

Personal Statement

Perhaps it was the debate, over many years, as to whether Budapest's iconic Chain Bridge should become traffic free that served as the catalyst for my interest in urban planning and sustainability. I became intrigued with the implications of such a decision not only in terms of the impact on traffic flow within the city, but also with the economic, environmental, social and political aspects that would inevitably result. What struck me was how a seemingly simple case of urban planning could be so multifaceted and complex.

Selected for an after school advanced studies programme taught in English, I studied Macroeconomics where, reading N. Gregory Mankiw's 'Macroeconomics', I was able to further my knowledge of the fundamental concepts of economics. This also confirmed for me the wish to pursue my mathematical interests in a field that has an impact on society. A module Matrices and Markov Chains gave me an understanding of matrix methods applied to real-life problems whilst a course, Minority and Identity, taught me about the most pressing societal issues related to various different groups. My fascination with cities intensified during an internship with the Budapest municipality where I was able to gain an insight into the ways in which the city's long-term development plan is evolving. A school project, based on the future of cities, led me to interview Thomas Vonier, former president of UIA, the text of which was published in the influential online academic journal, *Építészfórum*. My discussions with Vonier not only heightened my interest in urbanism but also introduced me to the concept of the 15-minute city (FMC), a model that inspired me to interview notable figures, such as Carlos Moreno, and to write an extensive research paper as to how the FMC could be implemented in my home city, Budapest. In reaching a conclusion that a post-socialist structure is currently an obstacle to this, I considered arguments put forward in an article by researcher Krisztina Keresztély and Professor James Scott. I was delighted when, in reviewing my published paper, Éva Beleznyay, Senior Sustainability Consultant, wrote, "I have rarely come across such thorough and professionally correct work."

Winning an Erasmus scholarship allowed me to spend time in Barcelona where I learnt about sustainable mobility and had the chance to see a successful urban model, Superblock, which served as a case study in my research. Attending a week-long conference in Sicily organised by the American Institute of Architects helped me to look at ways in which to preserve a cultural heritage.

Reading Allan Hutchinson's 'Is eating people wrong' led me to question the law behind urban planning and what body is responsible for decisions likely to impact on lives for decades to come. 'Ensuring Energy Security' by Daniel Yergin introduced me to the ways in which energy security has changed over time and the need for diversification, something I followed up in an essay based upon Venezuela's energy crisis. A three week course at Columbia University taught me, through group projects and case studies, where topics included the water security of Rwanda, about international affairs, governmental systems and NGOs. Most notable was learning about Sustainable Development Goals.

For four years as a student life leader I have helped to organise after school activities for younger children, as well as 10 day camps in the summer.

My interests range from aviation to the operas of Wagner, photography and contemporary art where I particularly enjoy the geometric abstraction of the Irish-American artist Sean Scully.

I look forward to studying at a British university to experience a standard of education unique in the world and feel ready for the challenges that it will bring. In addition I am excited to be part of a multicultural society to which, with my Hungarian American citizenship, I would like to contribute.