Strategic Planning under Fragility

The Role of Leadership in the Strategic Planning of Municipalities in Palestine

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Acknowledgments

The journey to complete this dissertation has been a challenging but rewarding endeavour. Accomplishing this research wouldn't be possible without the support of many people who provided support and encouragement through this challenging, yet enjoyable learning experience.

 The first and most important person whom I must mention is my friend, partner, and darling; my wife, Nariman; who believed in me since we first met almost twenty years ago, and since then she gave me the true love, unlimited encouragement, and comforting space to reach this point. No words can compensate her sacrifice and patience. I am also grateful for my parents for their support. Since I started my PhD studies, my father's famous question has been: "When are we going to announce that you are a 'doctor'?" I hope he can do that now.

My sincere thanks go to my mentor and advisor Prof. Dr. Adam Szirmai (Eddy). His enthusiastic encouragements, sound advice and kind guidance were critical in reaching this point. From day one, Eddy guided me through the development of my research proposal, and that involvement remained as my formal supervisor during the years of actual research work. It is unfortunate that, due to health reasons, Eddy might not be able to attend the defence ceremony. My heartfelt thoughts and prayers are for him, and his family and we wish him a fast and full recovery.

During the development of this dissertation I also benefitted a lot from the support of my external advisors Forbes Davidson, and Dr. Paul Rabé from IHS. I still remember when I travelled on my own to meet Forbes at his office in Rotterdam, where he expressed his willingness to offer valuable technical guidance as well as professional and practical advising to this research. Equally, the valuable and critical suggestions of Paul were instrumental in shaping this research.

I truly appreciate the professionalism, support, and friendship of the staff of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance. The continuous guidance and facilitation of Dr. Mindel van de Laar has helped me in overcoming the unique challenges that a Palestinian student faces when studying abroad. Special thanks go to Susan Roggen whose caring and administrative support helped my studies from the very first day at the School all the way through.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APLA	:	Association of Palestinian Local Authorities
AFD	:	French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement)
ARIJ	:	Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem
BTC	:	Belgian Technical Cooperation
CDS	:	City Development Strategic
CHF	:	Cooperative Housing Foundation International
CSOs	:	Civil Society Organizations
CBOs	:	Community Based Orgnaizations
DANIDA	:	Danish International Development Assistance
EPIP	:	Emergency Public Investment Plan
FG	:	Focus group
GAM	:	Grants Allocation Mechanism
GC	:	Global Communities (formerly CHF International)
GIZ	:	German Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, formerly GTZ)
HPC	:	Higher Planning Council
IDB	:	Islamic Development Bank
IDP	:	Integrated Development Planning
INGOs	:	International Non-Government Organizations
JICA	:	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSC	:	Joint Services Council
KfW	:	German Development Bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau)
KI	:	key informants
LACs	:	Local Aid Coordination Secretariat
LDR	:	Local Democratic Reform Programme
LG	:	Local Government/Governance
LGU	:	Local Government Unit
LED	:	Local Economic Development
LRDP	:	Local Rural Development Programme
LTC	:	Local Technical Consultant
MDP	:	Municipal Development Programme
MDLF	:	Municipal Development and Lending Fund
MoLG	:	Ministry of Local Government
MoNE	:	Ministry of National Economy
MoP	:	Ministry of Planning
MoPWH	:	Ministry of Public Works and Housing

MTB	:	Medium Term Budget
MTDP	:	Medium Term Development Plans
MTFF	:	Medium Term Fiscal Framework
NDP	:	National Development Plan
ODA	:	Official Development Assistance
OECD	:	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPTs	:	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PCBS	:	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statics
PDP	:	Palestinian Development Plans
PFLP	:	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO	:	Palestine Liberation Organziation
PNA	:	Palestinian National Authority
PRA	:	Public Rapid Appraisal
PRDP	:	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
PPPPM	:	Physical Planning Manual: Procedures and Tools for Physical Planning in the West Bank and Gaza
QIIP	:	Quick Impact Intervention Programme
SDIP	:	Strategic Development and Investment Plan
SESP	:	Socio-Economic Stabilization Plan
SP	:	Strategic Plan
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UN Habitat	:	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
USD	:	United States Dollar
VNG		International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities
WB	:	World Bank

Chapter 1
Introduction & Overview

> Palestine's control over its development prospects remains highly circumscribed. A government that does not control its borders, its revenue, its monetary policy and cannot access much of its natural resources is embarking on the 2030 Agenda with an overwhelming handicap.
>
> *UN Country Team*
>
> *(in (UN, 2016), page 39).*

1.1   Research Topic

The concepts of 'fragile states' and 'failed states' have been of practical interest to academics, policy makers, and international multilateral and unilateral organizations since it was created in the (Francois and Sud, 2006).

Although there is no agreed definition of a 'fragile state', most development agencies and practitioners apply the term to a situation where the central government fails or is unable to perform its core functions of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for its people including the poor as a 'fragile state' (McLoughlin, 2010). This inability of the government to meet citizens' expectations, exacerbates problems of both legitimacy and effectiveness (Brinkerhoff, 2005). It has been argued that one of the key defining characteristics of fragility is a weak state of legitimacy where fragile states "fail to establish reciprocal state-society relations or create a binding social contract" (McLoughlin, 2010,p. 9). Moreover, the weak capacity of any government to deliver core services (e.g. transport, electricity, health, education, water, and sanitation) to its citizens and to provide a decent level of economic opportunity and welfare, calls into question the legitimacy of the government. It also results in citizens losing trust in

the national institutions and thus withdrawing their support, jeopardizing the nation building process of fragile or conflict state (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Rakodi, 2001).

The vacuum resulting from the weak capacity and lack of legitimacy of the national government in a fragile state situation needs to be filled by other authority structures, whether different levels of government (e.g. local or regional) or other communal actors such as civil society, political factions, private sector, or informal governance systems (Ball, 2005; Brinkerhoff and Mayfield, 2005; Lister and Wilder, 2005). Among these structures, local government is considered the most relevant authority to bridge the gap in service delivery and reduce conflict in the communities of fragile states. The experience of different countries shows that local government structure has played a key role in post-conflict recovery including the restoration of service delivery capacity, economic recovery, peace building and reconciliation (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Hamill and Ali-Ahmad, 2008). Stable local level institutions can prevent further conflicts, even if national institutions turn out to be fragile (Hohe, 2004).

The ability of local governments to fulfill their service delivery mandate, and foster local economic development in the community, depends on a set of institutional disciplines that must be made available, including: civic, intergovernmental, and public sector management disciplines (OECD/DAC, 2008). In developing countries, and particularly in fragile and post-conflict states, these disciplines are weak and therefore requires a focus on enabling conditions that lead to more effectiveness (OECD/DAC, 2008). Strengthening local institutions such as local governments in contexts where its political system lack continuity and stability exists assists in drawing the national political system closer to citizens and facilitates the state building process (Hiskey and Seligson, 2003).

One of the instruments to empower local governments, and enable them to provide services and welfare to communities, is strategic planning (Čiegis and Gineitiene, 2008; Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007) .This instrument allows for efficient use of limited resources and better program coordination and implementation, which is needed in a fragile state context. Moreover, by focusing on local priorities, improved decision-making capacity, and performance monitoring strategic planning can help local governments to become more responsive to citizen desires and more effective in service delivery (Blair, 2000; Čiegis and Gineitiene, 2008; Davidson, 2006; Kloot, 1999; Rivenbark and Kelly, 2003).

Given the background of the previous arguments, this study's conceptual framework is based upon the notion that in fragile state settings, where the national institutional structure is weak and the legitimacy and effectiveness of the central government are in question, local leadership and community motivation

are crucial to the success of reform interventions such as strategic planning. We agree with Rotberg (2002) that strengthening and nurturing local leadership is key to restoring administrative structure, law and order, and peace in conflict and fragile contexts. The understanding of legitimacy and power of local leadership is considered one of the major factors behind the success or failure of state building efforts in fragile and post-conflict countries (Brinkerhoff, 2010). The motivation of people to engage in strategic planning exercises is also a determining factor in the quality and outcome of the planning process (Healey et al., 1999).

In Palestine, local governments pre-date the establishment of the National Palestinian Authority (PNA) and fulfil a specific and important role. In past decades, municipalities have become flourishing spaces for Palestinian nationalism, despite the efforts of successive rulers (e.g. Britain, Jordan and Israel) to muzzle it. The different forms of political regime that have ruled Palestine for more than two hundred years has impacted the institutional structures and legal frameworks that govern local government in Palestine. The continuous change in structure, level of authority given to local governments and regulatory framework has weakened local governments and has destroyed their ability to function as service providers and catalysts for local development in their communities. Moreover, the political realities that exist on the ground see local governments operate with limited sovereignty due to on-going Israeli occupation and scarce financial resources, each among the critical factors that determine the quality of services provided to local communities.

The creation of the PNA presented a turning point toward empowering local governments through supporting reform initiatives aimed at building local governments' functional, administrative, and planning capacity. A major part of empowering local governments in Palestine is the recent drives to reform and improve planning systems and practices of various parties. These parties include the government, civil society, and donors. This also entails donor's aims at bridging the gap between local governments and their constituents as well as to empower local governments to become more effective and responsive within a challenging environment. The national approach to promote and support strategic planning within local governments, which has been on-going for years, is an important step toward enhanced plan-making concepts and practices. In addition, a number of municipalities have embarked upon their on strategic planning as a response to the political, financial, and developmental challenges they face.

This research investigated a number of external and internal factors affecting strategic planning in Palestine. For external factors, this research looked at the fragility of the central Palestinian government and the condition of occupation

while, the quality of local leadership was among internal factor. A discussion of the interplay and degree of influence of these internal and external factors is presented through out the chapters of this research, mainly the final chapter.

This research aims at looking at the experience of strategic planning within the context of Palestinian local government and investigates the conditions, factors, and dynamics that influenced the initiation, formulation, and implementation of strategic plans at the local level in this fragile Palestinian context.

1.2 Research Questions and Variables

In this research, the main research question is:

> **What is the impact of local leadership on strategic planning as a vehicle to improve the performance of local governments in a conflict/fragile context such as Palestine?**

To investigate the main research question, the research theoretical framework relied on the relevant literature that is presented in Chapter 2, as well as on the findings of the empirical data collected from the case studies of Chapters 6 and 7. The linkages between the theoretical and empirical data are discussed in details in the following chapters. However, it is important here to briefly associate the research questions and proposition with the main concepts and theories emerging from the literature review.

The literature (Chapter 2) identified a number of factors that influence the process and output of strategic planning. As explained in Section 2.7.5 of this research, strategic planning shouldn't be treated as an isolated, stand-alone exercise. Nevertheless, the literature documented the impact of factors such as local context; actors involved; leadership; degree of citizen participation (Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007); existing municipal and supportive institutional dynamics and systems (Healey et al., 1999; Tsenkova, 2007); driving forces and motivation (Healey et al., 1999); the legal and regulatory framework (Davidson, 1996; Halla, 2007); and attitudes and political will among many factors that affect strategic planning.

The literature recognizes the crucial role of leadership and top management in influencing the content and process of strategic planning (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b; Hunter, 2012; Borraz and John, 2004; Martin, 1999). Moreover, in light of the in-depth analysis of the research case studies, leadership appeared to be one of the critical factors that affected strategic planning in the context of Palestine. Therefore, the research focused on the role of leadership in

moving forward strategic planning in fragile contexts, based on the following proposition that is related to the main question:

> P1: In fragile contexts characterized by a weak governance structure at the central (national) level, limited resources, and conflicting interests, the role of strong leadership is vital for the success of strategic planning as well as for dealing with the challenges faced by local institutions and communities.

To be able to investigate the main research question and to expand our knowledge and understanding of strategic planning, the study investigated a number of sub-questions related to specific propositions. These propositions have clear links to the reviewed literature as presented in Chapter 2.

In addition to the first propositions, propositions 2, and 3 are also linked to the first group of sub questions, which revolve around the role of leadership and the qualities and characteristics of leaders:

> SQ1: How does leadership influence the quality of plan-making, adoption and implementation of SP in LGs?
> SQ2: What are the main traits of leaders (political, economic, personal, motivation, etc.) that influence the role of leadership in local governments?

The propositions that address these are as follows:

> P2: The more involved the leadership is in the strategic planning process, the more influence this leadership will have on the pace of designing and implementing strategic planning and its outcomes. This will lead to better ownership of and commitment to the plan.

> P3: Traditional leadership tends to resist reform initiatives (such as strategic planning) and obstruct the introduction of new tools and practices to the municipal work.

Additionally, this research sought to identify other influencing factors that affected the realization of strategic planning within the Palestinian context by addressing the following sub-questions:

> SQ3: What are the potential factors other than that of leadership that could influence success or failure of strategic plans?

SQ4: What is the current level of up-take of strategic planning agendas in the Palestinian municipalities?

SQ5: What is the role of foreign aid and donors in strategic planning in Palestine?

SQ6: What are the policy implications and reform measures that should be applied to achieve the objectives of the strategic planning?

The following propositions have been formulated to address these sub-questions:

P4: For strategic planning to work under unstable conditions (both at the national level-fragile Palestine-and local level –unstable communities-), several key ingredients should exist, including: availability of incentives, effective leadership, access to financial resources and local ownership.

P5: Donor boycott of Hamas and left-wing-led municipalities produced positive unintended results from the use of strategic planning.

The main **independent variable** of this research is: quality of leadership at the local level. Additional factors will also be examined including: motivation of municipality's leadership, capacity of institutions, participatory approaches, existence of incentive systems, and availability of external resources.

The **dependent variable** of the research is the quality of strategic planning. This includes the quality of process, content, understanding and buy-in from the community, and utilization of the developed strategic plan in various municipal functions such as physical planning, and budgeting.

> **Fragile context of local governments in Palestine**
>
> Quality of Leadership **?** Quality of Strategic Planning (Process and Outcome)
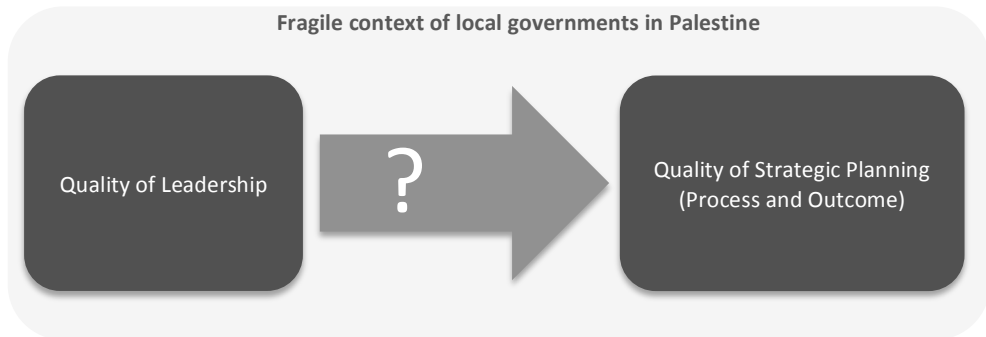
What is the impact of local leadership on strategic planning as a tool to improve the performance of local governments in a conflict/fragile context such as Palestine?

Figure 1-1   Overall Research Question and Variables

1.3   **Research Methodology**

The research built upon the interpretative approach to public administration, which encourages the study of the social world by examining the interpretation of that world by its participants and actors (Bevir, 2011; Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Finlayson et al., 2004). It relies on the understanding of a situation from the perspective of its participants by placing the researcher at the centre of that situation and understand it as much as possible on its own terms (Morgan and Moran, 1993). Furthermore, the research used an inductive analysis to understand strategic planning as a real-time phenomena by drawing conclusions and theories from the personal interpretation and 'story telling' of various actors in the process.

The use of the interpretive-inductive approach in this research is relevant to the human element of this research and the fact that it lies within a context that is characterized by its fragility and instability. This requires a certain level of flexibility to allow research findings to be derived from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006).

Due to its the qualitative nature, the objective of this research was not to prove or disapprove existing theories by testing preconceived hypotheses (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1996). On the contrary it tried to achieve multifaceted intellectual and practical goals that are relevant to qualitative studies as described by Maxwell (2012). It attempted to understand the *meaning* for participants in the study of the strategic planning experiences, how they were engaged in attempts to understand

and engage in the practice of strategic planning and this influenced different participants' behaviour. Second, to investigate the influence of the particular context of fragility on the actions of various actors involved in the process. Third, to identify unanticipated events and influences as a way of generating new "grounded" theories about strategic planning in fragile situations. Finally, to understand the process and develop causal explanations that feed into theoretical and practical constructs (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Trauth, 2001).

To achieve these goals and to answer the research questions, a multiple in-depth case study method was chosen as the principal research approach. Therefore, the research used a purposive and theoretical sampling approach in the identification and selection of cases for this research. Five Palestinian municipalities were selected as the cases of this study and for the in-depth data collection. The selected cases covered different locations and governorates, capacities, leadership, motivation, size, and environments.

To be able to investigate the selected case studies, this research employed a "triangulation of sources" technique that combines interviews, researcher observations, and documentary analysis.

1.4   Relevance of the Research

The particularity of fragile states, where local governments among other actors are obligated to compensate for those functions of a weak central government including basic services and socio-economic development, requires in-depth analysis of the enabling conditions and implementation mechanism that determines the effectiveness of the strategic planning model in achieving better quality and performance.

In fragile context where the national government suffer from weak legitimacy and efficiency, it could be argued that strategic planning at the local level can bridge the gap between citizens and national institution. The democratic and participatory nature of strategic planning, where local stakeholders are given the opportunity to participate in the initiation and making of the plan, could address legitimacy deficit observed at national level, and help overcome the service delivery challenges.   In addition, the ability for citizens to elect their representatives as Mayors and council members enhances their attitude toward local institutions vis-a-vis the bureaucratic, distant central government.

The strategic planning in fragile contexts and unstable situations is extremely challenging (Musleh et al., 2009); It might be argued that strategic planning as a

tool for improving the quality of local governments is not relevant in fragile/conflict state situations where, short-term and ad hoc planning methods might be more appropriate. On the contrary, the main assumption of this research is that strategic planning, when proper conditions exist, will aid the understanding of current conditions, issues and problems. This in turn will allow for a better response to the changing and unstable contexts that define these fragile conflict-ridden cases such as Palestine. In addition, the essential nature of strategic planning is the participation of stakeholders including citizens. This is thought to encourage dialogue, problem solving, and conflict resolution on a manageable scale (i.e at the level of local government) around issues of common community concern (OECD/DAC, 2008).

Another important element of fragile states is the weak legitimacy that influences the state-society relations (McLoughlin, 2010) and ultimately undermines the state building and reform process in these countries (Schou and Haug, 2005). This research builds on the theories of good local governance which necessitates the existence of local public policy and planning capacity so local governments can contribute to the state building process and recover civic legitimacy (Wilde et al., 2009).

This research investigates the applicability and effectiveness of local strategic planning to the unique context of "fragile" states where scientifically-based study of development practice is necessary. The research also to investigate the determining and enabling factors that influence the process of making, and realizing strategic plans for local governments.

Furthermore, in the absence of literature on strategic planning in fragile states, this research will contribute to a better understanding the phenomena of strategic planning and the factors influencing the quality of strategic planning processes and outcomes in the difficult environment of the Palestinian West Bank. The significance of this research stems from the fact that so far there are very few comparative studies of strategic urban planning (Steinberg, 2005). Most importantly, in the absence of literature on the role of local leadership in strategic planning in the specific context of fragile states, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the interaction between various types of leadership that exist or emerge in situations like Palestine. This will be further aided by the analysis of the quality of strategic planning and the performance of local governance.

This study will contribute to what Brinkerhoff (2005) considers to be a body of knowledge and practice that is only in its infancy. This body of knowledge

concerns the establishment of effective governance in post-conflict and fragile contexts. This sits in contrast to the far more extensive body of knowledge and practice that exists for building governance in stable countries with functioning governments. The study will add to what Worrall et al. (1998) consider to be an important scientific debate that must take place about the nature of the strategic planning process as a means of developing a more robust model for local government.

The case of strategic planning in Palestinian local government will contribute in minimizing the existing gap in the academic literature related to the development of regions and cities placed in fragile (conflict and post-conflict) situations. This will also add to the emerging academic research on strategic planning, and local government performance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and in the region. In addition, the findings of this research could be applicable to other similar settings. Although this research addresses strategic planning as a phenomenon within the unique context of Palestine, various analogous features with other fragile and conflict-like countries could be identified. This includes: the lack of a strong central authority, the reliance on external funding, the unpredictable financial flow available to local governments, and the deteriorated economic, security, and development conditions to just mention a few. The existence of such similarities, if combined with further comparative research, could presents similar conclusions that are themselves made applicable to other similar contexts. This would further enhance the relevance of this research in later years.

1.5   Outline of the Dissertation

The core of the dissertation is organised as a series of chapters that gradually examine strategic planning in Palestine, and investigate the research questions through detailed description of the case studies. Each chapter opens with an introductory paragraph that outlines the chapter and describes how the chapter contributes to the topic of this research. Each chapter will then end with concluding remarks that reflect on the implications of the chapter's findings and will introduce follow-up questions and how these are addressed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two provides context and backdrop to the case study chapters. It establishes the theoretical framework for the research based on a review of relevant literature. It starts by looking at the specific context of fragile states. It then looks at the role of local governments in state building efforts, with particular focus on how participatory approaches such as strategic planning can assist local governments to strengthen the legitimacy of the state and achieve good local

governance and better performance. Following that the chapter explores strategic planning including its origins, definitions, and the factors influencing the strategic planning process. Gaps in the literature related to strategic planning in local government are summarized at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological approach employed in this research and discusses the processes used to address the research questions. It explains the rationale behind the adopted research methodology, and outlines the conceptual framework of the research. It describes the different research tools and techniques used to conduct the research, along with the rationale for choices made. Following this, the chapter discusses the validity of the research and its implications.

To set the stage for the analysis of this thesis' case studies, Chapters Four and Five provide a historical background of local government in Palestine. The conditions under which Palestinian local governments operate and strategic planning are performed are discussed. This chapter includes a detailed historical portrayal of the creation, evolution, and facets pertaining to Palestinian local government during the various historical eras. Following this, Chapter Five elaborates on the current status of Palestinian local government including its structure, legal framework, and institutional setup. It then provides detailed information and analysis of the planning system in Palestine, including strategic planning.

To delve into the strategic planning experience in Palestine, chapters 6 and 8 investigate in details the five case studies that are selected for this research. To allow for analytical caparison the five case studies are categorized under two main groups. The identification of each group came out of the empirical data of each case study; Chapter Six presents the first category of strategic plans (independently-initiated plans). While the second category of strategic plans (externally-initiated) are presented in Chapter Seven. The two chapters provide a detailed description of each case including their histories, socio-economic conditions, and the elements of their own examples of fragility. Then, strategic planning process and its elements and outcomes are examined. More specifically, the role of leadership, motivation, and degree of buy-in were investigated for each case in light of the underlining research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter Eight concludes. It provides a summary of the main arguments and evidence presented throughout the dissertation. Building on those, it formulates a few policy directions that should be of central importance for development practitioners. Finally, it suggests areas and opportunities for further research and analysis.

Chapter 2
Theoretical Framework: Fragile States, Local Governments, and Strategic Planning

> Local government is a key strategic entry point for working in democratic governance in fragile contexts. It is at the local level that many key services are delivered and where it may be most fruitful and possible for citizens to begin develop a sense of ownership of their future and their political system.
>
> *Noha El-Mikawy and Lincoln Mitchell*
>
> *(in (El-Mikawy and Mitchell, 2007) page 295*

The aim of this chapter is to establish a theoretical framework for this research from a review of relevant literature. It starts by looking at the specific context of fragile states where it is necessary to build a state that fulfils the core functions of ensuring security, welfare, and representation of its citizens. The role of local governments in state building efforts is also discussed along with how participatory approaches such as strategic planning can assist local governments to strengthen the legitimacy of the state, achieve good local governance and better performance. Moreover, the role of strategic planning in empowering local governments to fulfil their functions is elaborated upon. Strategic planning in the context of local governments is explored including its origins, various definitions, its impact on local government performance, and the factors influencing the strategic planning process. This chapter concludes by summarising existing gaps in the literature on strategic planning in local government, both in general and in fragile states in particular.

2.1 Fragility, Legitimacy, and State Building

Academics, policy-makers, and international multilateral and unilateral organizations have been interested in the concepts of "fragile states" and "failed

states" as early as 1990 (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Francois and Sud, 2006; Lister, 2009). It was Madeleine Albright in the 1990s - the U.S. Secretary of State under the Clinton Administration- among other representatives in the United Nations who made the term popular in the policy-making and international development arena (Francois and Sud, 2006). As a result of this interest, most donor countries established a special unit that deals specifically with "fragile states" or "post-conflict state building" (Lister, 2009).

The literature provides various definitions for the term "fragile state" (see for example: Eizenstat et al., 2005; Francois and Sud, 2006; Newbrander et al., 2011(Naudé et al., 2011) However, two key elements could be distilled from the different definitions: lack of legitimacy and weak effectiveness in providing security and services (Newbrander et al., 2011). Other scholars link fragility with capacity deficits (Brinkerhoff, 2010) and the inability to protect essential civil freedoms (Eizenstat et al., 2005). Hagesteijn (2008) describes "fragile states" as having weak institutional capacities, limited control of land and territory, and lack the capability to fulfil their mandate to provide services and welfare to their constituents.

Other similar terms are used interchangeably by political scientists and development specialists in the aid management field. These include: "weak states", "failing states", "failed states", "collapsed states" (Francois and Sud, 2006), "warlord states", "shadow states", and "quasi states" (Hagesteijn, 2008). Milliken and Krause (2002) suggest that the concept of state collapse and failure includes two dimensions: institutional and functional, where the first concerns success or failure in achieving "stateness", while the latter concerns the practical implications for the state's ability to provide basic services to its citizens. The institutional weaknesses and gaps in the capacity of the state lead the state to become more fragile than failed (Brinkerhoff, 2007). This variation in terminology reflects the fact that by nature "fragile states" are dynamic and located on a continuum with strong and effective states at one end and failed/collapsed states at the other (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009; Francois and Sud, 2006).

In general, most authors identify the "fragility" of the state by its (in)ability to fulfil the social contract between the state and its citizens (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009). A state does this, as depicted by both the Weberian and Lockean theories (Lister, 2009; Sekhar, 2010), by performing three core governance functions: providing security and law and order; representation beyond the state borders; and effective and efficient delivery of basic public goods and services that assure citizens' welfare (Brinkerhoff, 2007; Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009; Eizenstat et al., 2005; Hagesteijn, 2008; Lister, 2009; McLoughlin, 2010; Milliken and Krause, 2002).

A fourth function was suggested by several authors related to citizens' participation: accountability and the protection of essential civil freedom (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009; Eizenstat et al., 2005).

This inability to of the state meet citizen's expectations exacerbate problems of both legitimacy and effectiveness (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Connelly, 2011; Lister and Wilder, 2005). Francois and Sud (2006) argue that legitimacy can be derived from two things: the democratic political process which is based on societal acceptance of the "rules of the game" (known as democratic legitimacy), and from government performance and effectiveness in fulfilling core state functions, which is based on the "outcome of the game" (conceptualized as performance legitimacy). Legitimacy is seen as a core governance issue as it concerns the acceptance of policy-making processes, institutions and actors by society (Connelly, 2011). Constructing legitimacy is essential not only for national or central governments, but also for other tiers of government including local level councils and authorities. To achieve that, it is essential for local level governments to provide good quality services and to engage with civil society (Jackson, 2005). Local governance context, in addition to the internal politics of actors and communities, impact the dynamic balance of formal and informal processes, which influence the legitimacy of the government (Connelly, 2011).

The connection between state fragility, legitimacy, and state building is well documented in the academic and development literature (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Lister, 2009; Roberts, 2008; Sekhar, 2010). The term "state building" itself refers to the process of creating a functioning state and was historically used in the context of constructing Western European' states (Sekhar, 2010). The term was then expanded to fragile states situation with the aim to help fragile states improve the life quality for their citizens and to establish the policies, institutions and governance arrangements that will lead to socio-economic development (Brinkerhoff, 2010) and citizens' welfare (Roberts, 2008). Brinkerhoff (2005) argues that building the state's capacity strengthens the legitimacy of the state and prevents the risks of backsliding (Brinkerhoff, 2010). Moreover, it is crucial for the international community to have a better understanding of capacity and capacity development (Brinkerhoff, 2010) and concentrate on strengthening the domestic capacity of the state, not just on prompting democracy (Francois and Sud, 2006). This is important to keep in mind, particularly in the context of fragile states where organizations are being established by external interventions. Then again, transforming these organizations into legitimate institutions requires time and depends on domestic political processes (Ottaway, 2002). International aid organizations should avoid bypassing the government by using other delivery

mechanisms, which will damage the pre-existing capacity and undermine state capacity building efforts (Francois and Sud, 2006).

The weak legitimacy of the government results in the diminished capacity to deliver the core services to its citizens (e.g. transport, electricity, health, education, water, and sanitation) and provide a decent level of economic opportunity and welfare. This then leads citizens to lose trust in the government and thus withdraw their support jeopardizing the nation-building process of the fragile or conflict state (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Rakodi, 2001). The more trust citizens have in the government, and the more satisfied they are with the government's performance, the more the quality of governance will improve and vice versa (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003).

2.2   Role of Local Governments in Fragile States

The vacuum that results from the central government's weak capacity and legitimacy in a fragile state situation needs to be filled by other authority structures. Whether it is a different level of government (e.g. local or regional) or by other community actors such as civil society, political factions, the private sector, or the informal governance system (Ball, 2005; Brinkerhoff and Mayfield, 2005; Lister and Wilder, 2005). Among these structures, local governance is considered the most relevant authority to bridge the gap in service delivery and reduce conflicts in the communities of fragile states. The experience of different countries shows that local governance structure has played a key role in post-conflict recovery including the restoration of service delivery capacity, economic recovery, peace building and reconciliation (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Hamill and Ali-Ahmad, 2008). The literature on local governments points to the unique position of local governments. They are closer to the citizens as they must deal intensively and on a day-to-day basis with real-world issues and problems. Teune (1995) notes that the day-to-day political and governance activities are done at the level of local government in most countries. Moreover, local governments offer an ideal setting for experiments and learning since they deal with fewer actors, cover smaller jurisdictions (Wunsch, 2005) and experience challenges and opportunities that are different from those faced by central government (Naschold and Daley, 1999a). The accumulation of learning and experiences allows for the refining of policies and strategies for reform and development, factors crucially needed for state building in fragile situations (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009).

The literature also highlights the modern role of local governments, which extends beyond providing fundamental public goods and services to overcoming both market and government failures and facilitating civic dialogue and engagement

aiming to improve the quality of life for their constituents (Shah, 2006; Wilde et al., 2009). By encouraging dialogue among constituents through public forums and other participatory mechanisms, local governments "*can increase speed of service delivery, address ethnic/regional inequities, build democratic and conflict management capacities, mitigate political conflict, experiment to find creative solutions, and enhance legitimacy*" (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009, p. 585).

The importance of local governments in steering and improving local economic growth is noted in the literature. Many social and economic services and aspects of infrastructure that are important to economic growth and business development are mainly provided by local governments (Padovani and Scorsone, 2009). In addition, the co-ordination of local, regional, and national-level investments falls within the key responsibilities of local governments (Marx, 2011).

Despite this importance, Lister (2009) claims that the area of local government has been neglected in the literature on state building. She concludes that the analysis of the relationship between local government and state building is lacking and requires the attention of researchers and policy-makers. This coincides with the call of Francois and Sud (2006) for the international community to involve local actors in the process of state building and the creation of sustainable national institutions.

In most countries, the predominant administrative (or governance) structure consists of three tiers or levels (Teune, 1995). These tiers or levels are: the national central government, provincial or regional governments, and the local level which is divided into rural and urban forms. Although differences exist among local governments across the world, they are similar in the fact that they are formed by some sort of local process, enjoy having certain administrative mandates, and control some local resources (Teune, 1995). In his study Shah (2006) maps out the evolution of local governance. He compares local governance models and institutions from different parts of the world as an introduction to a more in-depth analysis of local governance issues in developing countries. He argues that the role of local governments in developing countries should shift from the traditional model, where the local government only provides a limited number of services, to what he suggests to be the modern or new role of local governments. This role goes beyond limited service delivery to act more as a facilitator or catalyst between different stakeholders to promote greater collaboration for improving the quality of life in the community. Furthermore, local government's significant role has been rediscovered after centuries of local government responsibilities being transferred to central or regional governments.

This change is the result of a broader globalization phenomena and the revolution of information which accentuated the limitations of other levels of government (mainly the central level) for improving the quality of life and social outcomes of citizens (Shah, 2006). This eminent role and the ability of local governments to provide adequate service provision means enhancing the legitimacy and the capacity of local governments (Hamill and Ali-Ahmad, 2008). Rakodi (2001) suggests that the legitimacy of local government is key for the tasks of effective urban planning and management that are core functions of local government. In order for local governments to perform their intended role of restoring peace and legitimacy and providing efficient public service delivery, a number of "facilitating governance conditions", or "institutional disciplines", are required. This includes civic disciplines, intergovernmental disciplines, and public-sector management disciplines (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009).

2.3 **Decentralization**

It would be almost impossible when talking about local governments, not to address the debate concerning decentralization and power relations between the centre and other levels of government. This becomes more relevant in the case of fragile states where failure to manage these relations and tensions is thought to be one of the main causes of fragility and instability (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009).

Decentralization has been an issue long debated in the literature (see for example:Bergh, 2004; Bland, 2007; Bontenbal and Van Lindert, 2008; Goldfrank, 2002; Jackson, 2005; Newbrander et al., 2011; Rondinelli et al., 1989; Schou and Haug, 2005). It is crucial to situate decentralization within the context of local politics and traditional social and power relations (Jackson, 2005). More importantly, Decentralization is not a pure technical-administrative issue as the wider political context and social structure should be taken into account (Bergh, 2004). In general, the various definitions of decentralization revolve around the concept of allocating or transferring resources, responsibilities, or decision-making authority from the central government to lower tiers of government or to the private sector (Bergh, 2004; Goldfrank, 2002; Rondinelli et al., 1989). The interest in decentralization started in the United States and Western Europe as a result of the democratization and community empowerment movement that emerged in the 1960s (Goldfrank, 2002).

The literature distinguishes between several forms of decentralization in terms of its impact on institutional arrangements. Rondinelli (1989) lists five major organizational forms for decentralization: privatization; deregulation of private service provision; devolution to local government; delegation to public enterprises

or publicly regulated private enterprises, and de-concentration of central government bureaucracy. The form that is relevant to local governments is so called "devolution". This sees central government transfer financial and decision-making powers to quasi-autonomous units of local government or municipalities who elect their leaders and provide incentives to raise revenues and make investment decisions (Litvack et al., 1998).

Advocates of decentralization claim that more empowered local governments will enhance civic participation, promote inclusion, reduce internal tensions and conflict, and improve performance which will lead to more responsive, efficient, and accountable local governments (Bontenbal and Van Lindert, 2008; Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009). On the other hand, critics argue that decentralization would hamper development due to the weak capacity of local governments compared to central government as the state loses regulatory capacity and fiscal control (Goldfrank, 2002). Others noted that decentralization would result in more state fragmentation, favouring and benefiting the local elites while exposing local minorities' interests (Bergh, 2004; Bland, 2007).

In light with this debate, it is crucial to be aware of the challenges associated with decentralization, or as Bland (2007) stated at the end of his article: "*Decentralization and local governance is a lengthy, often controversial process that occurs gradually and requires frequent adjustment. Its impact is best assessed in decades as opposed to every few years with each new national administration*" (Bland, 2007, p. 222).

2.4   Good Local Governance

More attention has also been given to the quality of local governance as part of the mounting global demand for good governance and performance measurements in the public sector. This was motivated by the increased demand from citizens for better value and quality of government services (Beckett-Camarata, 2003a) and the global trends demanding greater democratization (Teune, 1995). In the recent years, public sector reforms have shifted from focusing upon "excellence in public service delivery" to the "excellence in exercising the political, environmental and social responsibilities" (Bovaird and Loffler, 2003), or, in other words, what is referred to as "good governance".

The definition of "good governance" is still an area of considerable debate and discussion. (Bovaird and Loffler, 2003). In general, governance refers to the ways or processes (Healey, 2003) by which a "human institution" (Bouckaert and Van de Walle, 2003) (whether it is a country, society, social group, or organization)

organizes itself to achieve collective goals and interests (Brinkerhoff, 2007b) through a system of values, policies, and institutions (Bontenbal and Van Lindert, 2008). Bovaird and Loffler (2003) adopt a specific concept of governance where they look at the ways different stakeholders interact to influence decision-making and policy outcomes. They define *"good governance"* as the "negotiation by all the stakeholders in an issue (or area) of improved public policy outcomes and agreed governance principles, which are both implemented and regularly evaluated by all stakeholders" (Bovaird and Loffler, 2003, p.316). The stakeholders interaction concept expands beyond local government as an organization of powers and relations (both external and internal) and the range of actors that shape the political urban agenda and its implementation (Bontenbal and Van Lindert, 2008). "Local good governance", as suggested by Wilde et al. (2009), involves a number of dimensions related to the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of local administration and public service delivery; the inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability of local public policy and decision-making procedures, and the way local governments are utilizing their power and authority. Healey (2003) adds planning as another dimension of governance where it occurs in complex and dynamic environments that are influenced by economic, social, and environmental forces and systems.

The demand however for good governance and service quality, coupled with the limited capacity of both local and national governments (Narang and Reutersward, 2006), has urged local governments to adopt new approaches to deal with the mounting challenges they face. The specific situation of developing countries and fragile states makes this all the worse as local governments are expected to deal with more serious challenges, including: rapid population growth and urbanization; lack of housing; infrastructure and services, and problems of insufficient financial and human resources (McGill, 1998; Narang and Reutersward, 2006; Todes et al., 2010).

2.5   Local Government Planning

The previous sections provided a general overview of the challenges faced by fragile states. It also outlined the potentially important role of local governments in restoring trust and legitimacy, which are essential for the state building of fragile states. To help local governments play their intended role, and to overcome problems of weak service delivery and institutional capacity of fragile states, many donors, International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) and other development agencies apply a variety of tools. These include includ the promotion of community-based approaches such as local strategic planning (OECD/DAC,

2008). The challenges faced by fragile states and developing countries include rapid urbanization rates resulting from high population growth, inadequate infrastructure and services, and the limited availability of funds and staff. These demand a more dynamic planning process where priorities constantly need to be assessed in light of available resources and macro-economic factors (Clarke, 1992).

In a world characterized by complex city management (Rotmans et al., 2000), an increasing number of scholars have questioned the efficiency and capacity of traditional planning practices and approaches[1] to assist local governments dealing with the challenges related to urban management and policy (See for example:Albrechts, 2004; Atash, 1993; Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010; De Meulder et al., 2004; Farhoodi et al., 2009; Healey, 1999; Todes et al., 2010).

Atash (1993) assumed that urban policy should not be limited to the physical attributes of growth and urbanization. This implies that socio-economic, cultural and political needs of citizens need to be addressed, including employment, social services, housing, income equality and social justice. Traditional master planning and static land use techniques, which have dominated local planning practices for centuries, have been critiqued for their lack of suitability and relevance and inability to promote sustainable local development and respond to rapid urbanization and changes in developing countries. The criticism of traditional comprehensive urban planning started in the early 1960s with a call for planners to pay more attention to clear and specific problems and to not spend time and effort on unpredictable details and issues (Farhoodi et al., 2009). Moreover, the focus on decentralization and neo-liberalism in the 1980s and 2000s drew the attention to the shortcomings of traditional practices of master planning and urban management as being more technocratic, time consuming, high-cost and inefficient for implementation (de la Espriella, 2007).

One particular criticism focused upon the relevance and suitability of traditional master planning to the specific conditions within developing countries. Clarke (1992) noted that in contrast to the slow urbanization trends in developed countries, developing countries face higher population growth and rapid rates of urbanization which lead to higher demands for infrastructure and services. Therefore, traditional rigid master plans fail to address the mounting development

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[1] Traditional physical planning including land-use planning refers to the approach which is "*concerned in an integrated and qualitative way-with the location, intensity, form, amount, and harmonization of land development required for the various space-using functions: housing, industry, recreation, transport, education, nature, agriculture, cultural activities*" ALBRECHTS, L. 2004. Strategic (spatial) planning reexamined. *Environment and Planning B,* 31**,** 743-758.

needs of most developing countries and are incapable of responding to the real social, economic, and environmental concerns of their citizens. One of the most vocal critics of traditional physical planning is Louis Albrechts. Albrechts argues that traditional land-use and physical planning approaches fail to bridge the gap between plan-making, political decision-making, and implementation (Albrechts, 2006). Moreover, solutions proposed by physical planning focus predominantly on technocratic capabilities (de la Espriella, 2007) and "physical" issues and do not quite capture the complexities and dynamics of social, or economic aspects of human activity (Albrechts, 2004).

2.6   Calls for a New Planning Approach

During the past two decades, and in response to the mounting criticism, calls for new and more dynamic planning approaches have emerged both in practice and academia (Albrechts, 2001; Davidson, 1996; de Graaf and Dewulf, 2010; Halla, 2007; Healey et al., 1999; McGill, 1998; UN-Habitat, 2009b).

Healey's Collaborative Planning approach was one of the first attempts to offer an alternative to the regulatory land-use planning. She contends that planners and cities should shift their attention toward more strategic approaches or what she calls the 'governance of place'. This involves emphasis on both the qualities of place - the good city - and on the process of achieving this quality - the good governance - (Healey, 2003). This shift, as noted by (Albrechts, 2006), has been taking place away from a regulative, bureaucratic type of planning towards a more strategic, implementation and development-oriented planning paradigm. Halla (2005) stresses the 'participatory' dimension of the new strategic planning approach as a significant departure from the traditional urban planning techniques. Others highlighted the importance of the plan-making "process" which is a significant difference between the new strategic planning approaches and traditional physical planning. This 'process' is characterized as being participatory, offering real understanding of critical development concerns, and establishing relationships between different parts and local participation (Farhoodi et al., 2009; Rotmans et al., 2000).

The criticism of the traditional planning practices and the call for a participatory strategic planning approach led several international organizations including the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Cities Alliance to experiment and support various strategic planning models all over the world. Some of these models are used globally and include the Cities Development Strategies developed by Cities Alliance (Alliance, 2006) whilst others are context-specific such as the Strategic Urban Development Planning Framework of

Tanzania (Halla, 2005; Halla, 2007) and the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) of South Africa (Williams, 2000).

2.7   Strategic Planning

2.7.1   Origins

The call for a new approach in planning led scholars and practitioners to adopt the private sector-based approach to strategic planning and apply it in both the public sector institutions and in community planning (Bryson and Roering, 1987; Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987).

From an etymological perspective, the term "strategy" originated from a military context and based upon the way in which an army is led with the aim of winning a war (Albrechts, 2004; Naschold and Daley, 1999; Van den Broeck, 2004). Two important aspects stem from this concept: the first focuses on achieving a goal, and the second emphasizes how to achieve this goal.

Farhoodi (2009) traces strategic planning back to the policy model developed by Harvard Business School for corporations in the 1920s. Kaufman and Jacobs (Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987) note that strategic planning as a concept was invented in the private sector during the 1950s in response to the need of corporations for effective planning and management to deal with an uncertain future. In the U.S., strategic planning captured the interest of government leaders during the 1970s to cope with the challenges facing the government at that time including the Middle East oil crises, demographic changes, and unstable economy (Albrechts, 2004). The publication of J.B. Olsen and D.C Eadie's book *The Game Plan: Governance with Foresight* in the 1980s could be considered as the beginning of a sustained application of strategic planning in the public sector (Bryson, 2004). After a wave of articles and calls from planners and local government professionals in the 1980s, cities in Europe and the U.S. have started developing strategic plans based on the business management and corporate model (Albrechts, 2001; Healey et al., 1999).

Subsequently, strategic planning found its way into other parts of the world, including developing countries. According to Rakodi (2001) the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) was among the first international organizations to initiate strategic planning in cities of developing countries through two main programmes: the Urban Management Programme and the Sustainable Cities Programme. Another programme called Integrated Urban Infrastructure Development Planning (IUIDP), which originated in Indonesia and

then expanded to other countries like Nepal and India. The aim of IUIDP was to link infrastructure development to planning and budgeting, promote local resource mobilisation and cost recovery, and improve local government budgeting procedures (Mattingly and Winarso, 2000). A Similar initiative called 'Strategic Urban Development Framework' was implemented in Tanzania in the 1990s and focused on prioritization of community issues, generation of programmatic interventions, and conflict resolution among stakeholders through public participation (Halla, 2007; Todes et al., 2010).

As a result of these programmes and other local and international initiatives, more cities and countries have participated in strategic planning (see *inter alia*: Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina (2010), Ged Kl (2010), Halla (2007), Igeis and Gineitien (2008), Khouri (1996), and Tsenkova (2007). By the end of the 20th Century, participatory models that promoted community participation on the process were developed and integrated into public sector strategic planning (Thi Vu and McIntyre-Mills, 2009). In addition, many experiments in participatory urban governance have surged in both developed and developing countries (Jackson, 2005; Lipietz, 2008).

De Graaf and Dewulf (2010), however, claim that strategic urban planning is widely applied in developing countries while it has limited application in the more advanced developed countries. They explain their observation by the fact that institutional mechanisms, characteristics, and cultural traditions limit the applicability of strategic urban planning in developed countries. This research agrees with this claim and contributes to the discussion about the applicability of strategic planning in developing courtiers. This research will offer a new perspective to the topic as it looks more specifically at the experience of the fragile context of Palestine in the design, preparation, and realisation of strategic planning.

2.7.2 **Definition**

There is no single universally agreed upon definition of strategic planning and both scholars and practitioners have suggested a number of definitions (Albrechts, 2004; Thi Vu and McIntyre-Mills, 2009). As stated previously, the earliest definition of the term strategy originally comes from a military background (Worrall et al., 1998). From a quick scan of related literature, the following are some examples of strategic planning definitions:

"Strategic planning … a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson, 2004, p. 6).

"My understanding of 'strategic spatial planning' refers to self-conscious collective efforts to re-imagine a city, urban region or wider territory and to translate the result into priorities for area investment, conservation measures, strategic infrastructure investments and principles of land use regulation " (Healey, 2004, p. 46).

"Strategic spatial[2] planning is a transformative and integrative, (preferably) public sector led socio-spatial process through which a vision, coherent actions and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and might become" (Albrechts, 2006, p.1491).

"Strategic planning can be defined as a systematic form of preparing for change and for the future of a city " (Farhoodi et al., 2009, p. 355).

"Strategic planning of a city is the participative process of development of a medium tern plan to meet strategic objectives set by key stakeholders in a city. It normally combines physical, financial and institutional aspects" (Davidson, 1996, p. 456).

"Strategic planning is … a systematic process for managing the organization and its future direction in relation to its environment and the demands of external stakeholders, including strategy formulation, analysis of agency strengths and weaknesses, identification of agency stakeholders, implementation of strategic actions, and issue management."(Berry and Wechsler, 1995, p. 159).

"Strategic planning can be defined as a continuing process that involves governance, management and participation" (Thi Vu and McIntyre-Mills, 2009, p. 93).

"Strategic urban planning can be described as a public-sector-led, socio spatial process   through which a vision, coherent actions and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and may become" (de Graaf and Dewulf, 2010, p. 471).

When scanning through many of the suggested definitions however, common elements can be identified which collectively describe what strategic planning is about. These common elements comprise of: a participatory and multi-actor process (Davidson, 1996; Ged kl, 2010) (Rotmans et al., 2000), action orientedness (Narang and Reutersward, 2006; UN-Habitat, 2009b), a never ending learning experience (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010) and, finally, planning not limited to the physical concerns of the city but also to its social, economic, environmental (Narang and Reutersward, 2006) and institutional concerns (Davidson, 1996). Finally, the outcome of the process is to formulate shared visions, strategies and means of implementation for multiple sectors in a written document (Ged kl, 2010) de Graaf and Dewulf, 2010, p. 471; (Beckett-Camarata, 2003b) .

In the urban planning and local government context, the term strategic planning is commonly associated with a spatial reference such as 'strategic urban planning' or 'strategic spatial planning'. The spatial reference of strategic planning brings into focus what Albrechts (2004) called the "where of things" which indicate the management of places and sites and the linkages between human and physical activities in a specific area. In addition, the concern of strategic planning in such contexts is the future image and shape of the geographic territories in which the community lives and practices its human and physical activities.

For the purpose of this research, the author refers to strategic planning as: *a participatory development planning process and an instrument that intends to steer local development using an integrated, multi-thematic and multi-stakeholder approach, in order to help Palestinian communities in setting development objectives and priorities, and tackling issues critical to local citizens in a participatory and integrated manner.*

2.7.3   Characteristics of Strategic Planning

Several characteristics of strategic planning in the context of local governments can be identified from both the literature and from practice. First, unlike the case of military or private sector strategy, local governments do not have the freedom to select the ground or markets they wish to target. Planning of local governments is tied to their territorial boundaries and location and is also confined to a certain selection of basic services that need to be guaranteed to their constituents (Naschold and Daley, 1999). In order for strategic planning to respond to the challenges of uncertain environments of local governments in fragile states, strategic planning needs to be democratic and interactive (Thi Vu and McIntyre-Mills, 2009).

In his review of the literature, Albrechts (2004) summarized the characteristics of strategic planning. These include: focusing on a limited number of strategic key issues; critically reviewing the environment in which planning is to take place; identifying strengths and weaknesses in the context of opportunities and threats; studying external trends, forces and resources available; allowing for broader involvement of different stakeholders; accounting for power structures, competing interests, and different values; influencing actions related to spatial change, and focusing on decisions, and achieving results.

In a similar review, vein de Graaf and Dewulf (2010) identify three core characteristics of strategic planning. First, the constantly changing nature of the environment in which strategic planning takes place requires planners to analyse the internal and external environment to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Second, strategic planning is an interactive participatory process in which stakeholders are encouraged to participate in order to mutually agree on community values and to take part in the implementation of plans and policies. Third, strategic planning is about balancing competing goals and ambitions as well as reducing the gap between planning and implementation. This is achieved by paying attention to implementation requirements and needed resources during all stages of plan-making.

