

Dr. Youngrong Lee

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EMPLOYMENT

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, 2025 -

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Sociology, University of Toronto, ON, Canada, 2025

- Dissertation: “The Contested Making of Gig Workers: A Comparative Ethnography of Global Food Delivery Platforms in Seoul and Toronto” (Advisor: Cynthia Cranford)

M.A. Sociology, Syracuse University, NY, United States, 2019

M.A. Culture and Gender Studies, Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea, 2014

B.A. Sociology and NGO Studies, Sungkonghoe University, Seoul, South Korea, 2010

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Work and Labour; Gender; Organizations; Labour Movements; Qualitative Methods; Global Ethnography; South Korea; Canada

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

Lee, Youngrong. (2025). Class identity vs intersectional solidarities: Divergent models for organizing gig workers in Seoul and Toronto. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207152241312904>

- Association of Korean Sociologists in America, Graduate Student Paper Award (2025)
- I-CSK Student Paper Award, James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, University of Pennsylvania (2024)

Lee, Youngrong. (2023). After a global platform leaves: understanding the heterogeneity of gig workers through capital mobility. *Critical Sociology*, 49(1), 23-37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205211055912>

- Dennis William Magill Canada Research Award, The Department of Sociology at University of Toronto (2022)
- Interviewed in ASA Economic Sociology Section Newsletter *Accounts*, Spring 2024: "On Gig Workers and Capital Mobility: An Interview with Youngrong Lee."
<https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Economic-Sociology-2024-Spring.pdf>

Books

Lee, Youngrong and Myung, Sumin (2016) *Is "Good Work" Possible? Youth's "Social Labor,"* Seoul: Communebut. (written in Korean)

Lee, Youngrong (2015) *Why We Quit Our Jobs: A Sociological Report on People who Escape from Labor Society*, Seoul: Seohaemunjip. (written in Korean)

Book Chapters

Lee, Youngrong (2024). Syndicat au défi de l'économie de plateforme: Autour des syndicats de travailleuses et de travailleurs de livraison de plateforme à Toronto et à Séoul (Unions Challenge the Platform Economy: Platform Delivery Workers' Unions in Toronto and Seoul). In C. Yoon, Y. Noiseux, B.-H. Lee, S. A. Soussi, H. Anh, D.-G. Tremblay, & C. Agbobli (Eds.), *Travailler dans l'économie de plateforme: Action publique et luttes collectives au Canada et en Corée du Sud* (S. Elimam & C. Yoon, Trans.). Presses de l'Université du Québec. (in press, expected 2027).

Lee, Youngrong (2016) "A Worker, a Job Seeker, and a Worker Again," in *The Betrayal of Efforts*, ed. Haejoang Cho and Kiho Uhm, Seoul: Changbi, pp. 91-109. (written in Korean)

Other Publications

Lee, Youngrong (2021) "A global platform left the country and local gig workers were left stranded," *Marxist Sociology Blog: Theory, research, and politics*,
<https://marxistsociology.org/2021/12/a-global-platform-left-the-country-and-local-gig-workers-were-left-stranded/>.

Lee, Youngrong (2016) "Continuity of Gendered Labour: Women's Experience of Job Seeking and Working Life in South Korea," *Guarantee Labor Rights for Job Seekers: Make the First Step toward Correcting Unfair Employee-employer Relationship* Korean Women Link and the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, pp. 56-91. (written in Korean).

Lee, Youngrong (2014) "Workplace of the 'Incomplete Life': Neoliberal Labor with a Focus on Narratives of Koreans in their 30s-40s," *The Radical Review*, 62, pp. 185-205 (written in Korean).

Lee, Youngrong (2014) "Book review: A Response from the Society that Lives on Humiliation: A Review of Chan-ho Kim, *The Feeling of Humiliation: Emotional Sociology of Indignity and Dignity*," *Platform*, pp. 62-65 (written in Korean).

Lee, Jonghee and **Lee, Youngrong** (2012) “The Hidden Side of the 24-Hour Society with a Focus on the Work Experience of Night Shift Workers,” *The Radical Review*, 54, pp. 259-279 (written in Korean).

Work in Progress

Youngrong Lee. “Start Without Pressure!”: (In)visibilisation of Gig Work through Worker Heterogeneity in Seoul, *Work, Employment and Society* (under review).

