (South)--Economic policy--1960-

I. Wessel, Karin.
II. Lee, Yong-Woo.
III. Title.

HC467 S31 1997 sls96-32886

ISBN 981-3055-48-0

The responsibility for facts and opinions expressed in this publication rests
exclusively with the authors and their interpretations do not necessarily
reflect the views or the policy of the Institute.

Typeset by International Typesetters
Printed in Singapore by Prime Packaging Industries Pte Ltd

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Preface

The collection of papers in this volume presents the most important results of a research project undertaken by the Department of Geography of Seoul National University in cooperation with the Department of Economic Geography in the University of Hanover. Involved in the research were Karin Wessel and Yong-Woo Lee, research officers in the Departments in Hanover and Seoul, respectively, and Woo-Ik Yu and Ludwig Schätzl, who also supervised the project. The investigations lasted two and a half years and field research in South Korea was completed in the summer of 1990. The research was made possible by substantial financial support from the Volkswagen Foundation in Hanover.

The main objective of the project was to elaborate the interdependent relationships between economic development, regional development and spatial economic policy, using the newly industrialized country of South Korea as a case study. The analysis focused mainly on three aspects:

- long-term economic restructuring starting with labor-intensive production, followed by capital-intensive and, finally, human-capital- and technology-intensive production,
- the effects of this economic transformation process on regional development and

- the significance of spatial economic policy for sectoral and regional economic restructuring.

This study consists of six individual papers. Chapter I provides an introduction and general outline of the economic development and economic policy of the developing and newly industrialized market economies in East and Southeast Asia. The objective is to point out the position of the case study of South Korea within this group of countries. Chapter II presents some theories dealing with the issue of international and interregional shifts of economic activity; this theoretical basis is essential when trying to explain the sectoral and regional economic transformation processes occurring in South Korea. Chapters III and IV analyze the characteristic features of South Korea's economic and regional development as well as regional policy. Two regional case studies conclude the investigation: Regional decentralization of the manufacturing industry is illustrated by the examples of the growth poles of Ulsan and Taejon (Chapter V); regional decentralization in the field of research is described in Chapter VI using the relocation of universities and research institutes to Taedok Science Town (Taejon) and within the metropolitan region as case studies.

This research project would not have been possible without the support of Korean scientists from universities and research institutes and the cooperation of ministries, public authorities and institutions and private enterprises; the authors are most grateful for all this support. We are also much obliged to Mrs Ursel Kurz for translating this volume (except Chapter VI) and to Ms Angela Imhoff for the cartographic work.

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