2.7.4 Strategic Planning and Local Government Performance

The connection between strategic planning and local government performance is also a field of study and debate amongst scholars. Rivenbark and Kelly (2003) list strategic planning as one of the key elements of performance management. In their point view, strategic planning helps local organizations including local governments in setting measurable objectives and designing performance measurement instruments to track outputs, outcomes, and efficiencies related to service provision and policy decisions. Moreover, strategic planning along with action planning are considered to be forms of performance-oriented planning (Davidson, 1996). A number of authors looked at the criteria to measure the effectiveness of strategic planning. For example, Bryson (1988) lists several criteria for an effective strategic plan including: technical soundness, acceptability by stakeholders, alignment with the organization's philosophy and core values. Although Bryson's criteria are more relevant to organizations, they could be of a good fit to the context of local governments as they function as institutions too. Vinzant and Vinzant (1996) identify performance measures derived directly from strategic goals and objectives, and links between strategic plans and budgets, as

critical elements of the strategic planning process. In addition, Poister (2010) added performance management—providing direction and control over the work of managers and employees to ensure their efforts focused on achieving strategic goals and objectives—to the list.

Kloot and Martin (2000) examined the linkage between strategic planning, economic development and financial performance and suggested a framework for strategic and balanced local government performance measurement. Other contributors have looked at the impact of strategic planning on financial performance and budgeting. The findings of these studies suggest that integrating the strategic plan into the structure and procedures of the local government would positively affect the formulation and the setting of the budget (Gabris, 1992; McGill, 1988; Steinberg, 2005). It was also found that strategic planning when linked to capital budgeting would, in particular, improve financial performance (Beckett-Camarata, 2003b).

Most importantly, strategic planning is believed to be a key tool that leads to better local governance. This is due to the fact that strategic planning and good governance have common and shared characteristics, including: public participation and community involvement, where all citizens have the space and the right to participate in the creation of a shared vision and values for their community; equity through a focus on pro-poor policies, and accountability which promotes higher transparency of operational functions and responsiveness of local governments (Narang and Reutersward, 2006). Another contribution of strategic planning to the improvement of local governance is the optimization of policy processes and the enhancement of co-operative decision-making standards for the relationships between elected officials and the appointed staff of the local government. Where it is expected to lead to minimization of conflicts between the political and the technical levels and in turn improving decision-making patterns (Gabris, 1992; Mier et al., 1986).

2.7.5   Strategic Planning and Context

The degree of effectiveness and the success of the strategic plan model to achieve the desired outcomes depend not only on the model itself but to a large extent on the implementation mechanisms and conditions surrounding it. Khoury (1996) highlights the importance of factors such as the context in which the process takes place, the actors that are involved, the roles of stakeholders, the process of implementation, and management tools. More specifically, a number of authors pointed out the impact of the specific context and local conditions on the

effectiveness of strategic planning systems (Albrechts, 2001; Steinberg, 2005). Some of these conditions include: the manner and degree of citizen participation (Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007); private sector partnerships (Shah, 2006); consensus between private and public stakeholders (Albrechts, 2001); existing municipal and supportive institutional dynamics and systems (Healey et al., 1999; Tsenkova, 2007); driving forces and motivation (Healey et al., 1999); the legal and regulatory framework (Davidson, 1996; Halla, 2007); attitudes and political will (Albrechts, 2001); differences in size, scope, and administrative capacity of municipalities (Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007); thematic and sectoral focus (Albrechts, 2001; Steinberg, 2005), and the linkages between strategic plans and other planning processes such as master planning, budgeting, and financial planning (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010; Beckett-Camarata, 2003b; Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007).

The relationship between strategic planning and the specific context of any country could be also linked to the influence of the local cultural framework on the application of any management model, including strategic planning and management. In his influential article on 'Theory of Culture in Management', Hofstede (1993) stated that although the term "management" is universally used in different countries and contexts, it has different meanings from one country to another and should not be isolated from other processes taking place in a society. His review of local management practices and theories from ten countries[3] revealed that management interacts with processes within the family, at school, in politics, and government (Hofstede, 1993). An appreciation of the influence of national or local culture on the application of strategic planning is crucial to understand this phenomenon in its native environment. This is particularly important in contexts such as Palestine, where local traditions and internal societal powers predominate the more formal, structured management and planning techniques as practiced in developed countries.

2.7.6   The Role of Leadership

The literature emphasises the crucial role of leadership and top management in influencing the content and process of strategic planning (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b; Hunter, 2012; Borraz and John, 2004; Martin, 1999). The focus of the literature on the role of local political leaders is a reflection of the shift

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[3] These ten countries were: Germany, Japan, France, Holland, the countries of the overseas Chinese, South-East Asia, Africa, Russia, and mainland China

from 'government' to 'governance' and includes the need to increase accountability and legitimacy and the ability to make decisions in a complex economic and social context (Bochel and Bochel, 2010). Haus and Klausen (2011), for example, oppose the notion that governance is 'governing without government', instead the concept of governance encompasses the crucial role of governmental and societal actors along with leaders in the collective practices of framing and targeting problems.

Researchers have also entertained various definitions of leadership and the characteristics of what they called effective or strong leadership. Although it is argued that there is no well-developed theory of political leadership nor a universally accepted definition (Haus and Sweeting, 2006), a number of authors have identified that what constitutes effective leadership depends greatly on context, capabilities, and constitutions (i.e. the formal statements of institutional rules for local political leadership and associated roles) (Goleman, 2000; Ford and Green, 2012; Lowndes and Leach, 2004). In this regard, Avolio et al. (2009) noted the need for more research on the relevance of leadership models and theories within different contextual settings. The importance of leadership to the functioning and efficiency of local governance depends on the different dynamics of decentralization, networks, participation, partnerships, bureaucratic reform, and rapid policy change (Borraz and John, 2004). In this sense, the literature referred to leadership in the context of local government as "local political leadership" (Lowndes and Leach, 2004), or "community leadership" (Sullivan et al., 2006).

The definition and role of leadership in the context of local government has also been a subject of debate in the academic and professional literatures. Sullivan et al. (2006) for instance, linked the role of local leadership to the task of blending and using available resources to influence change or to avoid certain events. Taking local authorities in England as a case study, Hunter (2012) examines the impact of local leadership and the strategic vision of local councils in shaping places and improving the quality of life of citizens. He argues that looking at local leadership on an individual basis will lead to methodological and practical mistakes. Instead, he takes a different perspective by investigating the collective corporate leadership of local councils in relation to their strategic vision and capacity to facilitate place shaping and community change. In his conclusion, he points to the importance of local leadership, in times of fiscal austerity, in the improvements in the management of scarce resources and the development of new forms of local governance in policy-making and service delivery. The idea of collective leadership has also been emphasized by Borraz and John (2004) who considered local leadership as a pluralist and not individual activity and one more suitable for the complexity and competing multiple interests that shape today's urban life.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt to summarize or explore the vast literature on leadership theories, models, and styles. It is important however to note that the literature has thoroughly examined and differentiated the various styles of leaderships that are "democratic", "participative", "group-developing", "relations-centred", "supportive" and "considerate", on the one hand, and those which are "authoritative", "dominating", "directive", "autocratic", "task-orientated" and persuasive on the other (Wallis and Dollery, 2005). Most importantly, there is a wide recognition in the literature of the significant role that leaders play in the success of the change process in any organization or community (Higgs and Rowland, 2011). Related to this, leadership should have three categories of charismatic behaviour to be able to create and influence a change: envisioning, energizing, and enabling (Parry, 1999).

At the community level, the leader should act as an agent of their community (Sullivan et al., 2006), and have the ability to move community forces collectively and simultaneously toward a shared vision and objectives (Hulcher, 1973). This distinctive role of local leaders is believed to be crucial in the formulation of the community strategic plan including mobilizing the community behind a shared vision and collective objectives. In the context of strategic planning formulation, leadership needs to start with the identification of community needs and priorities, which requires the brokerage of agreement between conflicting interest and the facilitation of cooperation between different groups in the community (Sullivan et al., 2006). Consequently, local leadership plays the role of a mediator (Hulcher, 1973), a role that promotes co-operation between partners and stakeholders by creating and propagating cultural frames (Borraz and John, 2004).

The nature of strategic planning approach that fosters consensus, buy-in, and collaboration makes effective leadership a key ingredient for realising desired changes in the community (McClamroch et al., 2001). As with corporate strategy formulation, active involvement in (and contribution to) strategic planning on the part of the top management, whether CEOs or mayors, is paramount for the alignment of organizational strategies with the environment and subsequent organizational performance (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b). Moreover, country-level environmental uncertainty was believed to influence the nature and level of leadership involvement in the strategic planning. The higher the uncertainty, the more important and, simultaneously, the more difficult the leadership role becomes in formulating, developing and implementing strategic planning (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b). This becomes more relevant and significant in the context of fragile and unstable contexts characterized by limited resources and political uncertainty.

Drawing on the previous review of the literature, the researchers side with Ford and Green (2012) who noted that: "in a world of issues based around place, ever tighter resources, shared services and interdependencies, a facilitative or connective leadership style, engaging others to leverage resources and address wicked problems, intuitively seems appropriate for local politicians" (Ford and Green, 2012, p. 315). A facilitative leader promotes positive collaboration and a high level of communication among local government staff and with the community and provides guidance in goal formulation and policy-making (Svara, 1994). Greasley and Stoker (2008) suggest four skills that should be available in facilitative leadership. This includes: (i) Partnership skills where the leader would be able to establish partnerships and collaborate with public officials, public agencies, and with the private, voluntary, and community sectors; (ii) accessibility - that is the leader would be relatively visible to citizens without major barriers that obstruct his or her engagement with them; (iii) low partisanship - The leader would rise above narrow party politics and be outward looking, and finally (iv) have a decision-making capacity that allows the leader to provide rationalized decisions for a complex urban life.

In light of the above, and given the critical role of leadership in moving forward community initiatives such as strategic planning, this research will explore how different kinds of leadership influenced the strategic planning process and outcomes in the Palestinian experience. This will include an examination of the main leadership traits that are important in moving forward strategic planning in fragile contexts.

2.7.7 Strategic Planning and Participation

Participation is a key element of strategic planning. Different authors highlighted the importance of stakeholders' involvement in the process of developing a strategic plan for a community (Bontenbal and Van Lindert, 2008; de Graaf and Dewulf, 2010; Farhoodi et al., 2009; Rotmans et al., 2000). Linked to this is the identification and mapping of stakeholders, a process based on stakeholder theory (Gomes and Gomes, 2009). For de Graaf and Dewulf (2010) strategic urban plans should be developed *with* stakeholders and not *for* them. Other authors emphasise the significance of participatory processes in strategic planning where relevant stakeholders work together to identify joint actions to realize an agreed common vision for their community (Farhoodi et al., 2009).

Although the term 'citizen participation' is very broad, Martinez (2011) defines it as "the set of practices by which 'civil society', the population that does not govern

or belong to the social elite, uses its capacities to intervene in collective life" (Martinez, 2011). This definition limits the focus of the participation on the role of civil society and ignores other major stakeholders such as citizens, social organizations, private sector, and other stakeholders (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2006; Rotmans et al., 2000). Citizen participation and stakeholder involvement is a key theme of 'interactive governance', a term that portrays a way a government makes policies by involving citizens, social groups, businesses, and other stakeholders at the early stages of the policy-making process (Edelenbos and Klijn, 2006).

Gomes and Gomes (2009) examine the way stakeholders influence the decision-making process of municipal districts. They concluded that similar to any other organization, it is important for local governments to establish mechanisms for involving stakeholders in its activities and managing its relationships with them. Most importantly, they claim that there are only few empirical and theoretical studies that analyze stakeholder involvement at the local level government (Gomes and Gomes, 2009). This claim is also supported by Bontenbal and Van Lindert (2008) who argue that bringing people and institutions together is an essential ingredient for achieving good, participatory local governance. With the aim of taking the discussion around public participation one step forward, Jackson (2005) calls for linking participation theory to the urban planning context. In his view, the existing literature does not provide a general consensus about best practice, nor a basic guiding framework approach or participation model for urban planning purposes. Therefore, a higher level of analysis and framework related to the process of stakeholder participation is required to cope with the complexities of urban planning issues (Jackson, 2005).

Another empirical study looked at the impact of public participation in the making of comprehensive plans at the local government level in the United States (Burby, 2003). The analysis showed that citizen involvement in the municipal planning process does indeed result in better plans and greater public acceptance of those plans and reduces the likelihood that latent opposition groups will arise unexpectedly at the last moment.

In their article, (Brody et al., 2003) examine the strengths and weaknesses of citizen involvement mandates and the degree to which these mandates and associated local planning practices have resulted in broader citizen participation in the planning process. The results showed that participation mandates have strong effect on the government's attention to citizen involvement. The study also provided guidance for crafting citizen involvement requirements that should result in broad public participation in planning.

The interaction between citizens and leaders (both national and local) is also discussed in the context of building or rebuilding governance systems in post-conflict societies and developing countries. Brinkerhoff (2005) for example, claims that the building governance systems in post-conflict countries is the responsibility of citizens and their leaders. A big challenge in this regard is to develop processes and tools for bringing together citizens, leaders, and external stakeholders in a manner that contribute efficiently to improving legitimacy, security and effectiveness.

In past decades, many cities in developing countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia have carried out participatory strategic planning exercises that were promoted and adopted by various international agencies (e.g. Cities Alliance, UN Habitat, World Bank, UNDP, GIZ, etc.) planning models and approaches as developed by international and local agencies. Despite the diversity in tools, and techniques that were used to promote public participation in the planning processes, Torres (2006) argues that most of the cases of participatory strategic planning in developing countries demonstrate that practice in participatory urban planning is still lagging behind theory. Moreover, despite the utilization of good participatory planning techniques, the results are still unsatisfactory in terms of proper inclusion in participation. He calls for more in depth comparisons of the different planning cases in developing countries with the aim to drive relevant lessons.

An important report published by UN Habitat in 2009 assessed the effectiveness of urban planning as a tool for dealing with the unprecedented challenges facing 21st Century cities and for enhancing sustainable urbanization (Un-Habitat, 2009a). Related to the issue of 'participation', the report concludes that several preconditions must exist to ensure successful citizen participation throughout the planning process. These include: the political context (a political system that encourages active citizenship and that is committed to equity and redress), the legal basis for participation (processes and outcomes are legally specified) and available resources (skilled and committed professionals, well-resourced and empowered local governments, and informed and organized communities and stakeholders). As one can clearly see, the report ignores the key role that leadership can play in promoting or discouraging the involvement and participation of community stakeholders and citizens in the plan-making and implementation process.

This research looks at the participation of citizens and different actors in the strategic planning at the local level in Palestine. Through examining the linkage between community leadership and stakeholders' participation in the planning

process (including citizens) the research aims to contribute to existing knowledge and paradigms, particularly in the context of fragile state and conflict situation.

2.7.8 **Critique of Strategic Planning**

In his book, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, Henry Mintzberg (1994) cautions us against expectations of strategic planning that are too high and above what it can achieve. While he stresses that strategic planning is not dead, it has lost its pre-eminent position for a variety of reasons; primarily, the lack of understanding by many people of the fact that strategic planning is not equal to strategic thinking, and that strategic planning has been practiced as 'strategic programming'. Another aspect of his critique of strategic planning revolves around the role of planners where he argues that planners' roles should be placed *around* the strategic formulation process and not *within* it. Planners should provide analyses and information and act as catalysts to support strategy formation by helping upper management think in a strategic way. Consequently, Mintzberg (1994) claims that strategy formation needs to function beyond the boxes where informal learning and thinking should be encouraged so new perspectives and ideas could be produced.

Bryson et al. (2009) present the harshest critique of strategic planning as a standard formalized process consisting of a rigid, systematically applied sequence of prescribed steps requiring a combination of information, power, and authority. In their view, the absence of a link between the standardized planning practice, the processes and the mechanisms of implementation result in little learning or political support.

The tendency to favour highly organized groups with resources and power is another problem associated with strategic planning (Lipietz, 2008). Those influential constituencies are normally able to determine the discursive parametres of the discussion, and at the same time de-legitimize other forms of political engagement. Related to that, participatory strategic planning approaches largely ignore the broader political structures and relations of power within which participation is taking place (Lipietz, 2008). In addition, many local governments lack the technical and management capacity needed to apply strategic planning instruments which minimize the success in the application of strategic planning in less developed countries in particular (Jackson, 2005).

Despite the cited criticism of strategic planning, many planning practitioners and international organizations do believe that strategic planning can present an

"innovative" alternative to the conventional master planning (or physical planning) approach (Section 2.6). Strategic planning, despite its shortcomings, is still seen as a process that is "more participatory, flexible, strategic and action oriented" (Un-Habitat, 2009a). It is because of this that international organizations and donor agencies are still promoting and funding the formulation and utilization of various strategic planning models in developing countries including Palestine.

This research acknowledges that strategic planning is not a faultless approach. Strategic planning can however offer an effective tool for communities to overcome the demographic, environmental, economic and socio-spatial challenges that face cities and their habitats around the world.

2.8 Gaps in the Literature

Scholars of strategic planning and management have looked at many aspects of strategic planning in local government and its relation to quality and performance. There are still however, areas that need to be further explored such as the adaptation of strategic planning models at different levels, how to identify models that are suitable for specific situations (Bryson et al., 2010), and the effectiveness of the new generations of strategic plans in terms of content and process (Tsenkova, 2007). A number of authors also highlighted areas where more empirical and theoretical research is still needed including the development of substantive theories related to strategic planning (Albrechts, 2006), studying the strategic planning process itself (Bryson et al., 2009), and the subject of stakeholder analysis at the local level (Gomes and Gomes, 2009).

Too little attention has been paid to the larger context (Bryson et al., 2009) or traditions (Orr and Vince, 2009) within which strategic planning is being conducted. Looking at strategic planning as a "black box" comprising of standardized processes with specific and fixed variables (e.g. process steps, planners, SWOT, vision, indicators, etc.) has been criticised by a number of important authors. Bryson et al. (2009) for example, call for the treatment of strategic planning as a highly dynamic and flexible process driven from and performed in a specific context with the intention to introduce changes within that context. Furthermore, and drawing on case studies from local governments in Sierra Leone, Jackson (2005) claims that there has not been any applied framework or model directed toward to participatory urban planning based on existing experiences, especially in the context of developing countries.

The importance of stakeholder involvement and participation in the strategic planning process is well documented in the literature (de Graaf and Dewulf, 2010; Farhoodi et al., 2009). Empirical and theoretical research however is still needed in the area of stakeholder analysis involving government at the local level (Gomes and Gomes, 2009). Furthermore, in the absence of literature on strategic planning in the fragile states, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena of strategic planning and the factors influencing the quality of strategic planning processes and outcomes in the difficult environment of the Palestinian West Bank. The significance of this research stems from the fact that so far there are very few comparative studies of strategic urban planning (Steinberg, 2005). Most importantly, in the absence of literature on the role of local leadership in strategic planning in the specific context of fragile states, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the interaction between various types of leadership that exist or emerge in situations like Palestine, the quality of strategic planning, and the performance of local governance.

Brinkerhoff (2005) considers the knowledge and practice about the establishment and/or reconstitution of effective governance in post-conflict and fragile contexts to be in its infancy, particularly when compared to the extensive knowledge and practice that exists on building governance in stable countries with functioning governments. This study aims to gain a better understanding of effective local governance in such fragile contexts. It will contribute to the important scientific debate about the nature of the strategic planning process as a means of developing a more robust model for local government.

2.9   Concluding Remarks

The conceptual framework of this research draws on the reviewed literature and investigates the interaction between the various factors that were cited in the literature and thought to influence strategic planning processes and outcomes.

As discussed in this chapter, the literature identified a wide range of factors that affect strategic planning. The distinctive context of Palestine as a fragile state with weak institutional structure makes it a nourishing platform for individuals/actors to play a larger role in influencing reform initiatives such as strategic planning. In addition to that, the empirical data obtained from the case studies (in Chapters 6 and 7), pointed out to key factors affecting strategic planning in Palestine including: context, leadership, citizens participation, and the incentives that drive strategic planning. This is inline with the what was listed by the literature on the importance of factors such as the context in which the process takes place, the actors that are involved, the roles of stakeholders (Khoury, 1996), degree of citizen

participation (Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007) and access to resources and motivation (Healey et al., 1999). These factors will be the base for the research model that will be elaborated and developed further in the coming chapters. Figure 2-1 illustrates these factors.
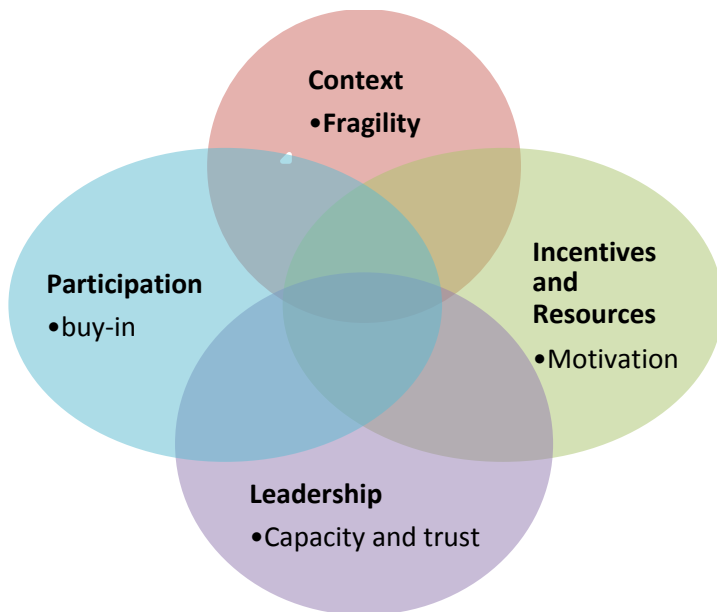
Figure 2-1: Main factors influencing strategic planning

Source: Author's compilation, based on literature review

As presented in Section 2.7.8, this research is aware of the criticism that strategic planning is facing. In fact, as we will see in the empirical analysis of the case studies, a number of key elements of this criticism has been identified and discussed in the conclusion chapter. In particular, the issue pertaining to the standardisation of strategic planning (or blue print) (Bryson et al., 2009), and the impact of the broader political context and power relations on the process and output of strategic planning (Lipietz, 2008).

The literature recognizes the crucial role of leadership and top management in influencing the content and process of strategic planning (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b; Hunter, 2012; Borraz and John, 2004; Martin, 1999). Moreover, in light of the in-depth analysis of the research case studies, leadership appeared to be a key factor that affects strategic planning in the context of Palestine. Therefore, the question this research aims to address is: *what is the impact of local leadership on strategic planning as a tool to improve the performance of local governments in a conflict/fragile context such as Palestine*?

A review of the theoretical and empirical literature in various relevant fields of research has led us to formulate several working propositions. In substance, this research posit the following: In fragile contexts that are characterized by a weak governance structure at the central level, limited resources, and conflicting interests, the role of strong leadership is vital for the success of strategic planning as well as dealing with the challenges faced by local institutions and communities (first and main working proposition). How to design an empirical investigation into the suggested propositions is what we turn to in the methodological chapter that follows.

Chapter 3
Research Design and Methodology

> Social explanation should relate actions to beliefs and desires, and locate beliefs in the context of wider webs of belief and historical traditions.
>
> *Mark Bevir*
>
> *In (Bevir, 2011) page 190*

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted in this research and discusses the tools utilized to answer the research questions. It starts by explaining the rationale behind the adopted research methodology (Section 3.1). The chapter then outlines the conceptual framework of the research, which is drawn from a review of relevant literature and theories (Section 3.2). Following this, the chapter presents the main and secondary research question as well as the related propositions that guided the selection of research techniques (Section 3.3). Moreover, the chapter elaborates on the data collection and analysis methods (Sections 3.5, and 3.6). Finally, the validity of the research and its implications are addressed at the end of this chapter (Section 3.7).

3.1   Research Methodology

This research builds on the interpretative approach to public administration, which has been developed in the past ten years by Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes (Bevir, 2011; Bevir and Rhodes, 2006; Finlayson et al., 2004). This approach encourages the study of the social world by examining the interpretation of that world by its participants and actors. In other words, an interpretative approach encourages us to understand management techniques and strategies through 'telling stories' and listening to them (Bevir, 2011; Bevir and Rhodes, 2006). The interpretative approach relies on the understanding of a situation from the perspective of its participants by trying to get inside a situation and understand it on its own terms (Morgan and Moran, 1993).

An inductive analysis will be used to understand strategic planning as a real-time phenomena by drawing conclusions and theories from personal interpretations

and 'story telling' of various actors. By inductive analysis we refer to a technique that uses detailed readings of raw data to originate concepts, themes, or models (Thomas, 2006). This technique is the opposite of what is called 'deductive analysis' which is concerned with examining whether the data is consistent with prior assumptions, theories, or hypotheses.

The use of the interpretive-inductive approach in this study is justified by the humanistic nature of this research and the fact that it lies within a context that is characterized by its fragility and instability. This requires a certain level of flexibility to allow research findings to be derived from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006). Moreover, the focus of this research is to understand processes and interaction between the different factors affecting strategic planning in fragile situation, mainly leadership, motivation, and the overall political structure. It doesn't meant to uncover causal relationships which a limitation of this type of research.

The use of this approach in the planning literature has recently been the dominant practice. It is also argued that a comparative inductive approach can advance our understanding of the strategic planning concept and its practice through empirical analysis where practices of spatial planning are examined within the various local and regional contexts and cultures (Walsh and Allin, 2012).

The adoption of interpretative-inductive approach fits perfectly with the ultimate aim of this thesis, which is to shed light on how organizations like Palestinian municipalities subscribe to the different concepts and practices of strategic planning, and the role of certain elements in the processes and outcome of strategic planning. The research is concerned with uncovering the dynamics of a technical solution (i.e. strategic planning) in a fragile setting where uncertainty over control and resources is dominant. The focus will be on understanding certain human behaviours such as leadership, motivation, and buy-in. These require the examination of the strategic planning phenomena through participants' perceptions and views based on real experiences and insider knowledge.

As to be expected from qualitative research, this study is not meant to prove or disapprove existing theories through testing preconceived hypotheses (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1996). Instead it seeks to achieve multifaceted intellectual and practical goals that are relevant to qualitative studies as described by Maxwell (2012). It tries to understand the *meaning* for participants in the strategic planning experiences they were engaged in, and how the understanding and practice of strategic planning influenced the different participants behaviours; second, to

investigate the influence of the particular *context* of fragility on the actions of various actors involved in the process; third, to identify *unanticipated* phenomena and influences as a way of generating new "grounded" theories about strategic planning in fragile situations; and finally, to understand the *process and* develop *causal explanations* that feed into theoretical and practical constructs (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Trauth, 2001).

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The research conceptual framework builds on different disciplines to properly explore the impact of leadership and other factors on the quality of strategic planning in fragile state conditions. More specifically, the theories of public administration and management, local governance, and urban management and planning are central. This is because these capture the various dimensions of strategic planning and the role of local leadership and motivation in a setting characterized by weak institutions and weak national government presence and control. These theories enable us to assess the quality of strategic planning and analyze the key factors that contribute to nation building in the context of a fragile state situation such as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

As discussed in the previous chapter (Section 2.1), although there is no agreed definition of a "fragile state", most development agencies and practitioners consider a situation where the central government fails or is unable to perform its core functions of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for its people (including the poor) as a "fragile state" (McLoughlin, 2010). The inability of the government to meet citizens' expectations, exacerbates problems of both legitimacy and effectiveness (Brinkerhoff, 2005). It has been argued that one of the key defining characteristics of fragility is the weak state legitimacy where fragile states "fail to establish reciprocal state-society relations or create a binding social contract" (McLoughlin, 2010,p. 9). Moreover, the weak capacity of any government to deliver core services (e.g. transport, electricity, health, education, water, and sanitation) to its citizens and to provide a decent level of economic opportunity and welfare, calls into question the legitimacy of the government. It also results in citizens losing trust in the national institutions and thus withdrawing their support jeopardizing the nation building process of fragile or conflict state (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Rakodi, 2001).

The vacuum resulting from the weak capacity and lack of legitimacy of the national government in a fragile state situation needs to be filled by other authority structures, whether different levels of government (e.g. local or regional)

or other communal actors such as civil society, political factions, private sector, or informal governance systems (Ball, 2005; Brinkerhoff and Mayfield, 2005; Lister and Wilder, 2005). Among these structures, local government is considered the most relevant authority to bridge the gap in service delivery and reduce conflict in the communities of fragile states. The experience of different countries shows that local government structure has played a key role in post-conflict recovery including the restoration of service delivery capacity, economic recovery, peace building and reconciliation (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Hamill and Ali-Ahmad, 2008). Stable local level institutions can prevent further conflicts, even if national institutions turn out to be fragile (Hohe, 2004).

The literature on local governance points out to the unique position of local governments since they are closer to the citizens as they interact daily and intensively with real-world issues. The literature also highlights the modern role of local governments which extends beyond providing basic public goods and services to overcoming both market and government failures and facilitating civic dialogue and engagement aiming at improving the quality of life for their constituents (Shah, 2006; Wilde et al., 2009). Drawing lessons from the recent experience of Lebanese recovery efforts, it is recognizable that local governments should be empowered through building their capacity in service delivery, local planning and decision-making, and peace building (Hamill and Ali-Ahmad, 2008). In addition, theories of good local governance assume that in order for local governments to contribute to the state building process and recover civic legitimacy, certain dimensions of good governance need to exist including: quality, effectiveness and efficiency in the local administration, public service delivery, and local public policy and planning (Wilde et al., 2009).

The ability of local governments to fulfill their mandate of delivering services and fostering local economic development in the community depends on a set of institutional disciplines that should be available. These include civic, intergovernmental, and public sector management disciplines (OECD/DAC, 2008). In developing countries, and particularly in fragile and post-conflict states, these disciplines are weak and require a focus on enabling conditions that lead to more effectiveness (OECD/DAC, 2008). Strengthening local institutions such as local government in contexts where discontinuity and instability in the political system exists, will help bring the national political system closer to citizens and facilitate the state building process (Hiskey and Seligson, 2003).

One of the instruments to empower local governments and enable them to provide services and welfare to communities is strategic planning (Čiegis and Gineitiene, 2008; Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007). This instrument allows for efficient use of

limited resources and better programme co-ordination and implementation, which is needed in the context of fragility. Moreover, by focusing on local priorities, improved decision-making capacity, and performance monitoring, strategic planning can help local governments to become more responsive to citizen desires and more effective in service delivery (Blair, 2000; Čiegis and Gineitiene, 2008; Davidson, 2006; Kloot, 1999; Rivenbark and Kelly, 2003).

Given the background of the previous arguments, this study's conceptual framework is built upon the notion that in fragile state settings, where the national institutional structure is weak and the legitimacy and effectiveness of the central government are in question, local leadership and community motivation are crucial to the success of reform interventions such as strategic planning. The researcher agrees with Rotberg (2002) that strengthening and nurturing local leadership is key to restoring administration structure, law and order, and peace in conflict and fragile situations. The understanding of legitimacy and power of local leadership is considered one of the major reasons behind the success or failure of state building efforts in fragile and post conflict countries (Brinkerhoff, 2010). The motivation of people to engage in strategic planning exercise is also a determinant factor of the quality and outcome of the planning process (Healey et al., 1999).

The overall quality of strategic planning could be assessed through two dimensions: (i) the process of the plan development, and (ii) the extent of application of the final plan in the municipal functions as well as in the management and delivery of community services. As mentioned earlier in the literature review chapter (Section 2.7.4), Bryson (1988) lists several criteria for an effective strategic plan at the organizational level including: technical soundness, acceptability by stakeholders, alignment with the organization's philosophy and core values. Drawing on these criteria, and taking into account the contextual specificity of the case studies, and the organizational/institutional nature of local governments, this research will evaluate the quality of strategic planning through the following criteria:

- Technical soundness:
    - Process: The application of planning tools and techniques (either traditional or innovative) throughout the planning process.
    - Outcome: the degree of alignment of the strategic plan to the municipal annual budget, and the extent to which the developed plan is influencing the physical (master) plan of the community.

- Stakeholder Acceptance:

- o Process: The extent of participation in the development of the plan by different stakeholders.
  - o Outcome: the degree of buy in and commitment by the stakeholders to the developed plan, and the level of their involvement in the realization of the plan.

- Alignment with organization's culture:
  - o Process: capacity of participants to reflect organization specific issues and conditions on the plan.
  - o Outcome: degree of harmony and compliance between the plan and the decision-making at the municipal level.

3.3 Research Questions and Propositions[4]

As described in the previous chapters, and building on the literature review presented in Chapter 2, the aim of this research is to investigate the factors influencing the nature of the strategic planning process and its outcomes at the local level of administration in a conflict/fragile state context.

The study is based on case studies of Palestinian municipalities, where strategic planning has been introduced since 2008. Building on Chapter 2, the literature identified a wide range of factors affecting strategic planning including: context, leadership, ownership, financial instruments and incentives, participation, and capacity of actors involved. However, as the research proceeded, leadership role emerged as a very important factor from the early case studies. Therefore, the main research question of this research places special emphasis on the role of leadership. Other key factors were also emerged which were then considered in the research analytical framework. These factors included: motivation, donors' role, participation, and planning approach.

To achieve these aims, **this research formulates the following main question**:

> **What is the impact of local leadership on strategic planning as a tool to improve the performance of local governments in a conflict/fragile context such as Palestine?**

---

[4] To avoid confusion, it is important to note that while the research approach is qualitative and exploratory (as described in Section 3.1), it uses terms such as *"variables"*, *"independent variables"*, and *"propositions"* which are commonly used in econometrics/quantitative research.

The first proposition pertinent to the main question is:

> P1: In fragile contexts that are characterized by a weak governance structure at the central level, limited resources, and conflicting interests, the role of strong leadership is vital for the success of strategic planning as well as for dealing with the challenges faced by local institutions and communities.

To be able to investigate the main research question and to expand our knowledge and understanding of strategic planning, the research looked into a number of sub questions related to specific propositions.

In addition to the first propositions, propositions 2, and 3 are also linked to the first group of sub questions, which revolve around the role of leadership and the qualities and characteristics of leaders:

> SQ1: How does leadership influence the quality of plan-making, adoption and implementation of SP in LGs?
> SQ2: What are the main traits of leaders (political, economic, personal, motivation, etc.) that influence the role of leadership in local governments?

The related propositions are:

> P2: The more involved the leadership is in the strategic planning process, the more influence this leadership will have on the pace of designing and implementing strategic planning and its outcomes. This will lead to better ownership of and commitment to the plan.

> P3: Traditional leadership tends to resist reform initiatives (such as strategic planning) and obstruct the introduction of new tools and practices to the municipal work.

In addition, the research sought to identify other influencing factors that affected the adoption and realization of strategic planning within the Palestinian context by addressing the following sub-questions:

> SQ3: What are the potential factors in addition to leadership that could influence success or failure of strategic plans?

SQ4: What is the current level of adoption of strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities?

SQ4: What is the role of foreign aid and donors in strategic planning in the Palestinian context?

SQ5: What are the policy implications and reform measures that should be applied to achieve the objectives of the strategic planning and its implementation?

In regard to sub questions, the following propositions have been formulated:

P4: For strategic planning to work under unstable conditions (both at the national level-fragile Palestine- and local level –unstable communities-), several key ingredients should exist, including: availability of incentives, effective leadership, access to resources and local ownership and participation (Figure 3-1). This Figure is a different presentation of Figure 2-1 that was developed based on the review of the literature. In this figure, the contextual element is not shown as it is treated here as a critical underlying factors that influence strategic planning in the case of Palestine.

P5: Donors' boycott of Hamas and left-wing led municipalities saw positive unintended results from strategic planning.
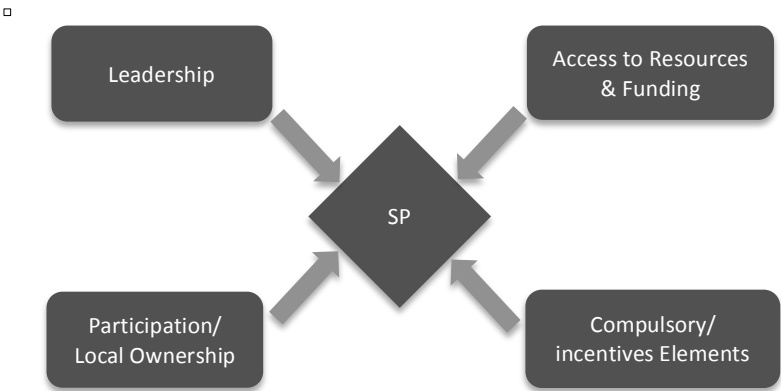
Figure 3-1   Model of the key ingredients for the success of strategic planning under fragile situation

Source: Author's compilation, based on literature review

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3.4 Research Variables

The main independent variable of this research is thus: the quality of leadership at the local level. Additional factors will also be examined including: the motivation of municipality's leadership, capacity of institutions, participatory approaches, existence of incentive systems, and availability of external resources.

The dependent variable of the research is: the quality of strategic planning. This includes the quality of process, content, understanding and buy-in, and utilization of the developed strategic plan in various municipal functions such as physical planning, and budgeting.

What is the impact of local leadership on strategic planning as a tool to improve the performance of local governments in a conflict/fragile context such as Palestine?
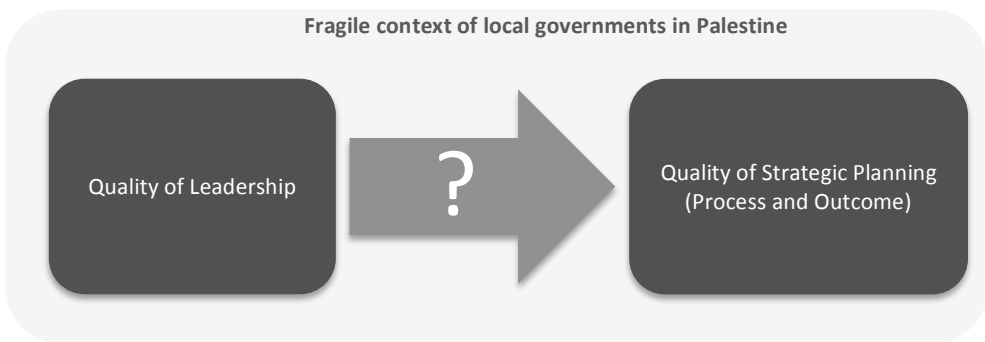
Figure 3-2   Overall Research Question and Variables

Source: Author

As already discussed in Section 3.1, the qualitative inductive nature of this research was not meant to uncover causal relationships, nor to define -in advance- all concepts or variables. This limitation is typical for this kind of research, which will not try to prove or disapprove existing theories through testing preconceived hypotheses. Instead it seeks to achieve multifaceted intellectual and practical goals that are relevant to qualitative studies as described by Maxwell (2012).

3.5   The Rationale for Case Studies as a Tool for the Research

To successfully answer the research questions and investigate the different elements that influence the quality of strategic planning at the local government level, an in-depth multiple case study method is chosen. This approach will provide important opportunities and will allow the investigation of real-life developments within a specific context (e.g. fragile state context). In addition, the

case study approach will examine strategic planning as a contemporary phenomenon from various perspectives (Yin, 1994). Through the case study approach, the specific context of cause-effect relationships can be applied and a detailed investigation of the phenomenon carried out. Additionally, the case study approach is chosen because it was found to be suitable for developing theories and investigating the interaction between a phenomenon (e.g. strategic planning) and its context (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). This method has been utilized in similar studies of urban planning, public administration, and public policy (Yin, 1994). As Sartorio (2010) explained, the use of case studies in planning and policy-making research can assist in bridging the emerging gaps between theoretical knowledge of planning, applied planning research and planning practice. To understand the dynamics of strategic planning and the underlying influencing factors across multiple settings, standardized interviews protocol will be used throughout the case studies. George and Bennett (2005) refer to this method as the method of "Structured Focused Comparison" which aims at facilitating the comparison across the selected cases, and developing a theory that can be generalized across settings.

The case study research design is often used in studying strategic planning in organizations as well as communities (Walsh and Allin, 2012). For example, Albrechts (2003b) used the case of the Flanders region to study the dynamic interactions between planners and the operation of the political process. Thi Vu and McIntyre-Mills (2009) explored the extent to which strategic planning has been applied in Vietnam by analyzing strategic planning in three local government case studies in the country. Using Johannesburg's recent experiment with city-wide strategic planning as a case study Lipietz (2008) explored the complex interplay between participatory processes and the broader political machinery of governance. In their paper, Ataov and Ezgi Haliloglu Kahraman (2009) revealed how experiential learning processes can help construct and maintain collaborative platforms in urban planning by looking at the participatory planning of Kaymakl, a small agricultural and touristic town in Turkey. Moctezuma (2001) described the experiences of community-based organizations in settlements and municipalities in southeast Mexico City in participatory planning and in the development of local projects and new employment opportunities. These examples and others illustrate the common use of the case study approach in studying strategic planning from different perspectives and contexts.

3.5.1 Selection of case studies

Researchers have identified one important difference between qualitative and quantitative research concerning case study sample size. They argue that while quantitative research design is based on representative random sampling, the selection of cases in qualitative studies should be based on purposive sampling (Eisenhardt, 1989). Purposive sampling involves selecting organizations or individuals who are willing to participate in the study and most importantly can provide rich information that is likely to replicate or extend the emergent theories (Patton, 2005). Also known as the 'strategic selection of cases' (Flyvbjerg, 2006), the aim of purposive sampling is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon. Theoretical sampling is another suggested sampling technique that should go hand in hand with purposive or strategic sample selection. It involves the selection of groups or categories to study based on their relevance to the proposed research questions (Draucker et al., 2007; Silverman, 2009).

The literature also discusses the number of cases required in any qualitative inquiry. For example, Mason (2010) and Dworkin (2012) noted that qualitative research was often concerned with gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or revealing the heterogeneities in meaning rather than developing generalized hypotheses. Therefore, the samples for qualitative studies are generally much smaller than those used in quantitative research.

Although there have been some broad guidelines suggested by a number of authors about the number of cases (and interviews) that is suitable for academic research, most scholars argue that the concept of 'theoretical saturation' (Mason, 2010) or the 'point of redundancy' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985a) is the most important determining factor for sample size in qualitative research. Both terms refer to a situation at which the data collection process no longer offers any new or relevant data, and the data being gathered no longer sparks new theoretical insights (Dworkin, 2012). While there is no ideal number of cases, Eisenhardt (1989) proposes a number between four and ten cases. To explain the rationale behind this range, she argues that: "With fewer than four cases, it is often difficult to generate theory with much complexity, and its empirical grounding is likely to be unconvincing" while " With more than ten cases, it quickly becomes difficult to cope with the complexity and volume of the data" (Eisenhardt, 1989, page. 545).

In line with the previous discussion, a purposive and theoretical sampling approach was used in the identification and selection of cases for this research. The aim of this research –as described previously– is to study a contemporary

phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 1981) with the ultimate aim of revealing new constructs and providing new insights to existing theories of strategic planning within the specific context of the fragile situation of the Palestinians' municipalities. Five municipalities were selected as the cases of this study and for the in-depth data collection. The following section gives more insight in the process of selecting the five Palestinian municipalities.

3.5.2 Selecting the cases for this research

The local government in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) operates at three levels of government and administration: the central level, presented by the Ministry of Local Government, the regional level which consists of sixteen governorates (or muhafazat in Arabic), and the local level which consists of a single tier of local governments, the units being either 'municipalities' or 'village councils'. The municipalities are divided into four categories, two of which were established before the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the year 1994, and were designated municipalities of categories A and B. The municipalities created after 1994 were categorized in C and D (PAPP/UNDP, 2005; Signoles, 2010). The classification of municipalities into A, B, C, D was due to several reasons. The first is political, and sees the newly established PNA using this categorization of municipalities to obtain and foster the political support of the council and citizens of certain municipalities. The second concerns demographic criteria, rural/urban characteristics, and the period of establishment (before or after the PNA).

According to PCBS (2008), the number of local authorities in the West Bank and Gaza is 517, of which 383 are designated village councils, 134 are designated as municipalities including 109 municipalities in the West Bank governorates, and 25 in Gaza governorates[5]. All the 134 municipalities had developed strategic plans as of December 2016. The unit of analysis is the municipality.

To investigate the factors surrounding strategic planning quality in the Palestinian municipalities, the purposive sampling strategy employed a mixture of homogeneous and heterogonous samples (Patton, 2005). The mix of cases covered the different categories of municipalities in West Bank, as it is impossible under the current political situation and access restrictions to include municipalities in Gaza. In addition, the selected sample covered different locations and governorates, capacities, leadership and political power, size, and environments.

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[5] Refer to Section 5.3.

The first section criteria were whether the strategic plan was internally motivated or externally driven. Out of the three municipalities that have formulated strategic plans on their own (i.e. Maithaloun, Beita, and Nablus) two cases were selected including: Beita (medium size), and Nablus (large size). Then another three municipalities that formulated strategic plans based on externally driven planning methodologies were selected (i.e. AsSamu', Deir Dibwan, and Bir-Zeit) in a way that broadly covers the different types and sizes of West Bank municipalities. As shown in Table 3-1, the selected five cases cover different key selection criteria and types of municipalities in the West Bank.

Table 3-1: Representation of the selected sample of the research

Criteria		Municipality				
		Nablus	Beita	AsSamu'	Birzeit	Deir Dibwan
Motivation	Self-motivated SP	☒	☒	□	□	□
	Externally Motivated SP	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
SP Approach	Unified (i.e. SDIP, SDF)	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	Ad-hock/Learning by doing	☒	☒	□	□	□
Leadership (mayor)	Entrepreneur/innovative leader	☒	☒	□	☒	☒
	Traditional leader	□	☒	☒	□	☒
	Authoritarian traditional leader	☒	□	□	□	□
Political	Boycotted by the donors	☒	☒	□	☒	□
	Not boycotted by donors	□	□	☒	□	☒
Size (i.e. Population)	Large	☒	□	□	□	□
	Medium	□	☒	☒	□	□
	Small	□	□	□	☒	☒
Location	North West Bank	☒	☒	□	□	□
	Middle West Bank	□	□	□	☒	☒
	South West Bank	□	□	☒	□	□
MoLG Classification	A, B, C, D	A	B	B	C	D

Source: Author.

The selection of these cases was meant to ensure, as much as possible, the representation in the sample, in order to be able to draw conclusions about the current practices of strategic planning in the municipalities in Palestine. The selected municipalities for this study are listed in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2   Key features of the five selected municipalities

Municipality	Key Features
Nablus	• Location: North West Bank. • Category A. • Population: 153,061 capita (2016). • Total Area: 32,947 donum. • The city became a municipality in 1869. • Main commercial centre in the West Bank. • Type of strategic planning: independently-initiated and externally initiated by MDLF (i.e. SDIP).
Beita	• Location: North West Bank. • Category B. • Population: 11,017 capita (2016). • Total Area: 17,622.020 donum. • Became a municipality in 1997. • Medium town size known for its commercial and agricultural activities. • Type of strategic planning: independently-initiated and externally initiated by MDLF (i.e. SDIP).
AsSamu'	• Location: South West Bank. • Category B. • Population: 25,949 capita (2016). • Total Area: 35,000 donums. • Village council was established in 1965 and became a municipality in 1997. • Medium town size known for its commercial and agricultural activities. • Type of strategic planning: Externally initiated by MDLF (i.e. SDIP).
Birzeit	• Location: Middle West Bank. • Category C. • Population: 5,796 capita (2016). • Total Area: 14,000 donums. • Village council was established in 1925 and became a municipality in 1962. • Small college town size known for its services and agricultural activities. • Type of strategic planning: independently-initiated and externally initiated by CHF (i.e. SDF).
Deir Dibwan	• Location: Middle West Bank. • Category D. • Population: 6,721 capita (2016). • Total Area: 14,000 donums. • Village council was elevated to a municipality in 1956. • Medium town size known for its agricultural and trade activities. • Type of strategic planning: Externally initiated by MDLF (i.e. SDIP).

Source: Author.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Eisenhardt (1989) proclaims that building theories from case studies may come from multiple data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. Mixing data sources is also called 'triangulation' (Patton, 1999) which refers to the use of a combination of different sources to examine the same phenomena. According to Patton (1999) 'triangulation' can take various forms including 'method triangulation', which refers to combining qualitative and quantitative methods, and the 'triangulation of sources' which is the use of multiple data sources within a qualitative research design. The latter is achieved by mixing different types of qualitative methods, combining purposeful samples, and including multiple perspectives.

The triangulation of data sources complements the investigation of the strategic planning phenomena through multiple cases and contributes significantly to the overall credibility of the findings produced. Therefore, this study employs a 'triangulation of sources' technique that combines interviews, the researcher's observations, and document analysis.

3.6.1 Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews and focus group meetings are considered the sole data source for qualitative research that allow the researcher to delve deeply into social and personal observations (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006; DiCicco‐Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The main advantage of collecting data through interviews and focus groups (FGs) is that it enables the researcher to deeply investigate individuals, settings, subcultures, and scenes, with the aim to generate a subjective understanding of how and why people perceive, reflect, role-take, interpret, and interact (Dworkin, 2012). In addition, using interviews and focus groups will encourage participants to freely "tell the story" – a key feature of interpretative inductive research and thusly provides the methodological approach of this study.

The use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups presents the opportunity to collect information about respondents' experiences, narratives, and understandings related to strategic planning practices in their real-world settings and conditions.

Although there is no rule of thumb that could help determine the number of interviewees required for research of this kind, several propositions and guidelines were mentioned in the literature (Baker and Edwards, 2012). According to Dworkin (2012), a range from five to 50 respondents per case is suggested as an

adequate number based upon her review of a large number of articles, books and book chapters. In this study, for the selected five cases individual interviews were conducted with a total of 78 informants and included elite-level government officials, local government mayors and councillors, local government technical staff, consultants, and officials from international agencies. Appendix A.2 includes the profile of the informants who were interviewed in this research. In addition, nine focus group meetings were organized that provided a total of 102 participants.

All interviews and focus groups discussions were conducted verbally in person to allow for personal interaction with the respondents. Most interviews and focus groups were conducted using tape recordings in addition to shorthand notes and keywords. An interview protocol was developed to guide the researcher during interview sessions and follow up discussions. The first draft of the interview protocol was developed and piloted through preliminary interviews with respondents before finalizing the interview protocol and introducing adjustments to the questions and their ordering. The final interview protocol started with introductory and open-ended questions so as to provide an informal setting and to break the ice with the informant. The open-ended questions were also aimed at providing the widest scope for informants to share their thoughts. This was followed by a set of probing questions aimed at obtaining detailed information pertaining to a particular issue under observation. The interview protocol is presented in Appendix A.1.

