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Personal Statement
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I have gathered a posie of other men's flowers, and only the thread that binds them is my own.

Montaigne¹

...geography changes as society changes, and ... the best way to understand the tradition to which geographers belong is to get a handle on the different social and intellectual environments in which geography has been practiced.

David Livingstone²

I have worked to make significant contributions to geography and related areas of inquiry, but to borrow Montaigne's metaphor, I am indebted for the flowers I have gathered from so many women and men. In a turbulent social and intellectual environment, the continuing, collective project of renegotiating Livingstone's geographical tradition is both urgent and challenging. I am fortunate and grateful to be part of this project. My contributions to the enterprise owe much to the social and intellectual environments in which I have been fortunate to practice.³

Research

Distilling the research record to raw numbers yields twenty-four refereed research articles, fifteen of them as lead or sole author. An additional pair (in the 'gently' refereed journal of the International Geographical Honor Society) were co-authored with students in an explicit effort to integrate research, teaching and advising. Three additional items are currently under review (journal article, book chapter, book proposal). I have also co-authored three book-length monographs, and work continues on another collaborative book under contract with The Century Foundation (formerly the Twentieth Century Fund). Other publications include a pair of book chapters, six book reviews, and about two dozen entries in the grab-bag category of government reports, non-refereed articles, and entries in various conference proceedings. Extramural research support totals about US\$200,000 in recent years if only sole Principal Investigator grants are considered; the figure is a little more than \$US800,000 if collaborative, Co-P.I. roles are included. Major funders include the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Ford Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Fannie Mae Foundation.

I am an urban geographer. My research is concerned with the nexus between public policy and private market forces in urban housing and labor markets in U.S. cities. I examine this connection through empirical, quantitative analysis in four distinct but complementary areas of inquiry:

- The spatial constitution of racial and gender inequality in urban housing and labor markets.

¹ Wavell, A.P. (1944). *Other Men's Flowers*. London: Jonathan Cape.

² Livingstone, David (1992). *The Geographical Tradition*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 347.

³ I was a faculty member at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, from 1995 to 2002, where I held a joint appointment between the Department of Geography and the Center for Urban Policy Research. The decision to leave the rigorous and nurturing environment of Rutgers was extremely difficult, but the opportunity to come to the University of British Columbia presented challenges for growth and new direction that I could not resist.

- Continuity and change in practices of racial and ethnic discrimination in mortgage lending.
- Evolving systems of residential capital investment and inner-city neighborhood change.
- The role and geographical scale of urban policy in the context of federal devolution and global political-economic restructuring.

A central theme that unites all of this research is the close association between social and spatial inequality as workers and households confront market forces. Consequently, my work is part of a tradition that challenges two prevalent dualisms. The first is geographical: analysts typically study how space and place influence and mediate social processes, *or* they emphasize how geographies are the outcome of social and institutional dynamics.⁴ A second dichotomy recurs throughout public policy and urban studies: ‘public’ decisions are typically regarded as the domain of formalized politics and institutional configurations, while ‘private’ actions are viewed as the collective outcome of innumerable decisions by economic actors in dynamic market relationships.⁵ I view both of these dichotomies as unfortunate constraints on our understanding of current rounds of socio-economic and urban change, and my research programs attempt to move beyond such divisions to examine policy questions at the blurred divisions between public and private, market and policy.

