

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**  
**Omayya Ahmad**

Will defend her prospectus

**A Systems Approach to Understanding and Mitigating Barriers to  
Accessibility and Well-Being in the West Bank, Palestine**

**Abstract**

More so than any other routine activity, the conflict conditions afflicting the livelihoods of Palestinian residents are embedded within the population's ability to travel. Palestinian movement is heavily manipulated by the Israeli military rule occupying the Palestinian territories. For residents, travel through and among Palestinian towns is a process of following paths riddled with multiple barriers that are both physical and political. Past studies have done well to paint a clear picture of the harsh transportation landscape in the region. However, less attention has focused on how barriers indirectly and directly affect levels of accessibility and well-being. Additionally, suggested development solutions are rarely capable of being successfully implemented given current political conditions. My research will use a systems approach to understand drivers of accessibility challenges in the West Bank and use that understanding to propose interventions to begin mitigating these challenges. The aims of my study are four-fold:

1. Construct a complete transportation system map that depicts drivers identified by various stakeholders and bolstered by established data;
2. Synthesize a vision for future development goals;
3. Layout the social and political challenges transformative development faces in the region;
4. Understand the appropriate points of intervention to transition from a state of poor accessibility and poor well-being.

Travel barriers are unique to the region. There are many parties working to maintain and change the landscape. Proposed solutions meet unique foreign and domestic, political opposition. With the help of regional experts and commuters, my study will

uniquely account for qualities that decrease the viability of development suggestions so that proposed interventions may be presently initiated.

February 14, 2013  
9:00 a.m.  
Wrigley Hall, Room 323

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Aaron Golub, chair  
Dr. Rimjhim Aggarwal, member  
Dr. Ahmad Saleh Sadaqa, member