The data collection for this research was undertaken in two phases:

(a) Pilot phase: this saw preliminary interview fieldwork carried out in Palestine from September 2013 to November 2013. The main objective of the pilot phase was to test the designed interviews protocol, to validate the initial assumptions and hypotheses, and to ensure a smooth process of thought sharing with the informants when the actual fieldwork (i.e. interviews, and focus groups) will later be undertaken. The pilot data collection of this research took place in two municipalities: Beita and Deir Dibwan. Four informants were involved in the pilot interviews including the mayors of each city, and the key staff who were involved in strategic planning. In addition to that, seven selected experts and government officials were interviewed. The interview sessions with these informants lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

The pilot phase assisted the researcher in two important ways. First, it helped the researcher to clarify and refine a number of concepts and constructs in order to give a clearer understanding of strategic planning and the role of leadership

among other factors in determining the pace of the process and its outputs. The second advantage was that data collected during the pilot interviews allowed the researcher to make necessary adjustments and improvements to the research protocol before proceeding to the data collection phase proper.

(b) Data collection phase: based on lessons learned from the pilot phase, the actual data gathering process took place in Palestine over a period of 12 months, from February 2014 until January 2015. The researcher conducted interviews and focus groups meetings in the five selected municipalities, in addition to conducting interviews with other stakeholders such as government officials, representatives of donors as well as local and international organizations, and planning experts. The two pilot cases, that of Beita and Deir Dibwan were revisited again during this phase, where the researcher used the final interview protocol to gather additional information from the mayor, municipal staff, and planning team. Interviews were conducted in the informant's own offices or an external venue convenient to the informant. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. A number of follow up interviews (N=9), and one focus group meeting with planning experts (April 2017) were carried out beyond this phase so to fill important gaps in the data, or to confirm and validate certain findings and analysis. Table 3-3 presents the breakdown of interviews per each phase, and category.

Table 3-3: Number of interviews per each phase and category

Phase	Category	Number of Interviews
Pilot phase		
	Beita	4
	Deir Dibwan	4
	External (experts and government officials)	7
	Total	**15**
Actual data collection phase		
	Beita	7*
	Nablus	10
	Deir Dibwan	6*
	AsSamu'	7
	Birzeit	10
	External (experts, donors, and government officials)	31
	Total	**71**
Follow up interviews		**9****
Total (with repetition)		**95**
Total (with no repetition)		**78**

* For the pilot cases (Beita and Deir Dibwan), the number includes the 8 informants who were interviewed in the pilot phase as the researcher interviewed them again during the actual data collection phase.

**The follow up interviews were conducted with nine external informants who were interviewed before to revalidate specific information, or findings.

Source: Author's compilation

One important tool used during the interviews with mayors, members of planning teams and in the focus group meetings, to measure character and personality traits of the various leaders and actors involved in strategic planning, was the Likert scale. This scale was developed by the American social psychologist Rensis Likert in 1932 as a procedure for measuring attitudinal scales (Likert, 1932). This research used Likert scale in a set number of questions that aimed at assessing the degrees of influence, and involvement of leaders and key actors in the strategic planning making in the selected case studies, as well as to evaluate the levels of community participation in the planning process.

Therefore, the main data collection methods of this research included: (a) Semi-structured interviews, and (b) focus group (FGs) meetings. The following provides more details about these tools.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with key informants (KI) who were directly and indirectly involved in the development of the strategic plans at the national and local levels. At the national level, these individuals included senior officials from the government (i.e. MoLG, MoP, PMO), MDLF staff, donor representatives, planning experts and consultants. Interviews also included mayors, council members, and members of the core planning team of each case. As shown in Table 3-3, a total of 78 key informants were interviewed for this research to ensure the confidentiality and neutrality of the information collected. Each informant was given a code according to a specific category. These are presented as follows:

> MU: for informants from municipalities (cases);
> NI: for informants from national institutions;
> ID: for informants from international donors and organizations; and
> PE: for planning experts.

Table 3-4 presents the profile of key informants who were interviewed for this research.

Table 3-4: Profile of key informants

Category	Number of Informants	Males	Females
Municipalities (MU)	40	31	9
Beita	7	7	0
Nablus	10	6	4
Deir Dibwan	6	5	1
AsSamu'	7	7	0
Birzeit	10	6	4
National Institutions (NI)	16	11	5
International Donors (ID)	12	10	2
Planning Experts (PE)	10	8	2
Total	**78**	**60**	**18**

Source: Author's compilation

After each interview, main issues, themes, and concepts revealed were noted down and analyzed. The analysis of the interviews was based on categorizing and

coding of each interview according to which key concepts were found in the interviews recordings and transcripts.

Focus groups

Focus group (FG) meetings for each case study were conducted to enable citizens and local stakeholders to openly share their experiences and perceptions related to the development of strategic plans in their communities. The objective of the FG discussions was to efficiently extract relevant insights and information about the various elements of strategic planning in each community and to prompt citizens to engage in an interactive self-evaluation process based on reflection, analysis and mutual learning (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014). Two types of FG were conducted for the purpose of this research. The first type of FG, (a), encompassed citizens from each community who were involved in, or at least aware of, the strategic planning that took place in their city. In order to have an open and frank discussion, municipal officials were not invited to participate in the FGs. A total of 93 citizens participated in eight focus group (FG1 to FG8) meetings. The second type, (b), included one FG meeting with selected local planning experts who were involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the different strategic plans in Palestine. This FG meeting was organized at the late stage of the research in order to enrich the analysis, and validate the preliminary findings that resulted from the case studies. A total of nine experts participated in this FG. Table 3-5 provides a summary the FG meetings.

Table 3-5: Summary of focus groups

Focus Group (FG)	Number of FGs	Number of Participants	Males	Females
Beita (FG1, FG2)	2	22	14	8
Nablus (FG3,FG4)	2	28	17	11
Deir Dibwan (FG5)	1	11	7	4
AsSamu' (FG6,FG7)	2	19	10	9
Birzeit (FG8)	1	13	7	6
Planning experts (FG9)	1	9	6	3
Total	**9**	**102**	**61**	**41**

Source: Author's compilation

Similar to the semi-structured interviews, the researcher used a standard protocol to guide the discussions in order to ensure consistency and relevance of the discussions. This was also done to allow for easy categorization and analysis as based on the research questions. Arabic was the language of discussion in the

focus groups. Following the consent of participants, each focus group meeting was recorded and then transcribed. These transcripts were then coded and analyzed following the same standard approach that was undertaken for the interviews as described below. Appendix A.1 includes the focus groups protocols.

Analysis of interviews and focus groups data

Analysis of data obtained through interviews and focus groups involved a number of interconnected tasks including:

1- Preparation of Interviews transcripts: Transcribing recorded interviews is a labour intensive process that requires a substantial amount of time and concentration. For that reason, the researcher decided to engage a professional stenographer to undertake the job. Those transcripts were subsequently verified thoroughly by the researcher to ensure accuracy. Additionally, in eventuality where gaps were found the researcher would fill in these gaps *ex post*. Most of the interviews were undertaken in Arabic, except for interviews with donors and international experts. The researcher undertook the translation from Arabic to English.

2- Data analysis: which followed a three–phase approach as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994): data reduction, data display, and the drawing of conclusions.

As the name implies, data reduction is about organizing and reducing a large volume of data by means of focusing, summarizing and converting the data from interviews transcripts and documents. The major activity in the data reduction phase is data coding and categorizations according to the questions and key areas of the research. Data display involves consolidating and matching the reduced data into a reasonable and understandable shape. This allowed the researcher to make inferences and suggestions concerning the specific issues, practices or policies undertaken by the actors in the research context. The final step, namely the drawing of conclusions, is also known as the interpretation phase and entails giving meaning or making sense of analyzed data (Tracy, 2013).

3- Coding of data: involved reviewing the interview transcripts thoroughly and giving labels to key themes or ideas emerging from the collected data that appeared to potentially address the research questions. During the coding process, core categories for the merging themes were established in which a descriptive label was assigned for each theme. Through the process, and keeping the research questions in mind, a number of core categories were identified. The coding process was undertaken for each of the five cases. This process subsequently led to

methodical case-by-case analysis. These analyses were then grouped into a comparative table, which enabled the researcher to carry out a comparative analysis in line with the research questions. The summary tables were used in cross-case analysis to identify similarities and differences across the five case studies. Finally, the process of interpreting the data and conclusions drawing was undertaken. The research findings are presented in Chapter 8.

Observation

Another technique that is commonly used in qualitative studies is observation (Kawulich, 2005; Vidich, 1955; Vinten, 1994; Johnson et al., 2006). The use of observation as a research technique is a familiar one in social studies, including social geography and social anthropology, which are relevant to the study of strategic planning in cities and communities. Jackson (1983) suggests that participant observation is suitable as research method for many of the problems which concern modern humanistic geography. Moeran (2009) argues that in understanding social phenomena it is important to appreciate that the "totality" of participant observation facilitates holism, and introduces an intimacy between the researcher and informants that are not possible with other research methods. The advantage of personal observations is that it enables the researcher to learn about the activities of people under investigation in their natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (Kawulich, 2005). In addition, personal observations help in capturing the whole social setting and context in which people function and work (Mulhall, 2003).

In examining the process and quality of strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities, the researcher has personally witnessed (and was engaged in) the formulation of strategic planning concepts and methodologies that have been used in many cities and communities in the Palestinian context. Additionally, a recent formal engagement of the researcher[6] provided a unique opportunity to informally collect data through participation in meetings and informal interviews and discussions. This long involvement in the process fits with (Whyte, 1979) that sees the researcher as participant-observer as they participate in activities relevant to the study over an extended period of time.

The use of personal observations allowed for a better understanding of the interaction between the different actors involved in the process, validate the information obtained from interviews, and experience the dynamics influencing

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[6] As a quality control and monitor over the development of strategic plans in selected municipalities, including part of the research sample.

the quality of strategic planning. Many observations were documented by writing short notes and comments.

Nevertheless, ensuring academic neutrality and objectivity was crucial for conducting this study. Additionally, the researcher was fully conscious of the ethical dilemmas and potential partiality that might emerge due to personal and former professional relations that the researcher had with some informants. It is for this reason; the researcher took a number of measures (described below) to minimize any possible biased responses from interviewed informants. At the beginning of interviews and focus groups, the researcher made it clear to all informants that the objective of this research is solely academic and will only lead to a better understanding of strategic planning though their lenses as "individuals involved in this phenomena". The understanding of the academic nature of this study by informants, along with the other measures that were taken by the researcher (as described below), facilitated the acquisition of honest and accurate opinions for this research.

This is also related to the discussion on the internal validity (Section 3.11) and the rigour methodology and tools used in this research as discussed before. In order to maintain high academic standards, the researcher relied on the following procedures (Lincoln and Guba, 1985b; Creswell and Miller, 2000; Moeran, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 1994):

1- Triangulation: The researcher sought for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form the themes of this study. In addition to triangulating between different sources of information (e.g. interviews, focus groups, documents, financial data, government and donors' reports, etc.), the researcher diversified the list of informants to include current and former mayors, government employees, and planning experts. This allowed for examining and validating the various information before drawing any conclusion on the themes of the research.

*2- Member checking***:** According to Lincoln and Guba (1985b), member checks is a crucial technique for establishing credibility in qualitative research. It entails taking data and interpretations back to the informants and participants in the study to order confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account. For the purposes of this study, the researcher convened a focus group of planning experts during the drafting stage of the manuscript to review the findings and clarify any misunderstanding that might have occurred during the fieldwork. In addition to that the researchers asked various informants, mainly independent experts and informants who are external to the specific case study/municipality, if

the themes or categories make sense, whether they are developed with sufficient evidence, and whether the overall account is realistic and accurate.

3- The audit trail: another technique that was used to improve the credibility and validity of the research is to refer to audited and official documents such as audited financial reports from external auditors (for financial data and budgets), minutes of meetings, documented decisions, and external official reports (from the government and/or donors).

Documentary survey

Documentary survey or review is considered one of the primary research techniques for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Payne and Payne (2004) suggest that documentary review method as a technique is used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources. One of the main benefits for the researcher of documentary data is to augment and validate the findings from in-depth interviews (Gaborone, 2006). To this end, the use of documentary review and analysis in this research aimed at triangulating the data obtained from interviews, and observations, as well as establishing linkages with relevant theories of strategic planning and to identifying new paradigms on the overall issues under study.

Documents reviewed in this research covered relevant publications and documents including: Palestinian national strategies and plans, reports from the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), international organizations' reports and documents (i.e. GIZ reports, CHF, UN Habitat, etc.), and reports from the selected sample of municipalities such as the developed strategic plans, budgets and financial reports, and internal manuals and procedures.

Additionally, the review included documents from the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau of the PNA[7], and from the Municipal Development

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[7] The Bureau is the official supreme audit institution in the OPTs responsible for auditing and assessing the compliance of public entities (including local governments) with provisions of applicable laws, regulations, codes, and decisions. The Bureau is conducting an annual audit of local governments including assessing the efficiency, accountability, and transparency of audited entities. The audit rank local governments based on their compliance and performance and assign a score to each entity. Source: SAACB 2010. Annual Report 2010. *In:* BUREAU, S. A. A. A. C. (ed.). State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, PNA, Ramallah.

and Lending Fund (MDLF) ranking system to assess the performance of the sampled municipalities[8].

3.7   External and Internal Validity

The concept of validity, developed by (Campbell and Stanley, 1966) and then elaborated by (Cook and Campbell, 1976), has been one of the main concepts that affected qualitative research. In general, research based on a case study approach faces the challenge of establishing the external validity of the data collected as well as the conclusions drawn from the research (Whittemore et al., 2001). The literature distinguishes between two levels of validity. The first is the 'internal validity' which is concerned with establishing a causal relationship between variables and results (Gibbert et al., 2008). The second raised 'external validity' or 'generalizability', which refers to whether the interpretation of processes identified and conclusions drawn can be transferable beyond the particular setting or case at hand (Kawulich, 2005).

To strengthen the internal validity of this research a number of measures suggested in the qualitative research literature were adopted and undertaken. The triangulation of different data collection techniques and sources made it possible to verify findings by adopting multiple perspectives (Gibbert et al., 2008). The number of selected cases is also in line with the range of four to ten cases suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) as a good basis for analytical generalization. The use of participant observation as a data collection tool is also one way to increase the validity of the study, as observations helped improve the understanding of a given context and the influencing factors surrounding the phenomenon of strategic planning (Kawulich, 2005). The research also designed and followed an interview protocol that went through considerable verification and piloting processes. Finally, the familiarity of the researcher with local context of the study area, and the reliability of different data sources, helped to screen and exclude dubious information.

The external validity of this research stems from the fact that the findings of this research could be applicable to other similar settings. Although this research looked at strategic planning as a phenomenon within the unique context of Palestine, various analogous features with other fragile and conflict-like countries

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[8] The Municipal Development and Lending Fund, a quasi-governmental organization that manages donors' projects to local governments, ranks municipalities in the OPTs using a performance-based formula that uses 12 key indicators of good municipal management including financial, planning, and technical. Source: GARZÓN, H. 2009. Grant Allocation System and Ranking of Municipalities Based on Financial Management Performance. Ramallah, Palestine: MDLF.

could be identified. This included, among other features, the lack of a strong central authority, the reliance on external funding, the unpredictable financial flow available to local governments, and the deteriorated economic, security, and development conditions. The existence of such similarities, if combined with further comparative research, could provide for similar conclusions that are applicable to other similar contexts that would enhance the external validity of this research (Calder et al., 1982).

Chapter 4
A Historical Overview of Palestinian Local Governance

> Palestinian municipalities are, thus, "longlasting" institutions that pre-existed the Palestinian state, and will be called on to endure, no matter what political form or territorial configuration may take in the future.
>
> *Aude Signoles*
>
> *in (Signoles, 2010) page 9*

This chapter provides crucial historical background to an understanding of the conditions under which Palestinian local government operates and under which strategic planning is performed. The chapter starts by presenting the political and socio-economic reality of Palestine (Section 4.1). It also outlines the elements and sources of Palestine's fragility (Section 4.2) and the role of foreign aid in setting the development agenda in the country (Section 4.3). A major part of the chapter includes a detailed historical portrayal of the creation, evolution, and facets pertaining to Palestinian local government during the various historical eras (Section 4.4).

4.1 Palestine Key Facts

The dispute over 'Palestine', the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, has been one of the most complex, pressing and on-going since the start of the 20th Century. This dispute extends beyond the geography and politics to include the narrative and terminologies. Therefore, a brief historical and geographical background is deemed necessary to provide a context and backdrop for this study.

With a total land area of 26,323 km², the historical Palestine lies on the western edge of the Asian continent and the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bounded to the north by Syria and Lebanon, to the south by the Gulf of Aqaba

and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, to the west by the Mediterranean Sea, and to the east by Jordan.

Following the first World War, the League of Nations was controlled by the leading colonial powers of Britain and France. It divided the territories of the collapsed Ottoman Empire. The territory of 'historic Palestine' was granted to Great Britain as a Mandate. After the first Arab-Israeli war and the proclamation of the state of Israel on 15 May 1948, the historic Palestine was divided into three parts: the new Jewish state, which occupied 78 percent of the territory of Palestine; the 'West Bank' of the Jordan River and East Jerusalem, which was annexed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; and a strip surrounding Gaza City close to the borders of Egypt that was controlled by Egypt (Hajjar and Beinin, 1988; Ayyash, 1981).

The 22 percent that remained under Arab sovereignty after 1948 was occupied by the Israeli forces in the Six Day War in June 1967. While the Israelis prefer to use the biblical names of "Judaea and Samaria" to describe the southern and northern mountains of the West Bank, the international community, represented by the United Nations, refers to the West Bank and Gaza Strip as "the Occupied Palestinian Territory-Palestine".

On 13 September 1993, both Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Oslo I Accord, officially called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or Declaration of Principles (DOP). This Accord was an attempt to set up a framework that would lead to the resolution of the on-going Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Abbas, 1993). The Agreement resulted in establishing the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in May 1994, which, since that time, took several civil responsibilities and some security responsibilities.

According to the agreements, the West Bank was divided into three zones: Areas A, B and C (PASSIA, 2012); In Area A (17.2 percent of the West Bank), which includes the major cities and villages, the PNA has full security and civil responsibility, but Israel still retains authority over movement into and out of these areas. In Area B, which comprises 23.8 percent of the West Bank and includes most Palestinian villages, the PA has civil authority and responsibility for public order while Israel maintains a security presence and "overriding security responsibility". The remaining 59 percent of the West Bank, Area C, Israel maintains security and civil powers.

Since the PA took over the responsibility of administration following the Oslo Agreements, the Palestinian Territory was divided into 16 governorates (districts); 11 in the West Bank and five in Gaza Strip.

Figure 4-1 presents a map of West Bank and Gaza with the geographic distribution of governorates while Figure 4-2 presents the division of West Bank into areas A, B and C.

4.1.1 Geography of Palestine

As mentioned before, following the 1967 Israeli occupation and the recent Palestinian-Israeli agreements, Palestine became recognized as the Palestinian Territory and consists of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with a total land area of 6,020 km².

The West Bank covers a total land area of 6,020 km²; 130 km long, 40-65 km in width. The area constitutes the major part of Palestine central massif. It comprises of the mountains of Hebron, Jerusalem, and Nablus that extend from Jenin in the north to Hebron in the south. The Gaza Strip lies in the southern part of the Palestinian coastal plain and it stretches over a smaller area than the West Bank. Its total area is about 365 km², 45 km long and 5-12 km in width. (Ayyash, 1981).

4.1.2 Demography of Palestine

According to official recent numbers of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statics (PCBS), the estimated population in Palestine at the end of 2016 was 4.81 million of which 2.93 million (61.0 percent) live in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and 1.88 million (39.0 percent) live in Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2016d). The fertility rate of Palestinians, especially in Gaza, is one of the highest in the world[9]. In 2014, the fertility rate reached 4.1 births (3.7 births in West Bank and 5.6 births in the Gaza Strip). Based on these rates, it is expected that the number of Palestinians living in West Bank and Gaza will reach 5.37 million by 2020 and 6.06 million by 2025 (PCBS, 2016d).

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[9] By comparison, in 2014, the growth rate in the Arab world, which has a significant youth bulge, was 2.0 percent and the rate for sub-Saharan Africa was 2.7 percent. World Bank Databank, Population growth (annual percent). Accessed at http://data.World Bank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW.
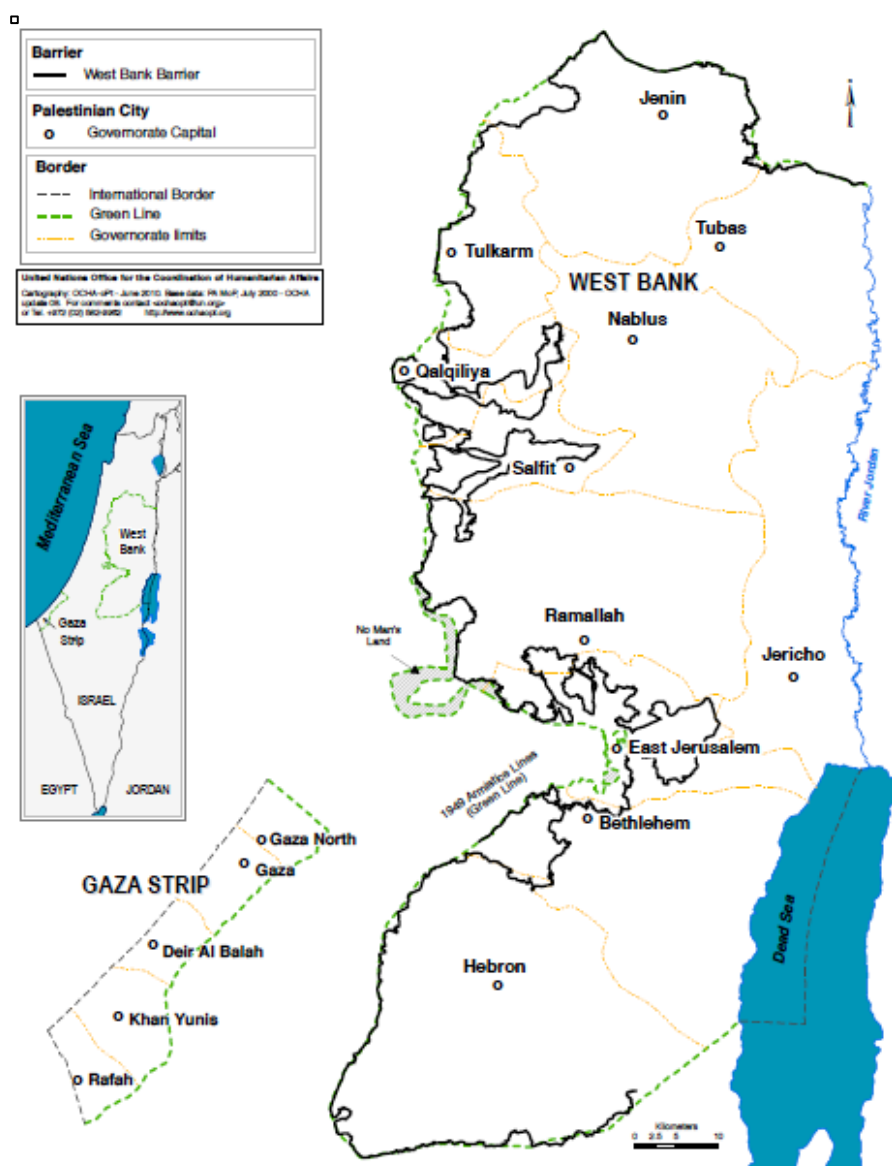
Figure 4-1 West Bank and Gaza Map

Source: (OCHA-oPt, 2010)
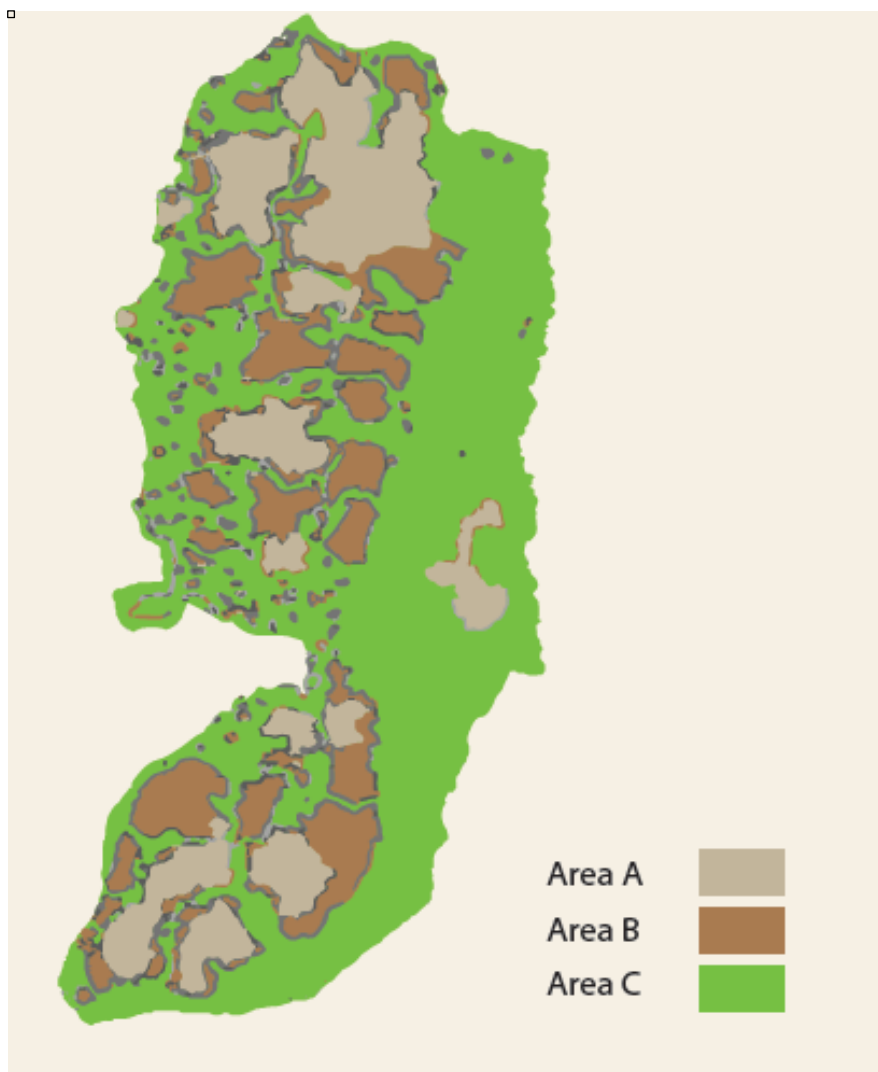
Figure 4-2: Map of Areas A, B, and C in West Bank

Source: (PASSIA, 2012)

About 44.2 percent of the population living in Palestine are refugees and estimated to number 2 million [10] with 818,000 in the West Bank (29.7 percent of the total West Bank population) and 1.2 million in the Gaza Strip (67.4 percent of the total population of Gaza Strip) (PCBS, 2016d). Palestine is characterized by a young

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[10] This number includes the descendants of the approximately 720,000 refugees of the 1947-1948 war.

population with 39.9 percent of the population aged below 15 years at the end of 2013 (PCBS, 2016d).

At the end of 2016, there were 2.45 million males in Palestine compared to 2.36 females, a gender balance ratio of 103.2. Data also indicate that the average household size has decreased from 6.4 in 1997 to 5.3 in 2012. Statistical data also indicate a decline in the average household size in Palestine from 6.4 persons in 1997 to 5.2 in 2015 during the period between 1997-2015. This average decline in the West Bank has seen a drop from 6.1 persons in 1997 to 4.9 in 2015 while it declined in the Gaza Strip from 6.9 persons to 5.7 for the same period (PCBS, 2016d).

At the end of 2016, the estimated population density in Palestine reached 800 persons per km^2, with 519 persons per km^2 in the West Bank and 5,154 persons per km^2 in the Gaza Strip, which is among the highest in the world (PCBS, 2016d).

4.1.3 Growth, poverty and unemployment

After the re-launch of peace talks between the PA and Israel in 2007, the Palestinian economy experienced a sharp spurt of growth with the annual growth of real gross domestic product averaging 11 percent in 2010 and 2011 (WorldBank, 2012). This growth, however, was unsustainable, was prompted largely by an increase in donor assistance together with a relaxation of access and movement restrictions Israel had imposed to ensure its own security[11]. When international donors, faced by their own deficits and domestic concerns, reduced funding, growth rates slipped to 5.9 percent in 2012 and down to 3 percent in the first quarter of 2013 (IMF, 2013).

The 2013 Human Development Index ranked the West Bank and Gaza at 110 out of 186 countries (UNDP, 2013). More than a quarter of all Palestinians live in poverty, including 38 percent in Gaza and 18.3 percent in the West Bank (PCBS, 2016c). The poverty rate among individuals in 2010, according to monthly expenditure and consumption patterns, reached 25.7 percent (18.3 percent in West Bank and 38.0 percent in Gaza) (PCBS, 2016c)

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[11] The International Monetary Fund (IMF), citing figures from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, says that there were 626 obstacles of various sorts in the West Bank at the end of 2009. The number fell to 500 in 2010 but had climbed back to 542 by September 2012. See: IMF 2013. *Recent Experience and Prospects of the Economy of the West Bank and Gaza*. Brussels.

Political constraints and a weak environment had left an uncompetitive private sector and one unable to meet the challenge of providing jobs. As a result, unemployment rates have been among the highest in the world (WorldBank, 2012). As International Labor Organization (ILO) Standards show, the unemployment rate in Palestine in 2012 was 23.0 percent, distributed as 20.5 percent for males and 32.9 percent for females. Given its rapid population growth, it is not surprising that Palestine faces a 'youth bulge' with 62.1 percent of its people under the age of 24 (PCBS, 2016d). It is this swollen demographic of young people that faced high rates of unemployment with 28.6 percent of those aged 15-24 in the West Bank being jobless and 46.6 percent in Gaza.

4.1.4 **Urbanization**

The majority of Palestinians live in urban areas. These include, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), all governorate centres, localities with a population of 10,000 persons or more, and all localities whose population varies from 4,000 to 9,999 persons provided they have at least four of the following services: public electricity, public water network, post office, health centre with a full-time physician and a general secondary school (PCBS, 2012b). Based on this definition, and on estimates prepared by the PCBS according to the results of the *Population, Housing and Establishment Census* of 2007, the percentage of urban population in mid-2016 was about 73.9 percent while the percentage of population in rural and camps areas was 16.6 percent and 9.5 percent respectively (PCBS, 2016d). The urbanization of the Palestinian communities has increased dramatically in the last 25 years according to a study conducted by the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ). The analysis showed that the Palestinian built-up area continued to increase from 1989 to 2000. This saw the total urban development grow slowly between 1989 and 1995 approximately by 6391,000 square metres per year and then increased by the third (8888,000 square meter/year) between the years 1995 and 2000. The study attributes the acceleration in urbanization to the establishment of the PA and its positive effect on development in the territories under its jurisdiction. This combined with the conducive economic conditions created as the result of the peace process. It should be noted however that the political situation has played an important role in encouraging the Palestinian built-up area expansion in A category areas. In these areas, Palestinians have full control over the land thus resulting in the consumption of most of the available land and open spaces. The study projected that the urbanization will keep increasing by an average of 7095,000 square metres a year, and the net Palestinian built-up area will increase by a factor 4.5 by the year 2020 (ARIJ, 2004).

4.2 Fragility of Palestine

As outlined in Section 3.2 of this research, the definition of fragility used by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), refers to the weak capacity of a state or a region to assume basic governance functions and the inability to foster mutually constructive relations with the society. Consequently, Palestine is considered one of the fragile states by OECD and many international organizations (OECD/DAC, 2012).

According to a recent report by OECD, Palestine (referred to as West Bank and Gaza) falls under the "middle-income fragile state" category and is still mired in an acute crisis. The following sections explain the main drivers of the fragility that characterize Palestine.

4.2.1 Governance

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and blockade of the Gaza Strip are the key drivers of fragility (Dittli, 2011; WorldBank, 2012). This fragility is further exacerbated by the sectarian division between the Fatah movement led by Mahmoud Abbas, the chairman of the PLO and president of the PA, and the Hamas movement. Since June 2007, the PA-led by president Abbas, has governed the West Bank while Hamas has ruled the Gaza Strip (UNDP, 2010). The division between Hamas and Fatah has prevented elections from being held. The last presidential election was in January 2005 while the last legislative election was in January 2006, which Hamas won. The legislative council has not met since 2007, principally because of factional strife but also due a number of its members having been imprisoned by Israel (CEC, 2014).

The political divide between Gaza and the West Bank is used as the pretext and justification for various forms of extra-legal activities or violations of human rights norms. As the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights mentioned in its 2012 report, "It is highly important to note the bitter consequences of the [factional] divide [and]…the damage caused to the practice of human rights and freedoms, as a result of that divide."(ICHR, 2012, p.20).

As described in the previous section, the PA has jurisdiction over about 38 percent of the West Bank territory with the rest, including borders and water resources, being under Israeli control. Lacking many of the instruments of a sovereign state, the PA is constrained in terms of what it can do to reduce and respond to fragility. In Hamas-run Gaza, the writ of the PA does not hold and Israel controls the land

and sea borders of the coastal strip except for a narrow land border with Egypt that is not always open, even for pedestrian traffic. In addition to these restrictions, Israel has imposed tight border controls and limited access to coastal fishing areas and to farmland along its border (OCHA-oPt, 2013).

The duplication of governance structures in the West Bank and in Gaza, the expiry of presidential and legislative mandates, and the paralysis of the Palestinian Legislative Council all affect the legitimacy of the PA (Newton, 2013). This legitimacy deficit is compounded by the PA's limited ability to provide quality services for citizens in the West Bank and its absence from Gaza (WorldBank, 2011)

4.2.2 **Economy**

The Israeli occupation (and their imposed restrictions on access and movement), the fragmentation of economic space within the West Bank and between the West Bank and Gaza, and the limited resource base due to Israeli control of 62 percent of the territory of the West Bank are significant factors that hamper investment and undermine economic growth. As a result of Israeli restrictions, the Palestinian economy is characterized by inefficiency and a lack of competitiveness (WorldBank, 2012).

The PA's fiscal crisis also contributes to fragility. Its inability to regularly pay salaries to employees adds to the instability of more than one million Palestinians who depend directly and indirectly on government salaries (PortlandTrust, 2013). Moreover, the Palestinian Authority's chronic fiscal deficit has resulted in the accumulation of debt to the private sector and to local banks (UNCTAD, 2013).

4.2.3 **Environment**

The environmental context in Palestine is extremely challenging. Some resources are severely degraded, access to others is limited or denied and certain ecosystems are on the brink of collapse. Population density and protracted conflict aggravate the situation. In addition, the Middle East is highly vulnerable to climate change due to the risk of desertification and prolonged and recurring droughts (PNA, 2012).

Under the Oslo Accords, most environmental issues are a shared responsibility between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In practice, environmental management is hampered by the PA's weak institutional capacity and Israel's

control over water resources and most rural areas (which fall under Area C) (WorldBank, 2009).

4.3 Dependency on Foreign Aid

The tendency of fragile states to depend on external donor aid has been growing since 2000 (OECD/DAC, 2012). Those states depend on Official Development Assistance (ODA), which constitutes their largest source of finance, followed by remittances and foreign direct investment (FDI).

Palestine is considered one of the 'donor darlings' which receives half of all ODA directed to fragile states. With an ODA-to-GDP ratio of about 25.5 percent, Palestine is ranked 12th among the world's most aid-dependent countries and economies (OECD/DAC, 2012). Moreover, along with Afghanistan Palestine suffers from an overabundance of small donors which results in aid fragmentation that increases the risk of duplication and inefficient aid allocation among donors (MoPAD, 2012).

In terms of financial figures, in 2015 the ODA to Palestine reached USD 1,029.95 million (OECD/DAC, 2016). Palestine is also considered the sixth highest recipient of ODA globally and in 2010 received about 5.1 percent of the total ODA and 4.0 percent of the total humanitarian aid (OECD/DAC, 2012). Following the end of the second intifada[12] in 2005 the ODA to Palestine showed a steep increase starting USD 888.4 million in 2006 to double that amount in 2009/2010. Figure 4-3 presents the ODA disbursements trend to Palestine from 2006 to 2015 according to the database of OECD/DAC. As can be noted from the figure, the most visible 'spike' in external aid occurred at the end of the Second Intifada after 2007 and the formation of the 12th Palestinian government in 2008. The difference between these two periods of rapid increase in aid was in the type of aid provided. As a response to the humanitarian needs following the end of the Intifada, donors directed most of their assistance toward emergency support at the expense of development assistance. Meanwhile, the 12th government, and the launching of the

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[12]The Second Palestinian Intifada (or uprising) resulted from a combination of the failure of the Oslo process in creating conditions for an independent Palestinian state and the failure of the preceding Camp David summit. The intifada started following the visit of Ariel Sharon, then the leader of Israel's opposition, to Al-Aqsa Mosque and Haram al-Sharif on Sept. 28, 2000 in the aftermath of collapsed peace talks at Camp David. After more than four years of violence and riots, the PA president Abbas and the Israeli prime minister Sharon declare truce at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on Feb 8, 2005. Source: BBC Al-Aqsa Intifada timeline (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3677206.stm). Accessed on March 8 2014.

Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP), shifted external aid toward longer term development (DeVoir and Tartir, 2009).

The latest report by the Portland Trust and the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) estimated that about USD 1.4 was received by the PNA in 2016 as external aid from various donors (PortlandTrust, 2016). Around USD 1.05 billion of aid constitutes direct budgetary support while USD 350 million is to be allocated to development expenditure. Most of the budgetary aid during the first four months of 2016 came from the U.S. (USD 200 million), Arab donors (USD 154 million, the majority from Saudi Arabia), the EU (USD 108 million, allocated through the PEGASE mechanism) and the World Bank (USD 63 million).

A discussion about the foreign aid to Palestine will not be complete without briefly tackling the Arab and Islamic aid to Palestine. Arab aid to Palestine has been characterized by its solidarity with the Palestinian cause and liberation movement (Malhis, 2007). From the 1940s up to 1967, it remained reactive to the severity of the economic, political and social conditions in the OPT while lacking an overall framework. After the 1967 war, Arab countries' priorities shifted from helping the liberation of Palestine toward eliminating the war's effects. Following the 1973 war, countries gathered at the seventh League of Arab States Summit where they pledged to give countries 'on the front line' (Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the PLO) USD 1.369 billion annually. At the time this represented a far higher amount than their Western counterparts. Following the signing of the Camp David Peace Agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1978, attendees of the ninth Arab League Summit pledged to allocate USD 150 million to Palestine annually over ten years (Malhis, 2007).

Between 1988 and 1993, following the onset of the first Intifada, the League of Arab States pledged immediate support of USD 128 million to Palestine along with a USD 43 million stipend per month. However, the onset of the first Gulf War between the United States and Iraq, prevented most of these pledges from coming to pass. It is estimated that transfers between 1988 and 1992 totalled to around USD 103 million, most of which went to emergency aid and medicines.

The period between 1994 and 2000 saw another shift in Arab country aid contributions and was influenced by the Oslo Accords and the push to support the nascent PNA. Between 1994 and 1996, Arab aid reached a total of USD 393.4 million, only about 15.6 percent of the total aid. The Ministry of Planning (MoP) on the other hand reports that between 1994 and 2000, Arab aid totalled 7.3 percent of total aid to Palestinians. Between 2001 and 2007, Arab funding saw a dramatic rise (PMA, 2013; WorldBank, 2003). Between USD 3.96 billion was committed as direct budget support and total commitments reached USD 5.11 billion. The major

increase in funding followed on the eruption of the Second Intifada and the intensified occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Arab countries convened an emergency summit in Cairo where they created two funds: The Al Quds Intifada Fund (USD 200 million) and the Al-Aqsa Fund (USD 800 million). The following year in 2002, an additional USD 150 million was pledged to those two funds. Actual disbursements are however different from pledges. The actual contributions to the two funds totalled around 761.8 Million USD, representing only 66.2 percent of the total pledges. Moreover, of the disbursements made, 89 percent came from only five countries (Saudi Arabia at 35.6 percent, Kuwait at 22.4 percent and United Arab Emirates at 19 percent, Qatar at 7 percent and Algeria at 5 percent).

The latest annual report by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), stated that the value of cumulative fund that was provided to Palestine since the establishment of the IDB in 1975 reached USD 1.76 billion allocated for vital sectors including health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, housing, municipal capacity, and economic empowerment (IDB, 2015). Moreover, data obtained from MoP database, as well as from its Aid Coordination Unit shows that Arab funding since 2007 to 2015 reached about USD 7.23 billion, most of which was in the form of budgetary support to the PNA (about 74 percent) and the rest was channelled through NGOs, charity organizations, and quasi-governmental entities. The second type of support was provided to Palestinian NGOs, CBOs, and local governments. However, it is difficult to obtain accurate breakdowns of this fund in terms of amount and recipients due to the fact that this fund is not recorded into the MoP database[13].

This dependency has led the Palestinian economy to be structurally dependent on foreign aid (DeVoir and Tartir, 2009). Moreover, despite the massive amount of aid received by Palestine, it is still uncertain that the existing co-ordination structure in Palestine is efficient in responding to the local needs and priorities. It is also unclear if the Palestinian Government is able to put forward a competent agenda to guide donors and unify efforts according to strategy as opposed to following them across scattered initiatives[14] (DeVoir and Tartir, 2009).

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[13] Data obtained from MoP/ DARP database on April 6, 2017. The data was also supplemented by an interview with NI16.

[14] Interview with NI16.
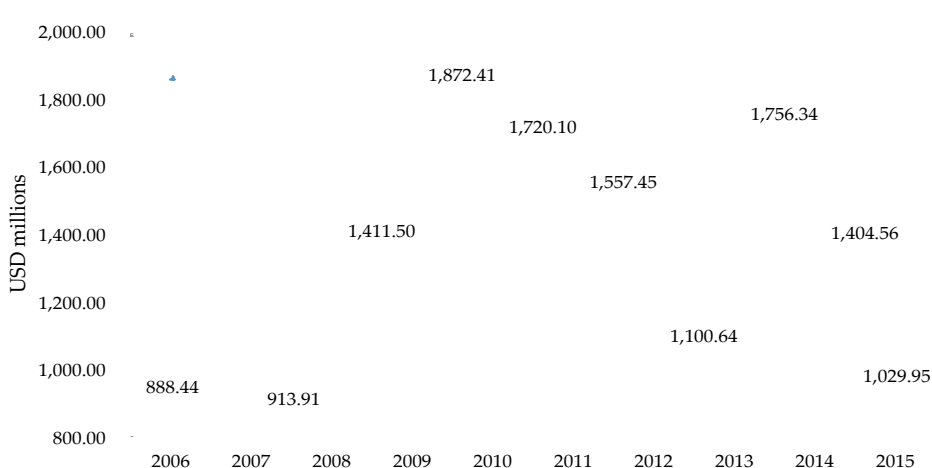
Figure 4-3 ODA disbursements trend to the OPT (2006-2015)

Source: (OECD/DAC, 2016)

4.4 Local Governance in Palestine

Having presented an overview of Palestine and the socio-economic conditions that describe the country, we turn now to a detailed discussion on the local government units (LGUs) situation in Palestine including its structure, history, and working environment. A special focus on the history, levels, and legal framework of planning is provided to set the stage for our research on strategic planning experience at the local level.

4.4.1 The history of Palestinian local governance

The Palestinian local governance system has evolved across five historical eras. In four of these periods, Palestine was ruled by foreign powers: the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate, the Jordanians, the Egyptian Administration, and the Israeli occupation. Although these powers have affected the Palestinian local government system and laid its foundations, they were nonetheless unable to empower local governments to represent the real interests and aspirations of the citizens they served. Moreover, it was argued that the Palestinian people looked at local governments as an extension of the central authority where local governments were used as a means of control by the ruling power rather than as a vehicle for social and economic development. As a result, mistrust between local government

institutions and Palestinian citizens dominated the relationships between them during the previous historical periods[15], even after the establishment of the PNA in 1994, as no real local elections took place before the years 2005-2006 (Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011; NewVision, 2007; Daoud, 2009; UNDP, 2004). The following sections provide historical background about the evolution of local government in Palestine.

To illustrate the key milestones and events related to local governments in Palestine in general, and related to local planning in particular, figures 4-4 and 4-5 draw a timeline of outlining historical milestones.

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[15] A number of informants pointed out to the issue of trust between the Palestinian local governments and citizens including: NI11, and NI07.

Figure 4-4 Time line of local governance in Palestine (1863-1993)

Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review

Ottomans Empire

1863 Jerusalem became the first municipal council

1871 The municipal councils law

22 Municipal — **1923**

1926 Decree allowing Palestinian residents to vote for municipal elections

1934 New municipal law elections

British Mandate

1927 First municipal elections

1936 Town Planning Ordinance

Early 1940s Development of two regional plans (RJ5, and S15)

1948

1955 New Jordanian Municipal Law

1966 New Jordanian Planning Law

1967

Jordanians and Egyptians Administration

Israeli occupation

1967

1971 Military order number 418 transferred planning powers to the Israeli military commander

1976 Local leaders affiliated with PLO were elected in major cities

1981 Israel created "village leagues"

1982 Partial regional plan number (82/1), known as for the "Centre project".

1983 The Partial Regional Plan No (50) for Roads

1967-1985 "Shamshoni" Partial Plans" prepared by the Israeli Civil Administration (283 master plans for Palestinian towns)

1987 Start of the 1st Intifada

End of 1980s Series of master plans called "Special Partial master Plan"

30 municipalities and 109 village councils — **1993**

80

Figure 4-5: Time line of local governments in Palestine (1993-2016)

Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review

Palestinian National Authority (PNA)

- **1993** Oslo I Accord between Israel and PLO
- **1993** Establishment of the PNA
- **1994** Establishment of the MoLG
- **1996** Palestinian Local Councils Election Law
- **2000** Start of Second Intifada
- **1997** Local Government Law
- **2001** Strategic planning process piloted in three micro-regions
- 1st democratic regional local elections
- **2005** End of Second Intifada
- **2005** First regional CDS strategic plan for the cities of Ramallah, Al Bireh and Beitunia City
- **2005** Establishment of MDLF
- **2006** Regional strategic plan for Salfeet
- Regional strategic plan for the Regional Development Plan for Jericho and Jordan Rift Valley

Palestinian National Authority

- **2006**
- **2016** 136 municipalities and 243 village councils

Local governments

- **2006-2008** Self initiated strategic plans (Nablus, Beita, and Maithaloun)
- **2006** Local Agenda 21" strategies for a number of LGs
- **2008** Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010)
- **2008** Formulation of a National Working Group for SDIP
- **2008-2009** Piloting Phase of SDIP
- **2009** Introduction of MDLF ranking system
- **2010** New Physical Planning Manual (PPPPM)
- **2010-2014** Roll out of SDIPs
- **2011** National Development Plan (2011-2013)
- **2012** 2nd democratic local elections
- **2013** Update of SDIP manual
- Launching of SDIP manual and policy note (NWSDIP)

Local governance in the Ottoman period

Local governments, as they currently exist in Palestine, were newly established at the end of the Ottoman Empire era. The difficulty to control the entire expanse of the Ottoman Empire positively revealed the need for new administrative structures in the peripheries. It was however not until 1863 that the city of Jerusalem became the first municipal council (majlis baladi) in Palestine under the Ottoman rule (Davis, 1999, p.12).

The central Ottoman government established an administrative entity with borders that were practically identical to those of Mandate Palestine on three brief occasions during the 19th Century (1830, 1840, and 1872) (Davis, 1999). The Ottomans divided the area of Bilad Asham (i.e. Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan) into three provinces or "wilayas": Al Sham, Halab (i.e. Aleppo), and Ṭarābulus (modern day Tripoli). They also divided Palestine into four districts or 'Sanjaks' that included Safad, Nablus, Jerusalem, and Gaza. Each of these districts were divided to sub districts or "nāḥiyahs". Ottomans used patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism as tools to reassert Ottoman control over Palestine as they did elsewhere (Brynen, 1995). Related to this, Ottomans appointed local princes and leaders, who were loyal to the Ottoman Sultan, for these various administrative divisions to take care of maintaining security, and collecting taxes on behalf of the central government in Istanbul (Shufani, 2003).

At the beginning of their rule, the Ottomans appointed governors (or Wālis) for the three provinces of Bilad Asham and delegated social and economic responsibilities to them. The feudal system that existed during that period allowed those local governors to have local special militias (Shufani, 2003). Within Palestinian villages, Ottomans created the position of 'mukhtar' a position indicating the head of the village. This position created an officially sanctioned intermediary between the Ottoman central government and local citizens. The mukhtars were granted certain authority to perform specific official functions as an exchange for political loyalty and local influence (Brynen, 1995).

During the 19th Century, the Ottoman Empire promulgated a series of reforms called Tanzimat (Turkish: 'Reorganization'). The Empire's attempt to introduce these reforms was a result of the pressure that the Western countries exerted on the Ottoman Empire to improve its system of governance (UNDP, 2004). Influenced by European ideas, the Tanzimat aimed to transform the Empire from the old system based on theocratic principles to that of a modern state (Kawtharani, 2013). The Tanzimat introduced new forms of popular representation

at various levels. This included administrative councils that were formed by the Wilayat Law (provincial law) of 1864, the municipal councils of 1871, and the fundamental law (the constitution) of 1876. The municipal councils law decreed that a municipal council was to be formed in order to manage municipal affairs in the capital city of the province (wilaya), administrative divisions (liwaa), or district (qada) (Kawtharani, 2013). Following the municipal councils law, municipalities in cities of Jaffa (1873) (Qûšnêr, 1986), Gaza (1893), Acre (1911), Al-Ramlah (1912), (Al-Dabbagh, 1965), and Lud (1917) (Munayyir, 1997) were established.

