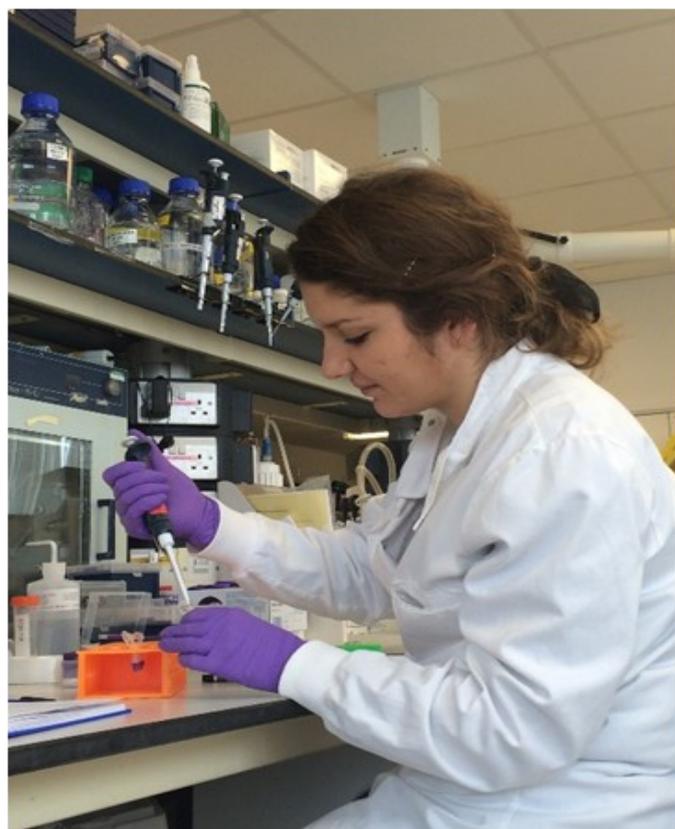


THE ANGLO-DANISH SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP REPORTS

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Scholarship Reports

In the following pages we are presenting the scholarship reports from the seven recipients of grants for the academic year 2013-14. At the time of selection for an award we ask them to accept our request that they share with us - at a later date - their experiences of postgraduate studies abroad.

In recent years we have benefited greatly from the hospitality extended by HE the Ambassador when he and his wife have welcomed new scholars in their residence at a reception. Back in 2013 when these scholars were selected, we were also honoured and grateful to have the Protector of our scholarship programme HRH the Duchess of Gloucester in attendance.

The programme is now in its 56th year - we have on file hundreds of names of award winners. Having the opportunity of putting a face to a name and having a chance to ask them questions about their research is enlightening and rewarding on many levels.

For further details about past and current awardees and our scholarship programme in general please visit our homepage listed below or feel free to contact me.

Margit Stæhr

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www.anglo-danishsociety.org.uk/scholarships

Gunvor Jóensson



I would like to thank the Anglo-Danish Society for its financial support. The funding enabled me to carry out

fieldwork in Senegal, West Africa, for my PhD in Anthropology from SOAS. The title of my thesis is, “At the End of the Railway Line: Malian Female Traders in the Senegalese Capital”.

I focused on market traders who had immigrated and settled in the capital as well as women who were incessantly travelling back and forth between Mali and Senegal, traders known locally as *bana-banas*.

Many Malians settled in Senegal in the early 20th century, while working on peanut plantations during French colonialism. In 1923, the Dakar-Niger railway was completed, linking the Niger River in Mali to Dakar’s port in Senegal. Its work force became dominated by people from Mali, who had fewer alternatives for wage labour than their coastal neighbours in Senegal. The wives of railroad employees used their spouses’ railroad passes to go to town to buy better food than the railroad supplied. Many women thus became railway merchants, taking advantage of the price differentials that existed between towns

PhD Anthropology

along the railway. Mali gained independence in 1960 and the new socialist government discouraged independent trade and actively opposed migration, calling instead for a ‘return to the land’. Women with connections to railroad employees and border officials and with state-level accomplices hence became increasingly involved in illicit railroad commerce.

In the late 1960s, peanut production in Senegal declined, due to a series of droughts and a decline in the world market price for peanut oil. This coincided with the end of socialism in Mali. Malian peanut cultivators moved to Dakar and transformed themselves into kola nut traders, drawing on their family networks in the Ivory Coast, from where they exported the nuts by railway or ship to Dakar. Malian women were also involved in the trade, albeit on a smaller scale, bringing sacks of kola nuts as well as other goods along on the passenger train from Mali to Dakar.

