

Younghoon Kim

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Positions

- 2025- Assistant Professor of Economics
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore
- 2016-2019 Deputy Director
Ministry of Economy and Finance, Republic of Korea
Divisions: Social Policy, Population Policy, Future Policy
- 2015-2016 Deputy Director
Seoul Metropolitan Government, Republic of Korea
Division: Transportation Policy

Education

- 2025 Ph.D. in Economics, University of California, Los Angeles
Advisors: Jonathan Vogel, Pablo Fajgelbaum, Oleg Itskhoki
- 2021 M.A. in Economics, University of California, Los Angeles
- 2015 B.A. in Economics (*Summa Cum Laude*), Seoul National University

Working Papers

“When Export Controls Backfire: Evidence from 2019 Korea-Japan Trade Dispute”

I show that export controls can "backfire," increasing productivity and exports in the target country. This productivity response mitigates the negative welfare effect in the target country and exacerbates it in the imposing country. I leverage Korea's response to the 2019 Korea-Japan Trade Dispute. In 2019, Japan announced export controls on South Korea for national strategic items, leaving enforcement up to Japanese officials. Although no export restrictions were imposed in practice, the potential risk alone triggered substantial changes in Korea's imports and exports. Imports from Japan declined significantly, irrespective of whether items were subject to the announcement. However, imports from Japan decreased disproportionately in sectors where Japan had been the primary supplier, and Korean producers' revenue also increased in these sectors, suggesting import substitution. Notably, Korea's exports expanded more in these sectors while prices declined, suggesting increased productivity. Motivated by these empirical findings, I structurally estimate the strength of scale economies in Korea (and elsewhere). Quantitatively, I show that the presence of scale economies mitigates the negative welfare effect of the export controls in Korea and exacerbates it in Japan.

“Responding to Semiconductor Supply Chain Disruptions: Evidence from South Korea”

How might semiconductor producers respond to the possibility of restricted access to key imported intermediate goods? And how might this response vary across inputs? I use the response of Korean semiconductor producers amid the 2019 Korea-Japan political dispute to answer these questions. In July 2019, Japan announced potential export controls on South Korea for three key semiconductor inputs, leaving implementation to Japanese officials. Although no export restrictions were applied in practice, the announcement itself triggered uncertainty over the global supply chain, leading to drastically different responses from Korean producers across the three targeted inputs. I present a model featuring two adjustment margins—inventory and global sourcing decisions—with heterogeneity across inputs in the initial share of sourcing from Japan. I show that the calibrated model matches the heterogeneous patterns across the three inputs, suggesting that these two adjustment margins played an important role in practice. Using the model, I also solve for how Korean producers would have responded had Japan extended its export controls to other key semiconductor inputs. These counterfactual responses align with actual responses, indicating that semiconductor producers feared an extension of Japanese export controls.

Work in Progress

“Hysteresis Effects of Geopolitical Conflicts on Consumer Goods Trade”

“Heterogeneous Effects of Geopolitical Disputes on Exports and Imports”

Seminars and Conference Presentations

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| 2025 | Melbourne Empirical Trade Conference, Seoul National University,
National University of Singapore |
| 2024 | Korea International Economic Association (Winter Meeting), Yonsei University,
Asia-Pacific Industrial Organisation Conference, KAEA Job Market Conference,
CSU-Long Beach, Midwest International Trade Conference, UCLA |
| 2023 | Warwick Economics PhD Conference, UCLA |

Honors and Awards

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| 2025 | Start-up Grant, NUS |
| 2020-2025 | Departmental Fellowship, UCLA |
| 2023-2024 | Lewis L. Clarke Graduate Fellowship, UCLA |
| 2020 | Summer Graduate Fellowship, UCLA |
| 2019-2020 | Fulbright Graduate Study Award |
| 2017 | Official Commendation, Deputy Prime Minister of Republic of Korea |
| 2013 | Passed the 57th National Higher Civil Service Examination, Republic of Korea |
| 2008, 2011-2014 | Merit Based Scholarships, Seoul National University |

Teaching

National University of Singapore (Instructor)

2025 Introduction to Coding for Public Policy using Python

University of California, Los Angeles (Teaching Assistant)

2021-2025 Intermediate Microeconomic Theory

2022 Microeconomic Theory

Other Information

Nationality: Republic of Korea

Military Service: Republic of Korea Army, Sergeant (2008-2010)

Language: Korean (native), English (fluent), Japanese (business proficient)

References

Jonathan Vogel

Department of Economics, UCLA

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Pablo Fajgelbaum

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Oleg Itskhoki

Department of Economics, Harvard

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