Youngrong Lee and Erin Reid (Proposal accepted). How technology is rewiring the ideal worker image: Implications for bodies, jobs and hierarchies, *Research in Organizational Behavior* (forthcoming 2026 issue; draft available).

Youngrong Lee (A book manuscript in preparation). *The Contested Making of the Global Gig Economy: Global Platforms, Workers, and Resistance*.

Youngrong Lee. “From the Worker to the Non-Worker: Unmaking the Organisational Life of Gig Workers” (manuscript in preparation; data analysis ongoing)

AWARDS

Graduate Student Paper Award, The Association of Korean Sociologists in America (AKSA), 2025

I-CSK Student Paper Award, James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2024

Dennis William Magill Canada Research Award, The Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2022

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIP

Major

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, 2025-2026 (CAD 70,000)

Korea Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2025–2026 (USD 48,400). *Declined*.

Dr. David Chu Scholarships in Asia-Pacific Studies, University of Toronto, 2022 (CAD 10,000).

Korea Foundation Fellowship, Centre for the Study of Korea, University of Toronto, 2019 – 2024 (CAD 25,000).

Minor

Travel and Conference Award, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2025

Doctoral Completing Award, Faculty of Arts & Science, University of Toronto, 2024-2025

SGS Research Travel Grant, University of Toronto, 2022

Research Travel Award, Center for the Study of Korea, University of Toronto, 2023

Research Stimulus Grant, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2021-2022

Virtual Conference Funding, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2021

Summer Fellowship, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2021

Research Stimulus Grant, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2020-2021

Summer Fellowship, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2020

Conference Travel Grant, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 2019

University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF), University of Toronto, 2019 – 2023

Syracuse University Graduate Fellowship, Syracuse University, 2017 – 2019

Yonsei University Graduate School's Excellent Thesis Award (M.A. Thesis), 2014

Cultural Diversity Fellowship for Master's Theses, Daum Foundation, 2013 - 2014

Social Science Department Chair's Scholarship, Sungkonghoe University, 2006 - 2009

University Entrance Scholarship, Sungkonghoe University, 2006

PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED TALKS

Invited Talks

March 2026. *“Start Without Pressure!”: (In)visibilisation of Gig Work in Seoul Implications for Workers’ Organizing*, Labour Studies Speaker Series, School of Labour Studies at McMaster University.

October 2021. *From a Foodora Workers' Union to a Union for All Gig Workers: Organizing of Ontario Delivery Gig Workers*, Online Conference on Collective Action in Platform Economy of Researchers and Activists in South Korea and Quebec, Canada (Virtual).

Is "Good Work" Possible? Youth's "Social Labor"

May 2017. The Center for Teenagers Outside School, Seoul, South Korea.

May 2017. Korean Women Ecofeminist Organization, Seoul, South Korea.

May 2017. Suwon Youth Network, Suwon, South Korea.

April 2017. Seoul Youth Hub, Seoul, South Korea.

November 2014. The university course, the Department of Cultural Anthropology, Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea.

Why We Quit Our Jobs: A Sociological Report on People Who Escape from Labor Society

Nov 2016. Paju Book City, Seoul, South Korea.

June 2016. The university course, Kwangwoon University, Seoul, South Korea.

April 2016. Monthly Seminar of the Center for Culture & Society, Seoul, South Korea.

February 2016. Conference for Comparative Study on Youth in Korea and Japan, Work Together Foundation, Seoul, South Korea.

Presentations at Professional Meetings

2026. "How technology is rewiring the ideal worker image: Implications for bodies, jobs and hierarchies", Identity Gathering, INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France (with Erin Reid).

2026. "Start Without Pressure!": (In)visibilisation of Gig Work through Worker Heterogeneity in Seoul, Looking Back on Forty Years of South Korea's Democracy: Discontents and Challenges, Center for Korean Studies Conference, University of Hawai'i—Mānoa, Manoa, United States (invited panel).

2025. Micro-fragmenting Gig Workers and Solidarity under Tension, *International Sociological Association*, Rabat, Morocco.

2025. Micro-fragmenting Gig Workers and Solidarity under Tension: A Comparative Ethnography of Seoul and Toronto, *Canadian Sociological Association*, Toronto, Canada.

2025. Micro-fragmenting Gig Workers and Solidarity under Tension: A Comparative Ethnography of Seoul and Toronto, *The Annual conference of the Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS)*, Hamilton, Canada.