As the kola trade declined, a new wave of Malian traders entered the scene in the late 1980s, importing dried foodstuffs and fruit to the terminus train station in Dakar, where a wholesale market emerged.

This trade was pioneered by women, who for decades had been travelling back and forth on the passenger train;

Gunvor Jóensson

they pooled money to order train wagons loaded with goods from Mali and used the old colonial warehouses at the terminus station as storage and trading space. With time, entire families came to Dakar and the community expanded.

In 2009, the Malian traders experienced profound changes to the infrastructure underpinning their business. The Malian market in Dakar was closed by the authorities, and the passenger train that the *bana-banas* had been using to transport themselves and their goods stopped running.



A Malian female trader and her daughter at one of the new Malian markets in Dakar, which was established after the market at the train station was demolished in 2009

Part of my research looks at how the Malian traders adapted to these changes and reorganised their activities. I conducted twelve months of multi-sited fieldwork in Dakar, where I moved between the different, scattered Malian markets that had

formed after the train station was closed, and I also spent time socialising and shopping together with the mobile *bana-banas* when they came on a business trip to Dakar. Female migration in West Africa is growing, but the phenomenon is plagued by misconceptions, and empirical data and in-depth analysis is sorely lacking. Part of my study traces the history of Malian migration to Senegal and Malian trade and settlement in Dakar, emphasising the significance of historical continuity and social networks in explaining migration. My study contributes to a qualitative understanding of the motivations and experiences of mobile West African women.

Finally, research on African migration and diaspora tends to focus on people outside the continent, despite the fact that the vast majority of Africans are actually moving and settling inside Africa. Migration between African countries has been largely ignored and my thesis contends that questions about diaspora, integration and transnationalism within the African continent itself need to be raised to enhance conceptual debates on mobility and diversity, and to improve understandings of contemporary African social dynamics.

Editor's note: Gunvor is preparing her thesis for submission in October. She started on 1st September 2015 as Departmental Lecturer in Migration and Development, at the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford.

Ralitsa R. Madsen



I am currently an MPhil student in Medical Science at Cambridge University where I am conducting full-time bio-

medical research in Dr Ozanne's laboratory, based in the Institute of Metabolic Science. The major focus of our research is to understand the mechanistic basis of the relationship between poor early growth and subsequent increased risk of Type 2 diabetes (T2D). Why this has major implications for society as well as the more specific details of my own work will be explained in the following.

Barely anyone would argue against research in T2D after considering this, to me, mind-blowing fact: during the time it takes me to complete this report, thousands of people will have lost their lives to T2D, a disease that currently claims a life every sixth second. The most recent estimates by the International Diabetes Federation predict that the worldwide prevalence of T2D will increase by an astounding 55 % from the year 2013 to 2035, presenting society with unforeseen challenges in terms of health care and associated economic costs. An upsurge of this magnitude, occurring within only one generation, is im-

MPhil Medical Sciences

possible to explain with changes in the gene pool, thus prompting us to take into account environmental changes. Current approaches to tackle the problem emphasise changes to adult lifestyle, but are unfortunately proving disappointing. The Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) is a scientific concept that provides an alternative approach of looking at the problem from a life course perspective.

According to the science of DOHaD, the adult risk of T2D is set early in human life – while still in the womb and in early infancy. The fetus is constantly receiving signals (in the form of nutrients and hormones) through the placenta about its mother's environment, and thus the environment it can expect to be born into. Subsequently, it adjusts its development accordingly to match this prediction; for instance, if the mother suffers from a disease that limits the transfer of nutrients to the fetus, the latter would predict a poor environment and would alter its metabolism to one of nutritional thrift.

In today's world, however, it is more than likely to be born into an environment with plenty of food, resulting in a mismatch between the original prediction and the actual environment. The science of DOHaD advocates that this mismatch is the primary cause for current escalating rates in T2D.

Ralitsa R. Madsen



Daily laboratory experiments have been central to my life as a Master student.

Numerous epidemiological studies, recapitulated in well-controlled animal models, have established that the risk of developing insulin resistance, a major component of T2D, is greatest in those who are small/thin at birth and who then develop relative obesity. Being born small for gestational age is an indication of a poor nutritional environment *in utero*, while the subsequent development of obesity is a consequence of our world's nutrient-rich environment, once again illustrating the aforementioned mismatch causing the adverse effects of an intrauterine programming of metabolism to become amplified in adulthood. To elucidate the molecular mechanisms governing this programming, we have set up a rat model of

poor fetal nutrition (by feeding the pregnant dam a low protein diet) followed by catch-up growth, effectively mirroring the situation in which a human is born small, but then develops relative obesity. The three main insulin-responsive tissues are liver, muscle, and fat tissue. My project explores the altered molecular response to the effects of insulin in fat tissue in the aforementioned rodent model.

