

# YOUN BAEK

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## EDUCATION

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<b>New York University</b> <b>Stern School of Business</b> Ph.D. in Economics	<i>2019 - 2025 (Expected)</i>
<b>Korea University</b> M.A. in Economics	<i>2018</i>
<b>Korea University</b> B.B.A. in Business Administration	<i>2016</i>
<b>Arizona State University</b> Semester abroad	<i>2016</i>

## INTERESTS

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development economics, economic history, political economy

## RESEARCH

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### Working Papers

#### **Missionaries and the Birth of International Development** [Draft]

The United States is the world's leading provider of foreign aid. I examine the role of Protestant missionaries abroad in fostering support for international development. I use the travel routes of recruiters from the Student Volunteer Movement, the largest missionary movement in America at the turn of the twentieth century, to generate plausibly exogenous variation in exposure to missionaries across denominations and regions. I find that a 10-percent increase in missionaries led to a 7-percentage point rise in congressional votes for foreign aid that established modern development assistance during the mid-twentieth century. Exploring mechanisms, I document that missionaries shaped foreign policy preferences and perspectives: exposure to missionaries led church denominations to endorse foreign aid in congressional testimony and prompted congressional representatives to adopt moral universalism in their speeches, reflecting increased awareness of outgroups. Biographical records of 12,265 missionaries and 24,841 runner-up applicants reveal that missionaries became key experts on non-European societies, providing critical insights to government agencies during the formative years of international development.

#### **Path dependence through agglomeration spillovers: Evidence from the beet sugar industry** (submitted) [Draft]

This paper presents evidence of path dependence in economic geography by investigating the agglomeration spillovers from US beet sugar factories, which attracted large-scale manufacturing facilities near farmlands. To estimate the effects of plant openings, I identify runner-up locations for beet sugar plants

from a historical trade journal and find that these plant openings had large and long-lasting effects on population and manufacturing activities over one hundred years. The agglomeration spillovers benefited industries not only directly linked through input-output linkages but also extended to broader, less related industries outside the production chain of agricultural processing.

### Work in progress

#### **Place-based costs and productivity in R&D** (with Sathya Ramesh)

This paper estimates the elasticities of productivity and costs of R&D with respect to urban concentration using data on 0.3 million scientists across American cities. We introduce a novel shift-share instrumental variable based on university-origin and destination-city pairs. Our findings show that the agglomeration elasticity of patents is generally higher than that of wages. However, while place-based costs remain constant across cities of varying sizes, the agglomeration elasticity of patents declines significantly in cities above the median size. These results suggest that place-based policies aimed at fostering economic activity in non-superstar cities could enhance the aggregate productivity of R&D.

#### **Engineering Human Capital: Long-Run Effects of Wartime Technical Training** (with Mina Kim)

This paper examines the enduring impact of the Engineering, Science, and Management War Training (ESMWT) program (1940-45) on the growth of engineers and scientists. To identify the effect of this training, the analysis leverages residual variation in ESMWT intensity across commuting zones, which stems from prediction errors made by local areas regarding imminent labor shortages during WWII, conditional on other WWII-related factors. The results indicate that this training led to a lasting increase in the number of engineers and STEM workers. Further analyses suggest that it also boosted interest in STEM education and led to increased post-graduate training after WWII. Localized spillovers in defense-related industries, driven by a temporary wartime demand shock, appear to have played a limited role in these changes in the occupational structure.

### FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

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<b>2023</b>	Kurnow PhD Fellowship, New York University
<b>2019</b>	Doctoral Fellowship, Ilju Academic Foundation
<b>2019</b>	Doctoral Fellowship, Kwanjeong Educational Foundation (declined)
<b>2019</b>	Doctoral Fellowship, NYU Stern
<b>2016</b>	Undergraduate Thesis Grant, Korea University
<b>2015</b>	Undergraduate Fellowship, Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies

### PRESENTATIONS

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**2023:**North American Meeting of the Urban Economics Association **2021:** Yale Economic History Graduate Student Conference

### OTHER

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Languages: English (fluent), Korean (native)

Citizenship: South Korea (F1 visa)

## REFERENCES

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**Petra Moser (Chair)**

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