Briefly describe your career plans and professional goals and how this fellowship will assist you in completing the year of study (300 words):

My goal is to become a tenured professor that produces cutting-edge research on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (hereafter DEI) expertise. Eventually, I would like to hold a position of authority within a university, and to turn my future workplace into a supportive space for both women and underrepresented minorities in academia. To reach this goal, I first need to graduate from my Ph.D. program. My research is inductive—I gather qualitative data mainly through in-depth interviews and participant-observation, and I build theory drawing from patterns I see in the data. The production of this type of scholarship requires time. My most urgent need right now is to find resources to cover child-care expenses while I am writing my dissertation.

In February 2020, I enrolled my infant in daycare. Alas, my daughter stopped going in March because of the COVID19 pandemic. Ever since, I have been juggling being her caregiver while being a full-time doctoral student. Despite this situation, I have been able to continue gathering dissertation data and to nourish my professional development. For example, in Fall 2020, I presented my work at the Harvard Ethnography and Inequality Workshop, the Stanford Graduate School of Business, among other venues. Earlier this year, I submitted one of my manuscripts, "*Qué Vergüenza*: How Scholarship Recipients Became Ashamed of What Once Made Them Most Proud" to the top-journal in my discipline. While I have been able to continue on my projects consistently, I will enter a highly competitive academic job market. Thus, it is critical for me to make time to work on my dissertation and on the projects that make up my research pipeline. If awarded the American Dissertation Fellowship, I will work diligently to reach my goal of becoming a tenured professor and an advocate for academic women and underrepresented minorities.

Title: *Racialized Expertise and the Enabling and Constraining Character of Organizations: The Case of University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workers*

Give a brief abstract of your project (300 words):

This dissertation projects unpacks the social organizational processes that lead to the emergence of a new form of racialized expertise. Providing a case study of the everyday work-life of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) workers at a large US university, I investigate (a) how the notion of an ideally qualified DEI expert is socially constructed within an organizational context, (b) how the ethnoracial background of DEI workers shapes the perceived fit to fulfill the tasks associated with DEI work, and (c) how the organizational structure of the university enables and constrains the tasks DEI workers fulfill. Drawing from 50 in-depth interviews, a review of the evolution of affirmative action policies and DEI initiatives at the organizational and state level, as well as participant-observation of DEI events, I argue that objects, actors, techniques, devices, and organizational arrangements lead to the emergence of a new form of racialized expertise. I find that when talking about the previous experiences and skills that have prepared DEI workers to do this type of job, workers at Redwood refer to the personal experiences that Black, Latinx, Native-American, Asian American or Pacific Islander workers have lived as a form of preparation for this type of work. In contrast, when talking about the experiences that have prepared White workers for DEI work, people highlighted their previous professional experience, rarely referring to

experiences related to the ethnoracial background of these workers. This project contributes to the study of organizations, the study of race and ethnicity within organizations, and the sociology of expertise by offerings insights on the variation of how the ethnoracial background of DEI workers is perceived and presented as a form of perceived credential. It also documents how the role and tasks of an overlooked group of workers – university DEI workers–is being redefined during unprecedented times.

Full project description: 700 words

The dynamism of present-day US society has sparked conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion across organizations. Sociologists have provided compelling empirical evidence to show what DEI practices work and do not work (e.g, Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly 2006; Dobbin, Kim, and Kalev 2011), and how concepts such as diversity have become influential binding norms, though open to local interpretations (Berrey 2015). Despite such contributions, research on DEI workers mostly refers to the experiences of corporate human resources personnel. We lack an understanding of how social-organizational processes shape the work life of DEI personnel in US universities which, in addition to being educational spaces, are also workplaces. This is a regrettable omission given the critical role of DEI workers in the endeavor to include members of historically disadvantaged groups in US universities.

This dissertation addresses these gaps in our knowledge by using the empirical case of DEI workers at Redwood University (pseudonym), one of the University of California campuses. I examine (1) how the notion of an ideally qualified DEI expert is socially constructed within this organizational context, (2) what role the ethnoracial background of DEI workers plays in the perceived fit to fulfill the tasks associated with DEI work at this university and (3) how the everyday tasks of DEI workers are enabled and constrained by the dynamics and processes at Redwood. Drawing from data gathered through (a) a revision of the evolution of policies and initiatives at the organizational and state level, (b) observations at university events related to DEI, (c) in-depth interviews with over 50 workers in the organization, and (d) an analysis of organizational narratives related to DEI posted on Redwood's website, I develop a novel theory of racialized expertise.