Binding of insulin to its receptor on the surface of the fat cell sets in motion a train of intracellular events mediated by the action of various enzymes, which together form what is known as the insulin signalling pathway. One such enzyme is the PI3K (phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase) which is considered a major 'player' in mediating the effects of insulin. This enzyme is composed of two protein parts, called subunits, where one of the subunits has enzymatic activity. We have previously shown that protein levels of this subunit, named p110 β , is decreased in adipose tissue from young rat offspring subjected to poor fetal nutrition, which then underwent catch-up growth (referred to as recuperated offspring from now on), when compared to their age-matched controls. A decrease in adipose tissue p110 β protein levels is expected to reduce the effects of insulin, contributing to the development of insulin resistance; as

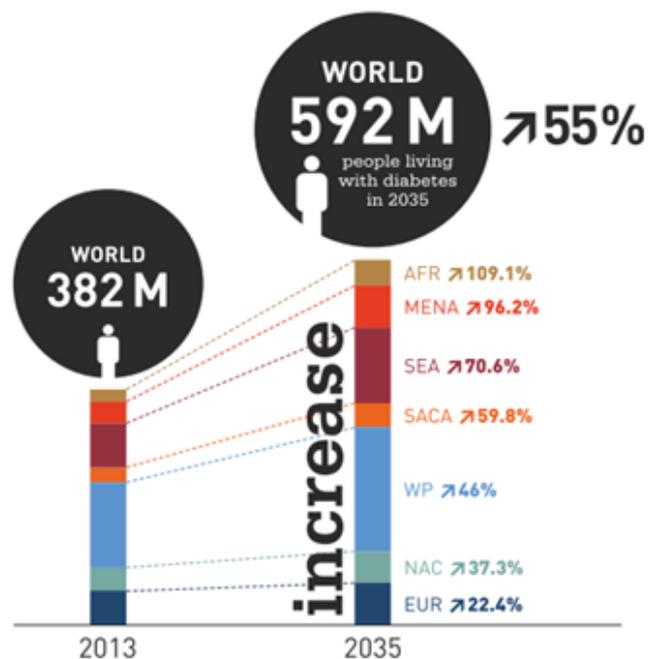
MPhil Medical Sciences

these programmed molecular changes precede the development of whole-body insulin resistance and T2D, we strongly believe that they are on the causal pathway relating poor fetal growth with increased risk of T2D in adulthood.

Moreover, similar results have been obtained with adipose tissue from young Danish men born small for gestational age who are known to be at an increased risk of developing insulin resistance with advanced age. Our hypothesis is that these changes in p110 β protein levels have been programmed by altered epigenetic mechanisms; the latter change gene expression without altering the cell's DNA sequence. One particular epigenetic mechanism includes the function of microRNAs (miRNAs), which are small molecules that are able to decrease the levels of specific proteins. Thus, one of the main aims of my project has been to identify candidate miRNAs that are predicted to target p110 β and analyse their levels in adipose tissue from recuperated offspring.

In addition, our group has previously demonstrated that recuperated offspring suffer from accelerated ageing and have reduced lifespan compared to controls. This fits well with their increased risk of developing T2D as ageing is an independent risk factor for

its occurrence. Hence, the second aim of my project has been focused on identifying adipose tissue miRNAs that change with age. Ongoing research is now focused on elucidating the roles of these miRNAs with respect to both normal ageing and developmental programming of adipose tissue.



Diabetes is a huge and growing problem with the costs to society being high and escalating. Taken from (IDF, 2013).

In conclusion, my current work, which has been generously supported by the Anglo-Danish Society, contributes to understanding the fundamental mechanisms underlying the developmental origins of T2D. Once we understand these processes, targeted intervention and ultimately prevention strategies may become a feasible possibility.

Editor's note: After her MPhil Ralitsa was awarded a four-year Wellcome Trust PhD Scholarship in Metabolic and Cardiovascular Disease with start October 2014 at the University of Cambridge.

Iain McLarty



Since autumn 2012 I have been studying Orchestral Conducting at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. There were two main reasons why I chose to study here and both of them have surpassed my expectations.