1) *The spatial constitution of racial and gender inequality*

My first research emphasis deals with the geographical causes and consequences of racial and gender inequality in housing and labor markets. Beginning with a concern for the role of transportation in the expansion of metropolitan regions, this research evolved into an examination of socio-economic problems at both ends of the “work journey.” At home, long-run changes in household organization have unfolded while patterns of residential segregation remained firmly entrenched in the urban landscape. At work, industrial restructuring alters the occupational mix of job opportunities while labor supply is transformed by immigration and increasing female labor force participation. Part of my research agenda synthesizes a fragmented and often contradictory literature to offer a new understanding of labor market divisions and the geographical interdependency of housing and labor markets. In “Race, gender, and spatial segmentation” (*The Professional Geographer*, 1996), I seek to illuminate the common elements of two discrete literatures, one of them focused primarily on racial divisions (the spatial mismatch literature), the other emphasizing gender relations (the spatial entrapment debate). Restrictions on mobility or residential location may be manifest in systematic race- or gender-based variations in unemployment or worktrip length when urban industrial transition alters the employment landscape; but these processes may also reinforce labor market segmentation without having any

⁴ As one illustration, consider the interpretation of America's prevailing form of urban growth ~ low-density suburban sprawl. In one account, this type of landscape is portrayed as a socially produced phenomenon, related to the ways in which time, space, and private residential environments are valued in America's culture and economy. In another view, however, once this kind of landscape is produced, it exerts a powerful effect itself ~ demanding that individuals and families conform to particular lifestyles, schedules, and consumption patterns.

⁵ The most common manifestation of this line of reasoning is a near-universal equation of ‘public’ with policy, and ‘private’ with market. In my view, recent rounds of federal devolution, deregulation, and the reinvention of government institutions to conform to private-sector models have accentuated the importance of *private policy* and *public markets*. The former are exemplified in gated communities, binding arbitration agreements, and other types of contracting relations intended to supplant open deliberation with corporate arrangements; the latter include public-private partnerships and government-sponsored institutions operating as private companies, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

effect on commuting patterns or unemployment rates. It is essential that local labor market studies test for these effects. In “Local labor markets and occupational sex segregation” (*Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1999), I extend this geographical perspective on segmentation to illuminate its inherently reciprocal nature. Deeply-entrenched gender divisions in the workforce carve out fine-grained local labor submarkets inside large metropolitan areas, but place also plays a role in segmentation even after accounting for human capital and residential location factors. Understanding the necessary and contingent facets of this reciprocal connection helps to identify locations where occupational *de*-segregation has achieved the greatest progress.

I extend and amplify these themes in “Continuity and change in the restless urban landscape” (*Economic Geography*, 1999). My goal in this article is to reconcile hotly-debated, contradictory interpretations of change and stability in the production of urban social space in the U.S. metropolis. I seek to fuse the integrated perspective on social and economic processes of feminist urban research with the detailed empirical insights offered by the classical factorial ecology literature. Despite significant changes between the 1960s and the 1980s, the broad spatial imprint of residential differentiation remains remarkably stable. More pronounced changes are evident, however, in the ways that households must adapt to the costs and behavioral requirements of life in the predominant urban spatial form of low-density suburbs. In my view, these changes are sufficiently important to require a new theoretical construct that moves beyond the problematic dichotomies of home/work, economic/social, public/private, and household/market. My theory of the “public household” is an attempt to understand how consumption decisions mirror the shifting boundaries between ‘private,’ non-commodified family relations and ‘public’ market solutions among the affluent suburban classes. The unequal income and wealth gains of dual-earner couples in the suburban professional classes yield a variety of geographical consequences that undermine any notion of Pareto optimality: the trend has reshaped intraurban central-place networks, magnified local instances of spatial mismatch in low-wage retail and household service job markets, and reinforced severe fiscal disparities in fragmented metropolitan regions.

2) *Racial and ethnic discrimination in mortgage lending*

Research on redlining, discrimination, and disinvestment is a central pillar of urban geography and allied fields. My second research program encompasses several contributions designed to shed new light on long-running debates in theory and policy. Part of my work in this area appears in journals aimed at an audience of housing policy analysts who are sometimes reluctant to accept the existence of widespread discrimination,⁶ while another part speaks to scholars who are absolutely convinced of the severity and persistence of the problem. My own considered judgment is that discrimination has not been eliminated from housing and credit markets in American cities, but it is undergoing significant changes that demand careful scrutiny. Sustained engagement with the mutually antagonistic positions in this debate convinces me that a dichotomous, either/or approach is theoretically flawed and dangerous for policy. My individual and collaborative research⁷ in this area is premised on a theoretical framework of contingency.