2025. Micro-fragmenting Gig Workers and Solidarity under Tension: A Comparative Ethnography of Seoul and Toronto, *Graduate Student Symposium, Global Labour Research Centre at York University*, Toronto, Canada.

2024. Organizing the Crises and Worker Subjectivities: Comparative Ethnography of the Gig Workers' Unions in Seoul and Toronto," *3rd International Conference on Sociology of Korea (I-CSK), at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, the United States.*
2023. Understanding the Union Strategies through Crises: Comparative Ethnography of Gig Workers' Unions in Seoul and Toronto, *The International Sociological Association (Virtual).*
2023. Organizing with Crises: A Comparative Study of the Toronto and Seoul Platform Delivery Unions, *The Global Perspectives on Platforms, Labor & Social Reproduction Conference (virtual).*
2023. Organizing Crises: Global Comparative Ethnography of Gig Workers' Unions in Toronto and Seoul, *The Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, the United States, accepted (but unable to attend for a personal circumstance).*
2023. Organizing with Crises: A Comparative Study of the Toronto and Seoul Platform Delivery Unions, *International Colloquium: Working in the Platform Economy: Public Action and Collective Struggles in Canada and South Korea, Montréal, Canada.*
2022. Working in Crises, Organizing with Crises: Comparative perspective of gig workers' unions in Seoul and Toronto, *Graduate Student Symposium, Global Labour Research Centre at York University (virtual).*
2022. Unfinished Business: A Global Platform's Exit, Gig Workers' Organizing, and the Competing Ideal Worker Subjectivity, in Open Plenary Gig Worker Organizing: Possibilities and Pitfalls, *Canadian Association for Work & Labour Studies, Invited Panelist (virtual).*
2021. Unfinished Business: A Global Platform's Exit and the Competing Ideal Gig Worker Norm, *WORK2021 (virtual).*
2021. After a Global Platform Leaves: Understanding Heterogeneity among Gig Workers through Capital Mobility, *The Annual conference of the Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) (virtual).*
2021. Unfinished Business: A Global Platform's Exit and Local Gig Workers Organizing in Canada, *Canadian Sociological Association (virtual).*
2020. "It Is Not Meant to Be Work": Consent of Privileged Gig Workers to the Degradation of Work," *New Voices in Work & Labour Studies Workshop Series (virtual).*
2020. "It is Not Meant to be Work: How do workers become consumers in the gig economy?" *The Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, accepted.*

2019. “Working like a Customer: Consenting to Precarious Work in Ride-hailing Platforms,” *Reshaping Work 2019*, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
2019. “Working like a Customer: Consenting to Precarious Work in Ride-hailing Platforms,” *The Annual Conference of the Association of Korean Sociologists in America*, New York City, U.S.
2019. “Working like a Customer: Reframing Work into a Commodity in Ridehailing Platforms,” *The Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society*, Boston, U.S.
2019. “Working like a Customer: Reframing Work into a Commodity in Ridehailing Platforms,” *Sociology Graduate Student Symposium*, Syracuse University, Syracuse, U.S.
2018. “The Work Experience of Early Retirees, or “Korean Downshifters,” in Neoliberal Society,” *The Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association*, Philadelphia, U.S.
2018. “The Work Experience of Early Retirees, or “Korean Downshifters,” in Neoliberal Society,” *The Annual Conference of the Association of Korean Sociologists in America*, Philadelphia, U.S.
2014. “The Breakaway from a Disrespectful Labor-Society and the Re-formation of Life: Resignation Experience and Narratives of the ‘X-Generation’ in Korea,” *The Association of Korean Cultural Studies* (Spring Conference), Chung-Ang University, Seoul, South Korea.
2014. “Life after the Day that Can Never be Recovered,” 4.16: *A Nightmare That Has Not Been Finished: Anthropologists’ Memorial Discussion of the Hundredth Day of the ‘Sewol-Ferry Disaster,’* Duksung Women’s University, Seoul, South Korea.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada, January 2023 – May 2023)

Research Assistant, “Peel Migration and Employment Project.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Cynthia Cranford in the Department of Sociology
- Writing on Canadian immigrants’ precarious labour

University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada, March 2022 – November 2022)

Research Assistant, “Repertoires of labour protests in Korea.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Yoonkyung Lee in the Department of Sociology
- Collecting data, coding and analyzing

University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada, May 2021 – Oct 2021)

Research Assistant, “Labor in the platform capitalism: Gender, precarity, and resistance.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Yoonkyung Lee in the Department of Sociology
- Organizing of colloquia

University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada, September 2019 – January 2021)

Research Assistant, “Peel Migration and Employment Project.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Cynthia Cranford in the Department of Sociology
- Coding and Data analysis on immigrants’ work history in Canada

University of Arizona (Fieldwork in Seoul, Korea, January 2017 – June 2017)

Research Assistant, “The Korean Internet Freak Community and Its Cultural Politics.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Sunyoung Yang in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Arizona.
- Collected data from online communities and academic materials.

