

## The Gavin C. Reid Prize for the Best Paper by an CBR Early Career Researcher

Thanks to a generous donation, the CBR has established the Gavin C. Reid Prize for the Best Paper by a CBR Early Career Researcher. The prize is named in honour of Professor Gavin C. Reid, a long-time supporter of the Centre and currently one of its Senior Research Associates. The £400 cash prize, to be awarded annually, is open to early career research staff and research associates of the Centre for Business Research.



**Gavin C Reid, Honorary Professor in Economics & Finance, University of St Andrews, and Senior Research Associate, CBR, Cambridge University**

The 2022 Prize is jointly awarded to to Dr. Mona Jebril, for her report ‘The political economy of health in the Gaza strip’ ([cbr-special-report-the-political-economy-of-health-in-the-gaza-strip.pdf \(cam.ac.uk\)](https://www.cam.ac.uk/cbr-special-report-the-political-economy-of-health-in-the-gaza-strip.pdf)) and to Dr. Helen Mussell for her paper ‘Reclaiming the relational ontology of the fiduciary and exploring relational ethics’ ([wp534.pdf](https://www.cam.ac.uk/wp534.pdf)), published in the *Journal of Business Ethics* under the title ‘Theorising the fiduciary: ontology and ethics’ <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05235-6>.

Gavin writes:

I am delighted by these two papers, which have been carefully peer reviewed, and will receive the prize in my name in 2022. They epitomise the high calibre of qualitative analysis that the Centre for Business Research fosters, under the leadership of Professor Simon Deakin.

### **I. Health in the Gaza Strip by Dr Mona Jebril**

Political economy is of course the root discipline of modern economics. However, the latter has narrowed its scope in the last fifty years, taking it away from its foundational principles, propounded in the French and Scottish Enlightenments. These include the analysis of contemporary issues, especially with regard to the human condition. This remarkable working paper by Dr Mona Jebril of the CBR takes us right back to these fundamentals with a most important contemporary issue: health in the Gaza Strip.

The conceptual assumptions of this work are, first, that armed and social conflict are intrinsically linked, and second, that interstate conflicts are conceptually and practically connected. Within this conceptual framework, Dr Jebril analyses with skill and rigour Gaza’s health sector, predicated on

diverse literatures, but, above all, enlightened by fieldwork. This involved conducting semi-structured interviews with a spectrum of health stakeholders, including policy makers at one end of the spectrum, and family members who care for patients, at the other end.

Amongst the inevitable abbreviations and acronyms of this work are two key Arabic terms: 'wasta' meaning nepotism, and 'al-ghadab' meaning 'anger or emotional upset'. Through all the excellent technical developments reported by Dr Jebriil (e.g., on fieldwork instrumentation), and political economy analysis (e.g., of barriers and opportunities in health coverage) these two Arabic terms are ever present in the mind of the reader.

The data acquisition is handled with skill, both in terms of techniques (e.g., instrumentation, sampling, interviewing, reporting) and the ethics of fieldwork. Many parties will want (and should want) to read this enlightening, and in many ways chastening, research report. It points to 'illusions of reform' in a stark fashion, which alas fail to rise to the humanitarian goal of maintaining the health and dignity of Gaza's people. All who read this report will be informed, and moved, by Dr. Jebriil's analysis. It reminds us that political economy is not exclusively about businesses. It is also about people, and indeed a people.

## **II. Reclaiming the Relational Ontology of the Fiduciary and Exploring Relational Ethics** **by Dr. Helen Mussell**

This is a rigorous, thorough, and original paper. While rooted in law, including the ethics of law, it is a thrilling intellectual journey through multiple disciplines, including economics, law, ethics, philosophy, politics, and gender studies, to name just some of the central ones. As such it is an inter-disciplinary *tour de force*.

The central concept in this paper is the *fiduciary*, which is the legal term for a person or entity that, in acting for another person or entity (the *beneficiary*), has the presumed role of acting with discretion and expertise. The key question which this paper asks, if I may so vulgarly put it - for the presentation of its argument is both subtle and rigorous - is as follows. What is the nature and extent of the fiduciary's obligation, especially in ethical terms, to the beneficiary, in the discharge of duties towards it? Of course, this immediately provokes interrogation of the question itself, like: what is an obligation, and are such obligations compatible with any thoroughgoing ethical systems? That it seeks such an intellectual prize as successfully broaching, if not completely answering, such questions is one of the many merits of the paper. It is bold indeed.

While the scope of the paper is essentially theoretical, its implications are by no means confined to theory. Its areas of application are diverse and manifold. For example, the fiduciary/beneficial relationships can be related to employer/employee, trustee/beneficiary, guardian/ward, lawyer/client, financial advisor/investor, etc., to name just a few possible real-world examples. The paper aims for an ideal fiduciary, which is open and evolving in its relationships, with, at its core, a fluid mix of interdependence and power dynamics. This is a big vision. It concludes by suggesting the adoption of an Ethics of Care, which is commended to the reader as the best way of steering - if this be possible - future fiduciary practice.