⁶ Some of this research has been supported by grants from the Fannie Mae Foundation, and is thus subject to contractual obligations to publish in *Housing Policy Debate* or the *Journal of Housing Research*. Both of these outlets maintain rigorous standards of peer review, and are aimed at an interdisciplinary audience of policy analysts, economists, urban planners, urban studies scholars, and geographers.

⁷ My collaborators in this area are David Listokin, Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning at Rutgers, and Steven R. Holloway, Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Georgia. David Listokin led our work for HUD and the Fannie Mae Foundation, but I drafted the theoretical and policy synthesis of our jointly-authored book of

Established traditions in social theory (as well as judicial precedent) acknowledge variations in the types, causes, and consequences of discrimination. These variations are further mediated by important changes in public policy, industry practices, and mobilization in a broad community reinvestment movement. In several multi-year projects with David Listokin and others, I examine how a large, complex, and sometimes uncoordinated institutional infrastructure has been constructed in response to the legacy of discrimination and market failures in housing finance. Regulatory scrutiny, community activism, judicial review, and structural changes in the lending industry have altered the context in which low-income and minority borrowers seek and obtain credit. Our work provides a balanced assessment of the possibilities and limitations of this new market relation, in light of the central role of homeownership in an age of privatization and cutbacks in social welfare.

This analysis goes a step further with a reconstruction and historical comparison of redlining and discrimination between the 1980s and the 1990s, using Atlanta, GA as a case study. My work with Holloway (published in *Housing Policy Debate*, 1999, and *Journal of Housing Research*, 2001) revealed troubling stability in the observed outcomes, but suggested that new processes may be at work behind the same old patterns. We have developed a theory of geographically contingent mortgage lending to understand the interaction of individual, institutional, and neighborhood-level processes in racial and ethnic disparities in credit flows. This work has spurred debate when presented at national conferences, including a select roundtable of lending researchers and policymakers in Washington, DC. In recent work we have extended our analysis to examine the wide-ranging implications of a new development in the housing and lending arena - systemic changes in the federal data collection infrastructure that was built in the 1970s (and revised periodically in the 1980s and 1990s) to monitor urban credit flows. In a series of articles (published in *Economic Geography*, *Social & Cultural Geography*, and the *Review of Black Political Economy*), we analyze the implications of the collection of data on race, ethnicity, and gender for academic research, government enforcement of civil rights laws, and social-theoretical debates on the epistemology of identity.

3) Residential capital investment and inner-city neighborhood change

My third research program examines the nexus between private market forces and public policy by focusing on neighborhood change at the urban core. Recent years have witnessed a pronounced resurgence of capital investment in the inner city, and in an interdisciplinary literature this trend has been used to investigate several fundamental theoretical dichotomies - production/consumption, economy/culture, and agency/structure. By the early 1990s, however, theoretical advances seemed to be rendered irrelevant by the sudden recessionary deflation of central city land markets. Since then, sustained economic growth attracted renewed scholarly and policy attention even while the process itself underwent important changes as it was globalized, linked to the smart growth and new urbanism movements, and woven into parts of a privatized public policy infrastructure. My own work in this area⁸ seeks to draw the connections between

empirical case studies for the "Making new mortgage markets" article. My work with Holloway is an ongoing collaborative research program between equals. I took the lead in arranging financial support from the Fannie Mae Foundation and subsequently the Ford Foundation, and we alternate order of authorship to signify leadership on specific manuscripts.

