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RAND Corporation, Summer Associate Program - Political Science & History
November 30, 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my interest in working with the RAND Corporation as a Summer Associate. I am firmly of the belief that my joining RAND for summer 2022 will be mutually beneficial for RAND's research program and my own academic and professional development. I am a doctoral student at Emory University's Political Science Department, and I am expected to graduate in May 2023.

My research focuses on discourses and communications at the various level of international politics. First, my dissertation looks at how the United States, China, Russia, United Kingdom, and France talks about other countries' (including about each other's) domestic human rights practices. I have presented a preliminary analysis of this paper, using the US subset of this data, at the 2021 Midwest Political Science Association Conference. Second, a part of my dissertation analyzes what aspect of human rights violations in a foreign country induces the American public moral obligation to support intervention policies. The survey design of this paper is under review for Emory's internal grant. Third, I look at how domestic discursal context in which the environmental effect of trade is talked about affects people's support for free trade agreement (FTA). Fourth, I analyze the way in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Israel report the conflict 'facts' differently, depending on their ideological stance in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This project has received a seed grant from a regional computational social science datathon. I pitched this project during the datathon, from which I gained three doctoral collaborators at Emory University and Georgia State University.

To study these questions, I have developed diverse skill sets. First, I received rigorous training in both statistical analysis and formal theory from my graduate institution (relevant courseworks are listed in the CV). Second, I use automated computational schemes to collect, sample, classify, and analyze the patterns of my text corpus. However, many of the modeling decisions are informed by political science theory, and the validity of the data is evaluated qualitatively. Third, because I generate event data from my text, I am familiar with different theories and structure pertaining to event data and media bias. I am also familiar with various event detection schemes used in natural language processing (NLP). Fourth, I have designed two survey experiments: one conjoint, one vignette.

I am excited by the prospects of receiving mentorship from and interacting with RAND researchers, first, because your diverse substantive, methodological, and first-hand expertise will enable me to reassess the usefulness and generalizability of my text coding schemes, by different criteria. Second, I currently work with undergraduates, graduates at my institution, and a graduate at another institution, and have tremendous interest in creating a healthy and sustainable culture in research labs. Exposing myself to the working culture and philosophy outside my lab, discipline, or school will inspire me greatly in rethinking my current role as a graduate student/principal investigator of my own projects, as well as future responsibilities as a more senior person.

Sincerely,
Jiwon Kim