Lucy Garbett

**Title of Research:** Social Reproduction, Neoliberalism, and Resistance: the Politics of Care in Palestine.

Education:

2009-2013 BA (Hons) International Relations and Middle East Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds. First Degree Honors.

2016-2017 MSc Development Studies, SOAS University, London. Distinction Thesis supervisor: Dr. Adam Hanieh, Reader in Development Studies, SOAS University of London. Email: ah92@soas.ac.uk

2018- enrolled in PhD programme at University of California, Irvine- Department of Anthropology.

Initial advisors:

Professor Eve Darian Smith, Chair in Global Studies, edarian@uci.edu

Professor Sherine Hamdy, Department of Anthropology, shamdy@uci.edu

References:

1) Professor Adam Hanieh, Reader in Development Studies, SOAS University of London. Email: ah92@soas.ac.uk

2) Professor Eve Darian-Smith, Chair in Global Studies, University of California Irvine, edarian@uci.edu

3) Professor Rita Giacaman, Head of Public Health Department, Birzeit University, Palestine. Email: rita@birzeit.edu

Fluency: Arabic (Fluent), Hebrew (basic)

Coursework:

Masters Level

Political Economy of Development, SOAS University of London, MSc Development Studies Understanding Economic Migration, SOAS University of London, MSc Development Studies

Theory, Policy and Practice of Development, SOAS University of London, MSc Development Studies

Neoliberalism and Global Development, SOAS University of London, MSc Development Studies

Dissertation: Social Reproduction, Neoliberalism, and Resistance: the Politics of Care in Palestine.

Undergraduate Level

Arab and Islamic History up to 1517, Leeds University, BA International Relations and Middle East Studies

Introduction to the Middle East, Leeds University, BA International Relations and Middle East Studies

Modern History of the Middle East, Leeds University, BA International Relations and Middle East Studies

Zionism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, Leeds University, BA International Relations and Middle East Studies

**Detailed Research Description**

My research aims to examine how social reproduction patterns have changed and been impacted by neoliberal policies in Palestine. This research has primarily been done through the scope of my MSc thesis in Development Studies at SOAS, however I hope to expand upon this in the coming few years using research I was not able to include in the dissertation and as part of a forthcoming PhD project.

There is a growing body of scholarship that seeks to understand care work and social reproduction under the current phase of neoliberal capitalist development (Fraser 2016; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). Critical scholarship has examined the home as a site where gender relations are reproduced and the labour of women exploited (Seccombe 1974). Such writing has also posited social reproduction as a useful framework in order to understand how the family, the market and the state interact with one another (Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Ferguson 2015). Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas outline the emergence of the dual breadwinner model in the late twentieth Century (1984), showing the effects of capital in the commodification of reproduction and the increase in the number of goods and services available for consumption as part of capital’s search for new markets (1984:57). Capitalism under neoliberalism has seen more aspects of social life brought under market imperatives (Bakker 2006; LeBaron 2010). In particular, there has been an increase in the privatisation of social protection, a process of commodification of household labour, coupled with the increasing fragility of informal systems of kin care (Hochschild 2003:1; Standing 1999:584; Bhatiacharya 2015). However most of the recent work and research on social reproduction has focused on countries of the Global North.

My research aims to advance this current conversation surrounding care work and social reproduction by focusing on Palestine as a case study. Scholars such as Eileen Kuttab (2006) and Samia Botmeh (2016) have examined Palestinian female labour market participation and elements of the Palestinian informal sector. In Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance, and Mobility under Occupation various authors investigate processes pertaining to social reproduction, mobility and survival of Palestinian households (2006). However the changing practices of social reproduction and care work remain understudied. Furthermore, although Palestine has been a subject of much scholarship generally, few studies have addressed Palestinian, family structures, and women’s -waged and unwaged- labor from a feminist political economy perspective.

I have begun to explore ways to address this gap through my MSc dissertation research. Under the supervision of Dr. Adam Hanieh, I explored the impact of neoliberal policies in Palestine on social reproduction. I used childcare services in Ramallah as a case study, arguing that there has been an increasing marketisation of early childcare provision in Ramallah. Through fieldwork I researched the growing sector of commodified childcare in Ramallah and the decline of social services provided by Palestinian political parties.

I use nurseries as a case study as it is particularly insightful in order to examine some of the changes in social reproduction patterns. In doing so, it sheds light upon an understudied side of neoliberal policies in Palestine. This is particularly important as childcare has been historically gendered and therefore through examining this sector my research has been able to understand more specifically the gendered political and social impact of neoliberal policies.

The research provides a brief historical and contemporary overview of early childcare provision in Palestine. I aim to expand on this as experiments in collective and socialised provisions of child care in Palestine as part of a resistance economy during the First Intifada have been largely overlooked.

I show how the marketisation of childcare has taken place by outlining how childcare provision was created as part of a resistance economy strategy adopted in the 1980s, before examining how this socially oriented form of childcare provision is being dismantled and changing in Ramallah today. This is shown through analysing early childcare policies and their social and political implications and the demise of socialized provisions of care. It explores the ways in which marketised child care can further marginalise women through impacting female labour market participation and squeezing the informal childcare sector. Furthermore, it explores how market logic and the marketisation of childcare has impacted the childcare provision of the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees’ (UPWC), hitherto the main provider of popular, costeffective childcare.

Using interviews with governmental, private and academic sectors in addition to women activists and mothers, I showed that Palestinian families were undergoing large shifts in patterns of social reproduction. New elderly care homes, private childcare providers, cleaning companies and ‘kitchen’ restaurants have become a more common occurrence in the West Bank in recent years. Some of the central questions I am interested in researching further include: how have family structures in Gaza, the West Bank and Palestinian towns within the green line been impacted due to economic changes? What is the impact of the neoliberal restructuring of the Israeli economy on Palestinian women and care work? What roles did women’s committees, NGOs, political parties and groups such as the Quakers play in providing social and childcare services and in alleviating social reproduction burdens often carried by Palestinian women?

My methodology currently relied upon using three approaches: interviews and fieldwork, collection of primary statistics and materials, and finally, a thorough examination of the secondary literature available on the topic. The research involved fieldwork in Ramallah, which included six interviews with early childcare specialists, women’s activists, Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) Officials, employees of the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees (UPWC) and three interviews with Palestinian women with children in various types of nurseries in Ramallah.