Based on the Tanzimat, the Ottomans re-divided Bilad Asham into two provinces (wilayas): Syria, and Halab (modern day Aleppo.). Palestine was attached to Syria as a district (Sanjak), and was ruled from Jerusalem (Al Quds) by an administrator (mutasarrif). In the year 1873, Palestine was reattached directly to the Empire's capital, Istanbul. The Turks formed local councils representing all classes, segments, and sects of the local population, which gave them some degree of autonomy in managing their own community (Shufani, 2003). Until the late 19th Century, most Palestinians enjoyed a high degree of self-rule. Native families, for example, governed the Nablus region during most of the Ottoman period. The same applies to other regions and main cities in Palestine (Davis, 1999). A unique pattern of local administration called "confessional decentralization" was maintained, where religious minorities (called: millets) were organized into communities with a religious leader who exercised administrative powers on issues related to personal status (UNDP, 2004). Local councils represented a co-opting mechanism for including some elites whilst potentially excluding others. Local councils were used by urban and rural elites to augment their existing social power with new legal instruments and thus creating new economic opportunities for them (Brynen, 1995).

By the end of the Ottoman era, the number of municipal councils in Palestine reached 22, eight in the West Bank and one in Gaza (UNDP, 2004). During that period, the municipalities' mandate was restricted to collecting taxes on behalf of the central government and for providing certain basic services to the inhabitants (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004).

Local governance in the British mandate period (1923-1948)

Following the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which promised to establish a "national home for the Jewish people" in historic Palestine, the British Government formally Mandated Palestine on 28 September 1923 (Mathew, 2013).

In an attempt to give a British character to the administrative system in Palestine, the Mandate authorities paid attention to the development of the local government sector in Palestine. The British maintained the Ottoman's municipal law until the year 1926, when the Mandate authorities issued a decree that allowed Palestinian residents (as taxpayers) to vote for municipal elections (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004). This marked the first time Palestinians could exercise the right to vote, although they could not to stand in elections. Then, in 1934 the British enacted a new municipal law (called the Municipal Corporation Ordinance) that kept most Ottoman municipal law, in terms of local government functions and authorities, in place. The Mandate also introduced several legislative measures aimed at developing the existing Ottoman-style local institutions. Among these measures was the establishment of local councils in the larger villages and in some quarters of municipal areas, extending the power of the local authority to raise loans, and the establishment of Municipal Courts of honorary Magistrates who deal that dealt with minor offences committed within the municipal area (Bentwich, 1926).

As a result of the various legislative reforms introduced by the British Mandate, additional powers were given to local governments which promoted more decentralization at the local level. The first municipal elections took place in 1927 following the issuance of the Municipalities Elections Decree of 1926. After this, the 1934 elections took place in 20 cities and villages. This election law remained applicable until the advent of the PNA and issuance of the Palestinian Local Councils Election Law.

During that period, the municipalities did not play a positive and effective role in political life. Their functioning was hindered by the fact that election or appointment of municipal councils was dominated by family conflicts and competition over how the councils were formed and how council presidencies could be acquired (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004). At that time, municipalities became a power mechanism retained in the hands of the dominant family (or coalition of families). Nevertheless, the municipalities' role and tasks started to be clarified in terms of provision of services to citizens. The Municipalities Law No. 1 of 1934 listed the services overseen by the municipalities in detail. The Law restricted the authority and responsibilities of the municipal councils to maintain and clean roads, public buildings, sewage, markets, slaughtering of animals, and public hygiene. The responsibility for key basic public services such as education, health, agriculture, and co-operatives remained in the hands of the central authority (Toukan, 2001).

Home (2003) pointed out that land regulations issued by the British Mandate authorities provided an array of legal instruments for capturing and controlling

land. These were subsequently applied by the Israeli occupation in the West Bank after 1967. The new British Mandate laws regulating land-use planning led to Palestinians being denied use of their land. In fact, the British defined these Palestinians that did attempt to use this land as "contraveners" of planning control rules. Related to this, the Mandate Planning Acts of 1921 and 1936, which were incorporated into Israeli law as the Planning & Building Law of 1965 (amended in 1990), created a British-style system of development plans that were managed by local governments and a National Planning & Building Board which remained functional under the name of High Planning Council (HPC) up to the current day[16]. The 1936 Ordinance in particular remained the basis of all subsequent planning legislation in the West Bank. It remained applicable in the West Bank until further Jordanian planning legislation was enacted in 1955. This was then replaced in 1966 by the Law of Cities, Villages, and Buildings no. 79. This is the planning law currently in force in the West Bank (Coon, 1992).

The British Mandate era also witnessed the beginning of the use of master plans and their formulation in Palestine. In the early 1940s, under the British Mandate's Town Planning Ordinance No. 28 of 1936, the Mandate developed two regional plans, one for the Jerusalem area (known as RJ5), and the other for the Nablus governorate (known as S15) (MoLG, 2005). These two plans covered almost all of the West Bank, and remained the only regional plans in place until the 1980s (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009).

Local governance in the Jordanian and Egyptian administrations period (1948-1967)

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank was placed under the administration of the Jordanian authority whilst the Egyptians administered the Gaza Strip. Both authorities desired a decentralized system in which local governments would not have full authority and only provided basic services. Under both authorities, two main types of government (based on population) existed at the local level: a municipality (baladiya) and a local council (majlis mahalli). These categories were also common under other municipal laws in the Middle East at that time (Nakhleh, 1981).

During this period, the Egyptians kept the British municipal law valid in Gaza and did not introduce new administrative reforms or changes. Only a few amendments

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[16] Interview with NI11

were made to the previous laws by the Egyptians with the aim of local governments to be as tools for the Egyptian central government. Out of thirteen villages in the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian military administration allowed only six villages to establish local councils. The rest remained under the responsibility of mukhtars, local appointed leaders with limited authorities who reported directly to the Egyptian governor (muhafez) (UNDP, 2004).

The situation in the West Bank however was different. Here, the Jordanian authority increased the number of local governments and a number of laws were passed in 1954, 1955, and 1960. The new Jordanian Municipal Law of 1955 continued to strengthen the role of the central government whilst minimizing the role of the local governmental level. The law gave the Jordanian Minister of Interior full authority and power over the bulk of local government functions (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004). For example, the creation of a municipality was subject to the approval of the Minister of Interior. The term of office of the council members was fixed at four years, but the Minister of Interior, like the British High Commissioner before him, had the right to dissolve a council before its term of office had expired. The law also specified the sources of revenue for local councils and municipal budgets were to be approved by the central authority before being implemented (UNDP, 2004).

Generally, the municipalities' work during this period concentrated on provision of basic services (water, electricity, roads). This role however did not extend to address the development priorities of local communities. Municipalities were not allowed to be the pioneers and take the initiative in the development of the local community. Although municipality elections did take place during the Jordanian period, this was not reflected in any qualitative development of the local government sector. On the contrary, centralization was promoted and the local councils were subordinated to the central government. Central government interference was frequent. This interference saw changes in election results through the appointment of unelected persons despite them getting fewer votes for the presidency of the local council than the 'winner'. This also occurred in the case of Hebron Municipality in 1964.

In the Gaza Strip, which was under the Egyptian administration, no local government elections took place. Elections were replaced by appointment of temporary committees charged with administering cities and villages. It is worth noting that Gaza Strip witnessed a reduction in the role of local government in providing services for communities. Local governance lost much of its social, developmental and political purpose during that period.

In terms of planning practices, the Jordanian Planning Law of 1966 called for the preparation of regional plans as the first level of physical planning that was to provide the basis and orientation for subsequent master plan preparation at local level. Nevertheless, no regional plans were prepared under the Jordanian authorities, which kept in force the two regional plans (RJ5, and S15) prepared during the British Mandate up until the 1980s.

Under that Jordanian Planning Law, planning in the West Bank followed widely accepted international technical practices where the development of physical plans for towns and cities were prepared using up-to-date physical and demographic surveys. The Jordanian Planning Law defined the planning structure and the functional relationships between the local, district, and national planning levels, and introduced an initial level of local participation on the part of representatives of local communities and civil society organizations (such as the engineers union) (Abdulhadi, 1990). Despite these improvements in the planning practice and system, Coon (1992) argues that considerable powers were vested in the central Jordanian Authorities, including powers to regulate the activities of local planning authorities by approving plans and considering appeals. The different control measures were embedded in the Jordanian law. These measures have been used during the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank to tighten the control over the Palestinian territories through military orders that amended the Jordanian Planning Law (Coon, 1992).

Local governance in the Israeli occupation period (1967-1994)

As a result of the 1967 Six-Day War Israel captured the Gaza Strip, the West Bank of the Jordan River (including East Jerusalem), the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights (PASSIA, 2001). On December 17 1967, the Israeli military government changed the name of 'the West Bank Region' to their Hebrew names 'the Judea and Samaria Region' (Roberts, 1990). This change in terminology, which has been followed in Israeli official statements since, reflected the policy of the Israeli authorities to integrate the West Bank into Israel on historical, religious, nationalist and security grounds (Caplan, 2011). In contrast to the West Bank and the use of Hebrew nomenclature, Israeli officials referred to Gaza simply as 'the Gaza Region'.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza introduced radical changes to the structure and functions of the local government system in the OPt. Although the Israeli authorities retained the Jordanian Municipalities Law of 1954 as the formal legal framework under which the local councils operated, the status,

mandate, and functions of these councils were significantly altered through a series of military orders and actions. The Israeli occupation authorities issued a series of military orders aimed at tightening the grip of the military administration over the municipal and village councils. The area's military governor was granted all powers over local councils previously vested in both the *mutasarrif* (district governor under the Jordanians) and the Jordanian Minister of Interior (UNDP, 2004).

During this period, the services provided by local governments were reduced and their ability to expand horizontally, in terms of geographic and urban expansion, was also limited by the various military orders and the Israeli settlement policy. As in any colonial project, control of land was central to Zionism which used an array of legal instruments to assume the state control of the newly occupied territories (Home, 2003). According to Abdulhadi (1990), the Israeli occupation used three interlocking elements within a single policy that included land-use planning, land expropriations, and settlements to advance what he calls the "Judaization of the territories occupied in 1967". This policy conforms with the Zionist vision to transform Palestine into a Hebrew land through using a mix of existing laws, and military orders to reclassify and transfer landed property from Palestinian to Jewish settlers (Fields, 2012). In addition, the Israeli policy aims at limiting the development of Palestinian local communities in the occupied territories.

In the West Bank and Gaza there were thirty municipal councils and 109 village councils during Israeli rule (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004). The role of the Palestinian local governments during the Israeli occupation was limited to providing the basic services. This resulted in a limited contribution to economic and social development in the Palestinian territories. (UNDP, 2004).

The Israeli occupation sought to use preferential access to state power and resources as a way to gain local influence. In many cases, the new military authority worked through the system of notables and local governments that it had inherited from the Jordanian era. In order to strengthen the acceptance of the new Israeli authorities by local population, Moshe Dayan, an Israeli politician and Defence Minister, maintained the structure of Palestinian municipal government intact, hoping that their interest in survival and continued access to resources would lead local officials to acquiesce in Israeli rule (Brynen, 1995).

Moreover, Israel tried to use those local governments as a political tool to counteract the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the national identity of Palestinians by appointing persons or committees not linked with the national political factions of the PLO. In an attempt to encourage alternative leadership not

loyal to the PLO, elections of local elections for local councils have been organised three times during the occupation period. The first (and only) free elections for local councils during Israeli rule took place in 1976. However, the elections result of 1976 shocked the occupation authorities when national leaders loyal to the PLO were elected in major cities like Hebron, Nablus, and Halhul. Israel subsequently dissolved a number of councils and imprisoned or deported a number of mayors and council members for political reasons.

During the occupation period, women were given the right to vote and to stand in elections for local government posts. The Civil Administration System, introduced to the Palestinian territories, contributed considerably to the tight control of local government by the occupying Israelis (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004).

The failure of the various policies adopted by Israel, and the rise of local leaders loyal to the PLO, forced the Israeli Civil Administration in 1981 to create what came to be known as the 'village leagues' that acted as a political counterbalance to both the municipal and rural councils. Those new entities aimed to provide client Palestinians with funds, arms, and a chance to fulfil an intermediary role between the local population and the Israeli government (Brynen, 1995). The 'Village Leagues' were also given significant administrative powers. At one point, any Palestinian had to go through the Village Leagues first so that their transaction (e.g. Building license, birth certificate, travel permit, etc.) could be approved by the military authorities. The fierce opposition by the local population to these organizations worked to de-legitimize them, and were ultimately abandoned as a viable alternative form of local government. Nevertheless, local affairs continued to be controlled by the Israeli military through its Civil Administration units in the different districts until the establishment of the PNA in 1994 (UNDP, 2004).

As mentioned previously, Israel issued a number of military orders to arrogate to itself full legislative and executive powers in the Occupied Territories. In 1967 the Commander of the Israel Defence Forces in 'Judea and Samaria' declared that any power of government, legislation, appointment, or administration with respect to the region or its inhabitants shall be vested in him alone (Bisharat, 1993). As part of this, military order number 418 of 1971 transferred planning powers to the Israeli military commander (Home, 2003).

Israel used master and land-use planning as the principal means to exercise control over the Occupied Territories. It was also used to restrict the development and expansion of local governments, while encouraging the development of Jewish settlements. The master plans were prepared by the Israeli Civil Administration drew tight boundaries around Palestinian settlements while generous areas of land

were given to Jewish settlements. The boundaries set for Palestinian communities were often smaller than their original built-up area, and there was minimal opportunity for community participation or objection (Home, 2003).

The Israeli Military Authority has issued more than ten major military orders that amended and altered the existing planning laws and regulations in West Bank and Gaza aiming at tightening Israeli control over Palestinian development. One of the notable effects of these orders was the extreme centralization of the planning process and the broadening of the planning powers of the Israeli Military Authority. For example, in 1970 Israel issued Military Order 393 which authorized the military commander to forbid, halt, or set conditions for construction. Another example is Military Order number 418, issued in 1971, where all planning authority was vested in the Higher Planning Council (HPC), which was given extensive powers to suspend any plan or license anywhere within the occupied territories (Abdulhadi, 1990). Local participation in the planning process was also eliminated by Israel military orders. Military Order number 418 excluded the input of all "non-official institutions" at all levels, which referred to those institutions that were not created by the Israeli authorities (i.e. non-Israeli). It also eradicated the district planning committees and the village planning committees, and replaced them with the Higher Planning Council and the Local Committee for Planning and Construction respectively, which was composed exclusively of representatives and officials from the Israeli Military Authority (Civil Administration) (Abdulhadi, 1990).

According to Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli political scientist and the former Chief Planning Officer at Jerusalem Municipality, two separate planning processes, under two separate administrations, existed in the late 1970s. Those two systems, one for the Israeli settlements and the other for Palestinian communities, had followed different standards, with clear efforts to use physical planning in the scramble for control over space (Benvenisti, 1987).

Between and 1985 the Israeli Civil Administration prepared about 283 master plans for Palestinian towns. Due to the strong opposition from the Palestinian community however, these plans were not approved as they imposed severe limits on the urban expansion and civic growth of Palestinian areas. In parallel, another 120 master plans were presented by Palestinian communities of which only 55 were discussed at the High Planning Council (NewVision, 2007).

During the early 1980s, about 180 local plans were prepared for towns and villages surrounding Jerusalem. An Israeli architect, S. Shamshoni, commissioned by the Israeli Central Planning Department, prepared the 'Shamshoni' plans. From this,

the same architect was commissioned to prepare 103 additional plans for towns and villages in the northern part of the West Bank (Nablus, Jenin, and Tulkarm districts). All these plans were prepared without conducting any surveys or studies and with no consultation with the elected village council or members of the community (Abdulhadi, 1990). The ultimate objective of these "plans" was to restrict the growth of Palestinian communities and severely confine any future development in the areas of housing, education, health, industry, and agriculture.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the Israeli Civil Administration prepared a series of master plans, each called 'Special Partial Master Plan'. These were aimed at limiting the areas that Palestinians are allowed to build in, of which 340 plans were approved in 1992 (NewVision, 2007).

In terms of regional plans, the Israeli authorities prepared two sets of plans during the 1980s under the 1966 Planning Law. The first plan was a partial regional plan number (82/1), known as the 'centre project'. This plan is an amendment of the old regional plan (RJ5) and aimed at limiting Palestinian urban development in the major cities of Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem in favour of settlement expansion at the expense of Palestinian-owned lands. The plan was based on a projected Palestinian population of 272,000 for the year 2002, which was even less than the 275,000 Palestinians actually residing within the affected area at the time the plan was presented in 1982 (Abdulhadi, 1990).

The second regional plan was 'The Partial Regional Plan for Roads No. (50) of 1983' approved on 25 May 1991. The aim of this plan was not the development of Palestinian populated areas, but to the exact opposite. It aimed to connect Israeli settlements in the West Bank with each other and with Israel proper while bypassing Palestinian communities. These two regional plans have been legally challenged by the Palestinians (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; NewVision, 2007).

As a result of the strong opposition and protest by the Palestinian communities the Jerusalem District Regional Plan and the Shamshoni local town plans were put on the shelf and did not acquire the legal status required under the amended planning law (Abdulhadi, 1990). Despite the fact that none of the Israeli master plans were granted 'legal' status, they had controlled the planning scene in the OPTs and were used by the Israeli Central Planning Department to control expansion and development of Palestinian areas (Coon, 1992). An example of this is found in the building permits in more than 60 percent of the West Bank area (Area C) placed under the full control of the Israeli authorities. These permits have been (and continue to be) granted (or more frequently, denied) on the basis of the regulations and restrictions imposed by these plans.

The Israeli control and restrictions related to planning are still in force for most of the West Bank, even after the establishment of the PNA. As mentioned previously, the Oslo Agreement divided the West Bank into areas A, B, and C, each with clearly defined but differing levels of civil and security control and responsibility assumed by both the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority. In Area C, full Israeli military and civil control was, and still is, maintained over planning, education, power and water supplies. Area C holds almost 60 percent of the West Bank area. The different planning regulations and military orders remained applicable in Area C, and effectively prohibited Palestinian expansion and construction in around 70 percent of Area C (about 44 percent of the West Bank), and mainly in areas designated for use for Israeli settlements or the military. In the remaining 30 percent (18 percent of the West Bank), obtaining a building permit is almost impossible as Palestinian construction is only permitted within the boundaries of a specific area that has a detailed planning scheme from the Civil Administration (PASSIA, 2012). These plans cover less than 1 percent of Area C, of which a large portion is already built-up, depriving Palestinians of housing and infrastructure development (OCHA-oPt, 2009).

A recent report by the WorldBank (2013), based upon available permit data, indicated that about 94 percent of Palestinian permit applications to construct infrastructure had been rejected by the Israeli Civil Administration between 1992 and 2012. These requests included housing, public infrastructure (roads, water reservoirs, waste treatment plants), industrial plants, and access roads and utility lines needed to connect Areas A and B across Area C. Moreover, it is virtually impossible in practice for Palestinians to obtain construction permits for residential or economic purposes, even within existing Palestinian villages in Area C since Detailed Outline Plans are needed as the basis to issue building permits. The detailed sets of criteria for these plans are set forth by the Israeli Civil Administration and are not necessarily in line with the spatial reality of most Palestinian Communities in Area C. It has proven difficult to ensure that plans developed by the Israeli Civil Administration are based on real Palestinian needs and aspirations. Often the perimeter of the plan, and the way the projected densities and population growth are calculated, do not correspond with the property and development patterns of the Palestinian communities. Restrictive perimetres also create further legal insecurity for houses and infrastructure interventions outside, as the prevailing Regional Plans (British Mandatory Plans) are interpreted in a very restrictive manner. Agricultural structures, water cisterns, irrigation infrastructure, and livestock shelter have for instance been increasingly targeted by demolitions by the Israeli authorities (MoLG, 2012).

Since 2011, The Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) started to support Village Councils in the preparation of Master Plans, working closely with a number of international and local organizations with experience in planning and zoning. Recently, 22 plans were completed for 26 localities and submitted for approval to the Israeli Civil Administration. The application process is characterized by ambiguity, complexity, excessive length and cost according to officials from the World Bank, Ministry of Local Government, and GIZ[17].

By the end of 1991, there were 30 municipalities (26 in the West Bank and four in Gaza Strip) in Palestine. During the Occupation period, the occupation policy weakened the municipalities' role as leaders of the local community and their ability to formulate development policies for their constituents. The occupation aimed to transform the municipalities from 'development agents' into a sort of 'collection bodies' that only have limited supervision of the provision of services (mainly solid waste collection, water supply, and internal roads rehabilitation) and the collection of local taxes for providing these services (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004). Nevertheless, and despite the various policies and actions taken by Israel to weaken local governments, Palestinian local governments have acquired valuable expertise in managing the affairs of their communities under unstable conditions both politically and economically (Nakhleh, 1981).

During the Israeli occupation period, the Israeli authorities were not interested in dismantling Palestinian local powers. On the contrary, they did their best to strengthen their power that, in their view, would reinforce their occupation. Nonetheless, the overwhelming victory of "pro-PLO" mayors in the 1985 local elections makes clear the impossibility of Israeli authorities' attempts to establish lasting and subservient authorities in municipalities. Municipalities become the space in which Palestinian nationalism flourishes, despite Israeli, Egyptian, and Jordanian efforts to muzzle it.

Local governance in the PNA period (1994-current)

Since the signing of the Oslo Agreement 1993 and the establishment of the PNA in 1994, local governments were given more responsibility and authority. Additionally, numerous efforts have been devoted to enabling local governments to meet the PNA expectations in building a viable democratic state anchored in good governance principles (Eshtayeh and Habbas, 2004).

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[17]   Interviews with NI11; ID02; and ID04.

Since the arrival of the PNA in 1994, it found itself face-to-face with a heavy legacy of regulations, laws and military orders including those related to the local councils. The PNA issued two laws related to local governments: the Palestinian Local Government Law of 1997, and the Palestinian Local Councils Election Law of 1996. During the PNA period, the local government sector witnessed quantitative expansion as the number of municipalities doubled on four separate occasions to reach 136 municipalities and the number of village councils rose to 243. The local government sector is considered the second largest sector after the governmental sector (6400 employees work in the sector in the West Bank and 2260 in Gaza Strip). It is worth noting that the revenues of the local government sector increased from 5 million USD in 1968, 84 million USD in 1990 and reached 350 million USD in 2012 (MoPAD, 2014; Niehaus, 2014).

4.5   Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented an overview of the historical evolution of the local government sector in Palestine as well as the main elements that influence the role and capacity of local governments within the fragile context presented by the Palestinian example.

As outlined in the chapter, a history of change in the political regimes that ruled Palestine for more than two hundred years have impacted the institutional structure and legal frameworks that govern the local government system in Palestine. The continuous change in structure, level of authority given to local governments, and regulatory framework resulted in the weakening of local governments and emasculating their ability to function as service providers and catalysts for local development in their communities. Palestinian local governments have been operating under conditions of limited sovereignty, scarce financial resources, and weak capacity. These realities are among the critical factors that determine the extent and quality of the services provided to local communities.

The discussion of this chapter is crucial to understand the local government sector in Palestine as well as the challenges that they face when looking to fulfil their functions and obligations toward citizens. The creation of the PNA presented a turning point in regards to empowering local governments by supporting reform initiatives aimed at building local governments' functional, administrative, and planning capacities. As the focus of this research is on strategic planning, it is important to dig deeper into the planning practices and different approaches that are relevant to the Palestinian context. This is what we turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
Palestinian Local Governments: Current Planning Instruments and Regulations

> Post first Intifada and the signing of the Oslo accords (1993), the municipalities – although in weary shape after decades of Israeli government hostility – remain charged with a strong symbolic signification as the central place for Palestinian politics in the occupied territories.
>
> *Xavier Guignard*
>
> *In (Guignard, 2012)*

Having provided a historical overview of the local governments in Palestine in chapter 4, this chapter examines the current status of Palestinian local governance including its structure (Section 5.1), legal framework (Section 5.2) and institutional set-up (Section 5.3). The Chapter then goes on to provide detailed information and analysis of the planning system in Palestine, its history, elements, challenges, and prospects (Section 5.5). In the discussion, there is a special focus on strategic planning to set the stage for the analysis of the case studies.

5.1   The Creation of New Local Government Units (LGUs)

As mentioned in the previous chapter (Section 4.4), by 1994 there were only 30 municipalities and 109 village councils in Palestine. Soon after its establishment, the PNA increased the number of these Local Government Units (LGUs) to 119 municipalities and 251 village councils by 1997. Currently, according to the MoLG official data, there are 136 municipalities, and 243 village councils, and ten local councils (classified as municipalities).

The decision of the PNA to elevate a large number of communities to council status was an attempt to combat the previous Israeli occupation policy that led to a paralyzing the local government system. Moreover, policy-makers of the PNA at

that time believed that promoting these communities to council status would allow them to benefit from any central government allocations made to the local level. Additionally, many villages needed a formal body responsible for delivering services, controlling urban planning and development, raising funds needed for development, providing more job opportunities, and representing the communities on national and international bodies[18].

5.2 **Legal Structure**

The Palestinian local governance system is composed of three levels: the central, the regional, and the local levels.

At the *central (macro) level*, the top administrative layer is the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), with its main headquarters in Ramallah. The ministry has local branches (district offices) whose jurisdiction corresponds to the boundaries of the governorates. These district offices report directly to the ministry and form the second administrative layer at the central level.

At the *regional (meso) level* – there are 16 regional governorates (11 in West Bank and 5 in Gaza).

The *local (micro) level* includes the local governments themselves (municipalities and local councils).

The structure and definition of local government is provided in the Palestinian Constitution as well as the Local Councils Law No. (1) of 1997 and its amendments in a Decree Law No. (9) of 2008. Another important related law is the Elections for Local Authorities Act of 1996 and its subsequent amendments (CCE/GIZ, 2008).

The Palestinian Constitution (or the Basic Law) outlined the general terms that defined and created local governments (or local administrative units). Article 85 of the Basic Law stated that the country (i.e. Palestine) shall be organized, by law, into local administrative units enjoying juridical personality. Each unit shall have a council elected directly as provided in law. The law shall determine the jurisdictional 'functions' of the administrative units, their financial resources, their relations with central authority, and their role in the preparation and

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[18]Interview with NI07; and ID01.

implementation of development plans. Furthermore, the law shall determine the extent of oversight over these units and their various activities. Demographic, geographical, economic, and political parametres shall be taken into consideration at the time of dividing the country administratively to provide integrity, unity of soil and interests of the country (PNA, 2003)[19].

The Local Councils Law No. (1) of 1997 provides the statutory framework for the functioning of the local governments in Palestine. It describes the role of the elected councils of local governments and their relationship with the central government, primarily with the Ministry of Local Government (ARD, 2000). It includes the administration of elected local government, the tasks and responsibilities of local councils, the responsibilities of local and central administrations and details related to auditing and planning. The first article of the law defines the local government (referred to as local body) as "the local government body within a specific geographical and administrative area whether it is a municipal, local, administrative committee or otherwise" (PNA, 1997, p. 3).

The enactment of the Local Government Law was considered a step forward as it introduced some positive changes when compared with previous laws. The local government system however, as outlined in the law, still tends to be centralized and paternalistic[20] (ARD, 2000). Moreover, the latest amendments of the law in 2008 furthered a clear trend towards greater centralization of power and authority in the MoLG, including increased financial oversight and control over local governments, greater authority of the Minister to dismiss elected local councils under certain conditions, and increased the authority of the Minister in overstaffing within the local governments including the approval of the new appointments (UNDP, 2009).

5.3 Institutional Structure of LGUs

LGUs form the backbone of the local government sector and are categorized by to the Local Government Law into two types: municipalities and village councils[21] (PNA, 1997). The majority of LGUs lie in Area A and B, with some unit borders in Area C. The official municipal borders are for the most part known and approved, but there are local councils that are unknown and not officially recognized. In

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[19] While the official Basic Law is in Arabic and no official translation is available, the translation of the article was obtained from the website: http://www.palestinianbasiclaw.org/basic-law/2002-basic-law.

[20] Interview with MU07.

[21] Village Councils are referred to as "Rural Councils" in the law.

addition to these two types of local governments, there are bylaws for other forms of local governments, namely Joint Services Councils (JSCs)[22], and project committees (NewVision, 2007; UNDP, 2004). Local governments vary in size though the majority includes small municipalities and village councils sometimes with a very limited number of inhabitants[23].

Since 1994, the MoLG reclassified all local governments to determine their financial and administrative capacity to be able to identify their need for MoLG supervision. The classification depended mainly on the population size and the year of establishment [24]. Thus, it classified the municipalities that existed before the establishment of the PNA as class A or class B, while those local governments that were established after the inception of the PNA were given C, D, or E classes (NewVision, 2007).

Table 5-1 presents the current structure of the local government system in Palestine.

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[22] As part of the government's efforts to amalgamate smaller villages or municipalities into larger units for a more effective provision of basic services, the JSCs represent such collaborative arrangements between adjacent LGUs, mainly villages

[23] 75 percent of municipalities have less than 5,000 inhabitants; only five cities have more than 200,000 inhabitants Gaza is the largest municipality with about half a million inhabitants followed by Hebron municipality in West Bank with about 170,000. *Data obtained from: MDLF Municipal Infrastructure Baseline Database of 2009.*

[24] Interview with NI09.

Table 5-1   Number and classification of Palestinian LGUs

Local Government Class	Number	Criteria
Class A municipality	16	Governorate centres
Class B municipality	32	Established before 1994
Class C municipality	62	Established after 1994, with a population of more than 15,000
Class D municipality	16	Established after 1994, with a population of between 5,000 and 15,000
Village councils	243	Population of less than 5,000
Project committees *	0	Very small communities.
Total **	379	

Notes:
* Project committees were dissolved and reattached to a nearby village councils or municipalities. The number of Project committees in the year 2010 was 127.
** Gaza includes 25 municipalities of the total number of 136 municipalities and has no village councils.
   ** The total number of LGUs includes ten local councils, which is a special category of local governments located in the Jerusalem area. These local councils are classified as municipalities.

Source: Data obtained from the MoLG database on May 6, 2016.

5.3.1   **Local governments' functions and mandates**

The functions and services of local governments were established in Article 15 of the Palestinian Local Government Law. In examining this article, one could see that that these functions are fairly comprehensive as they include most of the services typically deemed as municipal. In addition, and despite the wide differences in population size, geographic coverage, and capacity across local governments, they have all been given the same responsibilities regarding service provision (WorldBank, 2010).

Disaggregating these responsibilities as defined by the main local services, the legal functions cover 27 services in reality cover 28 different functions. These

functions could be grouped into seven development themes or areas of authority (MoLG, 2009b) . These themes include:

1. Planning and urban organization
2. Social services
3. Local economy
4. Environment and public health
5. Municipal services and infrastructure
6. Security and disaster management
7. Culture and sport

A list of these functions and their associated themes is provided in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 Palestinian local governments functions according to the applicable Law

Service	Theme
Sports facilities	Culture and sport
Libraries	
Museums and culture	
Cemeteries	Environment and public health
Fruit and vegetable markets	Local economy
Street construction, rehabs, paving, and roads	Municipal services and infrastructure
Rain water drainage system	
Sidewalks	
Street lighting	
Public transport stands and terminals	
Water supply	
Electricity supply	
Sewer system	
Waste water treatment	
Public lavatories	
Solid waste collection and disposal	
Solid waste treatment	
Schools	
Health centres	
Slaughterhouses	
Transit management (traffic lights, signs, metres, and others)	
Town planning	Planning and urban organization
Street names and numbering	
Regulation, control and monitoring*	
Fire fighting	Security and disaster management.
Public parks	Social services
Social assistance programmes**	

Other (the law explicitly allows for other functions)

Notes:

The table was based on the researcher review of article 15 of the Local Government Law and on a World Bank study (WorldBank, 2010).

* Regulation, control and monitoring of: public health standards, slaughter houses, food safety, restaurants, hotels, and public facilities, weight and scales control, craft and industry hazards, clinic and health centre standards, street vendors and stands, public transport, animal control, advertisement control, building demolition, lot fencing, etc.

** Such as shelter for the homeless, food donations, and other local social programmes.

Source: Author compilation based on the Local Government Law.

5.3.2   Main supporting institutions

The core institutional support structure at the central level that support local government includes the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and its Directorates (in the governorates and districts); and at the meso level – 16 regional governorates (11 in West Bank and five in Gaza), the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF), and line ministries (MoLG, 2010c; SDC, 2013). The following section provides a brief description about these institutions.

First: the central level: Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)

The MoLG was established after the transfer of authority from Israel to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) on 13 September 1993 as the result of signing the Oslo Accord. One of the main objectives of the ministry was to contribute to the decentralization efforts and raise the quality of service delivery to the local population (MoLG, 2010b).

The Ministry's headquarters are located in Ramallah, and has 16 district directorate (offices). These offices are the local branches of the MoLG and represent it within each governorate. Although these offices are not separate from the ministry, and they do not have legislative or judicial powers, their importance stems from their role providing a bridge between the MoLG and local governments and the citizens, in addition to communicating citizens' concerns and needs to MoLG headquarters. The role of the MoLG and its regional directorates is to oversee the local government sector through the formulation of relevant policies, to provide guidance, to coordinate with different donors as well as to support local governments' capacity and resource development towards achieving the welfare of Palestinian citizens within a good local governance framework and practices (MoLG, 2010b).

The Local Government Law No. 1 stipulated the duties of the MoLG. According to the law, the MoLG is to develop the local government system by designating local governments and defining their boundaries, monitoring their performance and providing necessary guidance (PNA, 1997). In carrying out these functions, the MoLG works at two levels; geographical and administrative within the main office of the ministry and the district offices.

The specific duties of the MoLG as set out in article 2 of the LGL include the following (CCE/GIZ, 2008; PNA, 1997):

1. Delineate general policies for local governments functions and supervise all functions and responsibilities of LGUs as well as the issues related to the organization of public projects, budgetary activities, administrative, financial and legal monitoring and control, and procedures specific to the structure of the local governments.

2. Perform all technical and administrative works pertaining to planning and zoning at the regional level in Palestine.

3. Develop any regulations or bylaws or guidelines required to implement all functions and duties of the local governments.

4. Looking at these duties, one could notice ambiguity yet a tendency toward ever-increasing control by the central government (MoLG) over local governments which itself reinforced a centralization tendency in Palestine[25]. For example, in the second duty mentioned above, the law gives a far higher level of control toMoLG over the physical planning function than is stated in the current town planning laws[26] (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; UNDP, 2004).

Second: the regional level

Palestine is divided into sixteen governorates, 11 in the West Bank and five in the Gaza Strip. The governorates in their current form were established in 1994 as administrative units of the PNA (DCAF/PCSSS, 2010). This division was based on the Jordanian Law of Administrative Formations (JMoJ, 1965) and on several administrative orders issued by the president of the PNA after the establishment of the PNA in 1994[27]. Each governorate is headed by a governor (a Muhafez) who is appointed by the president of the PNA and is part of the administrative structure of the Ministry of Interior, and is accountable to that ministry and not to the MoLG (Bushnaq, 2003). The governor represents the central authority at the governorate level with far-reaching executive powers in crucial areas, such as maintaining law and order, protecting civil rights, protecting private and public properties, promoting economic and social development in the governorate, enforcing PNA legislation in the governorates, supervising the delivery of local services, as well as supervision of all government agencies in the district (DCAF/PCSSS, 2010; UNDP, 2004).

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[25] Interview with MU07.

[26] For more discussion about the laws and regulations related to planning aspects in Palestine refer to section (4.6.5) of this chapter.

[27] Interview with PE06.

The executive powers enjoyed by governors provide an additional layer of confusion in terms of roles and responsibilities of both the MoLG and local governments. The powers given to the governors potentially place severe limitations on the ability of local governments to achieve significant decentralization. Moreover, municipalities and village councils, in addition to the MoLG directorates, may face a dual form of control from the central level through either the MoLG or the governor (UNDP, 2004).

Third: The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)

The institution mandated to provide support to local governments in Palestine is the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA). APLA has been in existence since the year 1997 as a semi-governmental institution that aims to represent and lobby for the collective interests of local governments. This representative role includes supporting local government capacity building, facilitating exchange of knowledge and best practice, and serving as a vehicle for dialogue between the central government and local governments (APLA, 2010). APLA has been active since 1997, but was formally recognized in December 2002 when the president of the PNA issued a decree to formally establish APLA (PNA, 2002).

Since 2004, APLA has not reached its full potential as a strong and credible body representing the interests of LGU although several donor-funded programmes have provided support for APLA's institutional strengthening, including GIZ, BTC[28], and VNG (SDC, 2013). Changes to internal management and a lack of leadership are seen as to have hampered the organization in assuming its expected advocacy role. Supporting APLA in pursuing this role remains a key issue for the development of the local government sector in Palestine[29] (UNDP, 2009).

Fourth: The Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF)

Another key institution in the local government sector is the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) which was created by the PNA Council of Ministers (Decree No. 32/36/09 dated 20 October 2005). This was intended to be an autonomous juridical entity to accelerate Palestine's drive toward a self-

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[28] BTC is the Belgian Development Agency.

[29] Interview with MU18; and interview with ID10 Sheikh Ali, Resident Programme Manager-VNG International on 25 April 2014.

sustaining, decentralized, prosperous, and creditworthy system of local government (MDLF, 2013a). Initially, the MDLF functioned as a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and the Project Technical Secretariat (PTS) under the auspices of the MoLG so as to support LGU in exercising responsibilities in investing and managing their financial resources to expand service delivery [30]. The main objective of the fund is to encourage the transfer of financial resources from the PNA and various donors to the Palestinian LGUs to improve the delivery of local infrastructure and municipal services, to promote economic development, and improve municipal efficiency and accountability (SDC, 2013).

The MDLF has been an observable partner introducing positive changes necessary for community development and has implemented a large number of donor-funded projects for strengthening local government operations and improving the living conditions of Palestinians[31]. Since its establishment, the MDLF has spent about 200 million USD on municipal infrastructure services, capacity development, and other initiatives at the municipal level (MDLF, 2013b). To ensure transparency and fairness in allocating funds to LGUs, the MDLF uses performance-based criteria and methodology (called the Grant Allocation Mechanism) whose ultimate objective is to improve the capacities of LGUs. The MDLF grants are based 50 percent on performance, 30 percent on population and 20 percent on need. Palestinian municipalities have been ranked by MDLF according to 16 basic accepted 'good practice' performance criteria, including use an up-to-date municipal strategic development and investment plan (SDIP). Table 5-3 lists the municipal ranking Criteria of MDLF.

Currently, the MDLF is governed by a Board of Directors which consists of eleven voting directors representing the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) (the Minister is the Chairman of the Board), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of Planning (MoP), the Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH). Members also include APLA, the Engineering Association, the Banking Association and three members from the local authorities and the civil society (MDLF, 2013b).

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[30] MDLF website, available at: www.mdlf.org.ps, accessed on 7 April 2016.

[31] Interview with ID02, and interview with ID03.

Table 5-3 MDLF Municipal Ranking Criteria

Rank	Performance Criteria)	Performance Criteria
A++ A+ A	Fulfilment of all below indicators in addition to the following: • 5 out of 5 • 4 out of 5 • 3 out of 5	• Substantial Operation and Enterprise Account Surplus (more than 15 percent) • Unqualified External Audit • Use of an Integrated Financial Management System IFMIS • Satisfactory Service Quality (Timely delivery of building licenses and clearances; Provided public green space per capita) • Good Collection Efficiency and own Revenue Generation (Specified own revenues > 100 NIS per capita or 10 percent above last two years' average)
B++ B+ B	Fulfilment of all below indicators in addition to the following: • 5 out of 5 • (3 or 4) out of 5 • 2 out of 5	• Substantial Operation and Enterprise Account Surplus (more than 5 percent). • Fixed Assets Register in place and updated • Operation and Maintenance Plan in place and updated • Public disclosure of all municipal investments, SDIP execution, and external audit reports • 10. Satisfactory Collection Efficiency and own Revenue Generation (Specified own revenues > 50 NIS per capita or 5 percent above last two years' average)
C++ C+ C	Fulfilment of all below indicators in addition to the following: • 5 out of 5 • (3 or 4) out of 5 • 2 out of 5	• Municipal Strategic Development and Investment Plan SDIP in place and updated. • Financial Accounting Policies, Procedures and Reports in place. • External Audit according to minimum standards • Public disclosure of budgets, SDIP plan and ranking • Basic collection efficiency and own revenue generation (Specified own revenues > 25 NIS per capita or above last two years' average)
D	Fulfilment of this indicator	• Budget forecast and executed properly submitted and approved by MoLG
E		• Minimum requirements not fulfilled

Source: adopted from (Pfeiffer, 2012), and validated through an interview with NI03.

5.4 Donor Support to the Local Government Sector

The local governance sector like others in Palestine is dependent on foreign aid and donor assistance. It is estimated that the current foreign aid channelled to the Palestinian local government sector is about 350 million USD. This funding is funnelled from 15 different donors and 35-implemented programmes through capacity building, services support, and infrastructure development (MoPAD, 2014; Niehaus, 2014). Along with the education sector, the local governance sector is a focus of donor contributions in Palestine as they are the only sectors with complementary/basket funding (Niehaus, 2014).

Donor support to the local governance sector is currently channelled in two ways. The first is through the provision of budget support and technical assistance via the MDLF-MDP[32] mechanism; a mechanism that seeks to standardize methods and procedures in local government units for effective management. The second form of donor assistance comes through their own programmes and activities outside the MDLF mechanism. Most include the testing and promotion of new approaches in local government domains through local or international means (e.g. GIZ on testing local participatory approaches), work on thematic areas and with national (policy units within specific ministries (e.g. Denmark strengthening policy planning units in MOLG and MOPAD), or local entities (e.g. Village councils, CSOs and CBOs) not targeted by the MDP (e.g. USAID and JICA)[33].

As discussed previously (Section 4.3), an important source of support to local government in Palestine comes from the Arab and Islamic state donors such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, and Qatar. Tracking the amount and type of this support however has been a challenge for the PNA due to this support being channelled through various charitable organizations and independent funds (e.g. Zakat Charity Committee, Kuwait Development Fund, Qatar Foundation, etc.). Additionally, this funding is provided to local governments on arbitrary bases, often depending on personal relations and networking capacity of mayors and council members [34].

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[32] MDP refers to the Municipal Development Programme which was developed by the PNA through its implementing agency, the MDLF, in co-operation with various donors. The stated overall objective of the MDP is to improve municipal management practices for better municipal transparency and service delivery. The total budget of the MDP is about 93 million USD for two phases (2010-2013, and 2014-2016). Source: Interview with NI04.

[33] Interview with ID12.

[34] Interview with NI11

Figures 5-1 and 5-2 illustrate the current foreign aid structure, flow, and budget in the Palestinian local governance sector.

Active donors in the LG sector	Estiomated budget (including operational budget)	Programs
• Belgium, Denmark, European Union, FAO, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, UNDP, UNESCO, USA, UN Habitat, and World Bank.	• Around USD 350 million • Largest budgets :USA/LGI for USD 100 million, and MDLF/ MDP for USD 93 million.	• About 35 projects/ programs. • One basket funding (MDP). • Largest bi-lateral program: LGI (USAID funded).

Figure 5-1: Overview of the foreign aid to the Palestinian local government sector

Source: Author compilation based on data from MoLG, LACs, and MDLF.
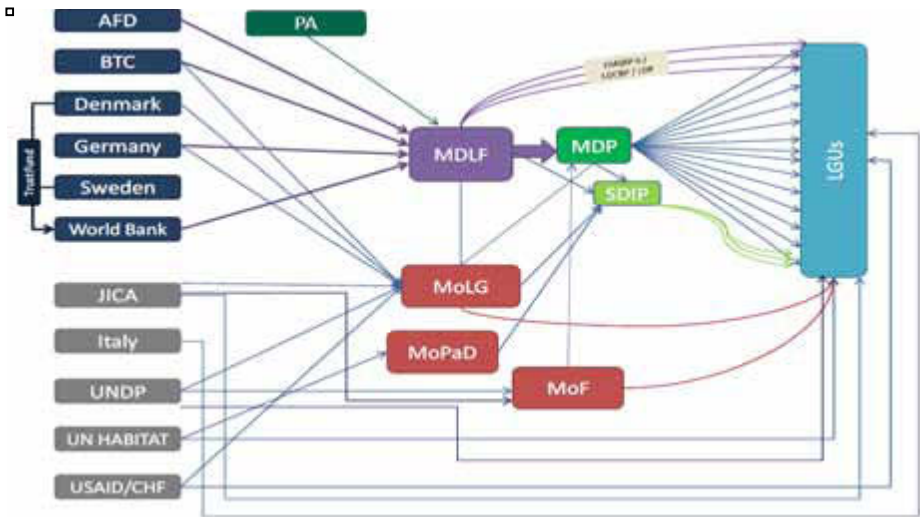
Figure 5-2: Funding flow to the local government sector in Palestine as of 2004

Source: (**Niehaus, 2014**).

5.5 Planning under Fragility: Planning Systems in Palestine

After we presented the general framework under which the Palestinian local governments function and operate, we turn now to focus on planning in the context of Palestine. The following sections attempt to provide more detailed information and analysis on the planning system in Palestine, its history, elements, challenges, and prospects. A special focus on strategic planning approaches is also provided to set the stage for the analysis of the case studies.

5.5.1 Overview of the Planning System

As mentioned previously, the successive occupations and presiding authorities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have created a maze of legal rules and regulations, making the planning and building systems complex and relatively inefficient (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009).

The new political realities that have been established with the signing of Oslo Agreements (1993-1995) have redefined the Palestinians control over the development and planning processes and, to some extent, over the natural and built-up environment in Palestine.

Within the framework of these agreements, powers and responsibilities of the Israeli military government concerning Palestinian civil affairs (in addition to other powers) would be transferred to and assumed by the PNA. Between 1994 and 2000, the jurisdiction of the PNA was extended to cover non-contiguous areas (namely, in areas A and B, comprising around 42 percent of West Bank area) in the West Bank and the 'autonomous area' of the Gaza Strip. This latter extension was later extended to cover all the Strip after the redeployment of Israeli forces outside Gaza Strip borders in the summer of 2005, as part of Israel unilateral 'disengagement plan' (Mari, 2005).

Since 1994, and for the first time in modern history, the Palestinians were more able to shape and direct the development of their future. Their activities however were confined to the areas within their jurisdiction. The evolving planning system

has been greatly influenced and governed by the provisions of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, as well as by ever-changing political conditions [35].

The agreements stipulated that all legislation and military orders existing prior to the advent of the PNA, would remain in force unless otherwise revoked by a joint Israeli-Palestinian legal committee. Furthermore, any new legislation to be proposed by the PNA must be approved by the Israelis, thus giving Israel a veto over any revocation of military orders. Accordingly, most previous Israeli military law remained applicable in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and have great influence over the existing situation (Roy, 2002) . This included the Israeli military government and approximately 2,000 military orders in effect before Oslo and during direct Israeli occupation.

Planning systems in Palestine could be categorized in different ways based upon their purpose, scope, and coverage (Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011; B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; Daoud, 2009; Rammal and Hamad, 2007; UNDP, 2004). At the macro level, planning included the national level, regional level, and local level. At the level of the local governments (i.e. local level), planning includes: physical planning, strategic (or development) planning, and budgetary planning. In addition, line PNA ministries prepare sectoral plans for about 23 sectors as well as to five cross-sectoral plans [36]. Although physical planning is mostly limited to the local level, the other types of plans could be found across the three levels albeit in various forms.
The following sections outline the levels and forms of planning in Palestine.

National level planning

At the national level, the PNA has developed a number of plans to guide its development and spending efforts. These plans could be categorized into three types:

1. *National Comprehensive Plans:* These rolling plans usually cover a three-year period and provide a framework for governmental spending priorities based on sectoral plans compiled by line ministries through MoPAD and then approved by the PNA cabinet. The PNA consults very

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[35] Interview with Dr. Ali Abdel Hamid, Planned and Director of the Urban Institute of Nablus University on April 28, 2014

[36] Interview with ID12.

closely with the donors during the development of these plans in order to secure the donors' financial and political support. Examples of these plans include several Palestinian Development Plans (PDP) in the 1990s, Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) during the 2005–2008 period, the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) from 2008 to 2010, and the National Development Plan (NDP) for 2011-2013 (Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011). In the PRDP, a three-pillared framework has been introduced integrating (a) a Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF) which sets out the macroeconomic framework and indicators and determines resource availability from both domestic and external sources; (b) a Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), which outlines the overall policy goals and targets and identifies how these will be pursued through the various sectors; and (c) a Medium-Term Budget (MTB), which allocates resources on the basis of policy priorities (PNA, 2008). The current plan (NDP 2011-2013) entitled *Establishing the state - Building our future* summarizes the PNA's policy agenda and delivering the macroeconomic, fiscal and accountability framework. It mentions the empowerment of local government and bringing public service provision closer to citizens as one of its strategic goals. It further reiterates and emphasizes the need for continued improvements in performance, transparency and accountability at the local government level (PNA, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that since the development of the PRDP in 2008, the national planning approach has been trying to link policies to planning as well as planning to budget preparation (Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011). Moreover, the latest plan (i.e. NDP) aimed to shift the emphasis from budgeting on a line-item basis to programme-based budgeting, although this has not yet been achieved[37].

2. *National Sectoral Plans:* Based on the national development priorities framework (i.e., national agenda), sectoral planning processes are led and coordinated by the relevant line ministries or agencies. The aim of these processes is to ensure consistency and coherence between the overall national objectives and strategies on one hand and the sectoral objectives, strategies, and programmes on the other. The planning processes involve all sector-relevant stakeholders in order to identify key sector-related issues that need attention in the near future, key actions or interventions to be undertaken, and realistic and attainable sectoral targets in the

[37] Interview with NI15.

short/medium term horizon. Since 2008, several such plans were formulated, including a specific plan for the local governance sector titled *Cross-Sectoral Strategy for Palestinian Local Government and Administration Sectors, 2011-2013*, in addition to similar plans for justice and rule of law, tourism, health, education, etc. These are often articulated in sectoral strategic documents that are used to guide sectoral interventions and, at the same time, to provide input to the national comprehensive plans (Daoud, 2009; Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011; PNA, 2011).

3. *Issue Specific National Plans:* Similar to sectoral plans, these are usually indicative plans that exist without a legal basis, led and developed by a line agency in co-ordination with relevant stakeholders, the aim of which is to guide and co-ordinate government activities and efforts addressing specific national cross-sectoral priority issues, and/or for specific time frame.

Examples of this type of national plans include the Emergency Public Investment Plan (EPIP) in 2003, the Quick Impact Intervention Programme (QIIP) in 2003, the Reform Action Plan for 2004-2005, the Socio-Economic Stabilization Plan (SESP) in 2004, the Quick Recovery Plan 2007, and more recently, PNA Strategic and Action Plan for Area C in 2012 [38].