I find that the ethnoracial background of DEI workers at Redwood plays a role on how workers are perceived as fit to fulfill the tasks related to this type of work. When talking about the experiences that have prepared DEI workers for these positions, a persistent feature was the way workers at Redwood referred to the personal experiences that non-White workers have lived as preparation for this type of work. Being a non-White person is perceived as a form of credential to carry out DEI work in this organization. In contrast, when talking about the experiences that have prepared White workers for DEI work, people highlighted their previous professional experience, rarely referring to experiences related to the ethnoracial background of these workers. I bridge the subfields of the sociology of expertise, organizational literature, and the sociology of race and ethnicity (e.g., Abad 2019; Collins 2019; Eyal 2013; Eyal 2019; Lawrence and Phillips 2019; Monk 2013; Ray 2019; Roscigno 2011; Saguy et al. 2020; Wingfield and Chavez 2020) to analyze this finding in-depth. In this way, I extend foundational work to examine the emergence of a new form of expertise. This timely project also documents how the tasks of an overlooked group of workers – university DEI workers–are redefined during unprecedented times, and how

approaches to DEI are evolving. As of October 2020, I have conducted 21 of the 50 interviews I will conduct for this project. I am a UC alumna, and I have a strong affiliation with Redwood. Given the COVID 19 pandemic, I propose a realistic and feasible timeline:

October 2020 - July 2021:
- Revise relevant documents.
- Conduct in-depth interviews (in person or via zoom).
- Gather participant-observer data during strategic meetings, DEI events, etc. If COVID-19 persists, I will join virtually.
- Analyze website content.
- Wrap up data gathering.

July 2021 (Start of fellowship tenure):
- Send interviews for transcription.
- Code and analyze field notes, memos, transcripts, and website content using Atlas.ti.

August 2021:
- Present preliminary findings at the 2021 American Sociological Association Conference.
- Start writing Chapter 1.

November 2021:
- Send Chapter 1 to committee. Workshop chapter 1 with Qualitative group.
- Start writing Chapter 2.

January 2022
- Send Chapter 2 to committee. Present it at the SKAT workshop.
- Starting writing Chapter 3.

March 2022
- Send Chapter 3 to committee.
- Turn Chapter 1 into an article. Send it out for review to the American Sociological Review.

May 2022
- Write introduction based on approved chapters.
- Set defense date in June.

June 2022 (End of fellowship tenure)
- Defend dissertation.

Autobiography (300 words)

The sky is really gray where I am from. Lima is a noisy, over-populated city, covered by a smog-ridden sky; a place where women are valued by how they look and how good their cooking is. In 2003, I left Peru searching for better opportunities to join my father in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Unfortunately, his violent outbursts pushed me away from him. At 17 years-old, I moved to California on my own, where I soon found a job bussing tables at a local restaurant. One day, a customer told me about Berkeley City College (BCC), a community college temporarily located in the basement of a *Ross, Dress for Less* store. Out of curiosity, I signed up for classes. Little did I know that the classes in that basement would completely change my life.

After four years of taking classes part-time, my BCC professors encouraged me to transfer to a four-year college. In 2010, I was admitted to UC Berkeley to pursue a B.A. in Sociology. That same year, my father was sentenced to seven years in federal prison for selling methamphetamines. While I juggled my undergraduate studies with monthly prison visits, my professors encouraged me to be resilient and to focus on my research. With their guidance and the help of fellowships, I wrote an honors thesis where I explored how a group of Andean women affected by war benefited from participating in a local organization. I loved every aspect of working on my research project, and that's when I decided to pursue a PhD in Sociology. I graduated with High Honors and Distinction from UC Berkeley. In the Fall of 2015, I joined Columbia University as a doctoral student. I dream of becoming a professor, and of supporting my students in the same way my professors encouraged me to thrive.

Commitment to Women and Girls:

I am the only child of a single mother who vehemently tried to overcome the obstacles that many women face around the world. My mom worked three jobs to make ends meet while trying to finish university. She was never able to finish her studies, and our economic vulnerability took a toll on her mental health. My mom had to let me go when I turned 10 years old. Inspired by her story, I have held different leadership positions with the goal of improving the lives of women.

At Columbia, I chaired the Graduate Students of Color Alliance, and I mentored undergraduate students of color through the Leadership Alliance Program. Serving in these roles showed me how precarious the support for women is in universities. For example, doctoral students who become mothers are given an extra semester to graduate. Alas, this extension comes without funding or health insurance. In 2017, I saw the need to hold a safe space for women to talk about a variety of issues such as setting boundaries around service work, managing the road to tenure, dealing with sexual harassment in academia, etc. Thus, I founded the *Intimate Conversations with Women in Academia* series in my department. Ever since, professors and graduate students gather once a semester to discuss the challenges of being part of a male-dominated discipline. Currently, I am a negotiation coach through the REBLS Leadership Academy, a joint initiative run by UMass Amherst and the Harvard Kennedy School. REBLS seeks to increase the number of women and minorities in STEM fields. I coach students on how to turn obstacles into opportunities for growth. My activism and commitment to tackle gender inequality was recognized earlier this year when I was awarded the 2020 Beth Hess Honorable Mention from the Society for Women in Sociology.