My lifelong experiences within a contested ethnonational reality, combined with my personal attributes—namely, a sharp intellectual mind, creativity, curiosity, an ability to work independently and a high sensitivity to social justice and human rights issues—have informed and directed my choices both in academia and in my professional life.

I strongly believe that the Development Planning Unit (DPU) at UCL's Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment is the right best place to conduct my proposed research. DPU's multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach to urban planning to political-economic, social and institutional researched phenomena, as well as research interest in issues such as privatisation and globalisation in the global south, lie at the heart of my proposed research.

As a global university located in the heart of London, UCL will provide me with an opportunity to conduct my research at an institution committed to academic excellence and with a worldwide impact, while taking advantage of the rich, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment a city like London has to offer.

After finishing my undergraduate studies in law nearly 18 years ago, I realized that my academic interest lay in human rights law, and I went on to undertake postgraduate studies in this field. Compelled by the desire to better understand political conditions, I also undertook further postgraduate studies in governance and political theory.

My previous Masters degrees provided me with relevant research tools and an in-depth knowledge of the fields I now propose to study. My law studies gave me knowledge of the legal and planning aspects of my proposed research, while my political science Masters gave me a solid grounding in its political aspects. My proposed research utilises combined qualitative content analyses and interviews, methodologies I studied as part of the qualitative research methods course.

Enrolling in the MPhil programme at DPU will enable me to take advantage of the knowledge and tools I acquired in relevant courses I took during my previous studies. It will also enable me to further develop my research interest in spatial planning, cultural heritage production and cultural tourism development, as these apply in historical cities recognized by UNESCO as world heritage sites in internal colonial settler societies. The thesis I wrote as part of my Masters degree in political science, conducted under intensive work circumstances, is especially salient.

My employment experience is highly relevant to my proposed area of study. I worked as a coordinator at the Popular Committee for the Allocation of Land and Housing Rights in the city of Jaffa. This work helped me to gain better understand of planning and development policies such as privatisation including public housing privatisation in a contested multi ethnic city in Israel through practical and unmediated experience.

In my role at the Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) I undertook research on the housing crisis in Acre's old city, which was exacerbated by privatisation and tourism development policies. This research exposed me to the complexity of the processes taking place in city and enabled me to get personal familiarity with the different players involved , which in turn helped me to develop and conduct a case study for my Masters thesis.

My current role as co-manager at the preservation project in the Byzantine village of Mi'ilya gave me an understanding of various aspects of conserving the village's cultural heritage, including legal and procedural issues. The preservation project is a family enterprise. Due to health-related circumstances in the family, I invested significant efforts into this enterprise over the past seven years. The project will officially open in the coming months, thus opening a window of opportunity for me to return to my initial passion of academic research.

My long-term goal is to work in academic research and teaching, and through this to contribute to a better understanding of the political and legal aspects of planning and development policies in world heritage cities within a conflicted ethnonational political context. . Further, I wish to continue to advocate for social justice and for the rights of the Arab-Palestinian minority living in historical cities in my homeland. I hope to impact social housing policies and promote equal production of the various cultural heritages that form the urban landscapes in my home country.

In summary, I believe that the opportunity to conduct my research at DPU would be profoundly meaningful, both to me personally and in the contribution I hope to make through my academic research.