January 17, 2020

Dear Members of the Faculty Search Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic interest in joining the faculty in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Dallas as an Assistant Professor of Sociology. I am an ABD Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech, who will defend his dissertation by May 2021. My research engages with race and racisms, racial ideology and language, Asia and Asian America, and the sociology of culture. I am particularly interested in how Korean and Korean Americans reproduce a U.S.-based racial ideology, and how their everyday racialized interactions consequentially legitimize the U.S. empire. In my scholarship, I engage with the cultural dimensions of racial formation, racial domination, and racialized gender performances. As a qualitatively driven sociologist of race and ethnicity, my research is deeply intertwined with my identity as a 1.5 generation Korean American. This critical reflexivity in my research also animates my pedagogy in the classroom. I am excited about the opportunity in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Dallas. My deep engagements with collaborative scholarship, student-centered pedagogy, and contribution to departmental life make me an excellent fit for the University of Texas at Dallas’ mission of academic excellence, interdisciplinarity, culture of innovation, and a global sense of space.

My dissertation, “The Vernacular of Whiteness: Towards a Sociology of Race and Language,” examines the ways that language – as a cultural process - becomes central to the production of racial identity, racial ideology, and, ultimately, the racial hierarchy in the U.S. Driven by qualitative research methods, I conducted approximately 600 hours of participant observation and fifteen (15) in-depth interviews with white, Korean, and Korean American university-affiliated participants at a predominantly white university in the Southern U.S. My findings show how a racialized economy of emotions is performed through language use – Korean and English – and how Korean and Korean Americans become racial actors invested in maintaining the racial position of “honorary white.” The first analytic chapter of my dissertation, “'The Possessive Investment in Honorary Whiteness?': How Asian and Asian Americans Reify a Transnational Racial Order Through Language,” has been recently accepted for publication at *Ethnic and Racial Studies.* The main thread of my research engages with a global, transnational framework of race in illustrating the role of Asian and Asian Americans as transnational racial actors. My overall research implicates how the U.S. racial order and white supremacy becomes a global project, implicating the U.S. as an imperial force structuring interracial/intraracial and interethnic/intraethnic interactions in everyday life.

My other scholarship rests at the intersection of racial ideology, sociology of culture, and Asian and Asian American masculinities, often with an interdisciplinary focus. My co-authored an article in *Sociological Inquiry*, “The Culture of White Space, the Racialized Production of Meaning, and the Jamband Scene,” examines the linguistic maneuvers of colorblind racism expressed by a predominantly white subculture. The findings from this research are further expanded in my co-authored publication in *American Behavioral Scientist*, “The Culture of White Space: On the Racialized Production of Meaning.” In this article, my co-authors and I bring together the various sites where white spaces are maintained ranging from the internet, subcultural scenes, to education to theorize how white spaces work sociologically. My coauthored article in the journal *Sociation*, “The Significance of Social Bonds for Asian Americans: Investigating the Relationship between Sex/Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Immigrant Generation, and Educational Attainment” directly engages with the model minority myth by demonstrating the segmented educational pathways of Asian Americans. I have also published an interdisciplinary collaborative work titled “Contemporary Spatial Publicness: Its New Characteristics and Democratic Possibilities,” in the journal *Sustainability*. Using data from Korea, this article examines the subjective perception of public spaces, capturing the transformation of public space with suggestions for direct policy implications. My current manuscripts in preparation focus on the intersection of race and gender by examining the ways in which masculinities and femininities are racialized.

I have developed and taught Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, Deviant Behavior, Introductory Sociology, and Women and Crime as an instructor of record at Virginia Tech. I am committed to the principles of educational diversity and inclusion and my course evaluations evidence this pedagogical commitment. Although student evaluations are not a reliable measure of teaching effectiveness, students have expressed my dedication and commitment to their learning experience in all of my courses. For example, one student observed from my Sociology of Race and Ethnicity course in the Fall 2019 semester that I “displayed genuine concern and interest towards each and every student.” Additionally, my evaluations are consistently above the various course averages in my department. I am excited to bring my pedagogical approach to the curriculum of the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Dallas. It would be a pleasure to develop a course that centers around race and racism, racialization, and racial domination incorporating the latest developments in the field of race and ethnic studies.

My professional endeavor as a collaborator, student, teacher, and mentor during my time at Virginia Tech has shaped my perspective on the importance of scholar-activism. My ethnographic approach to conducting fieldwork is one of the ways that I apply the principles of the scholar-activist tradition. I often aim to study “up” and engage in the community I become a part of in order to promote racial justice and awareness. Recently, I worked closely with Virginia Tech’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion to transform the visitor experience to accurately reflect the history of Smithfield Plantation. In the process, I facilitated the institutional practice of the principles of racial justice by way of community engagement at Virginia Tech. As a research associate and webmaster for the Laboratory for the Study of Youth Inequality and Justice, I strive to manifest the engagement with research and social justice in a digital forum. Additionally, my current role as a graduate programming assistant in the Asian Cultural Engagement Center at Virginia Tech has prepared me for a direct role in community engagement. I look forward to bringing this model of scholar-activism and racial justice to the University of Texas at Dallas.

I believe that given my expertise as a sociologist of race and ethnicity and active engagement as a researcher in the field allows me to bring a pedagogical approach that does not compromise depth for breadth. I believe I would make an excellent fit for your position given my scholarship, community engagement as a scholar-activist, and unique approach to classroom pedagogy, all of which will be an asset to the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Dallas. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions if they should arise.

Sincerely,



Joong Won Kim

Ph.D. Candidate

Department of Sociology

Laboratory for the Study of Youth Inequality and Justice (YIJ)

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