4/16 Memory (Seoul, Korea, January 2016 – July 2017)

Researcher, “An Oral History Project for 416 Testimony.”

- Archived oral histories shared by bereaved family members of the Sewol-Ferry Disaster on April 16, 2014.

Women Link and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation (Seoul, Korea, June 2016 – October 2016)

Researcher, “Guarantee Labor Rights for Job Seekers: Make the First Step toward Correcting Unfair Employee-employer Relationship.”

- Researched aspects of the gendered labour market in the job-seeking process in South Korea.
- Collaborated with a Korean women’s organization, “Women Link.”

Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education and Yonsei University (Seoul, Korea, May 2016 – September 2016)

Research Assistant, “Participatory Research on Odyssey-Schools’ Educational Effects.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Yoonkyeong Nah in Culture and Gender Studies at Yonsei University.
- Fieldwork in alternative schools and conducting interviews.

The Department of Anthropology at Seoul National University and the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Seoul, Korea, July 2014 – January 2015)

Research Assistant, “A Basic Study of the Medical Anthropological Approaches for Long-Term Psychological Support of the Sewol-Ferry Disaster.”

- Supervisor: Prof. Hyeon Jung Lee in the Department of Anthropology at Seoul National University.
- Multi-sited fieldwork and interviews in places involving the Sewol-Ferry Disaster.

Cultural Action: A Korean NGO for Cultural Action. (Seoul, Korea, October 2012 – January 2013)
Researcher, “Social Network of the Youth.”

- Conducted in-depth interviews with and writing about young people in share house communities.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Independent Teaching

Course Instructor University of Toronto, Mississauga, the Department of Sociology

- “The Contemporary Issues with Work: Precarity and Resistance” (Winter 2025)

Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “Introduction to Sociology I: Sociological Perspectives” (Prof. Mitchell McIvor, Fall 2024)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “The Sociological Inquiries” (Prof. Mitchell McIvor & Scott Schieman, Winter 2023)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “The Sociology of Work” (Prof. James Braun, Winter 2022)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “Global Cities and Urban Refugees: Connecting South and North” (Prof. James Johnson, Fall 2021)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “Introduction of Sociology” (Prof. Jayne Baker, Winter 2021)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “Transnational Asia” (Prof. Yoonkyung Lee, Fall 2020)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “Introduction of Sociology” (Prof. Hae Yeon Choo, Winter 2020)

Teaching Assistant University of Toronto, the Department of Sociology

- “Introduction of Sociology” (Prof. Rachel La Touch, Fall 2019)

Teaching Assistant Syracuse University, the Department of Sociology

- “Sociological Theory” (Prof. Gretchen Purser, Spring 2019)

Teaching Assistant Syracuse University, the Department of Sociology

- “Political Sociology” (Prof. Edwin F. Ackerman, Fall 2018)

Teaching Assistant Yonsei University, the Department of Cultural Anthropology

- “Cultural Design in the Network Age.” (Prof. Haejoang Cho, Fall 2012)

Teaching Assistant Yonsei University, the Department of Cultural Anthropology

- “Cultural Anthropology in the Global Age.” (Prof. Haejoang Cho, Fall 2010 – Spring 2012)

TRAINING

2021. Certificate in Teaching Fundamentals, Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation, University of Toronto

ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS

American Sociological Association
Canadian Sociological Association
International Sociological Association
Academy of Management
Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies

LANGUAGES AND SOFTWARE SKILLS

Languages

Korean: Native fluency
English: Fluent
French: Beginner

Software

Microsoft Office, Excel, PowerPoint, NVivo, STATA.

REFERENCES

Dr. Cynthia Cranford
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700 University Ave., Toronto, ON M5G 1Z5
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Dr. Yoonkyung Lee
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