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Columbia University

Department of Sociology

Graduate Admissions Committee

Dear Members of the Admissions Committee,

I am submitting the enclosed essay as part of my application to the MA program in Sociology at Columbia University. This letter provides context for the essay and explains how it reflects my academic preparation and developing research interests at the graduate level.

The essay examines how urban housing policy influences patterns of social mobility, with particular attention to neighborhood-level data and policy outcomes. Rather than attempting a broad policy comparison, I focused on a single metropolitan case to allow for closer methodological analysis and more precise interpretation of findings. This approach reflects the way I prefer to engage with research questions—through depth, structure, and clearly defined scope.

This work builds directly on my undergraduate training in sociology and public policy, where I developed a strong interest in institutional decision-making and its social consequences. Writing this essay required sustained engagement with empirical research, theoretical framing, and revision, reinforcing my interest in pursuing advanced study that combines qualitative analysis with policy-oriented inquiry. I see this essay as a foundation for further research within your program, particularly in areas aligned with faculty work on urban inequality.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my application and supporting materials.

Sincerely,

Michael Harris