**Mona Jebril, Research Associate, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, and Research Associate, CBR**

Mona writes:

Thank you for awarding me the Gavin Reid Prize for my report: [The Political Economy of Health in the Gaza Strip \(Occupied Palestinian Territories\)](#). This research meant a lot to me on both the academic and personal levels. Academically, the report discusses original themes and offers important knowledge contributions to the significantly under-researched context of the Gaza Strip. It explores the complex situation for health in the Gaza Strip under occupation, and how this is impacting people's lives in this area. The analysis of the report draws on 14 in-depth semi-structured interviews which I conducted with policy makers, health officials and carers for patients in the Gaza Strip. Using these and the scarcely available literature on the political economy of health in Gaza, the report offers an analytical perspective into the historical legacies, contextual and structural factors and the main actors and stakeholders of the health sector in Gaza, as well as outlining some of the key characteristics of the bargaining processes, key values and ideas, and the challenges of decision making and implementation in the health sector in Gaza. The report concludes by outlining some of the main barriers, and opportunities for reform, putting forward a few recommendations which are necessary to improving the situation for the Gaza health sector. On the personal level, since I am a Palestinian who lived and worked in Gaza for more than 22 years, I found this research meaningful and very inspiring to me. It enabled me to understand the voices and experiences of the research participants on a deeper level, and to share this understanding with a wider audience, as the report was featured prominently in academic, policy and media outlets. Also, to communicate themes from the research, I took proactive steps towards academic public engagement. For example, I produced several cultural outputs, including, a theatrical play, podcast episodes, research GIF and animations, a historical game, a critical comic script, a symbolic photography, and a poetry album. I also participated in three Cambridge Festivals which took place in 2021, and 2022.

I am really pleased that the success of the report has wonderfully been culminated by the award of the CBR Gavin Reid Prize! I invite you to read my report on the Political Economy of Health in Gaza through double clicking on this [link](#). The report also includes an insightful foreword by Professor Simon Deakin. You can also read our paper on reversing de-development in the health sector in Gaza [here](#), and a policy brief which discusses new pathways to reforming the health sector in Gaza [here](#).

Thank you very much!



**Helen Mussell, Lecturer in Organizational Studies and Director of Online Learning, Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University, and Research Associate, CBR**

Helen writes:

I am delighted to have been awarded the Gavin C. Reid prize and am very grateful to all who work hard to make this prize possible. Firstly, thanks are due to Professor Reid for his kindness, generosity, and thoughtful recognition that receiving such appreciation for one's research is extremely encouraging and uplifting. My thanks also to Professor Simon Deakin, not only for his Directorship of the Centre for Business Research and all the support it brings, but also for introducing me to the legal concept of the fiduciary, which is the focus of my paper. The seed idea for this particular piece came from a conversation Professor Deakin and I had over a decade ago regarding care in organizations. Without that important pointer, this paper would not have been possible. Likewise, I am indebted to Professor Tony Lawson, also a Research Associate at the Centre for Business Research. My knowledge of the ontological analytical approach I use in the paper was only possible with his guidance and support of my research. I am very grateful to all of you.

A few words on the paper and its development. As mentioned above, the introduction to the widely used legal concept of the fiduciary took place during a conversation concerning how caring features in legal contexts within organizations. My work at the time was focussed on investigating initiatives in organizational ethics using a relatively new ethical framework known as the Ethics of Care, and the fiduciary was highlighted because it is often referred to as a duty of care. Recognising that research on this notoriously difficult concept had the potential to develop into a separate and large project, the idea was temporarily put to one side. The idea has since been returned to and developed over a series of papers and chapters, with this paper being the third, and with more planned and in progress.

The core of the argument in the paper is evolved by developing an ontological analysis of the fiduciary – which is a legal device for safeguarding the relationship between two parties – and subsequently drawing conclusions as to a suitable ethical framework by which to explain and practice the fiduciary. By showing that the fiduciary is underpinned by a relational ontology – or a view of social reality and agential behaviour as interconnected, interdependent, and other-regarding - and by tracing the historical evolution of the concept thereby revealing its core relationship characteristics, an ethical framework also premised on a relational ontology (the Ethics of Care) is shown to be most appropriate for underpinning fiduciary interpretation and practice.

The reason this is an important argument to advance is because the ethical component of the fiduciary has been increasingly diminished via the use of legal and finance theory that draws on a fallacious atomistic and individualistic ontology, as opposed to a relational one. This has far-reaching implications considering the widespread and deeply embedded use of the fiduciary in our financial

and legal systems. The paper is therefore intended to assist in stopping this ethical erosion by revealing the ontological errors underpinning the economic and legal theories used to interpret and practice it, show how they misalign with the relational ontology of the fiduciary, and outline a suitable ethical framework for future fiduciary practice.