



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Omayya Ahmad

Will defend her dissertation

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

Abstract

The conflict conditions that afflict the livelihoods of Palestinian residents living in the West Bank are embedded within the population's ability to travel more so than any other routine activity. For Palestinian residents, domestic and international travel 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 interact to 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. This dissertation uses a systems approach to understand drivers of accessibility challenges in the West Bank and uses the understanding to propose a method to identify transition strategies that may be presently initiated whilst maintaining the ability to provide adequate benefit. The research question informing the study asks, *How do drivers influencing the issue of poor accessibility and well-being in the West Bank persist and interact, and how might solutions be approached?* The dissertation approaches the question in four sequential actions that each produces a functional planning deliverable. First, a system map that depicts the drivers and influences to the problem of poor accessibility and well-being is constructed. Second, a future vision for the transportation system in the West Bank is identified. Third, the system map and vision are used to assess how conflict conditions affect transition research. Finally, the previous three deliverables are used to suggest a guide for transition management for transportation development in the West Bank. Combinations of four different data sets, including an extensive review of published literature, field observations, individual field expert interviews, and group commuter interviews, inform the research. Additionally, the Transformational Sustainability Research

framework provides a normative base for the steps taken throughout the research. Ultimately, the dissertation presents an interpretation of information that has theoretical and practical application potential in transformational sustainability research and development efforts in the region respectively.

Monday, March, 30, 2015

10:00 a.m.

Wrigley Hall, Room L1-04

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Aaron Golub, chair

Dr. Rimjhim Aggarwal, member

Dr. Ahmad Saleh Sadaqa, member