Firstly, I was looking for a teacher who would allow me to develop as an individual but also push me to achieve the highest standards possible. The main teacher is the Italian-born conductor Giordano Bellincampi, one of the most prominent conductors in Denmark although relatively unknown in the UK. His teaching approach is very much influenced by the Finnish pedagogue Jorma Panula and focuses on students learning how to ask questions about the music which will help them when approaching any score by themselves rather than teaching a particular interpretation or tech-

nique. We have also focused a lot on effective rehearsal technique and the psychology that lies behind the interactions that take place between a conductor and an orchestra. All of our work is recorded and we spend time afterwards analysing the videos. This allows us to work as if we are in the real situation rather than having a teacher interrupt every few minutes. As well as our classes with Giordano we have also been lucky to have occasional workshops with Michael Schønwandt. This has been inspiring in a very different way, seeing the incredible amount of thought which goes into preparing the repertoire he specialises in such as Mozart and Carl Nielsen.

The second element which was important was the opportunity to have workshops with professional orchestras. I was very experienced with both student and amateur orchestras when I arrived but nothing can prepare you for your first time in front of professionals as you immediately feel completely out of your depth. This is why it is such good training to have time in front of these orchestras as a student, with the safety net of your teacher there to catch you, or to decide that failing will be a more important lesson and to pick you up afterwards! Most conducting classes will have a day or two each year with a professional or-



chestra between a minimum of five students so we are incredibly fortunate that we have around twenty days a year between three students, including both rehearsals and concerts with all of the Danish regional orchestras.

As well as classes in conducting I have also been able to have individual classes in a number of supporting subjects. This meant that in analysis classes I was able to spend a lot of time exploring twentieth century scores for example, expanding my knowledge of this repertoire as my analytical skills were already strong. The orchestration class even led to doing arrangements for the Royal Danish Opera Academy and Storstrøms Kammerensemble.

Other opportunities were collaborations with the composition class and with singers from the Royal Danish Opera Academy. These included work with both professional and student

orchestras and ensembles developing artistic relationships.

One of the highlights of my time in Copenhagen has undoubtedly been watching rehearsals with Sir Simon Rattle and Herbert Blomstedt. It was inspiring to see how they were able to create such an individual sound world through their gestures and their work in rehearsals. Herbert Blomstedt was even generous enough to take some time to discuss the scores he was working on as well as talk to us about his own inspirations and his musical philosophy.

I am very grateful for the funding I have received as it has helped make this wonderful experience possible, allowing me to focus on studying full-time and experiencing life in another country to the full. Although I will be leaving soon Copenhagen will always feel like a home for me and I hope I will have many more opportunities to visit or work in Denmark in the future.

Editor's note: Iain has returned to Scotland and works as a freelance conductor and church musician in both Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Christian O. Lund



Around 300 BC the Greek mathematician Euclid publishes a book on geometry in Egypt. He called it *The Elements*. In the book, he builds a geometry based on five simple postulates. For two thousand years, these five postulates were believed to constitute the only meaningful foundation for geometry possible. Not until the 19th century did Gauss, Lobachevskian and Bolyai realize that the fifth and last postulate of Euclid,

“Given a straight line l and a point p not on the line, then there exists exactly one parallel line through p which does not intersect l ”

is indeed independent of the four other postulates, and they found out that replacing this postulate by other postulates could indeed lead to meaningful geometries. Either allowing zero parallel lines through p or allowing more than one parallel line through p led them to discover the

PhD Mathematics

geometry of curved objects. How we understand geometry today is the result of work done by a student of Gauss in 1854 named Bernhard Riemann. His contribution to the field was so significant that today it bears his name: Riemannian geometry.

For a couple of years I had known that Riemannian geometry was my passion. Where to do a PhD in this area of geometry was a tougher question. Only a handful of universities in Europe have faculty dedicated to this particular topic and none of them is easy to get in to. It was therefore a joyful day when I learned that I had been accepted to the PhD program at Cambridge University. I started the PhD in October 2013.

Arriving at Cambridge was an amazing experience. Candlelit dinners in the old hall of St John’s College, gowns and Latin grace, the rich history and the beautiful buildings, the river, the meticulously kept gardens, and all of it filled with dedicated and talented scholars to discuss with and to learn from.

The geometric object Riemann introduced we nowadays call a manifold. Locally the object looks like Euclidean space, but globally it may be very different. The surface of the earth is a good example. Locally we can make a

Stephanie Oerum

chart of it, say a map of England, but we cannot cover the whole globe in one chart.