⁸ Most of my work in this area is co-authored with Daniel J. Hammel, Associate Professor of Geography at Illinois State University. We have collaborated on numerous studies of inner-city neighborhood change since we were in graduate school together at Minnesota. Dan was lead author on our first joint publication, but I have led our research program since then.

urban theory and public policy as the inner city is transformed by the privatization and devolution of federal assisted housing, while structural changes in housing finance funnel a wave of capital into parts of the urban core. The result is an intensified production of inequality and heightened tensions between affordability and capital availability. Moreover, significant domains of federal and local policy have been relegated, by design and by accident, to the status of weak, post hoc interventions after the dynamic market forces of investment and disinvestment have swept through the urban fabric. My analysis of these tensions has spurred considerable debate; prominent commentators on “Islands of decay in seas of renewal” (*Housing Policy Debate*, 1999), for example, viewed the argument as a provocative suggestion that public housing policy now causes gentrification (see comments by Kasarda, Berry, and Marcuse, cf. page 724). In my judgment, the continued emphasis on privatization, public-private ventures, and the imposition of market discipline on public institutions will only intensify dilemmas of affordability, investment, and inequality. Nevertheless, urban theory can be used with public policy and community organizing to encourage more sustainable and successful outcomes. To investigate these possibilities, I secured a small grant and directed a collaborative project to define and identify successful examples of reinvestment in low-income neighborhoods in large metropolitan areas; the results are presented in the “LMI lending in context” article (*Housing Policy Debate*, 2001).

4) *The role and geographical scale of urban policy*

My fourth research agenda is a synthetic analysis of the policy challenges of long-term changes in the U.S. urban network in the context of increased transnational trade, investment, and migration. Much of this research agenda is a collaborative effort with Norman Glickman and Michael Lahr,⁹ but my own perspective on the dynamics of devolution and scale (using Chicago as a case study) is expressed most clearly in the “Capital’s metropolis” paper (*Geografiska Annaler B*, 2000). My work with Glickman and Lahr in this area began with a project to document urban conditions as part of the U.S. contribution to the urban indicators program of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (“Habitat II”). The first phase of our research received a United Nations Best Practices award and yielded a unique public domain database distributed widely among urban researchers. We have also published several working papers, a policy monograph published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the lead article in a special urban economic development issue of *Cityscape*, a refereed policy journal. For the second phase of our research, I took the lead in writing a book proposal to The Twentieth Century Fund (now The Century Foundation).¹⁰ Our work examines three facets of urban theory and urban policy:

- How has the globalization of trade, investment, and migration altered the role of large cities in the economy of the United States?
- Is there a continued role for a coordinated national urban policy in the wake of important but selective streams of privatization and devolution from the federal government to state and local governments?
- What is the appropriate balance between “people-based” policies and “place-based” regional and community development initiatives?

⁹ Norman Glickman is University Professor at the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers, and served as CUPR Director from 1989 to 2000. Michael Lahr is Assistant Research Professor at CUPR. Glickman was Principal Investigator on several HUD contracts on which Lahr and Wyly served Co-P.I. roles.

¹⁰ The proposal was successful, and research continues under contract with the Foundation. Submission deadlines have been extended to permit analysis of 2000 Census data and other enhancement.

Influential decisions in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the U.S. government have defined several rounds of a “new federalism” balance between federal, state, and local institutions since the 1970s. In my judgment, this complex history has been oversimplified in most research on devolution, which portrays a simple delegation of autonomy to lower units of government. In “Capital’s metropolis,” I use the rich theoretical and policy history of Chicago to examine constructions of scale in housing policy in light of local changes in capital investment and a national emphasis on privatization. My theory of “centripetal devolution” tries to capture the dynamic process by which local “best practices” are torn out of context, promoted in competitive federal funding streams, and used to legitimize a federal retreat from public responsibilities.