Among the obvious criticisms of planning at the national level is the ambiguity with regard to the role of local governments and governors and their linkage to the national plans (Kassis, 2012). Furthermore, generally there is no linkage or reference to local planning in the national plans, policies or strategies.[39]

Regional level planning

Regional level planning refers to plans developed at the intermediate level between the national (i.e. central government) and the local (i.e. local government) levels. The need for this level of planning has emerged recently as a result of the regional (governorate) level poverty assessment and the pro-poor planning process, a joint effort between the PNA Ministry of Planning (MoP) and Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). Based on this assessment, it became clear that there is an inherent crudeness in relying solely on the existing national and sectoral

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[38] Interview with NI15.

[39] Interview with NI08; and interview with NI14.

planning as some locale-specific priorities and needs might not be captured or adequately addressed. It became evident that there was a need for a consultation and dialogue platform where national policies and objectives were discussed and negotiated against local needs and priorities (GTZ, 2008).

Among the first regional planning processes were the two regional consultation pilot activities organized in 2005 as part of the preparation for the MTDP 2006-2008 (Watt et al., 2004); Both the MoP and MoNE jointly led a participatory strategic planning workshop for the whole Gaza Strip. A second initiative by local institutions was conducted for the Nablus governorate. In these early models of regional planning, the identified regional priorities and developed action plans provided input to the central government agencies in identifying and refining sectoral local priorities and preferences in the MTDP[40].

Starting in 2005, more regional level plans have been developed on a more random basis, often induced by donor initiatives or projects (B.U.S., 2008); In early 2005 GTZ (later GIZ) supported the first regional strategic plan for the cities of Ramallah, Al Bireh and Beitunia as based on the City Development Strategic (CDS)[41] approach developed by Cities Alliance[42]. Between October 2005 and September 2006, several PNA ministries, mainly MoP and MOLG, along with JICA formulated a Regional Development Plan for Jericho and Jordan Rift Valley. In September 2006, MoP and UNDP signed an agreement to develop a regional plan for the Jenin government. The plan was completed and launched at the end of 2007 through a fund from the government of Finland. Another regional plan for Nablus governorate was developed in 2010, followed by Salfit governorate in 2013.

Similar to national development planning, regional planning suffers from a number of shortcomings (B.U.S., 2008; Daoud, 2009; Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011); It lacks a clear defined administrative body responsible for the plan and its implementation, which renders the implementation dependent upon the goodwill of the various Palestinian implementing agencies and of the donor community; The linkage of regional planning to other levels and types of plans (including national, physical, and spatial plans) is neither defined nor clear due to a number

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[40] Interview with NI15.

[41] City Development Strategies (CDS) was developed in late 1990s by Cities Alliance and its member organization such as the World Bank, UN-Habitat, Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a strategic urban planning approach RASOOLIMANESH, S. M., BADARULZAMAN, N. & JAAFAR, M. 2012. City Development Strategies (CDS) and Sustainable Urbanization in Developing World. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 36, 623 – 631..

[42] Interview with PE02; and ID06.

of reasons. These include the geo-political situation and the unclear basis of definition and responsibility for administration. It is also difficult to follow up and update the regional plan or to ensure the achievement of its declared objectives due to the absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Finally, the legal framework related to regional planning and its enforcement is vague and requires clarification.

Local level planning

Various types of planning existed and were practiced at the local level. The following sections outline the various planning approaches and types relevant to local governments. Figure 5-3 illustrates the relationship between the two types of planning at the local level.
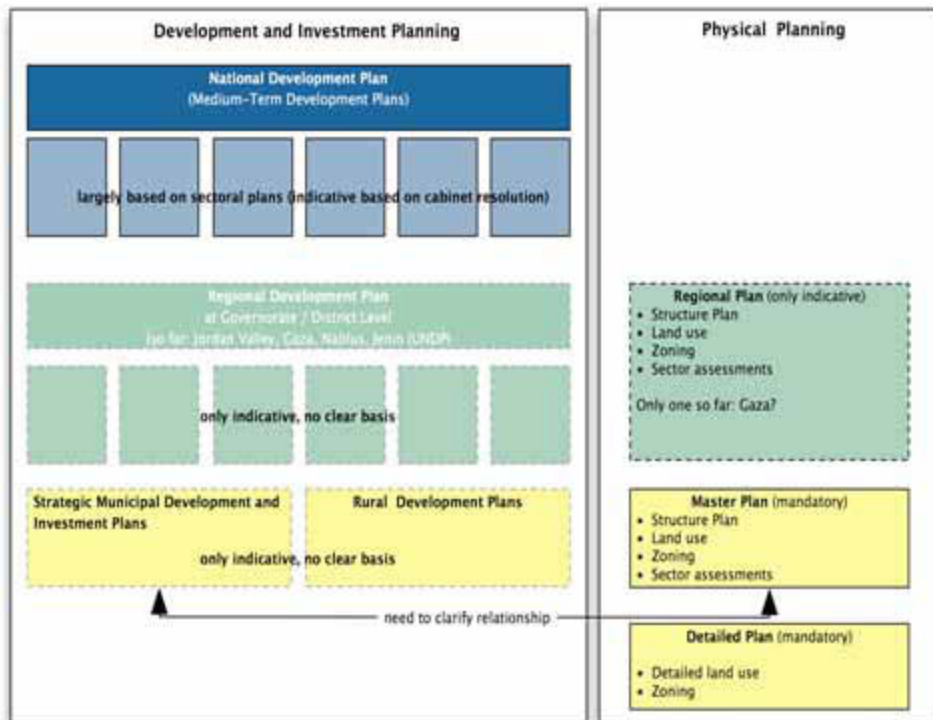
Figure 5-3: Relationship between planning types at the local level

Source: (**B.U.S., 2008**)

Physical Planning

Traditionally, in the Palestinian context, planning at the local level is often focused to physical planning (or master planning) which refers to the studies, policies, and practices concerned with the general pattern of land-use, the character and location of buildings, and structures, the layout of streets, the location of transportation systems, the scale or intensity of different types of land-use, and the location and development of other physical facilities that are important to the accessibility, and well-being of the community (van Lier, 1998; Pivo et al., 1990). As described in this chapter, the control over land, access and movement and natural resources is at the core of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For that reason, Israel has used, and continues to use, physical planning as a major tool to exercise control over the Occupied Territories. This poses serious challenges for Palestinian local governments in terms of planning and control over their boundaries and space for expansion and development.

Legal framework

Physical planning in Palestine is defined by a maze of legal rules and regulations, which make planning and building legislation and preparation complex and, in most cases, inconsistent. This regulatory framework includes laws and regulations issued during different historical periods. This included: in the Gaza Strip between 1948-1967; Israeli military orders issued for the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967; the Palestinian-Israeli Agreements 1993-5; and decrees, laws, by-laws, and regulations issued by the PNA since 1994 (Abdulhadi, 1990; Benvenisti, 1987; Bisharat, 1993; Coon, 1992; Kawtharani, 2013; NewVision, 2007; UNDP, 2004; UNDP, 2009).

According to the Oslo Agreement, the responsibilities of physical planning were transferred to the PNA, which enabled the Palestinians to initiate, prepare, amend and abrogate planning schemes and legislations, as well as, issue building permits and supervise and monitor building activities. However, these authorities and responsibilities are limited to areas under PNA jurisdiction, namely the Gaza Strip and in Areas A and B of the West Bank. On the other hand, in Area C of the West Bank, powers and responsibilities related to the sphere of planning and zoning were retained by the Israeli military authorities (WorldBank, 2013).

Based on the existing political and legal status of the various parts of Palestine, four physical planning systems, defined by the various applicable laws and

regulations, are simultaneously in use (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; NewVision, 2007; UNDP, 2004):

1. In areas A and B in West Bank, the legal basis for physical planning remains the Jordanian Law No. 79 of 1966 entitled *Town, Village and Building Planning Law*. In addition, the practical application of the law in the West Bank is determined by the two regulations issued in 1996: (i) Regulation No. 30 of 1996 concerning the Rules Applicable to Buildings and Planning for Local Authorities (for areas inside planning boundaries with an approved master plan); and (ii) Regulation No. 31 of 1996 concerning the Rules Applicable to Buildings and Land Planning outside the Planning Areas. A Presidential Decree amended membership of the Higher Planning Council (HPC) in 1996 to appoint the Minister of the MoLG as the Chairman of the HPC.

2. While in area C of the West Bank, Jordanian Law 79 of 1966 is also applicable, but it has been drastically amended by the many Israeli military orders issued after 1967 including the most noteworthy, Military Order 418 of 1971. As a result of this, Palestinian expansion and construction is effectively prohibited in around 70 percent of Area C (about 44 percent of the West Bank), and mainly in areas designated for the use of Israeli settlements or the military (PASSIA, 2012).

3. In the Gaza Strip, the British Mandatory law entitled 'Town Planning Ordinance No 28 of 1936' is still valid. Its practical application however was mostly determined by the use of the above regulations Nos. 30 and 31 (albeit they formally relate only to the West Bank and the Jordanian law). Moreover, since British ordinance does not include provisions for regional level planning, it was augmented in 2005 by the issuing of the 'By-law for the Preparation of Regional Plans'.

4. In East Jerusalem, Israeli domestic planning laws replaced the Jordanian law when East Jerusalem was unilaterally annexed to Israel in June 1967.

Furthermore, the scope of planning legislation in terms of licensing and regulating building activities is also bound by the various property laws that establish the basic and undisputed building rights of land owners on their property, although it is limited to residential or economic purposes of the family.

In addition to that above, there are legal regulations that define the functions and responsibilities for physical planning in a narrower sense. There are also a number

of other laws and regulations as well as policy documents issued by the PNA and are valid both for the West Bank and Gaza and include reference to physical planning functions, namely:

- The Local Government Law No. 1, 1997 that assigns some planning functions to "[t]own planning, building, deleting or modulating streets, specification of their width, lengths, asphalting paving, numeration of streets and buildings,…, watch nearby landscape" to local governments[43] .

- The Palestinian Environmental Law, No. 7, 1999 with the following general stipulations:
    - Article 6: Land Environment: "The specialized agencies, in co-ordination with The Ministry (of Environmental Affairs), shall devise the public policy for land uses taking into account the best use thereof and the protection of natural resources and areas with special natural characteristics as well as the conservation of the environment".
    - Article 40: Protection of Natural, Historical and Archaeological Areas: "The Ministry (of Environmental Affairs), in co-ordination with specialized agencies, shall prescribe bases and standards for the protection of natural reserves and national parks, additionally tell about and supervise them, and establish, designate the national parks and supervise them".
    - Article 45: Environmental Impact Assessment: "The Ministry (of Environmental Affairs), in co-ordination with the specialized agencies, shall set norms to determine which projects and domains shall be subject to the environmental impact assessment studies. It shall also prepare lists of these projects and set the rules and procedures of the environmental impact assessment".
    -
- Other laws of relevance for physical planning are the Agricultural Law, the Law on the Conservation and Preservation of Historical and Cultural Heritage, and the Law on Expropriation.

Physical Planning Administrative Structure and Jurisdiction

In line with the Jordanian law No. 79 of 1966, the planning administration in the West Bank is composed of three levels: the HPC, District Planning Commissions, and Local Planning Commissions. This structure is similar for Areas A and B

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[43] The Local Government Law No. 1, 1997, Article 15.

(under the Palestinian jurisdiction), as well as for Area C (under the Israeli military control). However, as described above, the membership and structures of various commissions applicable in Area C were altered through military orders.

In the Gaza Strip, the planning administration also consists of three levels: the High Commissioner, District Planning Commission (known as the Central Planning Commission), and Local Planning Commissions. The Minister of Local Government has assumed the role of the High Commissioner after the year 1994. The Central Planning Commission is equivalent to District Planning Commissions in the West Bank. In order to harmonize planning administrations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Central Planning Commission has been linked administratively to the HPC. In practice, however, the relationship between the Central Planning Commission and the HPC has been occasional and not adequately defined.

Since all cities and towns and the majority of villages, with exception of East Jerusalem, lie in Areas A or B in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip, the roles, functions and responsibilities of the different planning bodies as presently applied in Palestine can be summarized as follows:

1. Higher Planning Council (HPC):
   The Palestinian HPC, chaired by the Minister of Local Government, consists of 17 representatives (deputy-minister level or his designee) from relevant ministries, the Attorney General, and the Engineers Association. Functions of the HPC include the following[44]:
   - Proposing "town planning areas";
   - Approving regional and outline planning schemes;
   - Amending or cancelling any licenses issued (including building permits);
   - Reviewing appeals on district planning committees' decisions;
   - Approval of relevant by-laws and regulations;

2. The District Planning Commissions:
   The MOLG District Director General heads the District Commissions composed of almost the same number and agencies forming the HPC, albeit at a lower representation level. If needed, and upon the approval of the Minister of Local Government, it is possible to form a Joint District Planning

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[44] 1966 Planning Law, article 6.

Commission composed of more than one district commission. Functions of the District Commissions include the following[45]:

- Approving local detailed plans
- Investigating objections to regional, master and detailed plans and submitting recommendations to the HPC
- Reviewing appeals against decisions of local planning committees
- Resolving disputes between local and district committees
- Exercising the functions of a local planning committee where no such committee exists

3. The Local Planning Commissions:

The Local Planning Commissions are usually formed by the municipal or village councils. For smaller villages, District Commissions act as Local Planning Commissions. Similar to district commissions, it is possible, and upon the approval of the Minister of Local Government, to form Joint Local Planning Commission composed of more than one local commission. The functions of the local commissions include the following[46]:

- Preparing master and detailed plans as well as percolation schemes
- Issuing building permits in accordance with plans
- Ensuring that building activities comply with building permits
- Monitoring construction and building activities and ensuring their compliance with the regulations and approved plans
- Collecting necessary fees

Physical Planning Schemes:

Currently, and according to the applicable laws and regulations in the West Bank and Gaza, there are four types of physical planning schemes, one regional and three on the local level. The aim of these schemes is to guide and regulate land use as well as to control private and public construction activities in designated geographic areas. Their scope and content can be summarized as follows (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; MoLG, 2010a; NewVision, 2007; Rammal and Hamad, 2007; UNDP, 2004; UNDP, 2009) :

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[45] 1966 Planning Law, article 8.

[46] 1966 Planning Law, article 9.

1. Regional Planning Schemes:

The first level of planning, as defined by the Jordanian Planning Law of 1966, are regional plans that should serve as the basis and orientation for outline (or master) plans to be prepared at the local level. In 2005, a 'By-law for the Preparation of Regional Plans' stated that the General Directorate for Planning and Organization in MoLG and the General Directorate for Spatial Planning in MoP are to jointly prepare regional physical plans, in co-ordination with all relevant agencies.

According to the prevailing regulations, regional planning schemes should address the following issues (which are also required to outline/master planning schemes at the local level):

- Land use (residential, agricultural, industrial, cultural, forestry, protected, etc.)
- Location of new towns and villages
- Expansion or restriction of expansion of existing towns and villages
- Public utilities (schools, markets, places of worship, cinemas, theatres, and public halls)
- Preservation of historical antiquities
- Means of transport
- Roads (general traffic rights, construction of new roads, closure and detours)
- Communications (telegraph, telephone and wireless)
- Services (water, electricity and sewage)

During the period of Jordanian rule, no regional plans were prepared. The regional plan for the Jerusalem district (known as RJ5) and the regional plan for the Nablus district (known as S15), prepared in the early 1940s under the British Mandate's Town Planning Ordinance no. 28 of 1936 (1936 TPO), were the only regional plans in existence until the 1980s. Although they are clearly outdated, they are used to the present day by the Israeli authorities as grounds for refusing to grant building permits (outside the boundaries of outline/master plans).

As mentioned previously in this chapter, the Israeli authorities prepared two regional plans under the 1966 Planning Law; the first plan was a partial regional plan number (82/1), known as the 'centre project'. The second regional plan was 'the Partial Regional Plan for Roads No (50) of 1983' approved on 25 May 1991. The first plan was developed for the sole purpose of expanding Israeli settlements in and around Jerusalem and at the expense of Palestinian-owned lands. The second plan was to connect Israeli settlements in the West Bank with each other and with Israel proper whilst bypassing Palestinian communities. These two

regional plans have been legally challenged by the Palestinians (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; NewVision, 2007).

After the establishment of the PNA, two regional plans (one for the West Bank and the other for the Gaza Strip) were prepared between the years 1996 and 1997. The two regional plans however could neither be approved by the HPC in the West Bank nor by the Central Commission in Gaza, since PNA, according to the Oslo Agreement, cannot make decisions on plans outside its jurisdiction (i.e., for Area C in the West Bank, or the 'yellow' area in the Gaza Strip). Nevertheless, these plans served as indicative plans but do not carry any legal obligations.

2. Outline (Master) Planning Scheme

The scope and subjects dealt with by the outline (master) planning scheme are similar to the regional scheme with one difference being that the outline scheme is limited to one city, town, or village[47]. According to law, outline (master) planning schemes should deal with the following:

- Existing and new roads (location, alteration, width specification)
- Land use (residential, agricultural, industrial, cultural, forestry, etc.)
- Land allocation for public utilities (schools, hospitals, railway stations, buses, airports, markets, places of worship, etc.)
- Construction (conditions and restrictions regarding the area of the land on which building is permitted, obligatory setbacks around buildings, building height and type)
- Granting the right to the local authorities or neighbours to pass sewage, drainage, or water pipes, hanging reads or tunnels across land or property belonging to someone else
- Archaeological and historical sites that should be preserved

In the period between 1996 and 2016, about 187 master plans were prepared for around 150 localities in the West Bank and Gaza[48]. These plans were prepared by the local governments themselves with the assistance either from local consulting firms and institutions or with assistance from the General Directorate for Planning and Organization in MoLG. The time needed to prepare and approve such plans varied from one case to another, ranging from two years up to eight or even ten years in some cases. If this pace of planning and approval continues, it is estimated

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[47] 1966 Planning Law, articles 19–22

[48] MoLG database, 2016.

that between 50 and 70 years would be needed to complete the master planning for the remaining communities[49].

3.   Detailed Planning Schemes

After approval of an outline/master-planning scheme, a detailed planning scheme is to be undertaken for each of the various elements of the outline scheme. A local commission may at any time prepare a detailed scheme for any land lying within its planning area, or approve a detailed planning scheme submitted by a land owner (or group of land owners). Such a scheme becomes valid after the approval of the district commission or the High Planning Council in the case of a dispute between the district and local commissions. Detailed plans include the same issues as of outline plans, but should include more details related to the following:

- Location of markets, schools, worship places, parks and cinemas
- Specific regulations related to buildings (setbacks, architectural design, minimum building areas and ratios, etc.)
- Designating areas with special architectural provisions, use, and construction material to be used
- Designating protected or preserved areas
- Specifying lands expropriated for public use

4.   Land Parcellation Schemes

The preceding regulations stipulate that no person be allowed to divide or register a division of any piece of land any less than ten metric donums without a parcellation plan approved by the local commission. A parcellation scheme should indicate land borders, approved and proposed roads, and any other matter necessary for the parcellation scheme to correspond with the relevant detailed planning scheme.

With a view to the strategic importance of spatial development in the Palestinian context, there have also been some initiatives to introduce physical planning at the national level (this function assigned to MOPAD by a Cabinet decision in 2004, but was never put into practice). In addition, to formulate national policies for spatial and physical development, in addition to the types of plans stipulated by the law. These had the intention of linking physical planning to overall medium-term

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[49] Not taking into consideration the need to revise and update the already approved plans in due time, which according to the law should be done at least once every 10 years.

development planning of the PNA and to define the hierarchy of Palestinian localities and corresponding investment priorities. These initiatives however remained largely piecemeal and were not followed through.

The MoLG, with the support from the Danish government through MDLF, has taken a recent initiative to develop a new manual for physical planning in Palestine. This initiative was given life through a manual called *Physical Planning Manual: Procedures and Tools for Physical Planning in the West Bank and Gaza* (PPPPM) and was published and implemented in August 2010 (MoLG, 2010a). The purpose of the PPPPM is to support the relevant departments at MoLG in shifting the current physical planning functions into better formulated policy and a more effective management approach within the development of the new systematic physical planning process. The manual adopted a new integrated and holistic urban development planning approach that enriches existing prevailing practice of zoning and land-use planning of 'traditional master plans' with the dimensions of technical infrastructure development and a better consideration of the social, economic and environmental aspects of urban management, and at the same time "simplifies" and streamlines the planning process (MoLG, 2010a). Since then, MoLG has piloted the implementation of the manual in about 14 local governments in West Bank[50].

Local Development/Strategic Planning

In contrast to the other two levels (i.e. national and regional), experiences in local development planning goes back to the late 1980s and early 1990s during the First Intifada. Here, Local Popular Committees were established in most localities in the West Bank and Gaza. During that period, community-based participatory rural development and action planning used mainly by international development agencies, and NGOs, and often in close partnership with the local communities and their Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Then, by mid 1990s, local governments were included as partners in such endeavours. Local interventions focused either on individual communities or on a cluster of various communities following a concept of 'impact area' or 'micro-region' development (PAPP/UNDP, 2005). The most extensive of these interventions was the Local Rural Development Programme (LRDP) implemented by UNDP together with MoLG which extended over a period of about ten years and covered around twenty 'micro-regions' in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (number of communities in each micro-region

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[50] Interview with NI11

ranged from eight to 15)[51]. Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) techniques used to identify and prioritize needs and to formulate action plans and projects for the communities. In 2001, the strategic planning process was piloted in three micro-regions. In 2004, and following discussions with MoLG, the LRDP initiated other strategic planning pilots in five micro-regions (three of which, strategic plans have been already developed in 2005) [52].

Local strategic planning processes were initiated by other international agencies as well. As mentioned before, between the years 2005 and 2006 two strategic planning initiatives were promoted by GTZ (later GIZ), one for Ramallah, Al-Bireh and Beitunia cities, collectively, and the other for Salfeet city. In the same period, some cities have initiated strategic planning processes on their own, like Nablus, Beita, and Maithaloun [53].

In addition to the above, two other local development-planning initiatives are worth mentioning. The first is the USAID funded Local Democratic Reform Programme (LDR), launched in September 2005 by the Cooperative Housing Foundation International (CHF)[54]. As part of the LDR, CHF developed a community-based strategic planning process for twenty-two local governments in Palestine (West Bank only). This approach was based on a methodology developed by a local consultant that brings stakeholders together to develop a Strategic Planning Framework (SPF) (vision and objectives for sixteen years), a Community Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) (four-year implementation horizon), a Sector Investment Plan (SIP) (two-year capital investment plan), and a Corporate Plan (CP) for the local government's internal improvements[55]. In aftermath of local elections in January 2006, the LDR programme was suspended and was reactivated in early 2007 (Minis and Chetwynd, 2011a).

The second example of a local strategic planning initiative in Palestine was initiated in the footsteps of the Localizing Agenda 21 programme, itself initiated by UN-Habitat after the 1992 Earth Summit (Tuts, 1998). As part of this global initiative a Project entitled 'Environmental Sustainability for a Better Life: An Integrated Approach for Localizing Agenda 21 in the Bethlehem District' was

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[51] Interview with ID07; and interview with NI15.

[52] Interview with NI10.

[53] Interview with PE02; and ID06.

[54] Founded in 1952, CHF is an international development and humanitarian aid organization that operates in approximately 25 countries. 2012 CHF International changed its name to "Global Communities" GLOBALCOMMUNITIES. 2015. *http://www.globalcommunities.org/history* [Online]. [Accessed 2 June 2015 2015]..

[55] Interview with ID09.

initiated in 2006. The initiative aimed at promoting and facilitating a consultative process to develop and implement 'Local Agenda 21' strategies as well as developing the capacities of the targeted local governments including the municipalities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Za'tara, Al Khader, and Ed Doha, and the village council of Battir (ARIJ, 2008). Under this project, local governments undertook a consultative process to develop and implement 'Local Agenda 21' strategies for and with their communities (ARIJ, 2008). This project funded by the European Commission (EC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented jointly by the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ) and Centro Regionale d'Intervento per la Cooperazione (CRIC).

In addition to those two examples of donor-driven strategic planning initiatives, a number of local governments, on their own initiative, embarked up some strategic or development planning processes following the local government elections in 2005. These planning initiatives have largely relied on local resources and contributions, resulting in significantly lower costs for plan preparation, but also in fewer professional planning products. These initiatives however remained scattered, with diverse approaches to purpose, scope and content of such strategic plans, and largely undocumented (B.U.S., 2008).

Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP)

As highlighted in this chapter, local level planning legislation and practice in Palestine has dealt mainly with issues related to physical or land-use planning with limited attention to matters relating to socio-economic, environmental, and governance issues. Legislation, which deals with modern planning concepts such as strategic and development planning that tackles crucial socio-economic and environmental matters while taking into account available resources and capacities was absent. As previously noted, strategic and development planning at the regional and local level prior to 2008 took place on a more random basis, often induced by donor initiatives or projects (e.g. Regional Development Plan for Jericho and Jordan Rift Valley supported by JICA, or the GIZ supported CDS for Ramallah, Al Bireh and Beitunia) with few independently-initiated planning experiences (e.g. Beita, and Nablus) (B.U.S., 2008).

According to the MoLG officials[56], the idea of having a strategic planning initiative for local governments on a national scale came after GIZ approached the ministry

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[56] Interview with NI09; and NI11.

in 2006. Based on the discussions with GIZ at that time, a meeting was held in 2007 where some municipalities, such as Beita, Maithaloun, and Nablus, offered their experiences in strategic planning. A concept paper on strategic planning for local governments prepared by GIZ was discussed in that meeting. As a result, a National Working Group for SDIP (NWSDIP) was formed by a Ministerial Decree on March 2008 to lead and oversee the process of developing a national initiative for local strategic planning.

In terms of the motives behind initiating strategic planning at the national level, data obtained from interviews pointed out to the following reasons[57]:

1. The feeling at the MoLG that the relationship between mayors and citizens lacked transparency and that the work of most municipalities managed on ad hoc bases and not according to systematic, plan-oriented manner. In addition to the in efficient use of resources by municipalities which are already scarce.

2. The existence of a few donors who supported the idea financially and technically. In particular: GIZ and CHF (later Global Communities).

3. We should not ignore the fact that the discussion on strategic planning initiatives at the local level took place during the 13th Palestinian Government led by prime minister Salam Fayyad. Mr. Fayyad was promoting planning and setting priorities at sectoral and national levels through developing the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2008-2010 (PRDP), and the *Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State: Programme of the 13th Palestinian Government* document which was known as 'Fayyad Two-Year Plan'. Many informants believe that this environment of national planning helped to creat the conditions and to encourage the MoLG to enhance institution building in local governments through the use of strategic planning.

4. The existence of supportive leadership at the MoLG also facilitated the adoption and implementation of strategic planning. The political leadership of the Minister of Local Government at that time, Dr. Khaled Qawasmi (and complemented by the technical leadership of the Assistant Deputy Minister for Engineering and Planning, Dr. Tawfiq Budairi) and

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[57] Interview with NI07; NI09; NI10; NI11; ID07; and ID06.

his team) were mentioned by a number of informants as a key factor for moving the strategic planning initiatives forward at a national level.

5. Donors from Western countries as well played a significant role in conceptualizing strategic planning and then supporting its implementation. The motivation for those donors helped to launch and push forward the strategic planning for local governments. Technical advisors who worked with donors and international agencies came from developed countries with more developed local governance systems and where strategic planning at the community level was common practice. Those experts thought that promoting and applying strategic planning tools and mechanisms to Palestinian local governments would contribute to the development of a better Palestinian society. With this, donors believed that encouraging local governments to plan and set development priorities would help in channelling funds to support community-needed projects.

The increased awareness of strategic planning's importance as a vehicle for improving the performance local governments, led the Directorate of Urban Planning at the MoLG (together with the MoP, the MDLF, and other key stakeholders) to introduce a Policy Note; the 'Strategic Development and Investment Planning for Palestinian Cities and Towns' (SDIP). This came alongside the GIZ/CHF promotion and application of the concept in a number of municipalities in West Bank, as well as the development of self-motivated strategic plans of Beita and Maithaloun. SDIP has been developed and adopted as a new policy that sets the standards for preparing and implementing strategic plans for Palestinian cities and towns (MoLG, 2009a). In addition, a manual to assist cities and towns on how to prepare, implement, and update SDIPs has been prepared and piloted in four municipalities and one Joint Service Council (MoLG, 2009b). Following the piloting phase, the Palestinian prime minister Dr. Salam Fayyad on 29 September 2009 officially launched the SDIP Policy Note, by almost all Palestinian mayors, with wide representation from Palestinian civil society and major development agencies in the country. In 2011, the manual modified and accompanied by additional publications, such as tools and examples booklet, the guidelines for awareness rising for the SDIP, and the terms of reference for contracting consultancy companies.

The SDIP Policy Note and the manual were prepared by a National Working Group for SDIP (NWSDIP). This group was formed by Ministerial Decree on March 2008 and chaired by MoLG, and included members of Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD); MDLF; and the mayors of Beita and

Maithaloun, where GIZ served as a technical advisor. Other members were invited to join the meeting of the NWSDIP, but it was not until 2011 when JICA and Global Communities (formerly CHF International) started to participate regularly in these meetings.

The SDIP guiding documents refer to the SDIP as a participatory form of development planning process and instrument that intends to steer local development using an integrated, multi-themed and multi-stakeholder approach. It is a tool for the setting of development objectives and priorities and tackling issues critical to local communities in a participatory and integration-based manner where all community stakeholders are involved (MoLG, 2009a; MoLG, 2009b).

The listed key objectives of introducing SDIP process at the local level are (MoLG, 2009a, p.4):
- Promote a decentralization process
- Improve governance and decision-making process at the local level
- Improve responsiveness to emerging community needs
- Enhance services delivery at the local level
- Promote rational local economic and social development
- Set the basis of an integrated development approach that ensures integrated development among different governing levels

The rationale behind introducing the SDIP at the local level was to achieve improved quality of life for Palestinians by introducing a modern planning approach that would embrace the following principles (MoLG, 2009a, p.5):
- Responsive to community development needs and priorities and is able to improve service delivery at the local level
- Strategic in terms of identifying and tackling crucial community issues while utilizing available resources and capacities
- Integrated in terms of considering social, economic, and environmental issues.
- Integrated in terms of higher planning system
- Inclusive in terms of community involvement in decision-making process
- Framework for immediate actions by all community stakeholders
- Built on good governance principles, where participation, accountability and transparency are integral in the design

The SDIP was designed in a five-stage process (MoLG, 2009b):
- Phase One: Where are we now? Preparation and Analysis

- Phase Two: Where do we want to go? Strategic Development Framework
- Phase Three: How do we get there? Implementation and Monitoring Plans
- Phase Four: What will make us reach our destination? Implementation
- Phase Five: Did we reach our destination? Evaluation and Update

The implementation of these five phases consisted of 12 steps as illustrated in Figure 5-4. The SDIP manual provides detailed instructions on how to implement the various steps of the SDIP. It also includes tools and templates to be used by the community representatives during the planning process.
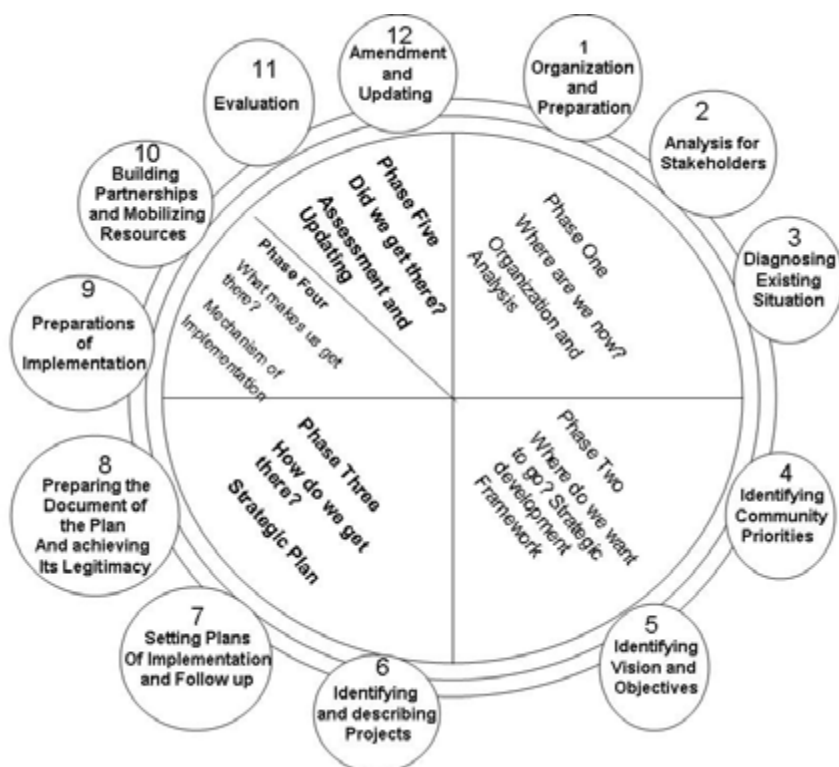
Figure 5-4: SDIP phases and steps

Source: (MoLG, 2009b)

The ultimate output of the SDIP process is a *Strategic Development Framework and Development Plan* document. The aim of the Strategic Development Framework is to steer local development, where local stakeholders in the community (civil society, private sector, etc.), would use the SDIP as the main development

reference. The SDIP is a four-year plan that would steer the work of the local government unit and would comprise the following:

1. Community Diagnosis of the following thematic areas (i.e. sectors planning and Zoning, Social Services, Local Economy, Public Health and Environment, Utility and Infrastructure Services, Security and Disaster Management, and Culture and Sports
2. Priority and strategic development issues (Thrusts)
3. Community development vision (8 - 12 years)
4. Development objectives in line with the priority strategic issues (3-4 years)
5. Performance indicators at the level of the development objectives (3-4 years)

The preparation of the SDIP encourages the participation of local community and other stakeholders through the formulation of several committees and working groups, including the Strategic Development Planning Committee, the Institutional Building Committee, the Core Planning Team, the stakeholders Committee, and the specialized working committees. The public is given the opportunity to discuss, review, and endorse the planning products in two public meetings. The first takes place at the beginning of the planning process to discuss the community diagnostic report and identify development priorities to set the stage for the working teams to develop the plan accordingly. The second takes place at the end of the planning process where the SDIP is presented to the community for endorsement (MoLG, 2009b).

The implementation of the SDIP approach was done in two phases[58]:

1. Piloting Phase: where the National Working Group for SDIP used the support of local experts to develop the first draft of the SDIP Manual. The draft manual was then tested in the four municipalities of Qabatiya, Qabalan, Bani Na'im, and Al 'Eizariya. Lessons learned from these pilots were then used to produce and launch the first version of the manual.

2. Roll-out Phase: Once the SDIP Policy Note and manual have been prepared and launched, the implementation of SDIPs at the national level start in two stages:
   a. The first to ensure consistent financing of municipal investment priorities, based on SDIPs, the MDLF and MoLG have mobilized

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[58] Interview with NI02.

development partners to harmonize efforts, share resources, and support the SDIP concept. One aspect of these efforts is linking the MDLF financing to municipalities to the performance-based criteria and methodology (i.e. the Grant Allocation Mechanism) by listing the SDIP as one of the criteria for municipalities to graduate in the ranking system. Moreover, one of the conditions for municipalities to receive investment funds from MDLF was that the supported projects must be selected based on a SDIP when such a plan is available, and community consultations, when SDIP is not available[59].

b. After putting the previous conditions and criteria in place, the second phase sees the MDLF, JICA, and Global Communities (GC) providing support to municipalities for the preparation of SDIPs. From 2009 to the end of 2014, all municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza have already developed their SDIPs [60].

A comprehensive, rigorous evaluation of the SDIP as a national approach has not been done yet, which makes it difficult to assess whether the SDIP as a planning and service delivery tool has been effective in achieving its objectives. However, several reports were produced by MDLF, MoLG, and GIZ that looked at various aspects of the SDIP processes, outputs, and institutionalization (for example: (B.U.S and HOPE, 2009; Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011; Musleh, 2014). These assessments highlighted areas of risk that need to be tackled, as well as providing a number of recommendations for improving the concept and implementation of the SDIP.

5.6   Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented a detailed description of the various types of Palestinian planning systems including the two main types of planning: physical and strategic.

As discussed in this chapter, the policies and practices of the previous central authorities have created mistrust between the individual citizen and local government. The absence of a regular democratic practice through elections, and

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[59] This condition was then modified after rolling out the SDIPs to all municipalities where it became a requirement to have the requested projects as part of the existing SDIP of each municipality.

[60] Data obtained from MoLG database on 12 March 2015.

involvement of citizens in the planning and decision-making as well as the limited resources available to local governments contributed to the mistrust between local governments and citizens.

The recent initiatives to reform and improve planning systems and practices by the various parties (including the government, civil society, and donors) aim at bridging the gap between local governments and their constituents. These also aimed to empower local governments to become more effective and responsive within a challenging environment.

The national approach to promote and support SDIPs within local governments, which has been on-going for a few years at the time of writing, is an important step toward enhanced plan-making concepts and practices. Given the complexity of the conditions, however, that surround local governments in Palestine, as well as the novelty of the SDIP, experience necessitates a deeper look at SDIP effectiveness, achievements, and its shortcomings. This will be undertaken in the next two chapters. The research also aims at identifying the determining and enabling factors that influence the process of making, implementing and realizing strategic plans for municipalities.

Chapter 6
Case studies of Independently-initiated Strategic Plans

> Fostering leadership capacity early on is critical for meaningful engagement in the planning process, as the lead actor has the greatest incentives to buy in, and to generate buy-in, to the process.
>
> *In (CIC, 2011, page 13)*

The first case study chapter presents the experience of two cities (i.e. Beita and Nablus) that began strategic planning on their own. This chapter is divided into two parts, each focuses on one case, and starts by outlining the significance of each case and why it is different from other municipalities (Sections 6.1.1 and 6.2.1). The chapter goes on to present a detailed description of each case including its history, socio-economic conditions, and elements of its fragility. This chapter then seeks to examine the strategic planning process, its elements and its outcomes. More specifically, the role of leadership, motivation, and the degree of buy-in were investigated for each case in light of the underlining research questions and hypotheses.

6.1   The Case of Beita Municipality

The case of the City of Beita offers an example of one of the first independently-initiated strategic plans in Palestine. Beita can be categorized as a mid-sized rural town that is known for trade. It suffered from restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities and Israeli settler's due to its proximity to the larger City of Nablus. Most Western donors boycotted the municipality after the election of an businessman mayor as part of a municipal council that was dominated by Hamas. Nonetheless this motivated the mayor and his team to look to strategic planning as a means for improving municipal services, to regain legitimacy, and mobilize financial resources. The Beita municipality has experienced two types of strategic

planning. The first was internally driven by the mayor and his team, while the second plan was externally driven by the national planning approach of SDIP. The case explores the role of different types of leadership (entrepreneur vs. traditional leader) in the initiation, formation, and implementation of strategic planning.

The research of the Beita case was based on review of documents, along with information gathered through interviews and focus groups. A total of twenty-two citizens participated in two focus groups meetings, and twelve members of the core planning teams were interviewed during the course of this study. Furthermore, data obtained from interviews with external stakeholders enriched the description and analysis of this case.

Description of the Case

The town of Beita is located in the Nablus governorate about thirteen kilometres southeast of the city of Nablus. Beita enjoys a strategic location where it lies at the cross roads between the Cities of Jenin to the north, Hebron to the south, Tulkarm to the west and Jericho to the east. While the total area of Beita's land is about 17,622 donums[61], only 3,693 donums are included in the existing master plan (Team, 2011a).

According to official data obtained from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Beita in 2016 was 11,017 of which 5,728 were male and 5,289 were female (PCBS, 2016e). There were 1,576 households registered living in 1,739 housing units (PCBS, 2008).

Figure 6-1 shows the location and borders of Beita.

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[61] 1 donum =0.1 hectare
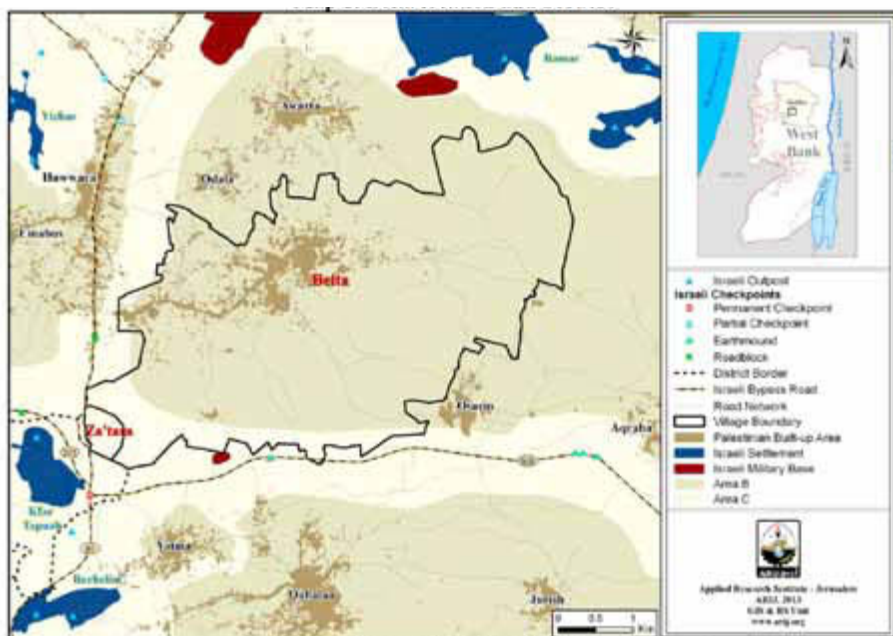
Figure 6-1: Beita City location and borders

Source: (ARIJ, 2014)

6.1.1   History of Beita

The town of Beita was named after the Arabic word "بيت" for 'home', as it was a place of safety for travellers who travel from the north, south, and east of Palestine (Al-Dabbagh, 1965). The establishment of the community dates back to the Canaanite era.

Similar to the rest of the localities in Palestine, Beita was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in 1517. In 1596, it appeared in the official Ottoman tax registers as part of the *Nahiya* of Jabal Qubal of the *Liwa* of Nablus. At that time the total population of the town was fifty households (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, 1977).

In 1838, the American biblical explorers Edward Robinson and Eli Smith mentioned Beita as a "large village" (Robinson and Smith, 1841a). Then in 1882, the Palestine Exploration Fund's Survey of western Palestine described Beita as *"A large village, with a kind of suburb to the south, near which are ancient tombs. It is supplied by wells, and surrounded by olives. It stands upon the hills east of the Milkhnah plain, and is the capital of the disaccording to the district named from it"* (Conder et al., 1882, p.288).

According to the first census carried out by the British Mandate authorities on 23 October 1922, Beita had a population of 883, all Muslims (Barron, 1923). The population increased to 1,194, living in 286 houses at the time of the 1931 census (Mills, 1932). By 1945 Beita had a population of 1,580, all of whom were Arabs living on 17,542 donums of land, according to an official land and population survey of 1945 (Hadawi, 1970).

Following the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and the signing of the Armistice Agreements[62] between the newly established State of Israel and neighbouring Arab countries in 1949, Beita was placed under Jordanian rule. After the 1967 war between Israel and the Arabs, the town came under Israeli military control until the signing of Oslo Agreement in 1994 and the establishment of the PNA.

6.1.2 Economic activities, infrastructure and services

The economy in Beita depends mainly on the trade sector, which employs 30 percent of the town's workforce (Team, 2011a). Several services are available to the city's residents including: water, wastewater treatment, solid waste collection, transportation, health and, education.

Table 6-1 provides a snapshot of the key indicators related to the city of Beita economic activities, infrastructure and basic services.

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[62] The 1949 Armistice Agreements are a set of agreements signed during 1949 between Israel and neighbouring Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. The agreements ended the official hostilities of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and established Armistice Demarcation Lines between Israeli forces and the forces in Jordanian-held West Bank, also known as the Green Line BAILEY, S. D. 1977. Cease-Fires, Truces, and Armistices in the Practice of the UN Security Council. *The American Journal of International Law*, 71, 461-473.

Table 6-1: Beita city key indicators as of 2016

Key indicators	Value
PCBS code	151215
Total area (donum)	17,622.020
Population	11,017
Number of housing units	1,724
Number of employees in the municipality	15 permanent employees, and 14 temporary employees (2016)
Number of enterprises	156 (2016)
Length of internal roads (KM)	
Paved	18.3
Unpaved	13.6
Electricity coverage	99 percent
Source of electricity	Israeli Electricity Company
Telecommunication network coverage	80 percent
Availability of public water network	Yes
Water source	Israeli company (Mekorot)
Water network coverage	99 percent
Quantity of water supplied (cubic metres/year)	420,000
Rate of water supply per capita litres/day	114 litres/day
Availability of wastewater network	No
Quantity of wastewater generated per day (cubic metres)	672
Number of solid sates containers	200

Key indicators	Value
Quantity of solid waste produced (tons per day)	10.6
Public Schools	8
Health Centres	3
Economic Activities (share in employment)	
Trade sector	30 percent
Government or other public employees sector	25 percent
Israeli labour market	20 percent
Industry	15 percent
Agriculture sector	15 percent
Unemployment rate *	17 percent
Active labour force**	30.7 percent
Employed ***	81.7 percent

Notes:

* Underemployment exists when a person's employment is inadequate in relation to alternative employment, account being taken of his/her occupational skills (PCBS, 2015a).

** The economically active population (Labour Force) consists of all persons 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed (PCBS, 2015a).

*** Employed refers to: All persons 15 years and over who were working at a paid job or business for at least one hour during the reference week, or who did not work, but held a job or owned business from which they were temporarily absent (because of illness, vacation, temporarily stoppage, or any other reason) during the reference week (PCBS, 2015a).

Source: Data was obtained by the researcher from various sources including: Beita Municipality Files (accessed in March 2016), (Team, 2011a),(PCBS, 2013b), (PCBS, 2007), (PCBS, 2012a),and (ARIJ, 2014a)

6.1.3 **Local government in Beita**

A village council governed Beita during the Jordanian rule period. The council resigned in 1982 in protest against the establishment of the 'village leagues' by the Israeli occupation authorities. The village council was reconstituted by the PNA in 1996, and one year after it was elevated to municipal status. The members of the municipal council were appointed by the central government until the first democratic local elections took place on the 23 December 2004.

Although the town was historically dominated by Fatah Faction (Lockman and Beinin, 1989), the municipal elections resulted in a political shift at the local level toward the Islamic Movement (Hamas) when Mr. Arab ash-Shurafa, a member of Hamas was elected as mayor[63]. Following his election, Mr. ash-Shurafa was arrested by the Israeli authorities for several months during 2006, but remained the mayor of the municipality until 2011. In 2012, when the 2nd democratic local elections were held in West Bank, a new mayor and council were appointed by acclamation (i.e. won automatically without competition).

A total of 30 employees work in the municipality's different units including: Internal Audit, Procurement, Projects and Engineering, and Financial and Administration (Beita, 2012a). In line with the local government's services and responsibilities listed in the Palestinian Local Councils Law No 1(PNA, 1997), Beita municipality is responsible for providing a number of services to the residents of Beita, including[64]:

- The establishment and maintenance of the drinking water and electricity networks.
- Waste collection, street cleaning and social services.
- Road rehabilitation, construction and paving.
- Organization of the processing and issuance of construction licenses.
- Provision of offices for governmental institutions.
- Protection of historical and archeological sites.
- Implementation of projects and studies for the town.
- Provision of the public markets.
- Provision of educational kindergartens.

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[63] Interview with MU27.

[64] Interview with MU30.

6.1.4 Fragility of Beita: Impact of the Israeli occupation

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed on 28th of September 1995 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Government of Israel, Beita was divided into Area B, and Area C. About 89 percent of the town's total area were classified as Area B, where the PNA has complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to retain overriding responsibility for security. The rest of the town's area (approximately 11 percent of the total area) was classified as Area C, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory (Team, 2011a). The municipality doesn't have planning and construction authority over Area C unless agreed or authorized by the Israeli Civil Administration. The majority of Beita's population resides in Area B while most of the land lies within Area C.

Although there are no Jewish settlements and Israeli military camps located on the lands of Beita, it is still surrounded by several Jewish settlements, Israeli camps and military checkpoints which restrict the expansion of the town as well as movement and economic activity. Israeli forces have also set up checkpoints and pedestrian guards on road No. 60 located to the west of the town, a segment under full Israeli control (ARIJ, 2014a).

During the Second Intifada (2001-2005), Israeli Military Forces established several military checkpoints and cement block barriers at the entrance of the town of Beita, especially on the western side near 'Huwwara' main road No. 60. Despite Israeli forces reducing their presence in this area and their control over movements, Palestinians from the end of the Second Intifada "Za'atara", checkpoint- to the south of Beita, is still in place where Palestinians are still subjected to stop and search procedures. Over the last decade, military checkpoints in the area have continued to have a negative impact on the daily lives of residents. Checkpoints continue to hinder freedom of movement and have severed links between the city of Nablus and the surrounding villages as well as curtailing the connection between the villages and their agricultural lands. This has resulted, especially when checkpoints are closed, in heavy economic losses for the residents of Beita as they are forced to travel further distances, thus taking more time to reach their agricultural land. Moreover, Israel has confiscated land to the west and south side of the town to construct military and security facilities[65].

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[65] Interview with MU28.

Strategic planning

Beita was among the first Palestinian municipalities to engage in a strategic planning process as a self-initiative, which was a surprise to donors, and government agencies. As one informant from the donor community noted:

> *"Before 2007, the cities of Beita and Maithaloun started the strategic planning process before the national concept of SDIP came into light. We were surprised when we discovered that Beita mayor who was not familiar with the concept of strategic development planning formulated working groups, conducted stakeholder's analysis, and assessed sectors, which then resulted in a participatory strategic plan. He relied on university students in the strategic planning process. This experience was distinctive and strengthened the strategic planning concept … We should engage in real life experiments before we start thinking of or formulating general policies"*[66]

Prior to the first democratic local elections of 2004, there was no strategic plan for Beita neither as a municipality nor as a town. The work of the municipal council was similar to other Palestinian municipalities – ad-hoc, and day-by-day service delivery and problem-solving style[67]. For instance, the municipality did not submit its annual budget to MoLG prior to 2006, which indicates weak financial planning and management at that time.

