KOREA

South Korea's rise: economic development, power and foreign relations, by Uk Heo and Terence Roehrig, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, 228 pp., $US29.95 (paperback)

The remarkable trajectory of South Korea, from struggling aid recipient to vibrant middle power, is rich grounds for investigation. This book provides an overview of South Korea's foreign relations in both a historical and contemporary sense. Spanning the globe, the authors summarise not just South Korea's relations with regional players, but its less well known bilateral relations (India, European Union) as well as its reach into Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia and multilateral forums.

Chapter 2 develops the conceptual framework, describing the ways in which a country's economic development influences foreign policy choices and outcomes. The arguments here are familiar: economic development provides a state with greater resources and a wider variety of policy choices and often leads to democratic transition and a leadership that is more sensitive in its foreign policy choices to domestic sentiments. This assessment of how a state defines its national interest, and how these assessments shift in response to domestic dynamics, provides the book with an overarching, clear narrative that allows the ensuing chapters to focus on some of the most significant developments in South Korea's foreign relations without becoming overwhelmed by detail. For example, the changing nature of inter-Korean relations, when viewed through the lens of South Korea's economic development, is understood as a rational response to South Korea's growing advantage: economic clout and the country's ability to wield trade and aid incentives in its efforts to induce the types of changes it would like to see in the North. Likewise, the growing influence of South Korea in multilateral forums is linked to this framework: economic development has led to material and ideational shifts, inducing greater incentives and opportunities to participate in security efforts such as peacekeeping operations. The theoretical argument linking economic development with foreign policy change is perhaps not new, but it allows a book of moderate length to cover a wide span of South Korea's foreign relations (spatially and historically) which is of great benefit to readers seeking such an overview.

The simple narrative, however, comes at a price, providing a perspective on South Korea's interactions with the world that is both linear and uncritical. The authors' framework draws explicitly from modernisation theory, whereby the domestic political and social changes brought about by economic development produce a state whose foreign policy is more confident and which seeks greater involvement in international affairs. As noted above, this neat argument allows for a concise set of wide-ranging empirical chapters. However, the price paid is a view on South Korea's interactions with the world that overlooks much of the nuance and debate that in reality surrounds many of the country's bilateral relationships. South Korea's political history is messier than this book's conceptual framing allows for. The authors promise to incorporate constructivist literature into the theoretical framework (p. 3), but the thin perspective provided on elite interpretations of national identity (pp. 16–17) fails to facilitate a rich, non-linear perspective that would allow for a more nuanced explanation of the trajectory of Korea's key relationships. With respect to US–South Korea relations, for example, any discussion of the series of identity related arguments and ideas that have long framed debate around this alliance is absent. The authors describe US base relocation decisions in purely economic terms, with scant reference to the heated political atmosphere in which these decisions have been made. The rejection of American intervention in South Korea's foreign policy has not simply developed alongside the country's economic structures. Rather, during decades of authoritarian rule, much of the pro-democracy movement felt the US government to be deeply complicit with the political repression and human rights abuses committed by consecutive South Korean governments. This is an

important part of South Korea's story about its relationship with the world, but is overlooked in a narrative that seeks to sacrifice complexity for the sake of a neat, flawless story. Likewise, the uncritical perspective provided by the theoretical framework has real consequences for this reading of South Korea's foreign relations. The political problems faced by POSCO in India are discussed in some detail, but there is no critical discussion of the implications of this for the book's core premise that economic development has led to positive trends in South Korea's foreign relations. The pressure the South Korean leadership is placing on the Indian government to overcome the social and environmental domestic barriers preventing progress of POSCO projects in Orissa (p. 141) reveals just how narrow a foreign policy driven by economic objectives can be. A reader of this book, with little background knowledge of South Korea's complex modern history, may come away with a one-sided view of how South Korea's own identity as an independent middle power has developed.

These concerns aside, the same reader is simultaneously well served by this book, and its value lies in its utility as an overview text. Beyond South Korea's key relationships (North Korea, US, Japan), there is a shortage of robust scholarship on Seoul's political and economic engagement with the world. The expertise brought to these subjects by the authors serves a general political science and foreign affairs audience well.

Danielle Chubb
Deakin University

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2016.1156474

Leverage of the weak: labor and environment movements in Taiwan and South Korea, by Hwa-Jen Liu, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 248 pp., US$27.50 (paperback)

By economic metrics, the rapid economic development of South Korea and Taiwan since the 1960s has been a spectacular success. However, the development of these "Asian Tiger" economies has not come without cost. This comes at a time of increasingly pointed and converging critique of capitalist development globally as exploitative of and destructive to life through ecosystem degradation as well as through the dehumanising effects of the commodification of human labour. *Leverage of the Weak: Labor and Environment Movements in Taiwan and South Korea* by Hwa-Jen Liu enters the literature at an auspicious moment when the systemic relationship between the labour and environment movements has never been more explicit.

Leverage of the Weak compares the emergence of the labour and environment movements in South Korea and Taiwan during the late 1960s to late 1980s, examining the significance of the temporal sequence of the occurrence of each movement. It finds that the environment movement preceded the labour movement in Taiwan, while in South Korea the movements emerged in reverse order. The causal explanation for the timing of these sequences is the central research question of the book, which it explores through the framework of "movement power" to explain the emergence of the early-riser movement and the significance of the sequence of movement emergence in each case.

South Korea and Taiwan make for a compelling case study. As Liu explains in the book (p. 6), the two countries represent "perfect twins" due to their shared geopolitical and economic characteristics, along with their shared experience of democratic transition during