I visited collaborative housing developments in Oslo, Norway; Stockholm, Sweden; Rotterdam, Utrecht and Delft, Netherlands; Rennes and Angers, France and London, England.

Housing and social (in)justice are tied together, even if we are unaware of this as the single family home and the suburban neighborhood have become accepted conditions. Multiple generations have become accustomed to this standard, and are not familiar with other housing alternatives that have been and are a successful option. One way to look at resolving social inequities and creating healthy societies is to reconsider the family home.

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Lessons Learned
Positive aspects that I witnessed in the housing developments were social cohesion and a lack of isolation, childcare support for families and single parents, networking for many topics like employment, services, sharing vacations and cultural or shopping excursions, along with meal-sharing and hobby groups. There is a cost benefit to living in a smaller private domain in order to afford sharing many amenities as a group, which might otherwise be beyond the budgets of each individual resident.

Advice
If you are interested in exploring a non-traditional topic, be prepared to spend a lot of time on the internet making inquiries. Find a great advisor to help you understand the parameters of making an independent study and assisting with references for scholarship applications. Apply for all scholarships that you are eligible for.

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Career Connections
I hope to work as a design activist and social entrepreneur working for humanitarian values regarding how the built environment affects wellbeing and social cohesion. Working to influence and change policy that will support healthy living for individuals and the environment I see working for the federal government as a possibility.