The strategic planning process of Beita municipality could be divided into two parts: the first part included the first 'Ten-Year strategic Plan' which extended from 2005 up until 2011 when the second strategic plan was developed following the national SDIP approach. The subsequent sections address the various elements that characterize each strategic plan, and highlights the main differences between the two.

To situate the strategic planning process of Beita within the broader historical context of local governments in Palestine, Figure 6-2 presents a time-line of key events and milestones to relate the use of strategic planning to the main events that influence the present case.

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[66] Interview with PE02.

[67] Interview with MU28.
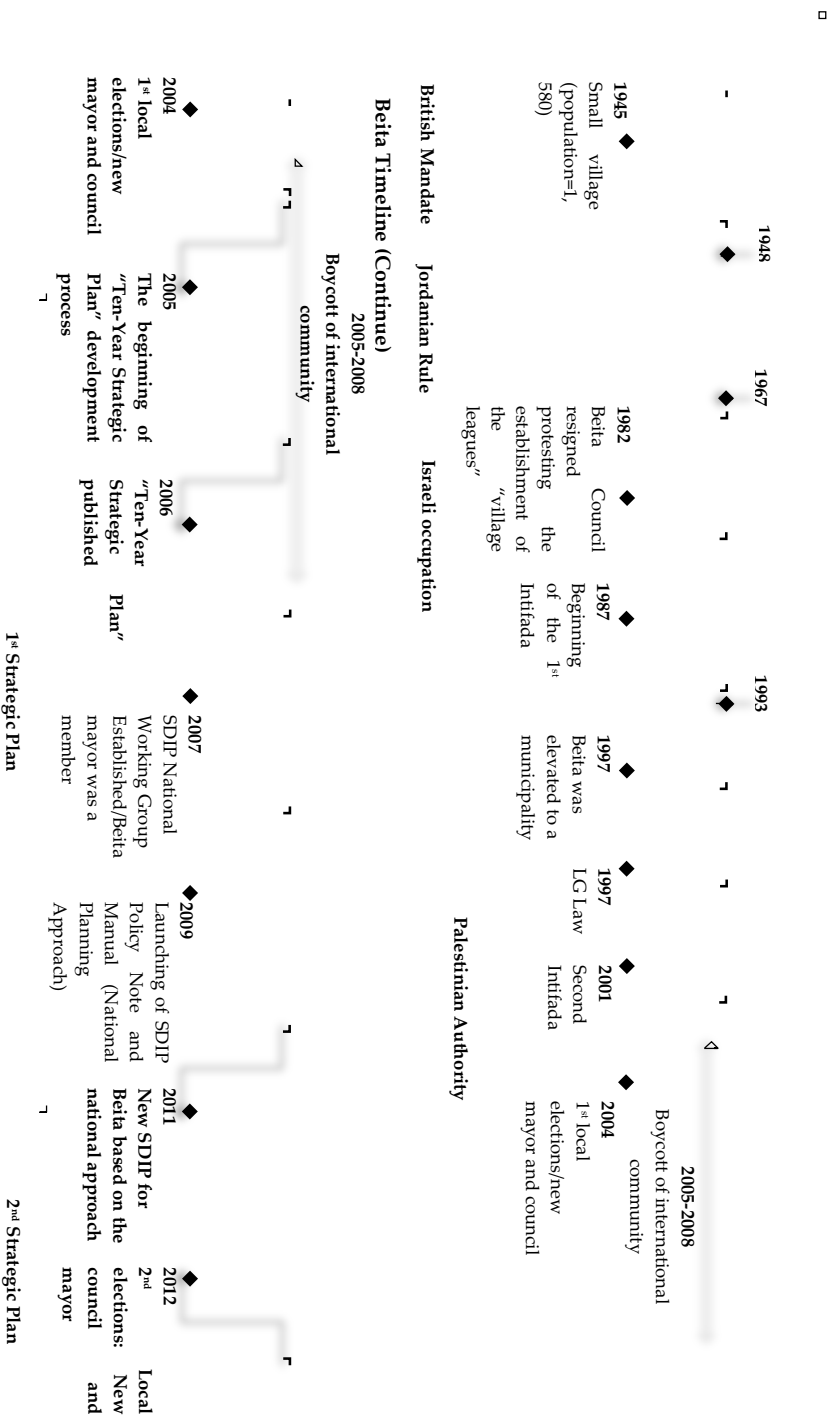
Figure 6-2 Beita Timeline

Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review.

Beita Timeline

British Mandate — Jordanian Rule — Israeli occupation — Palestinian Authority

- **1945** Small village (population=1, 580)
- **1948**
- **1967**
- **1982** Beita Council resigned protesting the establishment of the "village leagues"
- **1987** Beginning of the 1st Intifada
- **1993**
- **1997** Beita was elevated to a municipality
- **1997** LC Law
- **2001** Second Intifada
- **2004** 1st local elections/new mayor and council
- Boycott of international community **2005-2008**

Beita Timeline (Continue)

- **2004** 1st local elections/new mayor and council
- **2005** The beginning of "Ten-Year Strategic Plan" development process
- **2006** "Ten-Year Strategic Plan" published

1st Strategic Plan

Boycott of international community **2005-2008**

- **2007** SDIP National Working Group Established/Beita mayor was a member
- **2009** Launching of SDIP Policy Note and Manual (National Planning Approach)
- **2011** New SDIP for Beita based on the national approach
- **2012** Local elections: New council and mayor

2nd Strategic Plan

The 'Ten-Year Strategic Plan'

Motivation

The 'Ten-Year Strategic Plan' document cites the scarcity of financial resources as the primary rationale of the plan. The plan also had the intention, within this, to address the accumulation and overlap of needs and services and manifested a willingness on the part of the municipality to engage the local community and a motivation to find a clear and comprehensive vision (Beita, 2006). Probably the overriding motive behind the introduction of strategic planning, as cited by a number of informants, was the fact that donors ceased to fund and support elected local councils affiliated with Hamas or the left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)[68]. Beita was among the local governments where Hamas won a majority of the seats on the local council. This in turn encouraged the mayor and the council to look for funding alternatives and to explore solutions to the numerous challenges that they encountered.

> "*After the siege that was imposed on municipalities controlled by a certain political faction, the Beita mayor looked for alternatives including partnering with private sector and investing money for development work inside the town. This whole revitalization and improvement of roads and infrastructures happened during the period of dryness and blockade when there was no aid from donors. All these achievements were the result of the 10-Year Strategic Plan*"[69].

Even donors who could not work with or support the municipality at that time pointed out to the impact of this boycott on strategic planning.

> "*None of the municipalities that we worked with had the capacity or incentive to develop and implement strategic plans on its own. However, Beita municipality had formulated a independently-initiated strategic plan, which was one of the best experiences at that time. The motivation behind that was merely political as Beita was suffering from donors boycott due to the affiliation of its mayor with a certain political group*"[70]

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[68] Interviews with: ID08; PE05; and PE02.

[69] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014

[70] Interview with ID08.

Furthermore, the leadership of the mayor was an important driving force for starting the planning process.

> *"Shaikh Arab had the biggest role in initiating work and activities in Beita including the strategic plan while other municipalities were suffered from inactiveness and laziness. He was a leader and an entrepreneur although hasty in making decisions sometimes"[71]*

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, the majority of the informants (65 percent) ranked the mayors leadership, followed by the donor boycott (35 percent) as the driving factor behind initiating the strategic plan process. Figure 6-3 illustrates the main drivers for Beita' 10 Ten-Year Strategic Plan.
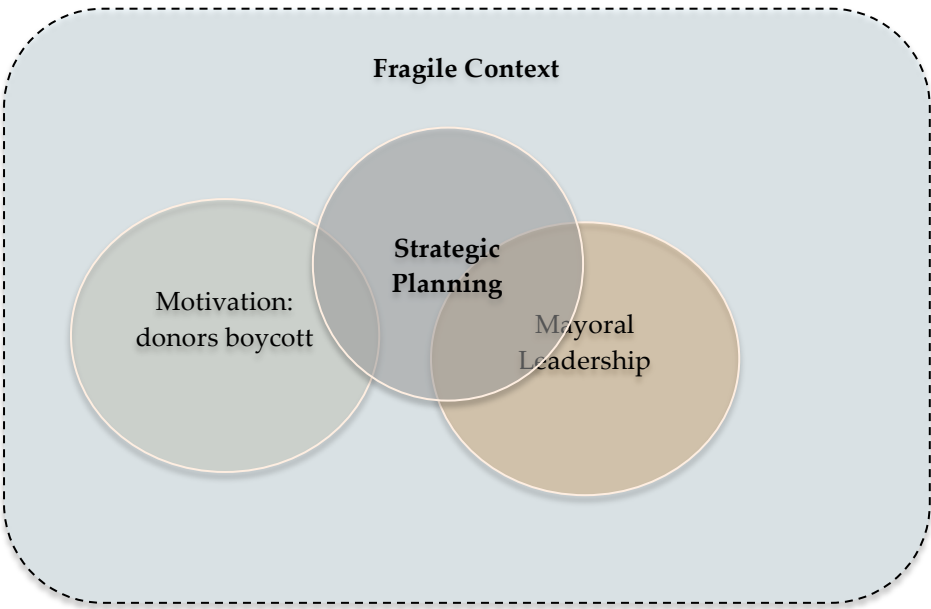
Figure 6-3 Drivers for Beita's Ten-Year Strategic Plan

Source: Author compilation based on interviews with focus groups discussion

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[71] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

Description of the strategic planning process

As mentioned previously, after the 2004 elections, the municipality was boycotted by most donors due to the affiliation of the mayor and some council members with Hamas[72].

The newly elected mayor of Beita Mr. Arab Ash-Shurafa possessed a "non-traditional way of strategic and development thinking"[73]. The mayor realized that "it won't be possible to perform his duties without a comprehensive understanding of the local community issues and needs". He formed a core team consisting of the municipality engineer, a council member, and a community activist to help him in this task. Data obtained from the members of this team reveals that the initial thinking of the team was limited to establishing a database and did not envisage developing any sort of strategic plans. The team operated without prior knowledge or experience on strategic planning and relied on learning by doing. The makers of the plan (i.e. the mayor and his team) admit that they did not have any previous knowledge of the principles and various methods related to strategic planning and that their ultimate goal did not include a full-fledged strategy. However, the 'snow ball' effect of the process unintentionally led to a strategic plan that followed commonly accepted mechanisms for formulating strategic urban plans as outlined in relevant planning literature (see Chapter 2). The 'Ten-Year Strategic Plan' was built based on the following mechanisms:

1. Comprehensive analysis of data.
2. Identification of needs and priorities.
3. Division of tasks and responsibilities.
4. Setting the time frame.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation
6. Preparation of detailed studies to be submitted to donors.

The strategic plan was then evolved throughout the process. The process of developing 'Ten-Year Strategic Plan' entailed the four following parts (Beita, 2006):

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[72] Many donors could not deal with the elected local councils in 2004-2006 that included members or supporters from Palestinian groups/parties (such as Hamas or PFLP), which are considered "terrorist organizations" by those donors' countries. As a result, many municipalities were banned from receiving donors aid, and all communication with these councils were stopped.

[73] Interview with MU31.

1. Establishing a general database: Among the first tasks the mayor and the council worked on was the establishment of a comprehensive electronic general database of the town's population. The aim of collecting a wide range of information and data about the town was to better understand the current state of the towns population and needs which also would help identify needs and priorities at a later stage. This task was completed over four months courtesy of a group of thirty-seven university student volunteers from the town itself. The database was composed of four parts:

    a. A comprehensive population survey: which was carried out by visiting all households in the town and gathering information (through questionnaires) on: age, gender, education, employment status, income, housing conditions, properties, agriculture, people with disabilities, health, services received from the municipality, etc.
    b. A study of the public opinion on municipal services: to grasp the local community needs, problems, and views in relation to the services provided by the municipality. The study focused on three main areas: the vegetables market, public properties and facilities, citizens, municipalities, and institutions.
    c. An education study: it looked at the levels of educational attainment as well as the quality of education in the town.
    d. An inventory of community organizations and public facilities: targeted all community organizations to assess the needs, and area of work of these organizations.
2. The comprehensive field inventory and diagnostic: a team of engineers, and technicians conducted a field study to assess the current facts and needs in relation to the town infrastructure including: roads, electricity, water, and wastewater.
3. Public workshop: this included all active organizations within the town, in addition to experts, and community dignitaries. Minutes of the workshop – reviewed by the researcher – indicated that more than 60 participants attended the workshop representing various entities and groups. About 30 percent of them were women, and 55 percent were from the youth generation (i.e. less than 45 years old). The discussion of the workshop focused on "real community needs" and the importance of having a "strategy" to address these needs. At the workshop, the idea of formulating a 'Ten-Years Strategic Plan' was first mentioned by the mayor, himself [74], and was then echoed by the attendance.

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[74] Minutes of public workshop, 13 June 2005; and interview with MU31.

4. In-depth interviews and site visits: Interviews have been conducted with experts and dignitaries from the town as well as the surrounding communities. This was combined with site visits to specific locations in the town.

Based on these four things, the mayor and his core team, in isolation from the local community, developed what is known as the 'Ten-Year Strategic Plan'. This was the first strategic planning attempts for Beita as well as one of the first strategic planning initiatives at the local government level in Palestinian. The plan took about 12 months to be formulated and was approved by the municipal council regardless of the council members' political affiliation and interests[75].

Buy-in and extent of participation in plan-making

Despite some attempts to engage the local community during the preparation of the plan, the production and finalization of the plan itself was undertaken only by the mayor and the core team without any communication with the community at large. This limited involvement of the community affected the ownership and awareness of the plan and its outputs. The mayor himself admitted that:

> "*The community did not feel the value of the strategic plan and did not realize that the plan was the driving force for all the achievements and projects that we did. This was due to the lack of consultation with the local community during the drafting of the plan and the limited communication of our decisions and actions*"[76]

This lack of communication was also mentioned by the city engineer as one of the main weaknesses in the planning process;

> "*The element of the local community was not properly considered at that time [plan drafting]. The process was not systematic enough as it was prepared based on the guidance and ideas of the mayor, who came from the private sector's mentality of profit. Neither the local community nor the municipality staff were aware of the content of the plan*"[77]

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[75] Council meeting minutes of 16 January 2016.

[76] Interview with MU27.

[77] Interview with MU30.

Looking at the minutes of the one public meeting that took place during the planning process, we found that about 60 participants attended the workshop representing several local organizations as well as family clans. The discussion was dominated by the mayor who exercised a "leadership role" in promoting the idea of a long-term plan for the town. The data obtained from the interviews and focus groups indicated that community involvement was narrow, both in terms of when engagement took place and the quality of community participation. During the twelve-month preparation period of the plan, only one half-day public meeting took place, and the drafting of the plan itself was done in isolation of the community.

The mayor himself believes that a major weakness of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan was the fact that it remained limited to him, a few council members, and the technical staff who worked on the plan formulation. The local community had little idea about its elements and was not aware of the status of its implementation. The lack of engagement of the local community in the plan formulation affected the sense of community ownership.

> *"The lack of community awareness and commitment to the plan could be linked to the limited community participation during the planning process. The plan was prepared based on the ideas and directions of the mayor. The plan was not well enough known to the municipality staff or to the community"*[78]

On the Likert Scale, community representatives (two focus groups meetings, with a total of 22 participants), the mayor and the core planning team (total of five members) ranked the community participation in the development of the 10-Year Plan as low (poor or fair). Table 6-2 represents the results of the Likert Scale.

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[78] Interview with MU30.

Table 6-2 How do you assess the *participation* of the community in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Mayor	☐	☒ (1)	☐	☐	☐
Core planning team (N= 5)	☐ (1)	☒ (4)	☐	☐	☐
Focus group participants (N = 22)	☒ (18)	☐ (3)	☐ (1)	☐	☐

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=27).

This lack of awareness and commitment led to discontinuity of the planning process when the second strategic plan was developed for Beita based on the national planning approach (SDIP);

> "*Unfortunately, after I left office, the municipality prepared a four-year strategic plan in cooperation with MDLF without taking the first plan into consideration. The people engaged in the second plan did not know anything about the first one and there was no knowledge accumulation. The absence of the man who was behind the idea led to weak interaction with the plan. The lack of common vision between the municipal council, staff, and the community weakened the plan. There was no real institutionalization of the plan*"[79].

Content of the plan

The stated vision of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan is: "*Through unity, participation, patience, and love...we cross to a better future*".

According to the data obtained from the interviews and the focus group, this vision was driven by the mayor himself and was not a true reflection of the at large community's aspirations. A review of the municipal council minutes from the year 2015 reveals' that the discussion about the plan itself including the formulation of

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[79] Interview with MU27.

the vision was led by the mayor with the support of the council member who was part of the planning core team. The council endorsed this vision with no changes in January 2016.

To achieve the vision, the Plan document outlined eight main objectives to be accomplished through a number of initiatives and projects (Beita, 2006). These objectives include:
1. Achieve national unity based on the higher interest of the community; accept and respect differences
2. Strengthen the positive human relations among town citizens on the basis of cooperation and consultation
3. Reach equity in service distribution and delivery
4. Implement investment projects to provide a sustainable income that covers the needs and expenditures of the town
5. Improve and develop municipal services
6. Forge partnership between public and private sectors built on cooperation, mutual interest, and environmental protection
7. Adopt sustainable projects that have a developmental dimension.
8. Empower the community, engage it in decision-making, and realize principles of transparency and fairness

To operationalize the plan, several projects were identified under 14 sectors and community services. The total estimated cost of the projects included in the plan exceeded USD 16 million. The analysis of the plan shows that a large percentage of the budget was allocated to infrastructure (36.1 percent), and education (26.2 percent). Table 6-3 provides the breakdown of the Plan budget.

Table 6-3 Sectors and budgets of the 10-Year Strategic Plan of Beita

	Sector	Total budget, 2006-2016 (USD)	Percentage from the total budget
1-	Infrastructure sector	5,865,000	36.1 percent
	Water	905,000	5.6 percent
	Electricity	1,460,000	9.0 percent
	Roads	2,000,000	12.3 percent
	Sanitation	1,500,000	9.2 percent
2-	Urban planning sector	NA	NA
3-	Education Sector	4,257,924	26.2 percent
4-	Health sector	200,000	1.2 percent
5-	Environmental Sector	232,500	1.4 percent
6-	Industrial sector	1,020,000	6.3 percent
7-	Commercial sector	2,150,000	13.2 percent
8-	Agriculture sector	1,600,000	9.9 percent
9-	Entertainment and tourism sector	525,000	3.2 percent
10-	Cultural sector	390,000	2.4 percent
11-	Social sector	NA	NA
12-	Housing sector	NA	NA
13-	Investment and development sector	NA	NA
14-	Media and outreach sector	NA	NA
Total		**16,240,424**	**100 percent**

Source: (Beita, 2006)

Due to the scarcity of financial resources at that time, the USD 16 million was distributed over a ten year time frame (2006-2016) of the plan (i.e. USD 1.6 million annually). Despite this attempt for financial planning, securing the required budget was still a challenge for a municipality that had no access to international donor money. Thus, the municipality adopted a "diversification approach of financial resources, with the assumption that: 20 percent would come from the municipality's own revenues, 20 percent, would be received from the government and donors, 20 percent through partnerships with the private sector, and the rest

from safe and legitimate loans. The later (private sector and loans) were used to finance the farmer's market project as well as the electricity project.

Leadership role

The case of the first strategic plan of Beita is a clear example of the significance of the local leadership in initiating, driving, and steering the process of strategic planning.

Internal and external stakeholders recognized the conspicuous leadership role played by the mayor of Beita, in the focus group meetings of Beita citizens, organized by the researcher, the name of the mayor and his active role was referred to as "crucial" at least five times by different participants. Most informants of the focus group agreed that:

> *"Shaikh Arab had the biggest role in initiating work and activities in Beita including the strategic plan while other municipalities suffered from inactiveness and laziness. He was a leader and an entrepreneur although hasty in making decisions sometimes"[80]*

Other internal informants agreed that the biggest and central role was assumed by the mayor. The other members of the core planning team only mirrored the ideas of the mayor[81]. The leadership of the mayor was also noted by external stakeholders, who closely followed the progress of the Beita municipality, including the MoLG, GIZ, and planning experts[82]. This leadership role was apparent from the interview with the mayor himself. As soon as he was elected, he realized that "with inadequate financial resources municipal services still need to be delivered and that these services should be managed and delivered "equally to all citizens and all neighbourhoods". The mounting priorities and needs that faced the council encouraged the mayor to think of the best way to respond to these needs. So, the idea of establishing a comprehensive inventory of the current state of the community and needs was proposed and was eventually developed into a full-fledged strategic plan;

> *"We were faced by numerous priorities and needs that covered all community aspects, which we thought to address in a four-year plan.*

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[80] Focus groups discussion on 16 March 2014.

[81] Interview with MU30, and interview with MU31.

[82] Interviews with NI07, ID06, and PE03.

However, after discussing that with the core team, we realized that this will not be adequate, thus we decided to go for 10-Year Plan"[83]

The influence of the mayor (as a leader) on the content and process of strategic planning was also evident from the data obtained from various sources. This included interviews with external stakeholders, focus group discussions, and people involved in the actual planning itself. This confirms what was reported in the strategic planning literature concerning the importance of leadership in influencing the process, content, and implementation of the strategic plan (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b; Hunter, 2012; Borraz and John, 2004; Martin, 1999).

The involvement of the mayor began in the early stages of the planning process. In the case of Beita, this process could be divided into five stages: (i) the conceptual stage; (ii) the formulation stage; (iii) drafting stage; (iv) finalization stage, and (v) implementation stage. In all of these stages, the mayor was heading the 'planning committee' (i.e. core team) where he acted as a 'mediator' between the plan and the different interests and conflicting priorities in the community (Hulcher, 1973).

The role and engagement of the mayor received high marks by the surveyed informants as shown in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4 Assessment of the *level of involvement* of the mayor in the planning process

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒(1)
Core planning team (N= 5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (5)
Focus group participants (N = 22)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (21)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=27).

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[83] Interview with MU27.

This high degree of involvement resulted in a significant influence in the various stages of planning including formulation, and implementation as shown in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5: **Assessment of the *level of influence* of the mayor in the planning process?**

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N= 5)	☐	☐	☐	☒ (3)	☐ (2)
Focus group participants (N = 22)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (4)	☒ (18)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=27).

The high level of involvement and influence in the planning process were necessary within "local practices of governing" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006) under which the strategic planning took place.

> "*We live in an oriental society that still respects dignitaries. The citizens need to see the mayor on the ground in any event or activity. The presence of the leader among the citizens represents 50 percent of the solution*"[84].

The engagement and influence exerted by the mayor as a local leader supports the relevant literature on leadership. In particular, the specific impact of charismatic local leaders in determining the strength of local initiatives in defining their niche in a spatially broader institutional and economic space (Moulaert et al., 2005). This also supports the perspectives stressing leadership-based creativity which both emphasize the role of key individuals as main drivers to overcome barriers to change and foster innovation (Mumford, 2002).

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[84] Interview with MU27.

"I had a vision and belief that as a leader my key tasks were: to mobilize all financial, human, and logistical resources toward achieving the goal, and to enhance the sense of ownership among citizens through ensuring equity in distribution and implementation"[85]

In looking at the main characteristics possessed by the mayor as a leader, we refer to the perceptions of the leader's character as raised by informants in the interviews and focus group discussions. A number of key words have been repeatedly used by informants which capture the qualities that allowed the mayor to assume a impactful role on the community in general and upon the municipal work in particular. Many of these qualities have basis and grounding in the relevant body of literature on leadership.

Table 6-6 lists the qualities of the style of the mayor in leading the strategic planning process and managing the municipal affairs against the key characteristics of leadership mentioned in the literature. It should be noted that each informant was asked whether or not a characteristic applies to the mayor, and then to rank each quality in accordance to its importance.

Table 6-6: Qualities of the mayor's leadership in the case study

Quality	Number of times mentioned (Number of informants=27)	Rank	Linkage to the case (examples)
Visionary Refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that clarifies the current situation and induces commitment to an even better future (Brown and Anfara, 2003; Jing and Avery, 2011; Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)	5	1	"After elections, the mayor had a non-traditional approach which is had a strategic and developmental aspect"[86] "The mayor had a wide developmental vision" [87]
Openness Openness is one of the top skills of effective leaders which relates to divergent thinking and is	3	3	"Shaikh Arab had the biggest role in initiating the strategic planning process while other municipalities

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[85] Interview with MU27.

[86] Interview with MU31

[87] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

Quality	Number of times mentioned (Number of informants=27)	Rank	Linkage to the case (examples)
strongly linked to creativity (Judge et al., 2002; McCrae, 1987; Yukl et al., 2002)			were suffering from inactiveness and laziness"[88]
Trust Trust refers to a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the trustee (i.e., a leader) (Avolio et al., 2004; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Rousseau et al., 1998).	4	2	"Council members including the mayor were socially accepted, and were selected based on qualification. Since the elections were not based on political electoral lists, Shaikh Arab has been chosen as a trusted, qualified, individual regardless of his political affiliation"[89]
Social intelligence Social intelligence refers to a set of interpersonal competencies, containing two components: (a) awareness of others' needs and problems, and (b) responsiveness to different social situations (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008; Kobe et al., 2001).	2	4	"Shaikh Arab was a respected person from groups in the society, as he had a good understanding of community issues, and willingness to respond to people's needs"[90]
Absorptive capacity Absorptive capacity is the ability to learn which involves the capacity to identify, absorb, and employ new information toward new ends (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Davies and Davies*, 2004) .	4	2	"The mayor possessed a non-traditional way of strategic and development thinking" [91]. He realized that "it won't be possible to perform his duties without a comprehensive understanding of the local community issues and needs"[92].
Capacity to change Refers to the ability define the	5	1	"Because of the challenges that faced the council after

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[88] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

[89] Focus groups discussion on 16 March 2014.

[90] Interview with MU31

[91] Interview with MU31.

[92] Interview with MU27.

Quality	Number of times mentioned (Number of informants=2 7)	Rank	Linkage to the case (examples)
suitable moment influencing, and leading strategic change in organizations (Davies and Davies*, 2004; Higgs and Rowland, 2011) .			elections, the mayor made himself willing to work at any cost by linking the reality with systematic solution and leaving his fingerprints on the municipal work"[93] "The strength of the mayor and his accomplishments made other council member follow his steps"[94]
Managerial wisdom Refers to the capacity to take the right action at the right time (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Malan and Kriger, 1998). Decision-making capacity Refers to the ability to provide a streamlined focus for decision-making in order to provide momentum for change and innovation (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).	2	4	"Shaikh Arab was a leader and an entrepreneur although hasty in making decisions sometimes"[95]
Partnership skills Refers to the ability to act within and beyond the respective personal/family/political circle to introduce or oppose change that affects the community's environment (Greasley and Stoker, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008). Low partisanship Refers to the ability of the leader to be outward looking and not tied to narrow partisan party/family considerations	4	2	"The mayor gained the respect of all groups regardless of his political affiliation. This is because he went beyond political and family limitations and cared only for the collective interest"[96] "During the term of Shaikh Arab, there was no bias against any political party or family. Everyone was working for the municipality's benefit"[97]

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[93] Interview with MU31

[94] Interview with MU28.

[95] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

[96] Focus groups discussion on 16 March 2014.

[97] Interview with MU30.

Quality	Number of times mentioned (Number of informants=27)	Rank	Linkage to the case (examples)
(Greasley and Stoker, 2008).			"Beita was one of the few municipalities that was not affected by the political or social division; There has been collective efforts by all political groups which played a significant role in preparing the strategic plan"[98]
Accessibility Refers to the ability of the leader to be relatively visible to the community, engage with citizens, and offer an accessible form of politics (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).	3	3	"The mayor was successful in making people feel that they are close to him and there is a strong mutual connection between them" [99] "I was -along with Shaikh Arab- present in the field always"[100]

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=27).

One of the unique features of the leadership in Beita was an entrepreneurial mind-set that was new to Palestinian local government at that time. Similar to municipality of Nablus, the mayor of Beita came from a private sector background. This influenced the way these municipalities had dealt with community needs and priorities given the scarcity of financial resources due to the donor blockade of both municipalities.

> "*The leaderships of Beita and Nablus tried to manage the municipal affairs through an economical, and commercial mentality that looked at the costs and benefits in the management of the municipality's work and community needs. Therefore, they were more able to transform the municipality from the traditional service delivery body to a municipality that leads and facilitates local economic and social development in the community. Unfortunately,*

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[98] Focus groups discussion on 16 March 2014.

[99] Interview with MU30.

[100] Interview with MU28.

this method of thinking was stopped as soon as this leadership stepped down[101].

Although the leadership role was dominated by the mayor as an individual, one cannot ignore the fact that a further two forms of leadership emerged during the process of strategic planning development. These roles were assumed by: (i) a supporting council member who provided the political coverage and legitimacy for the plan, and (ii) technical people who brought the technical knowledge and dedication to the process.

> "*Mr. Wasef Mu'alah (i.e. council member) was not involved in the details of the plan, but he provided a crucial coverage due to the high degree of trust in him from other council members. He was one of three people who formed the main axis for preparation of the plan. These are: Nabil Hamdan (i.e. the engineer), Murad Khdair (i.e. the community activist), in addition to Mr. Mu'alah*"[102].

Regarding the degree of involvement of the supporting actors (i.e. the council members and technical team) in the strategic planning process, we notice that the questions related to the role and engagement of those actors received high marks by the participants of the focus groups (total of 22), although lower than the marks that were given to the mayor (Table 6-7).

Table 6-7: Assessment of the focus group participants of the *level of involvement* of the supporting actors in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
Council members	☐	☐	☐ (4)	☒ (17)	☐ (1)
Technical team	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (19)	☐ (2)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on focus groups discussion (total of informants=22).

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[101] Interview with ID01.

[102] Interview with MU27

According to focus group participants, this level of involvement turned into a moderate level of influence in the various stages of planning and spanned formulation, and implementation (Table 6-8).

Table 6-8: Assessment of the *level of influence* of the supporting actors in the planning process?

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
Council member	☐	☐	☒ (15)	☐ (7)	☐
Technical team	☐	☐	☒ (6)	☒ (20)	☐

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on focus groups discussion (total of informants=22).

The moderate level of influence could be attributed to the fact that the mayor dominated the process and was the main driver of the idea and its final output. As mentioned by one informant:

> *"The Ten-Year Strategic Plan was the plan of the mayor with the help of a council member, one municipal staff, and a person who is close to the municipality. It was the ideas of the mayor which were then formulated as a strategic plan with the help of the technical team"*[103]

The complementary roles of these individuals fits within the relevant theories of 'collective leadership' or 'shared leadership'. Here a dynamic interaction influences the strategic planning process had been undertaken among the mayor, council member, engineer, and community activist in order to lead each other to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both (Contractor et al., 2012). As Yukl (1999) asserts, this type of 'collective leadership' is as important as the individual leader's actions (if not more so) in groups and organizations.

Planning outcome

The output of the 'Ten-Year Strategic Plan' process was a document that only circulated internally within the local council and was not communicated properly

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[103] Interview with MU30.

to the local community. The municipality however, did a better job in promoting the plan to outsiders including the government, NGOs and funding agencies. In fact, the preparation of this plan was a major factor in triggering the development of the national planning approach and methodology. This was known as Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) and was promoted by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) and other funding partners as a unified planning approach national wide[104].

> *"One of the main driving forces for municipal strategic planning in Palestine was the independently-initiated strategic plan of Beita municipality"[105]*

One of the most important effects of this 'Ten-Year Plan' was that it invited the attention of one of key players in the local government sector (GIZ). This then initiated the discussion and development of the unified strategic planning approach (SDIP). The mayor of Beita was invited to be a member of the SDIP National Working Group (SDIPNWG) that oversaw the development of the SDIP national policy and methodology. The experience of Beita was instrumental in promoting the SDIP as a national model for local governments[106].

Data obtained from the interviews revealed a good level of ownership of the plan by the mayor and the municipal staff. This could be linked to their engagement and leadership in putting the plan together.

The mayor looked at the plan as a monitoring tool for his performance by aligning the plan with the municipal budget; *"The preparing of the municipal budget was not realistic, but after the plan we started preparing the budget based on the needs that were identified in strategic plan"[107].* This change was also noticed by the Budgetary Department of the MoLG and by MDLF[108].

Numbers obtained from the municipal financial department of Beita indicate an improvement in the financial status of the municipality in terms of the development budget and the percentage of projects from the strategic plan included in the annual budget. The researcher reviewed the annual budgets of the municipality from the year 2007 to 2014, and found that starting the year 2007 the

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[104] For more description of the SDIP and its elements please refer to Chapter 4 of this research.

[105] Interview with NI14.

[106] Interview with ID05.

[107] Interview with MU27.

[108] Interview with NI13.

municipality attempted to include projects identified in the Ten-Year Plan in its annual development budget. For the first time ever, the process of preparing the budget started by requesting each municipal department to identify the planned development projects to be included in the annual budget for the respective year. After receiving this information from each department, the municipal council reviewed the list of proposed projects to assess their relevance to the Ten-Year Plan priorities as well as the availability of funds from various sources (i.e. own municipal sources, PNA support, donors support, private sector, local contributions, etc.).

The researcher was given access to the minutes of council budget preparation meetings for the years from 2007 to 2012 as well as administrative and financial reports for the same period. Analysis of these documents show that the municipal council approved only projects that were part of the Ten-Year Plan and that the municipality succeeded in achieving about 50 percent of the initiatives proposed in the plan (Beita, 2012b; Beita, 2012c; Beita, 2009; Beita, 2010; Beita, 2011a).

Table 6-9 presents the percentage of implemented projects (2007-2012) out of the proposed allocated budget for the main sectors that were identified in the Ten-Year Plan[109].

Table 6-9: Percentage of achievement of the Ten-Year Plan of Beita in main sectors (2007-2012)

Sector/intervention	Allocation per the Plan (USD)	Implemented Projects (USD)	Percentage (Budget allocated/Budget implemented)
Infrastructure sector	5,865,000.00	4,093,916.92	70 percent
Education Sector	4,257,924.00	2,408,372.31	57 percent
Health sector	200,000.00	0.00	0 percent
Environmental Sector	232,500.00	82,051.28	35 percent
Industrial sector	1,020,000.00	0.00	0 percent
Commercial sector	2,150,000.00	3,618,000.00	168 percent
Agriculture sector	1,600,000.00	0.00	0 percent

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[109] Data for this section was obtained from the Financial Department of Beita municipality, Budgetary Department of MoLG, and interview with MU32.

Entertainment and tourism sector	525,000.00	308,461.54	59 percent
Cultural sector	390,000.00	45,000.00	12 percent
Social sector	400,000	310,000.00	78 percent
Institutional development	340,000	246,410.26	72 percent
Public facilities	420,000	300,000.00	71 percent
Totals	**17,400,424.00**	**11,412,212.31**	

Source: Authors compilation based on Beita 10-Year Plan Document.

In addition to these main sectors, various projects and activities have been implemented for institutional development of the municipality itself with an estimated amount of USD 246,410 and community outreach and public relations with an estimated amount of USD 50,000.

The analysis shows also that the total cost of the implemented projects during the first five years of the plan (from 2007 to 2012) reached USD 11,412,212 or USD 2,282,442 annually. This represents an increase of 100 percent compared municipal spending for development projects during the five years prior to 2005 [110].

Although it is challenging to establish one direct link between the strategic plan improvements in the financial situation and performance of the municipality, one cannot ignore the fact that the strategic planning process and its outcomes were a key factor in changing the way municipality's leadership, and staff, dealt with municipal budgeting, planning, and implementation. This is presents a number of factors evidenced by the minutes of the council's meetings and its decisions. This reflects a serious effort by the municipality to align its annual plans and budgets with the priorities elucidated in the Ten-Year Plan. In addition to that, the overall political and developmental environment under which the municipality was operating has changed dramatically following the formation of the Palestinian caretaker government (the 13th government) in 2007. This change has opened the door for international donors to resume their support to the Palestinian development priorities including support to the local government sector.

Looking at the trend of expenditures on development projects of Beita municipality between 2005 and 2012, we observe a positive change as a result of the strategic planning process which coincided with the positive change in the political environment as mentioned previously (Figure 6-4). After the establishment of the new government, and the development of the strategic plan in

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[110] Interview with MU28; and interview with MU32.

2007, a steep increase occurred in the money spent on implementing development projects in the city. The years 2010 and 2011 witnessed a dramatic increase in the amount of development project expenditure (about five times that of the year 2007). According to informants, this increase was the result of two things: One, having a road map (i.e. strategic plan) that was used by the municipality to raise funding and advocate its needs to external stakeholders including the government, MDLF, MoLG, and donor agencies[111]. Two, the easing of the boycott of the municipality after 2008 due to "the change of the attitude and position of number of donors toward the municipality as a result of the remarkable efforts by the municipalities' leadership to improve its management and planning practices"[112].
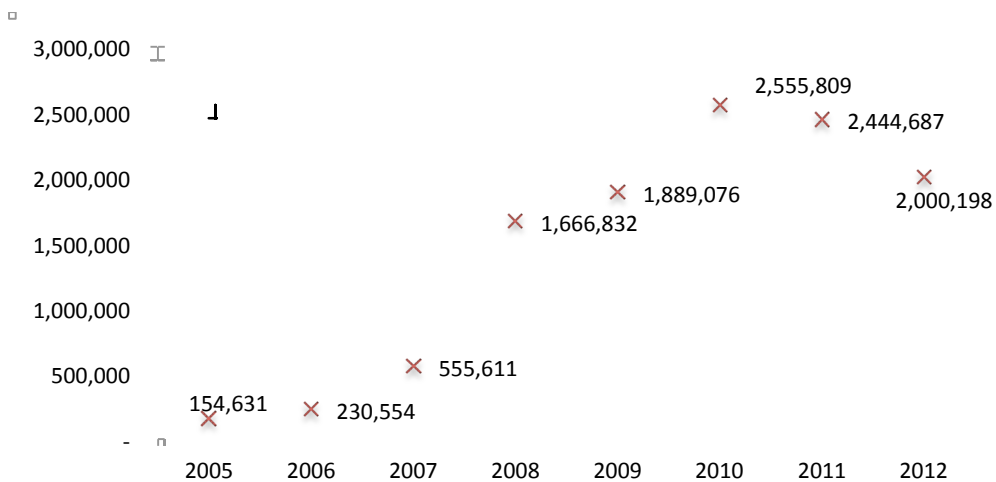
Figure 6-4: The trend of development expenditures of Beita municipality in USD (2005 to 2012)

Source: Authors compilation based on data from Beita Municipality.

The municipality was able to secure more funding and diversify its sources of income through better management of its own financial resources, forging partnerships with private sectors (e.g. banks and investors), and reaching out to external donors and funding agencies. Our analysis of the expenditure on development projects show that the municipality succeeded in diversifying its financial sources which minimized the dependency of the municipality on a single source of income. Figure 6-5 presents this analysis.

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[111] Interview with ID04; and Interview with MU27.

[112] Interview with ID02.
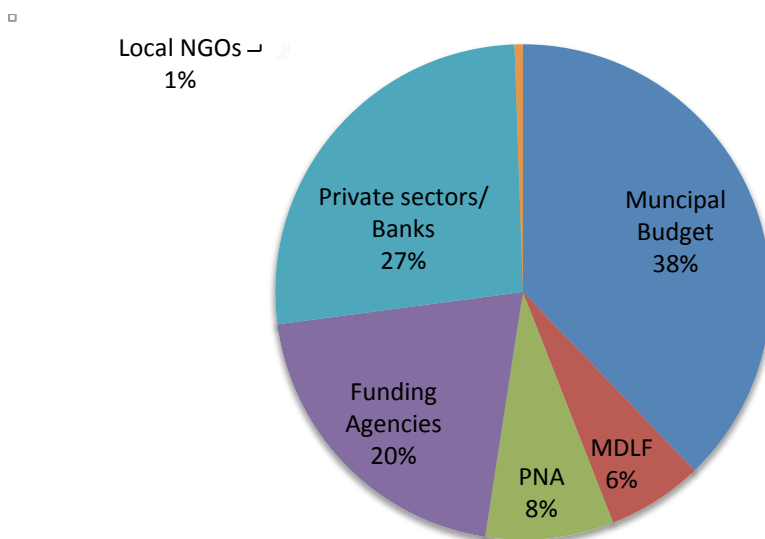
Figure 6-5: Distribution of financial resources for the implementation of the 10-Year Plan

Source: Authors compilation based on data from Beita Municipality.

Following the development and implementation of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan, the municipality of Beita was among the best 16 councils in Palestine according to the MDLF Performance Ranking System[113] (Beita, 2011b). Related to this, the ranking of Beita as a municipality, according to the MDLF Performance Ranking System, was elevated up from a rank of 'C' in 2008 to 'B+' in 2013. Although this improvement in the rank is not solely attributed to having a strategic plan, the strategic planning process and outcome that took place since 2006 however were among the main factors behind this upgrade in Beita's performance level and rank[114].

Citizens of Beita were aware of improvement in the performance of the municipality and the services provided to them during that period.

> "*During the period of Arab Ash-Shrafa there was real progress and implementation on the ground. Translating the Plan to actions resulted in a*

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[113] For more information about the MDLF Performance System please refer to Chapter 4 of this research.

[114] Interview with NI03.

better level of response and interaction between the community and the municipality"[115]

Consultants who worked on strategic planning at the municipal level also sensed this improvement in the performance of the council. For example, improvement in the way the municipality engages with its citizens, better project proposals, more focused needs identification and prioritization, and more realistic budgets [116].

> *"There is a clear positive effect of strategic planning on municipalities' performance in terms of building the capacity of the municipal council members or the staff; As part of strategic planning, training was provided on projects' design, proposals writing, feasibility studies, and procurement. In Beita, for example, the municipality had qualified capable staff who managed to write better projects proposals and in turn obtain more funding for development projects"*[117]

Adoption of the Plan

A major setback of the Ten-Year-Plan came from the fact it was oriented toward external stakeholders including the MoLG, MDLF, and donors while the awareness of the plan within the local community was minimal. This was the result of the low-level engagement of the community at large in the plan formulation and implementation, which remained limited to the mayor, a few council members, and the technical staff. The local community had little idea about its details and was not aware at what stage of its implementation it was in. The lack of engagement of the local community in the plan's formulation affected the sense of community ownership.

> *"The lack of community awareness and commitment to the plan could be linked to the limited community participating during the planning process. The plan was prepared based on the ideas and directions of the mayor. The plan was not well enough known to the municipality staff or to the community"*[118]

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[115] Focus groups discussion on 15 March 2014.

[116] Interview with PE04; PE05; PE03; and NI14.

[117] Interview with PE04.

[118] Interview with MU30.

The lack of awareness and commitment resulted in discontinuity in the planning process when the second strategic plan was developed for Beita as based on the national planning approach (SDIP).

> *"Unfortunately, after I left office, the municipality prepared a four-year strategic plan in cooperation with MDLF without taking the first plan into consideration. Except for the city engineer, the people engaged in the second plan did not know anything about the first plan which affected the accumulation of knowledge and experience. The absence of the man who was behind the idea led to weak interaction with the first plan. The lack of common vision between the municipal council, staff, and the community weakened the community ownership of the plan. There was no real institutionalization of the plan"[119].*

The plan's implementation continued after the resignation of the mayor, who handed over his responsibility to another council member but remained as a member in the municipal council, in August 2009. The implementation of the Ten-Year Plan continued during the new mayor's term until 2012 that saw the municipality develop a new strategic plan based upon the MoLG and MDLF approach itself based upon the SDIP. The details of the second plan are provided in the next sections of this chapter.

6.1.5 The Second Strategic Plan of Beita: the SDIP National Approach

Following the adoption of the Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) by the MoLG, MDLF, and other partners as a unified national approach, the Beita council was among the 137 municipalities that benefited from rolling out the SDIPs between the years 2008 and 2014[120].

This section investigates the SDIP process that began in Beita in 2011 and resulted in the second Strategic Plan known as 'The Strategic Development and Investment Plan (SDIP) of Beita Town (2012-2015)'. Similar to what was outlined in the previous sections concerning the first Strategic Plan, the following sections describe the process, content, outcome, and leadership role related to the second Plan (referred to as the SDIP of Beita). At the end of this description, a comparison matrix is provided to show the similarities and differences between the two plans.

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[119] Interview with MU27.

[120] For more information about the MDLF Performance System please refer to Chapter 4 of this research.

Motivation

As explained in Chapter Four of this thesis, the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in co-operation with the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) and various developmental partners introduced a *Policy Note for Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) for Palestinian Cities and Towns* (MoLG, 2009a) in 2009. This Policy Note was followed by a guidance manual in 2009 which was later updated in 2011. Based upon the manual and the features associated with it, the SDIP implementation had two phases–a pilot phase, and a roll out phase. The Beita council was among those Palestinian towns that were included in the second round of the roll out phase that took place from 2012 to 2014.

The incentive for the Beita council to start a SDIP process did not differ from that of other municipalities. The main reason behind its following this planning exercise was the MDLF Ranking System, which made it conditional upon having an SDIP to become eligible for receiving more funding from the MDLF for development projects[121]. Additionally, the new mayor of Beita found the development of a new strategic plan as a window for him to leave his a legacy of success with his community, similar to the previous mayor.

> *"The second strategic plan was a requirement from MDLF, the mayor followed it step by step as a lifeboat from the first plan which was known as the plan of Shaikh Arab. However, after the mayor became involved in the process he became more convinced on the importance of planning and prioritization of community needs and started to adopt and advocate the plan"[122]*

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This externally driven motivation was also mentioned by several participants of the focus group. For them, the main reason for having a strategic plan was the ability to attract donor funding and the fact that the SDIP was a pre-requisite of MDLF for receiving funding for development projects.

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[121] Interview with MU29.

[122] Interview with MU30.

"The municipality depends mainly on donors' money, therefore having a strategic plan will attract more donors […] One of the motivations behind the second strategic plan was that it is a donors' requirement"[123]

 In addition to that above, several participants of the focus group perceived the development of the SDIP as an "initiative from the Ministry of Local Government" [124].

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, the majority of informants (56 percent) ranked the MDLF eligibility condition of having an SDIP in order for the municipality to access funding, followed by the active role of the city engineer (48 percent), and the support of the newly elected council (31) as the three driving factors behind initiating the SDIP process. Figure 6-6 illustrates the main drivers for Beita's Ten-Year Strategic Plan.
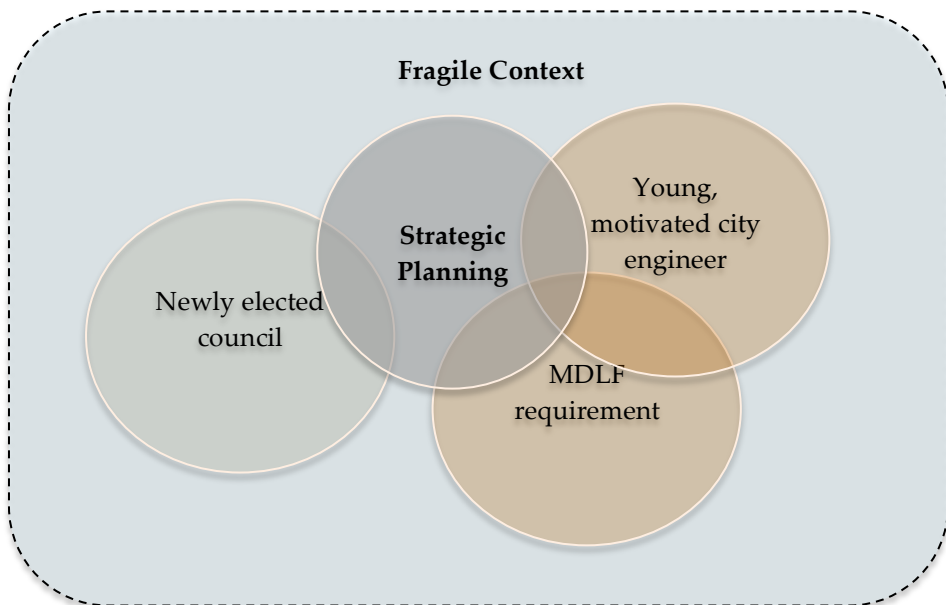
Figure 6-6: Drivers for Beita's SDIP

Source: Author compilation based on interviews with focus groups discussion

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[123] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

[124] Focus groups discussion on 16 March 2014

Description of the SDIP process

The development of Beita's SDIP followed a unified systematic process adopted by the MoLG and then implemented by MDLF with the aid of a step-by-step manual and related features. This SDIP manual is used for preparation, implementation, follow up and assessment of the strategic plans of the Palestinian cities and towns, including Beita. The implementation of the SDIP was also facilitated by a technical consultant who was hired by MDLF to support a number of municipalities (known as clusters) in their planning exercise.

As mentioned before (Section 5.5), according to the SDIP manual (MoLG, 2009b), the process of preparing a strategic plan includes 12 steps divided into five phases.

In the case of Beita, the first phase (organization and analyses) started in March 2011, when the MDLF contracted a Local Technical Consultant (LTC) to provide the technical and logistical support throughout the planning process. Immediately after this, the LTC, along with the municipality, formed various committees to take care of the planning process and to oversee the formulation of the plan. There were four of these committees:

1- Strategic Development Planning Committee:
This committee was formed of five council members (including one council woman) and headed by the mayor (Beita, 2011b). The role of this committee was to coordinate and exchange ideas with the core planning team, actively participate in the core planning team, follow up the planning process to ensure that is it is going as planned, providing a feedback process between the council and core planning team, and participation in the various planning process.

2- Institutional Building Committee:
This committee was formed from one council member and four senior staff from the municipality (Beita, 2011b). The role of this committee was to evaluate the institutional status of the municipality with regards to organizational structure, roles and responsibilities of the various departments, and supervise the evaluation of the institutional capability with regards to staff availability to conduct planning and implement its outputs, availability of the financial and logistic requirement for the planning process and its outputs, and suggest institutional arrangements to allow the core planning team to play its role actively.

3- Core Planning Team:
This is the backbone of the SDIP process. The core planning team was composed of 11 members, six of them from the municipality's staff and council, and the rest

were from the community, including two women (Beita, 2011b). The role of the core planning team included:

    i.   The institutional setup of the strategic planning process
    ii.   Preparation of the organizational structure of the planning process
    iii.   Preparation of the operational plan for the planning process
    iv.   Conducting stakeholder analysis
    v.   Suggesting the structure of the specialized working committees
    vi.   Preparing the diagnostic report; provide technical support to the specialized working groups
    vii.   Management and leadership of the planning process
    viii.   Preparation and co-ordination for all planning activities
    ix.   Management and facilitation of workshops
    x.   Preparation and implementation, monitoring and evaluation matrix; and
    xi.   Preparation of any other required reports for the planning process.