Teaching and Advising

For many years I have been privileged with the reduced teaching assignments that come with a joint appointment with a research center. I do not regard such a privilege as a license to neglect students. I really do believe the oft-recited statement that research and teaching are two sides of the same coin, although I would add the valuable currency of advising to the metaphor. In the realm of advising through scholarship, I undertook major substantive revisions and rewrites on two student seminar papers that showed promise (Keith Brown, Julie Silva), and stewarded the manuscripts to peer-reviewed publication. In formal classroom teaching, I am committed to rigor and innovation at all levels of the curriculum, and I have enjoyed teaching advanced seminars with enrollments below a dozen, middle-division offerings with 75-100 students, as well as introductory surveys enrolling 150 to 250. By the numbers, student evaluations usually rank my overall teaching effectiveness at a mean between 4.4 and 4.6 on a 5.0 scale. I am also working to revitalize our department’s Urban Studies program. My first offering of the program’s fourth-year seminar coincided with intense public debate around Vancouver’s bid to host the 2010 Olympics, and thus one part of the class integrated urban studies scholarship with a local case study of the bid process. We worked with a local alliance of nonprofits and other researchers on campus to develop a community survey (for which we secured ethics/human-subjects approval) administered at a series of forums organized by the city’s Mayor.

At the graduate level, I have enjoyed the opportunity to undertake major revisions to the structure, literature, and theoretical emphasis of long-established courses in the graduate curriculum (urban housing and labor markets, urban systems, migration). I also developed a new course at Rutgers, focusing on contemporary developments in quantitative geographical analysis; this course allowed students to develop the methodological components of their individualized research agendas while engaging classic multivariate techniques as well as recent advances in ecological inference, expansion methods, and spatial econometrics. Most of my advising roles have been as part of the ‘supporting cast’ of committees, but I do take these responsibilities (and opportunities) very seriously. I am currently supervising a new doctoral student at U.B.C. (Mona Atia) who is working with me on a project supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Service

My understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the scholar is shaped by experience in large, public, non-profit land grant institutions in the U.S. The public service missions of these

institutions are under assault from market forces, a few of them the product of 'natural' competition and demographic trends, but most of them concocted in short-sighted and reactive attempts to refashion the university into a lean and mean content provider machine. It is quite reasonable to dismiss such brash opinions when voiced by a junior scholar with limited expertise in these matters; but I am deeply committed to the unprofitable, inefficient, and non-benchmarkable qualities of fundamental inquiry. I believe in the public, social, and collective responsibilities of the academy and those fortunate to be part of it. These principles guide the day-to-day activities that wind up on the service section of the c.v., and part of my reason for moving to Canada was to experience and learn from another configuration of public and private institutional processes. My first-cut assessment is mixed and cautious: parts of the system here are genuinely different; others are simply about a decade behind on the path to market-oriented disinvestment in the scholarly tradition.

In service to the profession, I have sought to contribute through conference organizing, grant and contract review for the National Science Foundation and other prominent funders, and manuscript reviews for a variety of journals. My service to the university includes the usual scope of faculty responsibilities in department- and college-level planning and curriculum supervision, all of which I take very seriously. But my years at Rutgers also allowed me to learn about urgent institution-wide issues, through elected positions as a member of the New Brunswick Faculty Council, the University Senate, and as Chair of the Livingston College Executive Council of Fellows. The lofty discourse of shared governance means nothing unless scholars (not just full-time administrators) devote time to sustained engagement across disciplinary lines to make specific, difficult decisions. Sadly, the incentive systems discourage participation by untenured scholars, especially those who face deeply-entrenched disparate impact biases of gender, race, and family commitments. Finally, in the genuinely public arena of public service, I have been fortunate to advise external evaluations of welfare reform legislation and predatory lending. I also served on the board of an interfaith transitional housing program for homeless mothers. In my first year at UBC my efforts have focused on 1) membership on a Faculty of Arts Committee designing an interdisciplinary U.S. Studies Program, and 2) membership on the board of the Impacts of the Olympics on Communities Coalition, a nonpartisan alliance formed to ensure a sustainable, inclusive process in Vancouver's planning for the 2010 Games.