

The U.S. Military Base Relocation and Its Impact on the Host Cities in South Korea

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1. Abstract:

In 2002, the USFK and the South Korean governments agreed to consolidate and relocate U.S. military bases to a few large installations nationwide, with the relocation process beginning in 2005. This project focuses on examining how the relocation has affected two host cities, Dongducheon and Pyeongtaek. By analyzing the socioeconomic data of the two cities in 2007 and 2019, including factors such as physical environment, demography, and economy, the project aims to diagnose their current status in terms of urban decay. To achieve this goal, interactive web maps and various figures will be used to present the findings of the study.

2. Overview

U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) has been stationed in South Korea since the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953. Their presence has had both positive and negative impacts on the development of host cities for the last 70 years. In 2002, the USFK and the South Korean governments agreed to relocate and consolidate U.S. military units nationwide into a few large installations, which began in 2005. As a result of the Land Partnership Plan, 69 out of 80 U.S. military installations in South Korea are closed as of 2023, and their land ownership was transferred back to South Korea.

Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek (city) expanded its area by more than 200 percent and became USAG (U.S. Army Garrison) Humphreys, which is the largest U.S. military base overseas. This expansion is expected to benefit Pyeongtaek as an international city. This expansion is expected to benefit Pyeongtaek as an international city. However, Camp Hovey and Camp Casey in Dongducheon (city) have almost closed, and only a quarter of U.S. troops are now stationed there. The city seems to face considerable difficulty as the local economy has highly depended on local U.S. bases.

Based on these issues, this project addresses the question: How has the U.S. military base relocation affected Pyeongtaek and Dongducheon in socioeconomic aspects? The hypothesis is that Dongducheon is experiencing decaying after the base closures while Pyeongtaek is not. To test this hypothesis, the factors are selected in accordance with the Korean Special Act on Promotion of and Support for Urban Regeneration. According to the act, three factors with five criteria are used to identify whether a particular community is in the phase of decay or not. The three factors are 1) Physical Environment, 2) Demography, and 3) Economy. The project examines data of 2007 and 2019 to compare the early phase of the relocation process to the current situation. By

providing interactive web maps with various figures, it is expected to reveal the impact of the base relocation and contribute to the future countermeasures for 11 communities where base closures are planned.

3. Technology

Tableau, QGIS, ArcGIS Pro

4. Data

- The National Spatial Data Infrastructure Portal by the Mistry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportaion (<http://www.nsdi.go.kr/lxportal/?menuno=2679#none>)
- Korean Statistical Information Service by Statistics Korea (<https://kosis.kr/index/index.do>)

5. Inspiration

- https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/keren.aharon/viz/SuperstoreSalesOverview_16799264991760/Home
- <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/jennyvanlinh/viz/LiteracyStory-IronVizStudent2022/Dashboard1>
- My working paper for ACSP 2023 conference, "The Redevelopment of Former U.S. Military Bases in South Korea: Examining the Process and the Outcomes"

6. Potential Challenges

Currently, access to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure Portal by the Mistry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportaion using foreign IP is not available, which means that I can collect limited spatial data by myself. To address this, I am going to contact one of my friends living in South Korea.

7. Potential Challenges

- April 10th – April 16th: Data gathering and Cleaning
- April 17th – April 30th: Analysis and Visualization
- May 1st – May 4th: Review and Finishing any remainings
- May 6th: Submission