4- Stakeholders Committee:

The members of this committee were suggested by the planning team after conducting a stakeholder analysis. A review of the committee membership reveals that the committee was composed of 79 members covering various sectors in the community such as: agriculture, industry, education, health, infrastructure, policing, civil society, youth, women, etc. The percentage of women in the committee was about 15 percent (Beita, 2011b).

According to the SDIP manual the committee represents the community and has the following main roles: represent the local community in the planning process; support the specialized working committees and provide them with opinions and information; approval of the operational plan for the planning process; identification of the priority development issues; identification of the vision; objectives and developmental strategies; review the suggested developmental projects and prioritize them, and follow up the implementation of the SDIP by the LGU.

5- Specialized working committees:

The composition of these specialized working committees was drafted and prepared by the core planning team and approved by the council prior to the first public meeting. Each committee was headed by a municipal council or a municipal senior staff where about 68 members participated in these committees; out of that number 23 percent were women. The role of the specialized working committees was to participate in the diagnosis of the current status and strategic

analysis. In Beita, six specialized committees were established: (1) Planning, infrastructure, and municipal services, (2) social services, (3) culture and sport, (4) local economy, (5) security and public safety, and (6) institutional building committee.

The second step of the planning was to conduct a diagnostic analysis of the community's current status and needs by conducting interviews with various stakeholders, obtaining data from PCBS (if available), checking the municipality's data and maps, consulting available reports on the matter at hand. In addition, members of the specialized working committees have utilized their professional positions to obtain information and provided expert judgments in relevant fields. As a result, a 'diagnostic report' was produced and then presented to the local community in a public workshop in May 2011. This public workshop was attended by members of the stakeholder committee, specialized working committees, core planning team, in addition to interested citizens. A review of the workshop minutes revealed that more than 100 persons participated in the workshop, 25 percent of which were women. In addition to discussing the results of the diagnostic report, the developmental priorities of the community were identified and agreed upon through a ballot[125]. Participants in the focus group commended the level of participation and discussion, however they pointed out to a shortcoming of the workshop: the exclusion of many of peoples' needs, in particular those relating to women as a result of the voting[126]. After the voting was completed, the participants formulated the community vision.

Based on the agreed priorities, the core planning team, along with the specialized committees, identified the strategic objectives and indicators followed by the descriptions of the projects to be implemented. This process took about one month after the first public workshop.

The results of this stage of the SDIP process were then discussed in a second workshop, in which 54 members from the stakeholder committees, the specialized working committees (developmental priorities committees) and the core planning team attended. Following this workshop, the core planning team prepared project implementation and monitoring plans using the specific forms provided in the SDIP manual.

The SDIP development process was then concluded by producing the SDIP document, and presented it to the community in a public meeting in August 2011.

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[125] Minutes of the public workshop, 7 May 2011.

[126] Focus groups discussion on 16 March 2014.

163 people attended that meeting, out of which 37 percent were women[127]. During that meeting, stakeholders were asked to sign the 'societal contract' which embodied the adoption of the plan by the municipality and the representatives of the local community and their commitment to its objectives and outputs.

It is important to note here the role of the external consultants in the development of SDIP,. As mentioned previously, the MDLF contracted a team of local technical consultants (LTCs) to support the planning process and to provide quality control and guidance to the municipalities in the planning process. In Beita, the consultants provided "guidance and facilitation" to the process and did not overpass the role of the planning team and other specialized committees. However, some informants noted the difference between the voluntary nature of the first plan and the 'paid' business oriented external consultancy approach that existed in the second plan. Figure 6-7 summarizes the SDIP development for Beita and presents the key milestones of the process.

Pre-SDIP: Preparation and contracting
Jan 2011: MDLF approved the request from Beita for SDIP.
Mar 2011: MDLF contracted LTC.
Work in SDIP started.

Phase 1: Organization and Analysis
Mar-Apr 2011: Formulation of committees.
April 2011: Analysis of stakeholders.
May 2011: Diagnostic report produced.

Phase 2: Strategic Development Framework
May 2011: Public workshop- community vision formulated, community priorities identified.

Phase 3:Strategic Plan
May-June 2011: Projects descriptions developed.
July 2011: Implementation plans and indicators.
August 2011: Final public meeting and approval of the plan.

Figure 6-7: Beita SDIP timeframe

Source: Author compilation based on review of minutes of meetings, and SDIP documents.

Buy-in and extent of participation in the plan-making

[127] Minutes of the public meeting of 1 August 2014.

Compared to the first strategic plan of Beita (i.e. the Ten-Year Plan), the community participation and involvement was better in the SDIP development in terms of numbers, representation of sectors, specializations, and frequency of consultation. The stakeholder committee and Specialized Working Groups included more than 100 community members from different backgrounds, experiences, and sectors. Those people played an essential role in identifying the priorities of the community and determining the strategic direction of the town.

The process also included the convening of two workshops and two public meetings in addition to many working meetings and other sessions. These meetings were open to the public, which gave the opportunity for the community to discuss, suggest, and voice its concerns and needs. The role of the external consultants as neutral facilitators of the discussion was also essential in ensuring a free, and open dialogue among participants of these meetings.

Despite that, informants noted a number of observations;

> "*Several groups from various backgrounds and experiences participated in the preparation of the plan, this resulted in a knowledge gap between people with planning experience, and those who don't know anything about planning*"[128]

> "*All community sectors and groups participated in the MDLF plan. However, there were some shortfalls in terms of the academic and cultural level of participants*" [129]

On Likert Scale, community representatives (two focus groups meetings, with a total of 22 participants), the mayor and the core planning team (total of seven members out of eleven) ranked the community participation in the development of the SDIP in the high categories. Table 6-10 represents the results of the Likert Scale.

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[128] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

[129] Interview with MU31.

Table 6-10: How do you assess the *participation* of the community in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N= 7)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (5)
Focus group participants (N = 22)	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (19)	☐ (2)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=29).

This degree of community participation and consultation produced a positive attitude toward the plan in terms of buy-in and community ownership.

> *"The 2011 plan was one of the most successful initiatives in Beita, as it voiced the true needs of citizens, and embodied all groups in the society in comparison to the 2006 plan that was prepared by a few selected people"* [130]

Content of the SDIP

The stated vision of the Beita SDIP is:

> *"Together toward the Beita model: safe, prosperous, green, preserves its heritage and identity, and alive with awareness, love, and respect".*

This vision was the result of the discussion in the public workshop where participants from the community and municipality discussed the needs and identified the priorities of the town for the next five years. The minutes of that meeting show a clear role for the external consultant in facilitating the discussion among the participants of that workshop in order to reach a common vision. It was also obvious that the formulation of this vision did not take into account the vision of the previous Ten-Year Plan which supports what we mentioned regarding the low awareness and ownership of the community to the first plan.

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[130] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

To achieve the vision, the SDIP document identified seven issues that face the community, which were then used to derive 14 objectives that the plan aimed to achieve (Beita, 2011b). These objectives include:

1. Improve the infrastructure services of roads, water, electricity, and solid waste
2. Reduce the negative impact of not having wastewater and storm water collection systems
3. Develop the tools and means for managing infrastructure services
4. Increase the number of schools, classrooms, and educational facilities and equipment
5. Increase the number of tools and equipment to enhance the outputs of educational process
6. Introduce technical and vocational education to the local community
7. Expand the master plan with a comprehensive assessment of the land use of the town
8. Improve land titling and registration
9. Develop, revitalize, and promote touristic and archaeological places and natural resources
10. Enhance the agricultural activities in the area in co-operation with governmental and civil institutions
11. Develop the infrastructure for culture and sports
12. Develop the organizational structure of the municipality
13. Enhance the capacity and performance of municipal staff
14. Improve work performance and identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities in the munciplaity.

Similar to the previous plan, the SDIP proposed a number of projects that fell under six development areas (sectors). Those sectors were pre-determined by the MoLG manual for all municipal strategic plans. The total estimated cost of the projects of this four-year plan exceeded USD 16.8 million, which is close to the estimated budget for the previous Ten-Year Plan. The analysis of the plan shows that a large percentage of the budget was allocated to infrastructure (58.8 percent), and education (17.9 percent). Table 6-11 provides the breakdown of the SDIP budget.

Table 6-11: Sectors and proposed budgets of the SDIP of Beita (2012-2015)

Development Area (Sector)	Total proposed budget (USD)	Percentage from the total budget
Municipal Services and infrastructure	9,869,000	58.5 percent
Educational Services	3,015,000	17.9 percent
Master Planning	365,000	2.2 percent
Local Economy	1,248,000	7.4 percent
Culture and Sports	2,275,000	13.5 percent
Institutional Development	94,000	0.6 percent
Total	**16,866,000**	**100 percent**

Source: adopted from (Beita, 2011b)

To operationalize the SDIP, implementation and monitoring and evaluation plans were included in the SDIP document (Beita, 2011b).

Leadership role

In contrast to the previous plan, the formulation of the second strategic plan for Beita was not driven by one individual who could be singled out as the leader or champion of the process. Nonetheless, there were several individuals and groups who played a significant role in influencing the planning process and outputs.

Informants from interviews and focus groups pointed out the role of the current mayor at that time, Mr. Fayez Hamayl, who provided the logistical support and facilitated different stages of planning.

> *"The mayor, Mr. Hamayel, was a decentralizing person who gave the planning team the full authority and space in preparing the SDIP"*[131]

The role of the mayor in strategic planning could be described more as a 'facilitative leadership' style where he allowed for discussion and dialogue among different stakeholders in order to explore possibilities and to listen to everyone's needs (Ansell and Gash, 2008). The experience gained during the first strategic plan by the municipality's engineer was also instrumental in giving the engineer a 'technical leadership' role where he mediated between the council, local community, and institutions.

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[131] Interview with MU30.

> *"I was involved in all stages and in every detail. I was the mediator between the municipal council and the community representatives and institutions in order to bridge the gaps between the involved parties. I maintained continuous communication with the municipal council and citizens… I used to always talk about the importance of strategic planning and the work methodology"[132].*

Being a technical person who comes from another community made the municipal engineer more acceptable to and respected by the citizens of Beita;

> *"What made the engineer's involvement meaningful and effective was the fact that he was a specialized person with no bias to any political party or family. Because people trusted him, many were encouraged to positively participate in the process"[133]*

Participants in the focus groups, as well as the external consultants, commended the positive leadership role of the engineer in the SDIP development.

A 'collective' leadership role was also observed during the SDIP preparation (Yukl, 1999) . The fact that the unified SDIP methodology relied on assembling several committees and working groups, as well as the involvement of key stakeholders, meant a strong teamwork and collective ethic formed a key part of the planning process. The case of Beita was one of the few examples where the planning committees and some of the stakeholders played a noticeable role in influencing the process.

> *"The specialized working groups were active participants, were efficient and were motivated to carry out the plan. For example, the Beita youth club was actively involved which gave more weight to sports activities and the needs of youth clubs"[134]*

Using Likert Scale to assess the degree of involvement of the mayor and the technical people in the strategic planning process, we notice that the questions related to the role and engagement of the technical teams received high marks, although lower than the marks of the mayor:

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[132] Interview with MU30.

[133] Interview with MU29.

[134] Interview with PE03.

Regarding the degree of involvement of the mayor and the technical staff in the SDIP process, we notice that the questions relating to the role and engagement of the technical team received high marks by the participants of the focus groups (total of 22), although lower than the marks that were given to the mayor (Table 6-12).

Table 6-12: Assessment of the *degree of involvement* of the supporting actors in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
mayor	☐	☐	☒18	☐(4)	☐
Technical team	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☐ (1)	☒ (20)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on focus groups discussion (total of informants=22).

This degree of involvement turned into a very strong level of influence for the technical team in the various stages of planning including: formulation, and implementation (Table 6-13).

Table 6-13: Assessment of the *degree of influence* of the supporting actors in the planning process?

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
mayor	☐	☐	☒18	☐(4)	☐
Technical team	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☐ (1)	☒ (20)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on focus groups discussion (total of informants=22).

Participants of the focus group applauded the notable role of the core planning team and the composition of different committees and working groups in making the plan a success[135].

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[135] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014

Planning outcomes

In June 2013, two years after the SDIP development, new local elections were called in the West Bank where a new mayor and council were elected in Beita. The elections of a new council halted the implementation of the SDIP and discontinued the previous planning efforts. This was described by the participants in the focus group:

> *"The new council wanted to change the plan so they called for a meeting with the core planning to do that. We did not participate in the meeting since we felt that all our efforts would be wasted. We were hoping that this meeting would be for evaluating the plan and not to start from zero.... the role of the planning team and committees ended because the new council was not interested in maintaining the role of the team and other committees"*[136]

This setback affected the prospects of the SDIP and its objectives and resulted in delays in implementing the proposed projects. At the time of collecting information and writing this chapter, efforts by MDLF and MoLG were mobilised to put things back on track and to convince the new council of the importance of committing to and continuing the implementation of the SDIP [137].

As part of the fifth phase of the SDIP cycle (see figure 5-4), each municipality was required to evaluate (on an annual basis) the progress made toward the goals set in the strategic plan. The MDLF has supported this process through an external local consultant who supported the municipality and the core planning team in assessing the implementation of the projects and the reasons behind any delays. The implementation of Beita's SDIP was evaluated before the elections in June 2013 in which it was found that many of the indicators for the strategic objectives have not yet been achieved (Beita, 2013). The main stated reason behind this result was the lack of funding or a delay in transferring the financial allocation from MDLF to the municipality for certain projects. In addition to this, the interruption of the municipal work, due to holding elections during the middle of 2013, affected the decision-making process in the municipality[138].

> *"Because the previous municipal council was relying on promises of funding from the MDLF, the plan was ambitious. However, the MDLF was not able to receive money from the donors on time, and the municipality was not able*

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[136] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014

[137] Interview with NI03.

[138] Interview with PE04.

> *to promote the plan so funds fell short and many projects were not implemented"* [139]

The SDIP methodology requires the proposed development projects to be spatially linked to a master (or physical) plan for the city. As mentioned in the SDIP Policy Note, the SDIP should combine and integrate both planning streams (development and physical/spatial planning) at the local level (MoLG, 2009a). This action was made by showing the proposed locations of the selected development projects on the master plan of the city of Beita. This was different than the first strategic plan where there was no link between the projects and the locations on the ground;

> "We *had a master plan and it was linked with the second strategic plan, while we did not have a master plan during the development of the Ten-Year Plan*"[140].

Adoption of the Plan

As mentioned previously, the election of a new council and mayor affected the adoption and ownership of the SDIP. The new leadership pulled back from the implementation of the SDIP and started a new process of updating it without taking into consideration what had previously been achieved, even prior to the designated SDIP time-period coming to an end.

The SDIP methodology was based on engaging the community in the identification of priorities, and the selection of projects was done in a way so that the plan could be owned by the citizens at large and not by a particular political or social group. Yet, the new council did not honour this ownership principle as they looked at the plan as a product of the previous council and not, therefore, of interest to them[141].

Concluding remarks

The case of Beita's strategic planning experience, as described in the previous sections, is a good example of the role played by local leadership and community motivation through strategic planning and as an intervention in fragile contexts. The two examples of strategic plans that were developed in the city of Beita between 2005 and 2012 provides insights on key factors that affect the quality and

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[139] Focus groups discussion on 3 March 2014.

[140] Interview with MU28.

[141] Interview with MU33.

outcome of planning processes. We reiterate the view that understanding the legitimacy and power of local leadership is considered one of the major reasons behind the success or failure of state building efforts in fragile and post-conflict countries (Brinkerhoff, 2010). The motivation of people to engage in strategic planning exercise is also a determinant factor of the quality and outcome of the planning process.

Despite some similarities, the two strategic plans of Beita hold a number of distinctive differences that are outlined in the following table (Table 6-14).

Table 6-14: Comparison between the 10-Year Plan and the SDIP of Beita

Theme	10-Year Plan	SDIP
Leadership	Mayor led the process with the support of a core team of three persons.	Several committees played a key role in the process, the mayor facilitated the process, and technical consultants provided guidance. The role of the city engineer was key in facilitating the SDIP.
Motivation	Self-motivated: Newly elected council, boycotted by donors' for political reasons	Externally-motivated: requirements from MDLF
Methodology	Learning by doing: no unified or written methodology/tools.	Mechanical: National approach adopted by MoLG with step-by-step guideline and structured templates.
Process	Based on a comprehensive inventory of the current situation, and then evolved to a strategic plan.	Based on 12 steps SDIP wheel as predesigned in the MoLG manual.
Timeframe	10 years (2005-2014), interrupted after the fifth year to develop a new plan	4 years (2012-2015), the implementation was interrupted in 2012 as a result of electing new council.
Focus	14 sectors	6 development areas
Budget	USD 16,240,424 or USD 1,624,042	USD 16,866,000 or USD 4,216,500 per year.
Participation	Community participation was weak and not structured	Better community participation and involvement in terms of numbers, representation of sectors and specializations, and frequency of consultation.
Technical assistance	No external consultants, only volunteers from the community	External technical consultants were hired and paid by MDLF.
Adoption (sustainability)	Lack of community awareness and commitment led to discontinuity of the planning process after five years of the plan.	Change in municipal leadership halted the implementation of the SDIP.
Output and Outcome	Helped in sparking the attention to strategic planning at the national level, used as monitoring tool by the mayor, contributed to the improvement of the financial status of the municipality in terms of development budget, guided the municipal council decisions, and elevated the MDLF ranking of the municipality.	Some projects have been implemented but many others were not due to the lack of funding, and the interruption of the municipal work due to holding the elections. Linkage with master plan was done in the plan itself.
External environment	The boycott of donors' was relaxed following the appointment of new government in 2008	The implementation of the plan was obstructed due to the election of new council.

6.2 The Case of Nablus Municipality

Nablus City is one of the main urban centres in Palestine. The heavily populated city has played a significant role in the Palestinian national cause. The city was severely hit by the siege and the invasions of the Israeli Army during the Second Intifada, which caused further deterioration of its fragile economic and physical condition. The case of strategic planning in Nablus provides further insight into the different roles of leadership in the making and pushing for the implementation of strategic plans. Two models of strategic plans have been followed in the case of Nablus: an independently-initiated strategic plan that was motivated by an elected, well-respected mayor, but boycotted by international donors, and an externally driven SDIP that followed the unified national planning approached but was stalled by the second mayor who descends from a renowned family and was the "self-styled patriarch of Nablus politics".

The research of the case of Nablus was based on a document review, as well as information gathered through interviews and focus groups. A total of 28 citizens participated in two focus group meetings, and 14 members of core planning teams were interviewed during the course of conducting this research. In addition to that, data obtained from interviews with external stakeholders have enriched the description and analysis of this case.

Description of the Case

Nablus is one of the largest cities in Palestine and the administrative centre of the Nablus governorate. The city is located approximately 66 kms north of Jerusalem in a valley surrounded by two mountains, Eibal and Gerizim (Team, 2011b).

The total area of Nablus City is approximately 32,947 donums[142] (Team, 2011b). According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the city's population in 2016 reached 153,061, including its four refugee camps (PCBS, 2016e). Muslims are the majority of the city's population and there is a small but well integrated minority of Palestinian Christians and Arabic-speaking Samaritan Jews (Dumper and Stanley, 2007).

Figure 6-8 shows the location and borders of Nablus.

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[142] donum =0.1 hectare
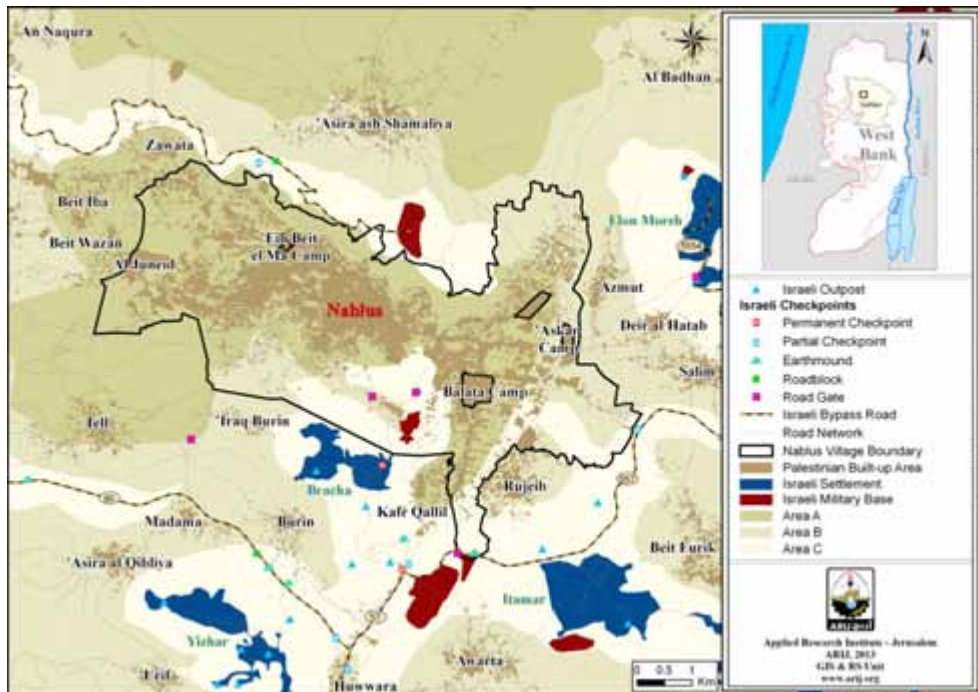
Figure 6-8: Nablus location and borders

Source: (ARIJ, 2014)

6.2.1 **History**

The historical centre of Nablus city was founded in 2500–3000 BC by the Canaanites (located in Tell Balatah nearby Gerizim Mountain). It was then rebuilt in 72 AD by the Roman Emperor Titus as the city "Flavia Neapolis" and was soon settled by Semitic tribes. By 480 AD Christianity was flourishing in Nablus and by the end of the 6th Century, Nablus was considered a major site in the Holy Land. Arab-Islamic rule that came shortly afterwards led to the city being dubbed "Little Damascus". The 19th Century brought with it economic prosperity for this area with traditional industries including traditional handicrafts and the small-scale, production of Arabic sweets, olive oil soap, stone and woodcarving, and cotton processing. Trade expanded toward new frontiers of TransJordan, Egypt and Syria establishing the area as a manufacturing and agricultural heartland. Nablus continued to be a city of economic importance in the 20th Century for Palestinians (Dumper and Stanley, 2007; Hammami, 2012; Khalidi, 2010; Doumani, 1995).

Like the rest of Palestine, Nablus came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in 1517. It was designated as capital of the Jabal Nablus (Mount Nablus) district. For

almost hundred years from the middle of the 17ᵗʰ Century, the city became the venue for a series of upheavals against the Ottoman Empire. It was not until 1841 that Ottoman rule was firmly re-established, which then led Nablus to prosper as a centre of trade in the region (Doumani, 1995).

Various authorities have ruled the city since then, including the British mandate in 1923, the Jordanian administration in 1948, and the Israeli occupation from 1967 until the jurisdiction over the city was handed over to the Palestinian National Authority on 12 December, 1995 (PASSIA, 2001).

Following the earthquake of 1927 the city's social and physical structure had witnessed substantial changes. Additional destruction occurred during the Arab revolution against the British authorities in Palestine (1936–1939). Since this revolution started in Nablus, the City became known as 'rebellious and a platform for resistance' in Palestine. Similarly, a culture of resistance to the Israeli occupation became evident during the First and Second Intifada.

During the Jordanian period, the city's growth rates were lower than those of most of the main cities on the East Bank of Jordan. The emigration from the city to the Arab Gulf states became one of the most important inducements for growth in the city, as it was one of the principal sources of investment in the domestic economy in building, crafts, and services. On the political side, many of the city's leaders, particularly those who came from refugee camps in the city, were opposed to the Husaynis during the British Mandate period. That later made the city one of the foci of opposition to the Jordanian regime. The city was also an important centre of the several nationalist parties such as the Communist Party and the Ba'th and Qawmiyyun al-'Arab. The local elite of the city has also played an active role in the riots against the Hashemites, which took place between 1955 and 1956 (Gilbar, 1989).

After the 1967 war, the Israeli army captured the city which was governed at the time by the Israeli Civil Administration. During that period, Israel surrounded the city with many Jewish colonies or settlements such as the Kafr Qaddoum colony, built in 1975 to the west of Nablus, and the Moshe Zar'in military camp, built on the top of Ebal mountain. In 1979, the Alan March colony was established to the east of the city, and in 1982 the Israelis built the Barkha colony on top of mountain Gerizim. The Israeli authorities also constructed roads that allowed easy movement of military vehicles by confiscating Palestinian land and striping Palestinians of their rights of land ownership (ARIJ, 2014b; Coon, 1992; Welfare, 2011). Nablus city was considered one of several centres of rebellion in the First Intifada (1987-1993) and was one of the first locations in the West Bank and the

Gaza Strip to witness the initial impact of the Second Intifada that broke out after 28 September 2000 (OCHA-oPt, 2005).

Nablus was affected by the many military regulations, policies, and laws created by the Israeli occupation. For strategic reasons, the city was extremely important for Israeli occupation authorities, and an administrative headquarters was established in it for the Israeli military forces.

6.2.2 Economic activities, infrastructure and services

The economy in Nablus is dependent mainly on the trade sector, which absorbs 30 percent of the town's workforce (Team, 2011a). In addition, several services are available to the city's residents including: water, wastewater, solid waste, transportation, health, education, and others.

Table 6-15 provides a snapshot of the key indicators related to the economic activities, infrastructure and basic services of the city of Nablus

Table 6-15**: Nablus city key indicators as of 2016**

Key indicators	Value
PCBS code	150920
Total area (donum)	32,947
Population	153,061
Number of housing units	37,327
Number of employees in the municipality	1,825
Length of internal roads (Km)	
Paved	330
Unpaved	250
Electricity coverage	100 percent
Source of electricity	Israeli Electricity Company
Telecommunication network coverage	99 percent
Availability of public water network	Yes
Water source	Municipality's wells and springs
Water network coverage	99 percent
Quantity of water supplied (cubic metres/year)	420,000
Rate of water supply per capita litres/day	180 litres/day
Availability of wastewater network	Yes (97 percent coverage)
Quantity of wastewater generated per day (cubic metres)	12,528
Number of solid waste containers	1500
Quantity of solid waste produced (tons per day)	147
Public Schools	82
Health Centres	12
Economic Activities (employment shares)	
Trade sector	41.6 percent
Government or other public employees sector	15 percent
Israeli labour market	3 percent
Industry	24 percent
Agriculture sector	0.4 percent
Services sector	16 percent
Unemployment rate*	19 percent
Active labour force**	37.1 percent
Employed ***	87.9 percent

* Underemployment exists when a person's employment is inadequate in relation to alternative employment, account being taken of his/her occupational skills (PCBS, 2015a).

** The economically active population (Labour Force) consists of all persons 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed (PCBS, 2015a).

*** Employed refers to: All persons are 15 years and over who were working at a paid job or business for at least one hour during the reference week, or who did not work, but held a job or owned business from which they were temporarily absent (because of illness, vacation, temporarily stoppage, or any other reason) during the reference week (PCBS, 2015a).

Sources: Data was obtained by the researcher from various sources including: Nablus Municipality Files (accessed in July 2016), and (ARIJ, 2014b; PCBS, 2008; PCBS, 2009; PCBS, 2013a; PCBS, 2013b; Team, 2011b).

6.2.3 Local government in Nablus

The city of Nablus is the centre of the Nablus governorate (muhfaza) and is governed by a municipal council made up of fifteen members, including the mayor. The city became a municipality in 1869, and the first mayor, Sheikh Mohammad Tuffaha, was appointed by the by the Ottoman governor of Syria and Palestine (Doumani, 1995). About 44 mayors, both elected and appointed, have governed the city since it became a municipality (Team, 2011b; Nablus, 2014).

During the Israeli occupation, municipal elections were held in April 1976, where nationalist leaders affiliated with the PLO won the majority of municipalities in the West Bank. This challenged the authority and control of the Israeli authorities over the Palestinian communities at that time (Aronson, 1987). One of those mayors was Bassam Shakaa, a well-known local leader in Nablus and a member of al-Baath al-Arabi Party. Shakaa stayed as a mayor until he was dismissed in 1982 from office by Israeli authorities when three elected Palestinian mayors (including the mayor of Nablus) were replaced by Israeli army officers. In July 1980, as part of a wider attack against elected Palestinian mayors carried out by Israeli militants affiliated with the Gush Emunim underground movement[143], Bassam Shakaa lost both of his legs as a result of a car bombing (Neff, 1999; Gilmour, 1997; Aronson, 1987).

An Israeli army officer controlled the municipality until the establishment of the PNA in 1994. The PNA appointed a municipal council headed by Ghassan Shakaa, a prominent Fatah leader, until the first free local election took place in 2005. As a result of this election, the Reform and Change list which was affiliated with Hamas faction won 73.4 percent of the vote, gaining a majority in the municipal council, while the other 13.0 percent was gained by the Palestine Tomorrow list that represented the Fatah faction (CEC, 2005). The head of the Reform and Change list, Mr. Adly Yaish, became the mayor of Nablus from 2005 to 2012. In May 2007, the Israeli authorities arrested Mr. Yaish along with another four council members for 15 months. In 2012, another local election, boycotted by Hamas, took place in which the previously appointed mayor, Mr. Ghassan Shakaa, won the vote and

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[143] Gush Emunim movement was an Israeli messianic, right-wing activist movement committed to establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. It was formally established as an organization in the wake of the October 1974 war between Israel, Egypt, and Syria SPRINZAK, E. 1986. *Fundamentalism, Terrorism, and Democracy: The Case of Gush Emunim Underground*, Smithsonian Institution, Wilson Center..

became the new mayor until his resignation in August 2015 (Damon, 2005; Risheq, 2010; Tomeh, 2015 ; Lynfield, 2012).

There are more than 1,800 employees working in the municipality (ARIJ, 2014b; Team, 2011b). In line with the local government's services and responsibilities, listed in the Palestinian Local Councils Law No 1(PNA, 1997), the municipality of Nablus is responsible for providing a number of services to the residents of Nablus, including[144]:

1. The establishment and maintenance of the drinking water and electricity networks
2. Waste collection, street cleaning and social services
3. Road rehabilitation, construction and paving
4. Organization of the processing and issuance of construction licenses
5. Provision of offices for governmental institutions
6. Protection of historical and archaeological sites
7. Implementation of projects and studies for the town.
8. Provision of the public markets.
9. Provision of educational kindergartens.

6.2.4   Fragility of Nablus: Impact of the Israeli occupation

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed on 28 September 1995 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Nablus was divided into Area A, B and C. In this division, approximately 20,373 donums (62 percent of the city's total area) were assigned as Area A; here the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has total responsibility for internal security and public order. 6,949 donums (21 percent of the city's total area) were classified as Area B, where the PNA has complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. The rest of the city's area, constituting 5,625 donums (17 percent of the total area) were classified as Area C, where Israel retains full control over the security and administration of the territory. In Area C, Palestinian building and land management is prohibited without the consent or authorization of the Israeli Civil Administration. The majority of Nablus' population resides in Areas A and B, while most of the land lying within Area C is open space and agricultural land located on the southern side of the city, particularly Mount Gerizim (ARIJ, 2014b).

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[144] Interview with MU20.

An Israeli military base overlooks the city from above Mount Gerizim from the south side. The base covers an area of 52 donums, confiscated from the city territory. This site is the Israeli site nearest to the heart of the city. Other military bases surround the city from the north and south east. The aim of establishing these military bases deep inside the Palestinian territory is to enhance security and military control of Palestinians living inside the city as well as to protect Israeli settlements that surround Nablus.

With regard to Israeli settlements, Nablus city is surrounded by several settlements, among them are "Bracha and Yitzhar" situated on the south side. Other major settlements are "Shavei Shomron" and "Kedumim" which are located to the western side of Nablus city (Team, 2011b).

During the Second Intifada (from 2001 to 2005) Nablus city and the governorate was severely affected by the conflict, experiencing the highest number of casualties, the most severe physical damage[2] and the most intense restrictions on movement (OCHA-oPt, 2005; Doumani, 2004). At least eight large-scale Israeli military incursions to Nablus city occurred during the Second Intifada. The city also stayed under curfew for a total of 240 days forcing its residents inside. The longest period was between April 2002 and November 2002 when the city was under curfew for 151 days. As a result of the conflict, about 522 residents of Nablus and the surrounding refugee camps, including civilians, were killed and 3,104 injured during the Israeli army incursions and operations.

Most importantly, between 2001 and 2005, the Israeli army has imposed severe obstacles to mobility. These saw the creation of earth mounds, concrete blocks, checkpoints, road gates and trenches restricting movement in the city as well as the governorate. In November 2005, there were 53 obstacles throughout the governorate, isolating Nablus from the outside world (LRC, 2006).

The Israeli military checkpoints and blocks in the area had a negative impact on the daily lives of residents. Checkpoints continue to hinder freedom of movement and sever the links between Nablus city and the surrounding villages, as well as the connection between the villages and their agricultural lands. This has resulted in heavy economic losses for residents of Nablus as they are forced to travel further distances which takes more time, in order to reach their agricultural land, especially when checkpoints are closed (UNSCO, 2002; Amnesty, 2002).

Hundreds of private homes, public buildings and religious and cultural sites have been destroyed and damaged throughout Nablus city during the Israeli army incursions and search and arrest campaigns (Welfare, 2011). In particular the city's

cultural and religious sites have been severely hit by the conflict. 149 cultural and religious sites have been destroyed and a further 2,000 damaged, mostly in the historic Old City of Nablus (OCHA-oPt, 2005). These sites have included historic mosques, shrines, churches, traditional bathhouses and old soap factories including Al-Kharaz mosque (12th Century), Al-Shaikh Musallem Mausoleum, Roman Orthodox Church (1882) and the Al- Shifa' Turkish bath (1720). It is estimated that the cost of the damages during the first two years of the Intifada reached more than USD 80 million (Hanafi, 2002) . Consequently, a large number of the Old City's residents were forced to move to other areas of the city.

As mentioned in the previous section, the municipal council including the mayor was a target of Israeli actions. In May 2007, the Israel authorities arrested the mayor along with another four council members for 15 months, which affected the management of the municipality and its ability to deliver the needed services to its residents.

Strategic planning

The status of Nablus as a major Palestinian city of commercial and historical significance have encouraged the municipality to look for ways to improve its services and enhance its financial position. This came despite its security, economic, and social challenges in the aftermath of the Second Intifada, and the boycott of the elected municipal council by many Western donors' from 2005 to 2009. One of these tools was strategic planning and was done twice during the last ten years: the first strategic plan was developed by the municipality itself in 2007 and the second plan following the SDIP process in 2011.

The following sections look into the two experiences in more details to uncover the key elements that influence the strategic planning exercises of Nablus city. Figure 6-9 presents a timeline of the strategic planning experience of Nablus city in relation to the main events that affected local governments in general, and Nablus city in particular. This also positions the strategic plans of Nablus within the broader historical context of local governments in Palestine
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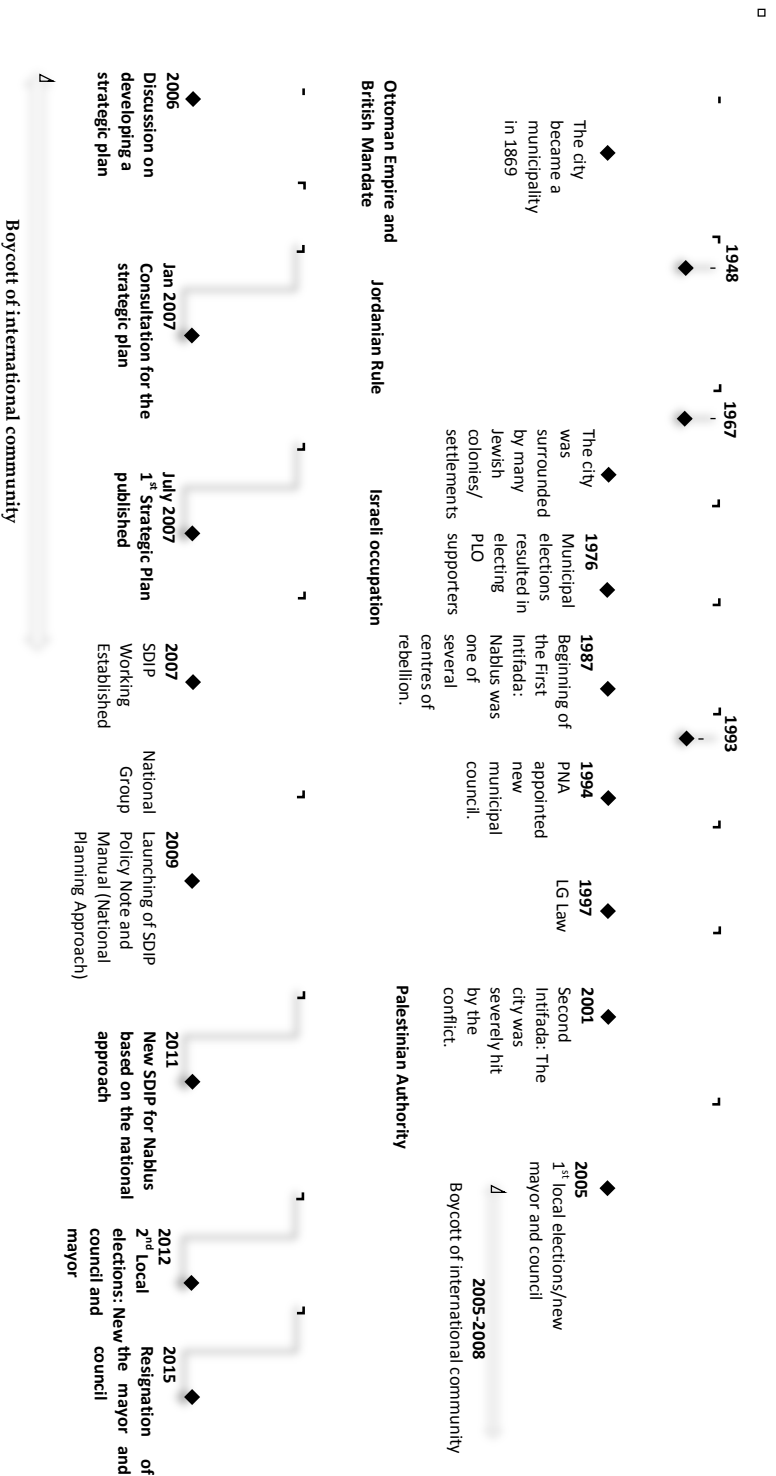
Figure 6-9: Nablus City Timeline

Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review

Ottoman Empire and British Mandate | Jordanian Rule | Israeli occupation | Palestinian Authority

The city became a municipality in 1869

1948

1967

The city was surrounded by many Jewish colonies/settlements PLO supporters

1976 Municipal elections resulted in electing new municipal council.

1987 Beginning of the First Intifada: Nablus was one of several centres of rebellion.

1993

1994 PNA appointed new municipal council.

1997 LG Law

2001 Second Intifada: The city was severely hit by the conflict.

2005 1st local elections/new mayor and council

2005-2008 Boycott of international community

2006 Discussion on developing a strategic plan

Jan 2007 Consultation for the strategic plan

July 2007 1st Strategic Plan published

2007 SDIP Working Group Established

2009 Launching of SDIP National Policy Note and Manual (National Planning Approach)

2011 New SDIP for Nablus based on the national approach

2012 2nd Local elections: New the mayor and council

2015 Resignation of the mayor and council

Boycott of international community

6.2.5 **The 1ˢᵗ Strategic Plan of Nablus**

Motivation

As mentioned before, the newly elected council of Nablus municipality took office after years of destruction, economic decline, social instability, and security problems that were the results of the Second Intifada. Additionally, the municipal council elected in 2005 faced a politically motivated boycott from many Western donors, since Hamas won the majority of the council seats in the elections of 2005.

One of the motives behind developing a strategic plan was the fiscal deficit the municipality inherited; a deficit created from years of political, and security turmoil. The unrest had diminished the ability of the municipality to collect revenues thus provide basic services to the city's neighbourhoods. In 2005, following the elections, the arrears of the municipality reached NIS 175 million (about USD 46 million), and the collection rate of taxes and fees was less than 30 percent[145].

Similar to the case of Beita, the development of the strategic plan was driven by the donor boycott; a boycott made in response to a majority of municipal council seats being won by a political movement close to Hamas[146]. The inability of the municipality to finance (from internal and external resources) its operational and development budget made it difficult to respond to the pressing needs of the community at that time. These sentiments have been expressed in the interview data. "The council felt the urgent need for a plan to set priorities and secure the required funds to address these priorities"[147]. In the interview with the mayor, he expressed "the feeling that we are responsible toward the city and its citizens required from us to prepare a plan that included priorities for development"[148].

This encouraged the municipal council to look for ways to overcome the challenges and improve the situation of the citizens in the city. Minutes of the municipal councils, meetings from 2005 to 2006 indicated an early discussion

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[145] Interview with MU22, and review of the 2015-2016 External Audit report of Nablus Municipality.

[146] Interview with ID01; and input from FG04.

[147] Interview with MU21.

[148] Interview with MU17.

about preparing a "plan to help the council setting priorities for the city development within the limited financial resources available"[149].

The newly elected mayor, Adly Yaish, who came from a private sector background, suggested to the council that they develop a plan to correct the financial deficit the municipality accumulated during the past years of the Intifada. In December 2006, the mayor assigned a council member Dr. Hafez Shahin, who was a professor at Al Najah University to lead this task with the help of Dr. Amal Al Hodhod, who was appointed as the Director of External Relations of the municipality[150].

> *"After the local governments elections in 2005 which Hamas won the majority in many locations, some of the elected local governments' leaders started by themselves to prepare strategic plans. The elections gave legitimacy to the elected representatives, created new spirits for change, and brought intellectuals and businessmen to run municipalities. One of these municipalities was Nablus"[151]*

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, the majority of informants ranked the quality of the mayor's leadership (71 percent), followed by the donor boycott (63 percent), the fiscal deficit of the municipality (59 percent), and the support of intellectual council members (46 percent) as the driving factor behind initiating the strategic plan process. Figure 6-10 illustrates the main drivers for Nablus' first strategic plan.

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[149] Council meeting minutes of 22 Dec 2005.

[150] Interview with MU17, MU20.

[151] Interview with ID06.
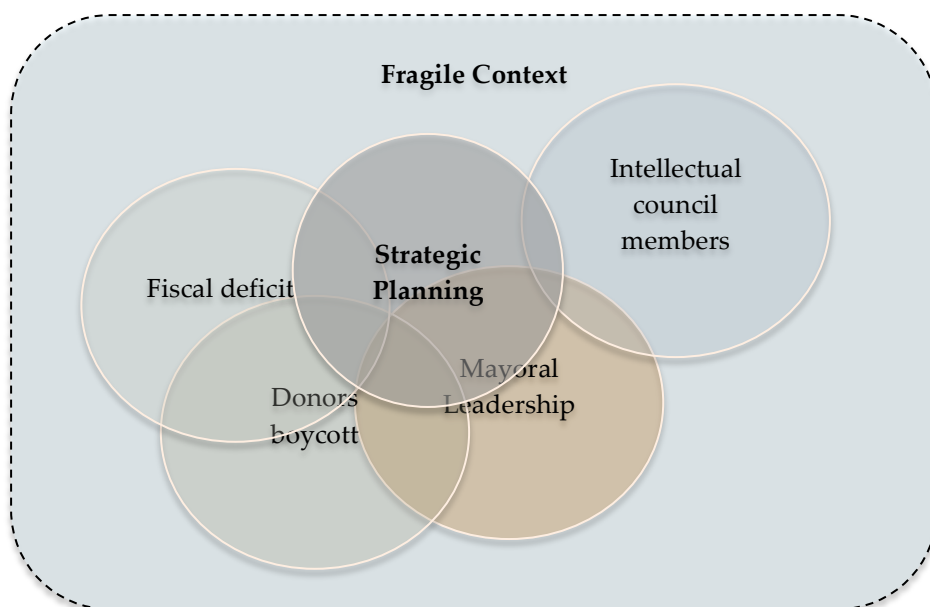
Figure 6-10: Drivers for Nablus' 1st Strategic Plan

Source: Author compilation based on interviews with focus groups discussion

Description of the Strategic Planning Process

After being elected, the mayor and his council realized how massive were the needs of a city that had suffered from Israeli military invasions, armed conflict, siege, and uncontrolled militants, which had damaged the social, economic, and infrastructural conditions in the city. These needs required both financial and technical capacity and were hampered by the decision of many donors to halt all forms of support for the municipality. Therefore, in December 2006, the mayor suggested to the council to prepare a strategic plan for the city and assigned a core team from the council and the municipality staff to work on the plan.

The core team included a council member, with a PhD degree in environment and natural resources, and the new director of external relations who is also a holder of a PhD degree. The work on preparing the plan started immediately in January 2007 and took about six months to complete.

The process of developing Nablus' strategic plan followed a consultation approach that included the city's main institutions and civil society organizations. The two key institutions in the city facilitated this process were Al Najah University and the

Chamber of Commerce. In January 2007, the municipality invited the public, private and civil society organizations to attend an intensive workshop to discuss the needs and priorities of the city. Attended by about 70 participants, the directors of the different municipality departments took the lead and presented the various projects and activities that the municipality was running during that time in addition to the expected needs of each department. The participants were also given a questionnaire to identify what is needed to improve the situation in the city and what are the priorities given the limited financial and technical capacity of the municipality.

Based on this consultation, the core planning team with the mayor drafted the strategic plan document and presented it to the municipal council on 21 July 2007. Minutes of the municipal council meeting indicate support from all council members to the plan, which was finally approved and became an official document for the municipality;

> *"The mayor took the lead in presenting and discussing the elements of the plan during the council meeting. For many council members, who were new to the municipal work, this was the first time to experience planning as a systematic way for identifying the priorities and needs of the city. There was no objection to the proposed plan from any of the members"[152]*

Content of the Plan

The plan encompassed seven main priorities with proposed interventions and goals for each priority (Nablus, 2007). Due to the security situation of the city during the Intifada, the first priority was to "create a status of stability, safety, and rule of law in the city". This made sense for a city that suffered the most from years of political and security disorder. Table 6-16 lists the seven priorities of Nablus strategic plan along with the estimated budget for each priority.

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[152] Interview with MU21.

Table 6-16: Priorities and estimated budgets of 1ˢᵗ Strategic Plan of Nablus (2007-2011)

	Priority	Estimated Budget (USD)	Percentage from the total budget
1.	Create a status of stability, safety, and rule of law in the city	2,040,000	1.8 percent
2.	Improve and diversify the services provided by the municipality to the public	3,990,000	3.6 percent
3.	Enhance and maintain the infrastructure of Nablus	75,300,400	67.1 percent
4.	Preserve environment and public health	20,310,000	18.1 percent
5.	Enhance innovative initiatives to encourage human resources	3,094,077	2.8 percent
6.	Encourage and strengthen cooperation relations with relevant stakeholders	2,020,011	1.8 percent
7.	Achieve autarky and maximize the utilization of financial resources	5,401,011	4.8 percent
	Total	**112,155,499**	**100.0 percent**

Source: adopted from (Nablus, 2007)

According to the core planning team, the design of the strategic plan was based only on one consultation workshop with the community, and on the information obtained from the municipal departments. The planning process did not follow any of the international or regional approaches for strategic planning, which include elements such as formulating a vision, diagnoses of the conditions in the community, indicators, etc. For the mayor and his planning team, the main purpose of having such a plan was "to manage the crises that the municipality was facing at that time until a better opportunity for developing a real, full fledge strategic plan become possible"[153]. It could be said that the so-called strategic plan of Nablus was more of a simplified plan (Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011) or as the MDLF considered it, a "*list of needs and projects developed through a rapid appraisal method (RA)*" [154].

Buy-in and extent of participation in the plan-making

As mentioned before, the planning process involved limited community participation in terms of size, frequency, and timing. The only workshop that was

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[153] Interview with MU21.

[154] Interview with NI03.

organized was attended by a limited number of citizens (about 60 people), who did not represent the diverse needs and views of a large city such as Nablus. The low participation rate was a reflection of the lack of public awareness of the plan and the extent of buy-in from the community. Participants from our two focus groups indicated that "although they know that some sort of a plan was developed during 2007, they are not however aware of the content of that plan". Interestingly their limited knowledge of that plan, did not preclude them from "trusting that the previous municipal council must have a plan since the mayor was a business man who believed in numbers, cost, and benefit calculations"[155]

On the Likert Scale, community representatives (two focus groups meetings, with a total of 28 participants), the mayor and the core planning team, in the development of the first strategic plan of Nablus, (total of six members) ranked community participation as poor. Table 6-17 represents the results of the Likert Scale:

Table 6-17**: How do you assess the** *participation* **of the community in the planning process?**

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Mayor	☒ (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Core planning team (N= 6)	☒ (5)	☐ (1)	☐	☐	☐
Focus group participants (N = 28)	☒ (24)	☐ (2)	☐ (2)	☐	☐

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=34).

As the plan was self-motivated and initiated by the mayor and his team, the connection to the plan and the commitment to its objectives were much stronger and clear. This was obvious from reviewing the decisions taken by the mayor, and the council, between 2007 and 2010, and from data obtained through interviews. The researcher reviewed documents, minutes, and annual reports of the municipality and found that: about 70 percent of the decisions made by the mayor were based on the strategic plan itself. The discussion that took place during the

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[155] Discussion of FG03, and FG04.

council's regular meetings referred to the strategic plan in various occasions before approving or rejecting any project. The following table gives an indication on the number of approved or projects based on the strategic plan. The information in Table 6-18 is from municipal records, and council minutes between 2007 and 2010.

Table 6-18: Projects approved and rejected based on strategic plan

Year	No. of projects implemented	No. of projects from the plan	Percentage
2007	78	60	77 percent
2008	102	90	88 percent
2009	164	150	91 percent
2010	170	153	90 percent

Source: Authors compilation based on municipal records and council minutes, 2007-2010.

The strategic plan served as a guiding document to the mayor and the council when approving projects or preparing the annual budget; "the first step in preparing the annual budget was to ask each department to look at the strategic plan before deciding on priorities. In most cases, we excluded any request that did not comply with the priorities set by the strategic plan"[156]. In summary, the level of ownership is much higher at the municipal council side as well as the mayor himself.

