

“If we think of politics as an industry, we might delight in its new “labor-saving efficiency”, but if we think of politics as a democratic deliberation, to leave people out is to miss the whole point.” This is one of the quotes from Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (2000) that always looms in my mind. I surveyed this book extensively in my research during my final year of my graduate program at [REDACTED]

to define social status when it comes to policy intended to leverage certain community values, I experienced the realities of incorporating multiple schools of thought into research. While many may find this experience to be intimidating, I found it liberating to have such a wide array of theories at my disposal. Whether I end up enhancing and/or complicating knowledge, it is exhilarating to be a part of the tradition. Overall, my research and the experience of presenting it gave me the confidence to assert and defend my arguments while also affirming an affinity for research that would be well-suited to pursuing a Ph.D.

Though it is difficult to predict what direction a project might take given many more years to research it, I can expect that the following theories and issues would be addressed. First and foremost, I would like to expand the utilization of theories to better understand my observations. For instance, I believe Pierre Bourdieu's concept of multiple forms of capital in social relations may differ from Putnam's social capital at times but can bring interesting facets to the overarching goal of illuminating the experience of these communities experiencing change. I would also like to take some time to probe the implied values of what gentrification policy brings to these communities as there is an underlying assumption that certain class values are superior. Bourdieu brings mention to these implied values with his theories on social stratification being largely aesthetic in nature and his theories on class fractions. I would also like to take a more materialist approach to the antagonisms in the communities facing gentrification that might borrow from Marx in a more economic materialist approach to understanding. Lastly, I believe that qualitative research inside communities of people post-gentrification could be beneficial to research. Many of these people are displaced and dispersed among other communities and, by and large, they become forgotten and I want to incorporate their experiences more centrally into gentrification research.

My previous research is but just a glimpse into my interests—it is just a starting point for future research and study. While I am proud of my research experience and could say so much more about it, it is important to stress that my research interests can fall along broader terms. Generally, the heart of my



diverse research interests that can allow me to best explore who I am as an academic and what angle I want to take with my research interests.

UNO also provides an ideal situation where I can pursue some specific disciplinary interests. In particular, I am interested in UNO because of the Emergency Management and Disaster Science Program's faculty. This a unique feature of UNO that better allows me to have fruitful discussions on research topics related to my interests in public policy in communities that are difficult to implement policy in. Emergency management policy has underlying assumptions that many disasters will cause displacement of citizens. There will be some consistencies among displaced people regardless of the mechanism of displacement. Having the specialist knowledge of these faculty can provide me with a great opportunity to garner a more holistic approach to my research interests. k mng asc didown take with my research int 0 62 9

The outstanding faculty in UNO's Public Administration Program is also a boon for the program. I have already mentioned Dr. Thomas Jamieson, but there are other faculty that I would be excited to work with as well. For instance, Dr. Jodi Benenson is someone that I have quite a lot of research similarities with and believe I could garner a lot from her. Most of my policy interest is centered around questions of (in)equity as is much of her research. She also takes an assets-based approach to understanding volunteerism's relationship to economic mobility in low-income communities. While I have not specifically used the assets-based approach in my gentrification research, I have shown an affinity to the general concept by interpreting and characterizing different concepts of what forgotten community members bring to the table in policy processes. I believe Dr. Benenson and I could have a fruitful relationship where I could get a more sophisticated understanding of how civic engagement relates to economic mobility. I am also interested in working with Dr. Angela Eikenberry as there is much that could be gleaned from her work on how volunteerism and philanthropy can increase civic and political engagement. Underlying my research on gentrification has been a general idea that civic and political engagement is intrinsic to citizen efforts to resist gentrification policy. Most manifestations of resistance are explicitly political or civically-minded and I believe there is a lot that I can learn from Dr. Eikenberry to get a more integral and incorporated understanding of the phenomenon I am observing.

At UNO, I would have the utmost opportunity to fully commit and be pushed to my limits on who I am as an academic. The diverse set of tracks also allow for a specific commitment to important aspects of the discipline. For instance, I would like to pursue specializations in public policy and either public