

Youn Baek

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EDUCATION

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

INTERESTS

development economics, economic history, political economy

RESEARCH

Working Papers

Cultural Exchange and the Birth of International Development

How did America embrace international development? I study the role of American Protestant missionaries abroad. I use the travel routes of recruiters from the Student Volunteer Movement, the largest missionary movement at the turn of the twentieth century, to generate plausibly exogenous variation in the number of missionaries. Congresspeople representing constituencies with one standard deviation greater missionary exposure were 29 percentage points more likely to support foreign aid bills that established modern development assistance. Missionaries played a fundamental role in shaping foreign policy preferences and perspectives: Denominations with greater missionary exposure were more likely to endorse foreign aid in congressional testimony, after which congresspeople adopted moral universalism in their rhetoric. By the mid-twentieth century, experts on non-European regions disproportionately had a missionary background, and their expertise was especially valued by the government.

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

PRESENTATIONS

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

REFERENCES

Petra Moser (Chair)

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