My research is concerned with generalizing properties of certain types of manifolds to a bigger class of objects, known as orbifolds.

Orbifolds are essentially manifolds where you allow the structure of the object to break down locally. They were first described by the Japanese mathematician Ichiro Satake in 1956 and continue to this day to attract the attention of mathematicians and physicists alike.

I would like to thank the Anglo-Danish Society for their support, which has improved the quality of the first year of my PhD at Cambridge University significantly.

It has paid for me to go to a conference at Imperial College in London, it has allowed me to buy the books I need to do my research, and it has ensured that I could focus on my research without having to worry about my economy.

Editor's note: Christian Lund is still at Cambridge University where he is scheduled to finish his PhD in Mathematics at the end of September 2016.



I have spent the past years of my DPhil (Ph.D.) working at the Structural Genomics Consortium (SGC) at Oxford University. SGC

conducts translational science in close collaboration with industry, and this collaboration creates a very result oriented atmosphere in the lab and a highly focused approach to the various projects. This translational university-industry collaboration – and the atmosphere that it brings – is something very unique for SGC, and has thus attracted all the major pharmaceutical companies with whom SGC is now collaborating to develop drugs for various diseases. As well as drawing in the major pharmaceutical companies, SGC's uniqueness also attracts top scientists and specialists in the area of drug development ensuring that students at SGC gain the best possible education and future network. In my work at SGC (past 3 years) I have been trying to understand the rare genetic disorders HSD10-deficiency and Perrault Syndrome with a prospect of eventually providing a treatment. Patients suffering from these disorders progressively lose motor and mental skills from

Stephanie Oerum

the age of 2 months which very often leads to an early death around the age of 4.

When I applied for the Anglo-Danish Society Scholarship I had only just started my research and now – three years in – I have managed to create a good foundation for understanding the molecular mechanism underlying these diseases. I now know how the various disease factors are linked and thus how they work together making it possible to target one or more with purpose designed drugs. The work I have performed so far has led to two already published papers and two first author publication currently in preparation.

In addition to the Anglo-Danish Society award, I have recently received a highly competitive scholarship award from the Arne Jacobsen designed St. Catherine's College and furthermore various conference awards for best talk or most competitive abstract. At Oxford University all DPhil students are reviewed half way through their 4 years of DPhil work with a written report and an oral defence. I had both of these in April 2014 where I got the best possible feedback with no concerns raised.

On top of the work conducted in the lab, I have managed to find time to

DPhil Structural Biology

give back to the college society in my role as Middle Common Room (MCR) Co-President and First Boat Woman Rowing at St. Catherine's College. In the role as Co-president I managed to ensure college housing for more Graduate students, to establish a 24 hour study room for all Graduate students and to extend the opening hours in the college library.

The Anglo-Danish Society scholarship has enabled me to spend time both focusing at my DPhil research and at my function as MCR Co-President and First Boat Rower. The very good research progress I have made so far, and the changes I have managed to make to the college, would not have been possible without the support of the Anglo-Danish Society.

The next step in my DPhil research will be to develop potential drug candidates targeting the – now better understood – underlying mechanism behind HSD10-deficiency and Perrault Syndrome.

Once again, I thank the Anglo-Danish Society for valuable support and encouragement in my research.

Alexandra Messerli

PhD Glaciology



At the Centre for Ice and Climate, Niels Bohr Institute, my project outline was to investigate the process of how water affects the motion of the glacier.

Climate change and sea level rise are very prevalent topics in society today. It is important to understand how much sea level rise we can expect if the glaciers and ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica were to melt. For example, if the entire Greenland ice sheet were to melt that would contribute to approximately 7m of sea level rise globally. However, many of the processes that determine how fast the melting ice contributes to this sea level rise are still poorly understood. One of the most fundamental processes is how the meltwater produced at the surface of the glacier affects how fast the ice moves. The surface meltwater flows down into the glacier through a drainage network in the ice eventually making its way to the bed.

Once at the bed the water acts as lubrication causing the ice to speed up. As the ice flows faster it pulls more of

the ice upstream with it, thus delivering more ice to the margin and eventually into the ocean. All this additional water that enters into the ocean leads to a rise in sea level that can have a large effect on the low lying land around the globe. The processes driving this system are poorly understood due to the difficulty of obtaining data needed to constrain these processes. This is particularly so at the base of the ice sheet, which lies under 3km of ice.

