

Kyeyoung Park

Title:

**How has Black-Korean Relations Evolved since the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest?**

Abstract:

“Black-Korean tension” has been ubiquitous in America since the 1980s. Tensions between Black and Koreans have been exacerbated by the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest where more than half the financial damage occurred to Korean immigrant merchants. Accordingly, my talk will cover how Black-Korean tension has evolved over time, in particular since the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest. First, I’ll present an analytical model to explain how and why there has been tension between Korean immigrant merchants and their African American customers and residents. Equally important, I will elaborate in what sense are both anti-Black racism and anti-Asian racism fundamental elements and driving force within white nationalism? Secondly, there has been signs of progress in Black-Korean relations since the 1992 unrest. To be accurate, Black-Korean tension has been for the most part contained. I’ll discuss what kind of efforts have been made on both community and individual merchant levels, in particular business practices from both Korean and African American perspectives. I’ll also discuss different Koreans and Blacks’ take on Black-Korean relations. Third, I will provide an update on the status of Black-Korean relations as the country continues to battle the coronavirus pandemic and to reckon with racial (in)justice in the aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd, which sparked social protest. I will end my talk by envisioning radical empathy and solidarity, which ideally lends itself to opening up new conversations among excluded people such as Koreans and African Americans. There is no doubt we should be fighting against anti-Black and anti-Asian racism and systematic racism and white supremacy.