The project takes place at a small Arctic glacier called Engabreen, the outlet of the much larger Svartisen Ice Cap. It lies just within the Arctic Circle at approximately 66° north.



Figure 1. An overview of Engabreen, Norway. The red cross indicates the entrance to the Svartisen Subglacial Laboratory

The focus of my PhD is to understand the complex relationship between meltwater and the motion of the ice. Original ideas suggested that as the volume of meltwater reaching the glacier bed increased, the sliding of the

Alexandra Messerli

glacier would increase. However, this relationship is not as straight forward as this. My aim is to investigate this and provide quantitative analysis of ice flow data, meteorological data and discharge data from the proglacial river in front of the glacier. Engabreen is a perfect site to investigate this, as there is a subglacial laboratory, the Svartisen Subglacial Laboratory, directly beneath the glacier under 200m of ice. This unique research facility allows researchers to access the bed of the glacier through a series of underground tunnels in the mountain (see entrance marked with a red cross in Figure 1). These tunnels were constructed as part of a large hydropower plant that gain access to the glacier bed to divert melt water to a large reservoir. An additional research tunnel of approximately 20m was drilled to gain access to the glacier bed for experiments.

Here we can measure pressure at the glacier bed, sliding of the glacier along its bed and many other glaciological phenomena. As a result of the hydropower tunnels there are also many discharge stations that give us direct measurements of the volume and pattern of water flow underneath and around the glacier. Knowing about the hydrology of the glacier is only one part of the study, in order to fully investigate the relationship

we also need to know how fast the glacier is moving. For this I used a time-lapse camera and some GPS



measurements to monitor the flow of the ice.

After collecting the images we post process them in order to track visible features on the glacier to determine the speed at which it is flowing. Information about this can be found on our newly developed website here: <http://imgraft.glaciology.net>.

I wish to thank the Anglo-Danish Society for awarding me this scholarship. It has allowed me to pursue and expand my fieldwork. Due to the extreme nature of the fieldwork field assistants are vital. The Anglo-Danish society provided the much needed travel support for me and my field assistants, who are an essential part of any field campaign on the ice.

Editor's note: Alexandra finished her DPhil May 2015, has since worked at the Niels Bohr Institute as Fieldwork Logistics Coordinator and will be heading to Norway to do a short Post-doc at the Norwegian Polar Institute from Nov 2015 until next April, continuing similar research from her DPhil.

Frederik Weissenborn



Thanks in no small part to the generosity of the **Ove Arup Foundation**, I have been able to conduct my doctoral research into the sociology of urban space at

University College London (UCL). At a glance, my research investigates the genesis of urban form and the role played by it in the various socio-economic processes unfolding in urban space. With the world rapidly urbanising, the understanding of these dynamics is of increasing import. Alongside my research at UCL, I have been involved in a tutoring role to students on the MSc Spatial Design: Architecture and Cities course, just as I have lectured on the relationship between technology and urban space. I have also been the organiser of two conferences held at UCL: the 2013 "Spatial Cultures" symposium, and the 2014 "Civilisation, infrastructure and the city" symposium, held in collaboration with the UCL Centre for Research into the Dynamics of Civilisations (CREDOC).

Studying at UCL is and has been a great experience for me. It has also been very conducive for my research and further career. In addition to being internationally recognised as an elite institution, UCL is the home of a particular line of enquiry into urban space known as "space syntax"; a

PhD Urban Studies

paradigm with which my research is very much concerned. Space syntax is an evidenced-based approach to urban planning. It takes as its point of departure the experience of the urban inhabitant, factoring in crucial - but often overlooked - factors such as spatial accessibility and spatial intelligibility. It also has a thorough and far-reaching understanding of the processes involved in the genesis of the urban artefact; a process commonly known as morphogenesis. Both a theoretical line of enquiry and a hands-on and very operational approach to the practicalities of urban planning, space syntax has been involved in a host of high profile urban renewal projects. To name but a few, these include i) the refurbishment of Trafalgar square; ii) the planning of the Olympic Park and iii) the central urban area masterplan for the city of Jeddah (Saudi-Arabia).

My research has been carried out under the supervision of Prof. Alan Penn, Dean of the Bartlett as well as Director at Space Syntax Ltd. Being able to study alongside the members of the Space Group in general, and alongside Prof. Alan Penn in particular, has been a unique opportunity and will be an invaluable aid to my thinking and career going forward.

I thank the Ove Arup Foundation for their role in giving me this unique opportunity.

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