Planning outcomes

The strategic planning exercise of Nablus resulted in a planning document that guided the mayor and his team in improving the city's infrastructure and services.

A number of positive outcomes resulting from the first strategic plan of Nablus have been documented. In this main, having a strategic plan has enabled the municipality to improve its infrastructure capacity as well as the services provided to citizens, an improvement which was reported by the participants of the focus groups and by the staff of the municipality. Moreover, analyzing the specific data of Nablus city, that formed part of two rounds of the "Client and Citizen Satisfaction Survey" conducted for the MDLF, revealed that citizen satisfaction with Nablus Municipality witnessed major areas of improvement from the first round of the survey in 2008 to the 2nd round of 2012. The result of the survey also

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[156] Interview with MU22.

highlighted improvements in the delivery and management of services and dealing with the citizens between the two survey rounds (Alpha, 2009; Alpha, 2013). Although this recorded improvement is attributed to a number of factors, informants from the focus groups as well as from external stakeholders pointed out the role of the strategic plan in improving the management of the city's services as well as enhancing the financial position of the municipality[157].

> *"By having a sort of strategic plan, the municipality of Nablus was able to improve its management capacity, make better decisions, utilize the available resources, and create new opportunities. All that enhanced service delivery, and increased revenues"[158].*

Probably the most obvious example of the impact of strategic planning on the municipality was its ability to move from a financial deficit to surplus between 2005 and 2010. The financial data of the municipality are documented in the independent annual audit reports. These show a clear improvement in all aspects related to the financial position of the municipality, as presented in Figure 6-11.
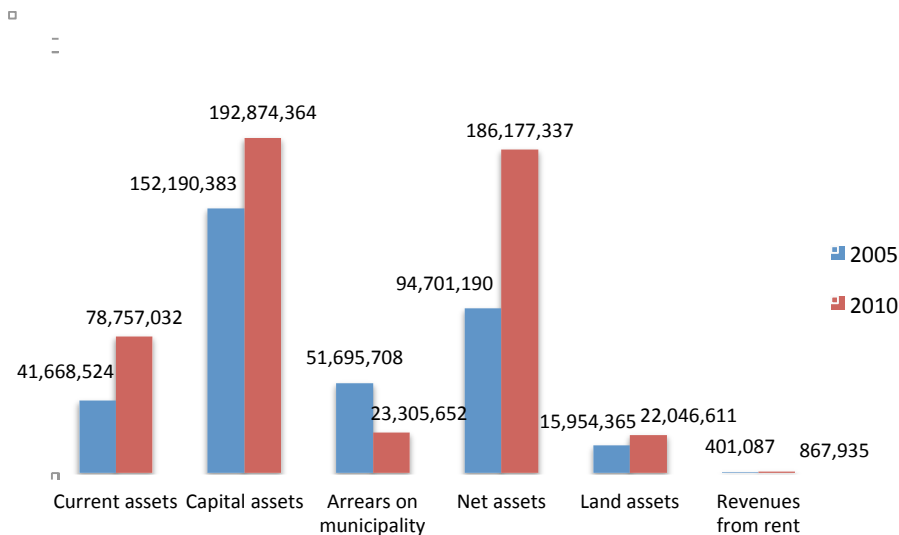
Figure 6-11: Change in financial status of the municipality of Nablus from 2005 to 2010 (in USD)

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from the municipality of Nablus.

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[157] Discussion of FG03, and FG04; and Interview with NI09, and NI05.

[158] Interview with NI07.

In terms of donor funding, the municipality was able to use the strategic plan to raise more funds from several donor agencies including the Germans, the French, the World Bank, and the Arab Funds. According to one of the community representatives, "their attitude and position started to change toward the municipality after 2007 due to the existence of an active, trustworthy mayor who came with a documented plan that outlined the priorities of the city"[159]

Moreover, funding received from donors onwards from 2007 increased sharply when the strategic plan was developed and endorsed by the council. It is difficult to claim that this increase in funding was caused by the strategic plan alone. Other external factors had also improved the financial condition of the municipality. Nevertheless, many informants believe that "having a strategic plan was the main driver for the improvement in the management and services of the municipality, which led to better relations with the community, donors, and government"[160]. For example, the change in the community perception and the trust in the municipality has raised the collection rate of municipal taxes and fees from less than 30 percent in 2006 to almost 70 percent in 2012[161]. Figure 6-12 illustrates the increase of external donor funding to the Nablus municipality from 2005 to 2012[162].
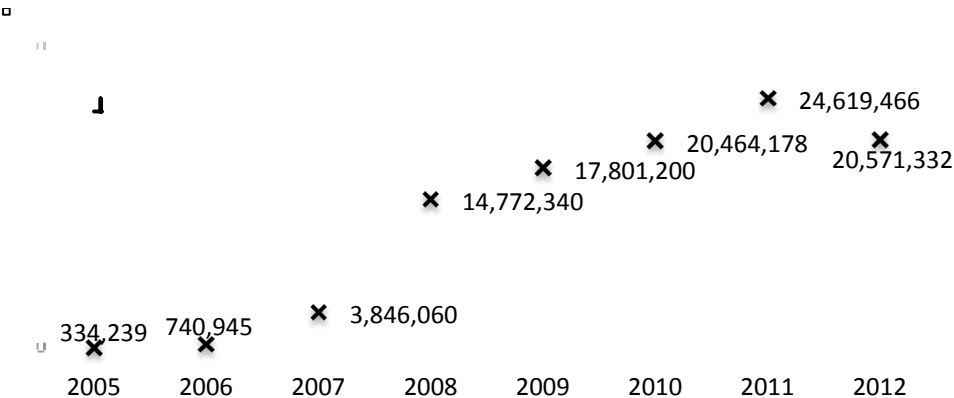
Figure 6-12: Trend in donors funding (in USD) for the municipality of Nablus from 2005 to 2012

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from Nablus municipality.

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[159] Interview with ID03.

[160] FG03; this observation was also confirmed by other informants from MoLG, GIZ, KFW, and World Bank.

[161] Data obtained from Nablus Municipality Financial Department on 12 February 2015.

[162] Based on data obtained from Nablus Municipality Financial Department on 12 February 2015.

The plan was used by the municipal council as "a reference for submitting proposals to donors" according to the mayor of Nablus [163]. As stated by the Engineering Department, the priority for funding and implementing development projects was given to projects that were part of the strategic plan. To confirm this, the researcher reviewed the implemented projects from 2007 to 2011 to investigate if these projects were included in the plan itself. It also sought to investigate if the municipal council referred to the plan before making decisions either approving or rejecting any project. Records of the Engineering Department, and minutes of council meetings indicated a good level of awareness and commitment to the plan.

One important outcome of the plan is its influence on the budget preparation process of the municipality. Prior to the plan, the municipal development budget was prepared using forecasted numbers from the mayor and heads of departments. After the plan, the municipality's development budget was prepared using the priorities and projects identified in the plan. The process would start by asking each department to review the strategic plan and to identify the projects to be included in the annual budget. The Financial Department consolidated these requests and submitted the draft development budget to the council for review and approval[164]. From looking at the development budget of Nablus from 2006 to 2011, and comparing this with the projects identified in the strategic plan, one can observe an improvement in the way the municipality prepared its annual budget and aligned it with the priorities of the strategic plan[165]. The Director of the Budgetary Department at the MoLG also confirmed this observation[166].

Looking at the implementation of the proposed projects in the strategic plan and in terms of the actual development budget spent on each identified priority, the municipality was able to implement about 80 percent of the proposed projects in the strategic plan (Davidson and Al-Sahili, 2011; Nablus, 2011). The researcher calculated the percentage by reviewing the annual reports, and financial data of the municipality from 2007 to 2012. The results were also validated through interviews with various sources including the mayor, the City Engineer, and the City Financial Director.

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[163] Interview with MU17.

[164] Interview with MU24.

[165] Data was obtained from approved annual budgets of Nablus municipality for the years from 2006 to 2011 as received from the MoLG Budgetary Department.

[166] Interview with NI13.

Table 6-19 presents the total budget for implemented projects in each priority of the strategic plan between 2007 and 2012. It also shows the percentage of the budget in relation to the estimated budget as set in the plan.

Table 6-19: The total cost of implemented projects of Nablus municipality based on the Strategic Plan

Priority	Implemented Projects (USD)	Percentage of the Actual Cost to the Estimated Budget
Create a status of stability, safety, and rule of law in the city	1,795,200.00	88 percent
Improve and diversify the services provided by the municipality to the public	3,072,300.00	77 percent
Enhance and maintain the infrastructure of Nablus	59,487,316.00	79 percent
Preserve environment and public health	13,607,700.00	67 percent
Enhance innovative initiatives to encourage human resources	2,784,669.30	90 percent
Encourage and strengthen cooperation relations with relevant stakeholders	1,616,008.80	80 percent
Achieve autarky and maximize the utilization of financial resources	3,888,727.92	72 percent
Total	**88,602,844.21**	**79 percent**

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from the municipality of Nablus.

Figure 6-13 illustrates the percentage of implemented projects (as of 2012) out of the proposed budget for the main priorities identified in the strategic plan[167].

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[167] Data was obtained from Nablus's Engineering Department and Financial Department.
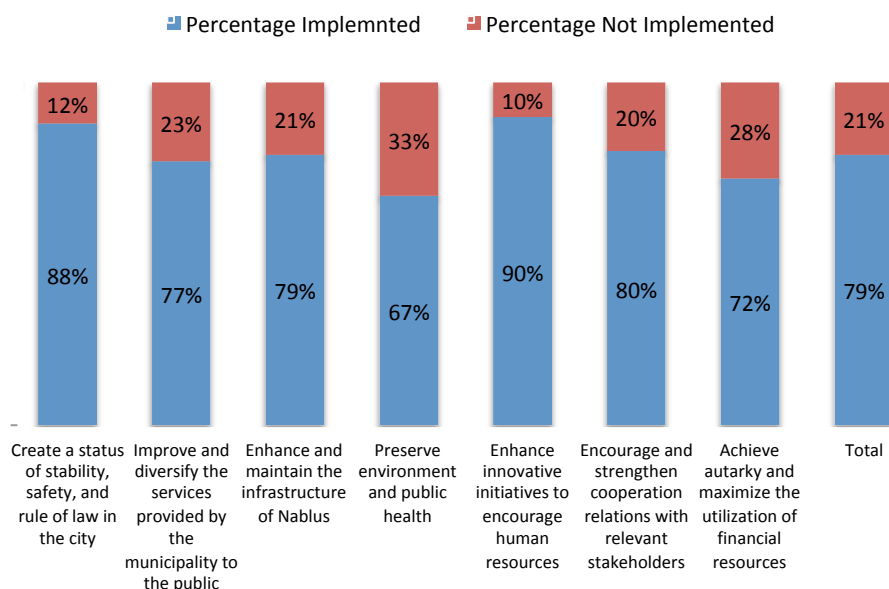
Figure 6-13: Percentage of implementation (as measured by actual expenditure against each priority) of Nablus' strategic plan from 2007 to 2012

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from Nablus municipality.

The analysis shows also that over a period of five years, the municipality managed to channel USD 88,602,844, or USD 17,720,568 per annum, towards the implementation of various projects and initiatives as proposed by the strategic plan. This represents over five times the municipality spending for development projects during the five years prior to 2005 [168].

Looking at the trend of annual budget of Nablus municipality between the years 2000 to 2012, we can observe a positive change starting the year 2005 following the election of the new council and the end of the Second Intifada. The dramatic increase in the annual budget, however, took place after 2007 as a result of the changes in the overall political environment in the country as well as the return of donor funding after two years of their politically motivated boycott. Another key factor was the development of the strategic plan, which helped the municipality tap into other sources of funding and provided a means for managing priorities

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[168] Interview with MU24, and NI13.

and implementing projects[169]. The chart in Figure 6-14 shows an increase in the annual budget of the municipality after preparing the strategic plan in 2007.

| | 33,671,239 | | 34,358,407 |

Data points:
- 2000: 5,825,674
- 2001: 6,005,850
- 2002: 7,507,312
- 2003: 7,902,434
- 2004: 12,025,442
- 2005: 15,461,283
- 2006: 20,615,044
- 2007: 25,081,637
- 2008: 26,586,535
- 2009: 30,574,516
- 2010: 33,671,239
- 2011: 31,489,938
- 2012: 34,358,407

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012
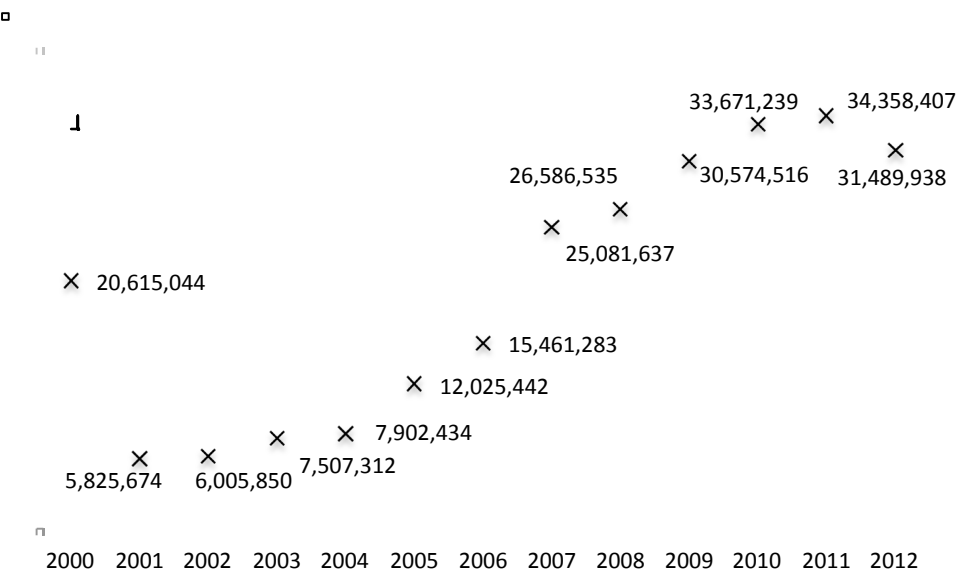
Figure 6-14: Nablus Annual Budget (in USD) from 2000 to 2012[170]

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from Nablus municipality.

The municipality was able to secure more funding and diversify its sources through better management of its own financial resources, collaborating with private sectors, local NGOs, and outreaching to external donors and funding agencies. Although the municipality depended on external funding to finance its projects (for example about 60 percent of projects were financed by donor agencies, our analysis of the expenditure on development projects show that the municipality succeeded in diversifying its financial sources as part of its attempt to minimize its dependence on one source of income. Figure 6-15 illustrates this:

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[169] Interview with MU21, NI11, and ID02.

[170] Data in the chart was obtained from Nablus Municipality Financial Department on 3 July, 2015. The researcher verified the data from the MoLG Budgetary Department and by reviewing the External Auditor Report of the years 2006, 2008, and 2012.
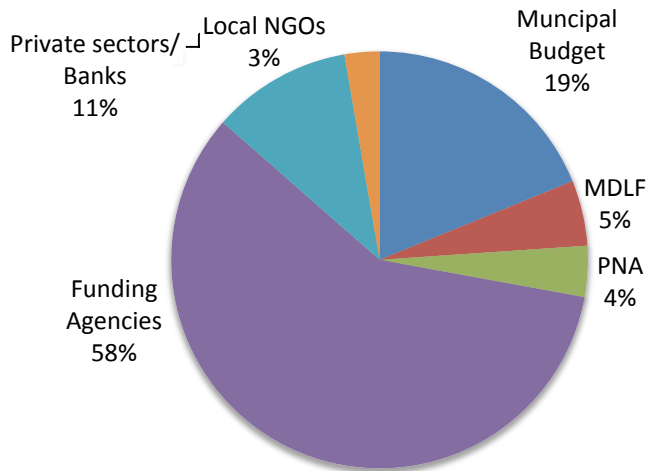
Figure 6-15: Distribution of sources of finance for the implementation of the Nablus Strategic Plan from 2000 to 2012

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from Nablus municipality.

Being one of the few municipalities with a strategic plan, Nablus was ranked among the top 16 municipalities in Palestine according to the MDLF Performance Ranking System[171] (Nablus, 2010). This ranking allowed the municipality to receive more funding from the MDLF in comparison to other lower ranked municipalities[172].

Adoption of the Plan

"I used to carry the plan with me to every meeting, workshop, or event and always preach about its importance to guide our work and to raise funding"[173].

This statement of the mayor is an example of the level of commitment of the mayor himself, and the core planning team, toward the strategic plan. In fact, the plan was also adopted by the council as indicated in citations by the council members in the various meeting minutes. The same could be said about the attitude of the municipal staff, at the level of department's directors, who used the plan as a guiding document in their work, whether as a device to prepare departmental plans, budgets, or requesting and approving projects. The researcher was able to

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[171] For more information about the MDLF Performance System please refer to Chapter 4 of this research.

[172] Interview with NI03.

[173] Interview with MU17.

confirm that the mayor and the municipal staff used the plan as a guiding document through interviews with key staff at the municipality as well as by reviewing documents such as internal communication letters, budget preparation memos, and project proposals.

The limited community participation in the planning process however, as well as the inadequate citizen outreach about the plan, resulted in poor awareness of the plan's content. Focus group participants have indicated that "if you ask the ordinary citizens on the street, they might know that the municipality has some sort of a plan to work within, but most citizens will not identify any more information about its content, outputs, or progress"[174].

6.2.6 The Second Strategic Plan in Nablus: the SDIP National Approach

The first strategic plan of Nablus came to an end in 2011. One year before that, the mayor and the council requested the support from the MDLF to develop a second strategic plan based on the unified national approach of the Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) that was adopted by the MoLG, MDLF, and other partners. Nablus municipality was among the 137 municipalities that benefited from rolling out the SDIPs between the years 2008 and 2014[175]:

> "I was happy to know that the MDLF included strategic planning as one of their main criteria for funding, and was eager to benefit from this opportunity. I genuinely believe that planning is the first step to achieve better and efficient services"[176].

This section investigates the SDIP process that started in Nablus in the year 2011 and resulted in the second strategic plan known as 'The Strategic Development and Investment Plan (SDIP) of Nablus (2012-2015)'. Similar to what is outlined in the previous sections about the first strategic plan, the following sections describe the process, content, and outcome related to the second plan (referred to as the SDIP of Nablus). A comparison matrix is provided to show the similarities and differences between the two plans.

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[174] Discussion of FG03, and FG04.

[175] For more information about the MDLF Performance System please refer to Chapter 4 of this research.

[176] Interview with MU17.

Motivation

As explained in Chapter Four of this thesis, the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in cooperation with the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) and various developmental partners introduced a 'Policy Note for Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) for Palestinian Cities and Towns' in 2009 (MoLG, 2009a). This policy note was followed by a guiding manual in 2009, which was later updated in 2011. Based on the manual and the tools associated with it, the SDIP implementation had two phases: a pilot phase, and a roll out phase. The municipality of Nablus was among those Palestinian towns included in the second round of the roll out phase from 2012 to 2014. Similar to other Palestinian municipalities, the main incentive for Nablus to undertake an SDIP process was the MDLF Ranking System which made SDIP [177] a condition for additional funding from the MDLF for developmental projects.

> *"Having a strategic plan became a main requirement for donors and a condition to receive funding. Therefore, one of the main motivations to the municipality was respond to the donor's requirement so it can bring funding"*[178].

One important difference was the appreciation and understanding the mayor and his core team had of the planning process as a tool for municipal management, an understanding developed through their first experience of this sort of process.

> *"One of the motivations behind engaging in the SDIP was the existence of few individuals in the council and the municipality who have the appreciation and knowledge of strategic planning due to their previous experience in the first plan[179]".*

Being one of the few municipalities to have engaged in strategic planning on their own (without formal guidance or external funding), the mayor and the planning team learnt by doing in pursuing the process of making and implementing a strategic plan. This capacity was valuable during the preparation of the second plan (i.e. SDIP).

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[177] Interview with MU20.

[178] Discussion of FG04.

[179] Discussion of FG04.

"We have learned a lot from our previous planning experience which made it easier for us to overcome the challenges and improve both the process and the output of the planning"[180]

Another key factor behind the preparation of the Nablus SDIP was the charisma of the mayor himself and his belief in and enthusiasm for strategic planning[181].

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, almost the same percentage of informants ranked the leadership of the mayor (68 percent), and the MDLF eligibility condition of having an SDIP (66 percent) as the main drivers for the SDIP. This was followed by the support of the council that had prior knowledge and experience of strategic planning (52 percent). Together, these provided the three driving factors behind the initiation of the SDIP process. Figure 6-16 illustrates the main drivers for Nablus' second strategic plan (SDIP).
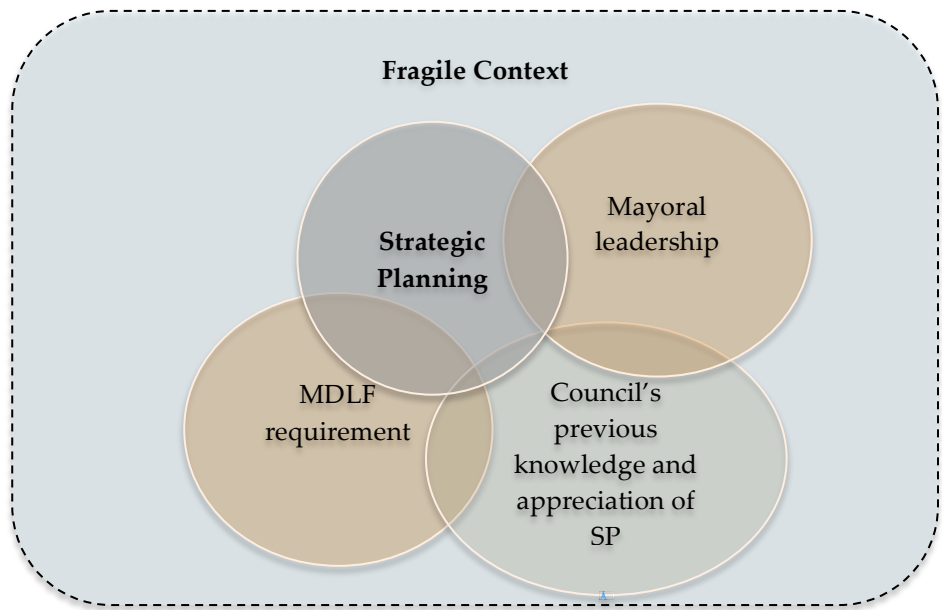
Figure 6-16: Drivers for the 2nd SP of Nablus (SDIP)

Source: Author compilation based on interviews with focus groups discussion

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[180] Interview with MU20.

[181] Interview with MU26.

Description of the SDIP Process

As discussed previously (Section 5.5), the development of Nablus' SDIP followed a unified systematic process that was adopted by MoLG and implemented by MDLF through a systematic manual and related means.

For the Nablus SDIP, the first phase (organization and analyses) started in March 2011 when the MDLF contracted An-Najah National University (NNU) to be the Local Technical Consultant (LTC). This role was to provide technical and logistical support throughout the planning process for five municipalities, including Nablus. Following this, the LTC alongside formed various committees in conjuncture with the municipality to manage the planning process and to oversee the formulation of the plan. These committees included:

1. Strategic Development Planning Committee
2. Institutional Building Committee
3. Core Planning Team
4. Stakeholders Committee
5. Specialized working committees

The planning team suggested that the stakeholder committee conduct a stakeholder analysis. A review of the committee membership reveals it was composed of 121 members covering various parts of the community such as agriculture, industry, education, health, infrastructure, policing, civil society, youth, women, etc. Women represented 23 percent of the committee members (Nablus, 2011). the composition of the specialized working committee w prepared by the core planning team and approved by the council prior to the first public meeting. Each committee was headed by a municipal councillor or a municipal senior staff member. About 109 members participated in these committees; of that number 26.6 percent were women (Musleh, 2014).

The second step of the planning was conducting a diagnostic analysis of the communities current status and needs through conducting interviews with various stakeholders, obtaining data from PCBS if available, checking the municipality's data and maps, consulting available reports on the matter at hand. In addition, members of the specialized working committees utilized their professional positions to obtain information and provided expert judgments in relevant fields. As a result, a 'diagnostic report' was prepared and presented to the local community in a public workshop in May 2011. This public workshop was attended by members of the stakeholder committee, specialized working committees, core planning team as well interested citizens. A review of the workshop minutes

reveals that more than 140 persons participated in the workshop, 26 percent of which were women. In addition to discussing the results of the diagnostic report, the developmental priorities of the community were identified and agreed upon through a ballot[182].

According to the focus group participants, public participation in the SDIP process was extensive and diverse. The first public workshop and the subsequent meetings embraced many organizations, and individuals from the community. For a city of the size of Nablus however, they expected participation to be much higher and more comprehensive. Participants talked about the 'elitist' nature of the participation in the SDIP process, where the same individuals maintained continuous presence in many community activities including the SDIP meetings. This was in addition to the absence or low participation of key groups such as the youth and representatives of very poor neighbourhoods[183].

Based on the identified priorities, the core planning team and the specialized committees identified the strategic objectives and indicators followed by the descriptions of projects to be implemented. This process took about two months after the first public workshop.

The results of this stage of the SDIP process were then discussed in a second workshop in which about 60 members from the stakeholder committees, the specialized working committees (developmental priorities committees), and the core planning team attended. The focus group participants indicated that the reduction of the number of participants in the second workshop was a result of a loss of interest among community members in voluntary participation and community work, as well as of the way community participation is designed and managed in the SDIP manual.

The SDIP development process concluded by producing the SDIP document and presenting it to the community in a public meeting in August 2011. About 145 people attended that meeting, of which 33 percent were women[184]. During that meeting, stakeholders were asked to sign the societal contract which embodied the adoption of the plan by the municipality and the representatives of the local community and their commitment to its objectives and outputs.

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[182] Minutes of the public workshop, 15 May 2011.

[183] Discussion of FG03.

[184] Minutes of the public meeting of 20 August 2011.

Figure 6-17 summarizes the SDIP development for Nablus and presents the key milestones of the process.

Pre-SDIP: Preparation and contracting	Phase 1: Organization and Analysis	Phase 2: Strategic Development Framework	Phase 3:Stretegic Plan
Jan 2011: MDLF approved the request from Nablus for SDIP. Mar 2011: MDLF contracted LTC. Work in SDIP started.	Mar-May 2011: Formulation of committees. April 2011: Analysis of stakeholders. May 2011: Diagnostic report produced.	May 2011: Public workshop-community vision formulated, community priorities identified.	May-June 2011: Projects descriptions developed. July 2011: Implementation plans and indicators. August 2011: Final public meeting and approval of the plan. Oct 2011: Institutional assessment completed.

Figure 6-17: Nablus SDIP timeframe

Source: Author compilation based on review of minutes of meetings, and SDIP documents.

Buy-in and Extent of Participation in the Plan-Making

The involvement of the community in the second strategic plan was wider in than in the first strategic plan. As indicated previously by citizens however, the level and comprehensiveness of community consultation was lower than expected for a city the size of Nablus.

The SDIP received a higher level of buy-in and commitment from the council's staff. Interviews with council staff revealed an acceptable level of satisfaction about their role in the SDIP process as well as awareness of the plan content.

The interviews showed a difference in the level of satisfaction between citizens and the municipality's staff and council. Citizens who attended the focus groups thought the "participation was diverse and included a number of organizations and individuals, however it was not suitable for the size of Nablus and the public meetings were not representing all citizens and community groups in a proper

way"[185]. On the other hand, the mayor, council members, and the municipality's staff considered the community participation as "excellent and embraced individuals who had a dignitary representation of institutions and groups in the city"[186]. They also felt that "through the planning process the municipality tried to bridge the gap between the citizen and the municipality by encouraging people to set priorities and to think of the municipality as a local development catalyst and not just providing services such as water, electricity, and collecting trash" [187].

On the Likert Scale, community representatives (two focus groups meetings, with a total of 28 participants), the mayor and the core planning team (total of eight members) ranked the community participation in the development of the second strategic plan (SDIP) of Nablus differently, Table 6-20 represents this difference.

Table 6-20: How do you assess the *participation* of the community in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒(1)
Core planning team (N= 8)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (6)
Focus group participants (N = 28)	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (24)	☐ (3)	☐

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=36).

The municipality's staff and the council started the implementation of the SDIP immediately after the community approved it in August 2011. Following the local elections in 2012 however, a new council and new mayor temporarily halted the implementation of the SDIP. After being elected as the new mayor, Ghassan Shakaa, stated "he doesn't recognize the SDIP which was prepared during the period of the former mayor"[188] and "he needs to modify it"[189]. The new council

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[185] Discussion of FG03, and FG04.

[186] Interview with MU17.

[187] Interview with MU26 ,and MU20.

[188] Discussion of FG04.

looked at the plan as "an ownership of the previous municipality" and wanted to "augment and renew the plan"[190].

Although the reluctance of the new council toward the SDIP had slowed the implementation of the strategic plan, the council still uses the plan implicitly when dealing with donors and community affairs[191].

Content of the Plan

The stated vision of the SDIP of Nablus is (Nablus, 2011):

> *"Nablus: a capital for economy, Incubator for education, a land of steadfastness, and an address for authenticity".*

This vision was the result of the discussion in the public workshop where participants from the community and municipality discussed the needs, and identified the priorities of the town for the next five years.

To achieve this vision, the SDIP document identified seven issues that face the community, which were then used to derive 25 objectives that the plan aims to. These objectives include (Nablus, 2011):

1. Improve the planning process of the city to suit future needs
2. Enhance the urban harmonization in urban planning between the city and its surroundings
3. Raise awareness and strengthen the partnership between local community and the municipality in relation to planning issues
4. Establish quality infrastructure necessary for the cultural activities
5. Establish infrastructure necessary for the sports activities
6. Empower citizens and local community (especially youth) to participate in the cultural and sports activities
7. Enhance students' understanding of the importance of education
8. Improve the capacity of educational staff in schools and kindergartens and introduce modern technological and educational tools in schools
9. Rehabilitate existing schools and build new schools
10. Reduce the pressure on the existing health services

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[189] Interview with MU18.

[190] Interview with MU19.

[191] Interview with MU20.

11. Provide health services in a geographically balanced manner
12. Build the capacity of the cadre of the health sector
13. Improve the specialized health services
14. Develop the tourist attractions in the city especially in the old town
15. Facilitate better investment procedures in the city
16. Develop and organize the marketing process of products and services
17. Increase water quantities needed for residential, industrial and commercial uses
18. Develop the sewage system
19. Improve the rainwater collection and harvesting system
20. Enhance the efficiency of the road network and improve the city's entrances
21. Develop transportation and pedestrian facilities and improve traffic safety levels
22. Improve the management system, and human resources related to roads and traffic
23. Develop and organize the municipality's organization structure and improve work efficiency
24. Complete the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for municipality's departments
25. Enhance the efficiency and productivity of municipal staff

Similar to the previous plan, the SDIP proposed a number of projects that fall under eight sectors. The sectors were pre-determined by the MoLG manual for all municipal strategic plans. The total estimated cost of the projects of this four-year plan exceeded USD 216 million, almost twice the estimated budget for the previous strategic plan (Nablus, 2011). The analysis of the plan shows that a large percentage of the estimated budget was allocated to infrastructure (both water and road related) (46.8 percent), followed by local economy education (17.7 percent). Table 6-21 provides the breakdown of the SDIP estimated budget as set in the SDIP document.

Table 6-21: Sectors and budgets of the SDIP of Nablus

Sector	Total Estimated budget (USD)	Percentage from the total budget
Water and Wastewater Services	63,830,000	29.5 percent
Roads and Transportation Services	37,490,000	17.3 percent
Educational Services	20,700,000	9.6 percent
Health Services	21,200,000	9.8 percent
Master Planning	442,000	0.2 percent
Local Economy	38,280,000	17.7 percent
Culture and Sports	20,190,000	9.3 percent
Institutional Development	14,250,000	6.6 percent
Total	216,382,000	**100 percent**

Source: adopted from (Nablus, 2011)

To operationalize the SDIP, implementation, monitoring and evaluation plans were included in the SDIP document (Nablus, 2011).

The former mayor of Nablus, Adly Yaish, believes that some elements of the SDIP were not realistic and should not have been included in the strategic plan document because they fall outside of the mandate and/or the financial capacity of the municipality. For example, the focus on improving the health services was a legitimate need and a priority for the community. However, health activities such as building hospitals are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and not the municipality. According to mayor Yaish, this problem resulted from the SDIP process itself as priorities were determined by voting participants in the public workshops[192]. A similar opinion was expressed by the co-ordinator of the core planning team, Dr. Amal Al Hodhod, who thinks that the projects proposed by the SDIP were too ambitious and did not suit the financial and technical resources of the municipality[193].

[192] Interview with MU17.

[193] Interview with MU20.

Leadership role in Nablus' strategic planning

The experience of the Nablus strategic planning provides a remarkable insight in the role of local leadership in initiating, driving, and steering the process of strategic planning. More importantly, it shows how different types of leadership (at the mayor's level) have influenced the strategic planning process and its outcome.

Several forms of local leaderships have emerged from studying the case of Nablus. Two elected mayors each with a distinctive style and character; an empowered municipal staff; and supportive council member with technical knowledge in strategic planning. Each of these leaderships contributed in different ways to the development of strategic plans in the city and affected the process as well as its outputs.

The elected mayor initiated the first strategic plan of Nablus in 2007. Adly Yaish, who came from a private sector background found himself "facing mounting challenges that required securing sufficient financial resources and restoring trust between citizens and the municipality"[194]. The politically motivated ostracising of municipalities like Nablus by donors added to the challenges faced by the mayor and the council, which in turn "inspired him to find solutions to the problems that faced the city, and to embark on strategic planning to help in prioritizing needs"[195]. The character and style of this mayor presents an interesting model of a local leadership which managed to drive the process of improving the city's services, social cohesion, and welfare.

> *"Mr. Yaish refused to receive his salary since he was elected as mayor for the city of Nablus, as he considered his job to be a voluntary service to his town and people. What was unique about him was his patriotism, empathy, and engagement with the people and their fears"* (Kishek, 2012).

Another citizen comments on the performance of the mayor; *"He did a good job for this city, even though foreign countries did not support him"* (Lynfield, 2012).

One of the distinguishing characteristics of this mayor is his background as a business person with a "private sector" mentality. Similar to that of the mayor of Beita, the mayor of Nablus "tried to manage the municipality in a commercial and

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[194] Interview with MU17.

[195] Discussion of FG03.

economical manner by calculating inputs and outputs according to his business mentality". Therefore, this type of mayor was more capable of changing the traditional view of local governments as units mandated to provide basic services to that of local institutions aiming to facilitate local economic and social development within their boundaries[196]. Although this style of municipal management was interrupted following the change in leadership after the 2012 elections, the examples given by this type of leadership in various Palestinian municipalities sparked the discussion on the role of local governments in Local Economic Development (LED). This then led to a number of interventions and projects related to LED in 2012[197].

The mayor played an active role in pushing for a strategic plan for his city as well as in resolving conflicts and facilitating the discussions during the strategic planning process; *"mayor Adly was intensively following up the strategic planning process; he moved from a room to another, participating in discussions, and suggesting solutions to avoid conflicts. His involvement in strategic planning committees stimulated everyone towards a successful strategic planning"[198]* .

This level of involvement from the mayor as a leader was a key ingredient for the success of the strategic planning process as well as for the production of the plan itself. As Table 6-22 shows all informants assessed the involvement of the mayor as very active:

Table 6-22: Assessment of the *level of involvement* of the mayor in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (8)
Focus group participants (N=28)	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☐ (2)	☒ (25)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=36).

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[196] Interview with ID01.

[197] Interview with ID10.

[198] Discussion of FG03.

As assessed by various informants, this high degree of involvement of the mayor resulted in a significant influence in the various stages of planning including: formulation, and implementation (Table 6-23).

Table 6-23: Assessment of the *level of influence* of the mayor in the planning process?

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=8)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (7)
Focus group participants (N=28)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (26)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=36).

This research looked at the main leadership traits possessed by the mayor as a leader. This asked informants in interviews and focus groups to confirm and rank the qualities of leadership that allowed the mayor to play a significant role in the strategic planning process as well in managing the municipal affairs. Many of these qualities are raised in the relevant body of leadership literature.

Table 6-24 shows the ranking of these qualities of the mayor as perceived by the various informants. It should be noted that each informant was asked whether or not a characteristic applied to the mayor, and then to rank each quality in accordance to its importance.

Table 6-24: Qualities of the mayor's leadership in the case study

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 36 informants)	Rank
Visionary Refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that clarifies the current situation and induces commitment to an even better future (Brown and Anfara, 2003; Jing and Avery, 2011; Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)	13	5
Openness Openness is one of the top skills of effective leaders which relates to divergent thinking and is strongly linked to creativity (Judge et al., 2002; McCrae, 1987; Yukl et al., 2002)	18	3
Trust Trust refers to a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the trustee (i.e., a leader) (Avolio et al., 2004; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Rousseau et al., 1998).	18	3
Social intelligence Social intelligence refers to a set of interpersonal competencies, it contains two components: (a) awareness of others' needs and problems, and (b) responsiveness to different social situations (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008; Kobe et al., 2001).	13	5
Absorptive capacity Absorptive capacity is the ability to learn, which involves the capacity to identify, absorb, and employ new information toward new ends (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Davies and Davies*, 2004) .	17	4
Capacity to change Refers to the ability define the suitable moment influencing, and leading strategic change in organizations (Davies and Davies*, 2004; Higgs and	19	2

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 36 informants)	Rank
Rowland, 2011) .		
Managerial wisdom		
Refers to the capacity to take the right action at the right time (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Malan and Kriger, 1998).	19	2
Decision-making capacity		
Refers to the ability to provide a streamlined focus for decision-making in order to provide momentum for change and innovation (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Partnership skills		
Refers to the ability to act within and beyond the respective personal/family/political circle to introduce or oppose change that affects the community's environment (Greasley and Stoker, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008).	19	2
Low partisanship		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be outward looking and not tied to narrow partisan party/family considerations (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Accessibility		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be relatively visible to the community, engage with citizens, and offer an accessible form of politics (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).	20	1

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (Number of informants=36).

In addition to the leadership of the mayor, another vigorous role was assumed by a technical staff member in the second plan (SDIP) based on the experience gained from the first strategic plan. Dr. Amal Al Hodhod was appointed as the International Relations Manager for the municipality in 2007 when the municipality started the development of the first strategic plan. Having no previous experience in strategic planning, the first strategic plan was the "perfect

opportunity Dr. Amal learned by practice the basics of strategic planning and how to set priorities based on community needs and availability of resources" [199].

This kind of capacity building proved to be very valuable during the second strategic plan exercise, where the skills and knowledge acquired from the first planning experience allowed Dr. Amal to assume a more active and influential responsibility in the second planning exercise;

> *"Before the first strategic plan of Nablus, I had no idea about what it is entailed in doing a strategic plan for a community. However, after this experience, I felt more confidence and knowledgeable about the process and content of strategic planning. This experience enabled me to have a more active role in the second SDIP"[200]*

The role assumed by Dr. Amal, was technical in nature, which supplemented the political and societal leadership of the mayor during the strategic planning process; "Dr. Amal played a big role in leading the strategic planning from the technical side"[201].

In assessing the level of involvement of the supporting actors in the planning process, we observe that the role and engagement of the technical teams received high marks by participants in the focus groups (total of 22), although lower than the marks, which were given to the council members (Table 6-25).

Table 6-25: Assessment of the *degree of involvement* of the supporting actors in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
Council member	☐	☐ (3)	☒ (17)	☐ (2)	☐
Technical team	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (20)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=36).

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[199] Interview with MU20.

[200] Interview with MU20.

[201] Discussion of FG04.

This level of involvement translated into a strong level of influence for the technical individuals, and average for the council members in the various stages of planning including formulation and implementation (Table 6-26).

Table 6-26: Assessment of the *degree of influence* of the supporting actors in the planning process?

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
Council members	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (18)	☐ (2)	☐
Technical team	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (21)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=36).

Nablus case presents an interesting example of the impact of leadership change (at the higher level) and the different effects of two types of local leadership on the progress of the strategic planning as well as on the way municipal affairs were managed.

In 2012, Mr. Ghassan Shakaa, a veteran leader of Fatah movement (Lynfield, 2012) and a member of the PLO Executive Committee [202], was elected as the new mayor of Nablus along with other new council members. As soon as he was elected, Mr. Shakaa expressed his hesitation to continue implementing the SDIP that was developed during the last year of the previous mayor and council[203] tenure. Despite all attempts made by the MoLG and the MDLF to convince the new mayor to adopt the SDIP and restart its implementation, the mayor refused to do so and insisted on "the need to revise the plan and improve it" to match his vision and priorities for the city[204].

Although several newly elected mayors tried to back away from the strategic plans they inherited from their predecessors, the MDLF and the MoLG were able to regain the commitment and momentum in most of these municipalities in a short time after the elections. The new mayor of Nablus was different and did not follow

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[202] The Executive Committee (EC) is the highest executive body of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It has 18 members elected by the Palestinian National Council (PNC). SAYIGH, Y. 1997. Armed struggle and the search for state. *The Palestinian National Movement*..

[203] Discussion of FG03, and FG04.

[204] Interview with NI05, and NI14.

the guidance of the MoLG or MDLF in many municipal affairs, including for strategic planning[205].

The new mayor of Nablus represents an unusual leadership style. Being the descendant of a renowned family and one of the senior leaders of the PLO, the mayor considered himself as "a person of superior knowledge and power above any lower authority whether the ministry or the MDLF"[206]. This "self-styled patriarch of Nablus politics" (Lynfield, 2012) mode of leadership differs from the style of the first mayor who was seen as "a businessman with high partnership skills and openness to the society" [207]. The latter style was "closer to the public and more able to mobilize the community and encourage the citizens to work with him"[208]. The distinction between the two types of leadership "more elitist, political" using family heritage and political ties to manage local affairs, versus a "popular, service-oriented mentality" is important to understand the dynamics behind strategic planning and municipal governance in local governments in Palestine.

> *"There are different kinds of leaders in the Palestinian context: there are those who are realistic and they appreciate the existing challenges as well as the available resources. Those leaders were the catalysts for the strategic planning and drove everyone toward a unified vision for the community. They handled the challenges in a pragmatic way. But this type of leadership cannot achieve all objectives in a short time period.*
>
> *On the other hand, we have the "dictator" leader who claims to know everything. This leader might be able to achieve something or implement projects due the massive power and authorities under his hands. However, eventually this leader will not leave any impact at the institutional or the community levels"[209].*

This "authoritarian" style of leadership resembles what was termed by one of the informants as "the traditional leaders" who are supported by a political party or family legacy. This kind of leader has low possibility to change their mind-set as they are convinced that they own the magic keys and they know the community needs and problems better than anyone else. In addition, they have a totalitarian

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[205] Interview with PE01, and ID04.

[206] Interview with ID01.

[207] Discussion of FG03.

[208] Interview with NI07.

[209] Interview with ID07.

and centralizing mind-set without sufficient experience in policy-making or management. Those leaders contribute negatively to the development of the local government sector in general and in strategic planning in particular[210].

It should be mentioned that during the writing of this chapter, the mayor of Nablus was forced to resign in August 2015 following protests over "the deteriorating municipal performance and severe water shortages". This forced resignation of the mayor is the first ever in the Palestinian local government history caused by the dissatisfaction of the citizens as well as the opposition from council members. In his letter of resignation the mayor stated that "he and all the members of the municipal council decided to resign to avoid chaos in the city because of the crisis" (Farha, 2015; Tomeh, 2015).

Concluding Remarks

The case of Nablus' strategic planning experience as described in the previous sections is another example of the role played by local leadership and community motivation in the context of strategic planning as a reform intervention in fragile situations. The two examples of strategic plans that were developed in the city of Nablus between 2005 and 2012 provide insights into key factors that affected the quality and outcomes of planning processes. We reiterate the view that understanding the legitimacy and power of local leadership is considered one of the major reasons behind the success or failure of state building efforts in fragile and post conflict countries (Brinkerhoff, 2010). The motivation of people to engage in strategic planning exercises is also a determinant factor of the quality and outcome of the planning process (Healey et al., 1999).

Despite some similarities, the two strategic plans of Nablus hold a number of distinctive differences that are outlined in the following table (Table 6-27).

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[210] Interview with NI11.

Table 6-27: Comparison between the 1st Strategic Plan and the SDIP of Nablus

Theme	1st Strategic Plan	SDIP
Leadership	mayor led the process with the support of a core team of two persons.	Technical staff played a key role in the process, mayor was engaged in the process, and technical consultants provided guidance.
Motivation	Self-motivated: New elected council, boycotted from donors for political reasons	Externally-motivated: requirements from MDLF
Methodology	Learning by doing: no unified or written methodology/tools.	Mechanical: National approach adopted by MoLG with step-by-step guidelines and structured templates.
Process	Based on a limited consultation approach and then the core planning team with the mayor drafted the plan.	Based on 12 steps SDIP wheel as predesigned in the MoLG manual.
Timeframe	5 years (2007-2011) interrupted	4 years (2012-2015), the implementation was interrupted in 2012 as a result of electing new council.
Focus	7 priorities	8 sectors
Budget	USD 112,155,499	USD 216,382,000
Participation	Community participation was limited and not structured	Better community participation and involvement in terms of numbers, representation of sectors and specializations, and frequency of consultation.
Technical assistance	No external consultants, only technical staff from the municipality.	External technical consultants were hired and paid by MDLF.
Adoption (sustainability)	Lack of awareness at the community level, and higher	Change in municipal leadership halted the implementation of the SDIP.

	commitment and ownership among the municipal staff.	
Outcome	The municipality was able to secure more funding and diversify its sources through better management of its own financial resources, collaborating with private sectors, local NGOs, and outreaching to external donors and funding agencies. The Plan served as a guidance to the mayor and the municipality's staff.	The municipality's staff and the council started the implementation of the SDIP immediately after the community approved it in August 2011. However, following the local elections in 2012, a new council and mayor elected halted the implementation of the SDIP.
External environment	After a boycott of donors for about 3 years, this boycott relaxed following the appointment of new government in 2008	The newly elected mayor obstructed the implementation of the plan and insisted on formulating a new one.

Source: Author based on field research.

6.3   **Concluding Remarks**

The presented cases in this chapter are examples of independently-initiated strategic plans. As discussed in this chapter these plans were formulated after the elections of Hamas dominated councils and aimed at determining the priorities of the municipalities given the massive community needs, the scarce financial resources, and the boycott of donors. The newly elected mayors in both cities, who came from a private sector background, initiated the idea of developing a plan to overcome the financial deficit that their municipalities accumulated during the past years of the Intifada. The leadership of both the mayor of Nablus and the mayor of Beita was influential in steering the planning process as well as implementing the plans. Data obtained from interviews and focus groups indicated a high degree of involvement of mayors, as well as great respect of and confidence in their leadership (Section 6.1, and Section 6.2). Coming from a private sector background, the mayors of Nablus and Beita are examples of a 'non-traditional' leadership style that was new to the local government sector in Palestine. Our analysis showed that the high level of involvement of the mayors as

leaders was a key ingredient for the success of the strategic planning process as well as for the production of the strategic plans (Section 6.1, and Section 6.2).

Having presented in greater details of the two cases of independently-initiated strategic plans, and the role of leadership, motivation, and participation in those plans, we turn on to the other forms of strategic planning in Palestine. This form was externally driven by national institutions with the support of Western donors. The investigation of the case studies of the second form of strategic planning is provided in the next Chapter.

Chapter 7
Case studies of Externally-Initiated Strategic Plans

> *In the face of scarce resources and pressures of urbanization, unemployment, resource and land restrictions municipal leaders have been turning to strategic planning as a tool with which to use their limited resources to maximum effect.*
>
> *Khaled Qawasmi, Minister of Local Government*
>
> *In (MoLG, 2009a, page 2)*

This second case study chapter presents the experience of three cities – Deir Dibwan, AsSamu' and Birzeit – that commenced strategic planning following externally developed and externally driven approaches (i.e. influenced by the national SDIP approach or the USAID-funded SDF). The chapter is divided into three parts, each focusing on one case and starting by outlining the significance of each case, and why it is different from other municipalities (Sections 7.1.1, 7.2.1 and 7.3.1). The chapter proceeds by presenting a detailed description of each case: its history, socio-economic conditions, and the elements of its fragility. Then, it seeks to examine the strategic planning process and its elements and outcomes. More specifically, the role of leadership, motivation, and degree of buy-in were investigated for each case in light of the underlining research questions and propositions.

7.1   The Case of Deir Dibwan Municipality

Deir Dibwan is a small rural city that developed a strategic plan based on the nationally adopted SDIP, and provides an example of the important role technical staff played in the advocacy, development and implementation of the SDIP. It also illustrates how a combination of young talented individuals and traditional local structure (e.g. elderly and heads of families) positively influenced the strategic planning process and its outcomes. Deir Dibwan is a showcase of the evolution of

the municipality leadership where the involvement of the city engineer in strategic planning motivated him to run for election and eventually become the mayor.

The research of this case of Deir Dibwan was based on a document review, along with information gathered through interviews and focus groups. A total of 11 citizens participated in one focus group meeting and four members of core planning teams were interviewed during the course of this research. Furthermore, data obtained from interviews with external stakeholders enriched the description and analysis of this case.

Description of the Case

Deir Dibwan is a Palestinian town in the Ramallah governorate located 6.4 km east of Ramallah City. The total area of the town is 76,000 donums (CEP, 2011a). Similar to other villages and towns in the area, Deir Dibwan has a tradition of migration since the turn of the 20th Century. The first emigrants from Deir Dibwan went to Latin American countries and then increasingly to the United States of America during the 1950s. After the Arab Israeli War of 1967, emigration from Deir Dibwan had increased dramatically as 39 percent of the population emigrated to the U.S., mostly to California (Escribano and El-Joubeh, 1981). Currently, more than half of the people of Deir Dibwan live and work outside Palestine mainly in the U.S., South America, and Europe. It is estimated that about 14,000 persons live inside and around the town. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the estimated total population of Deir Dibwan in 2016 was 6,721 of whom 46 percent were male and 54 percent female (PCBS, 2016b). There were 990 households living in 1,343 housing units (PCBS, 2007).

Figure 7-1 shows the location and borders of Deir Dibwan.
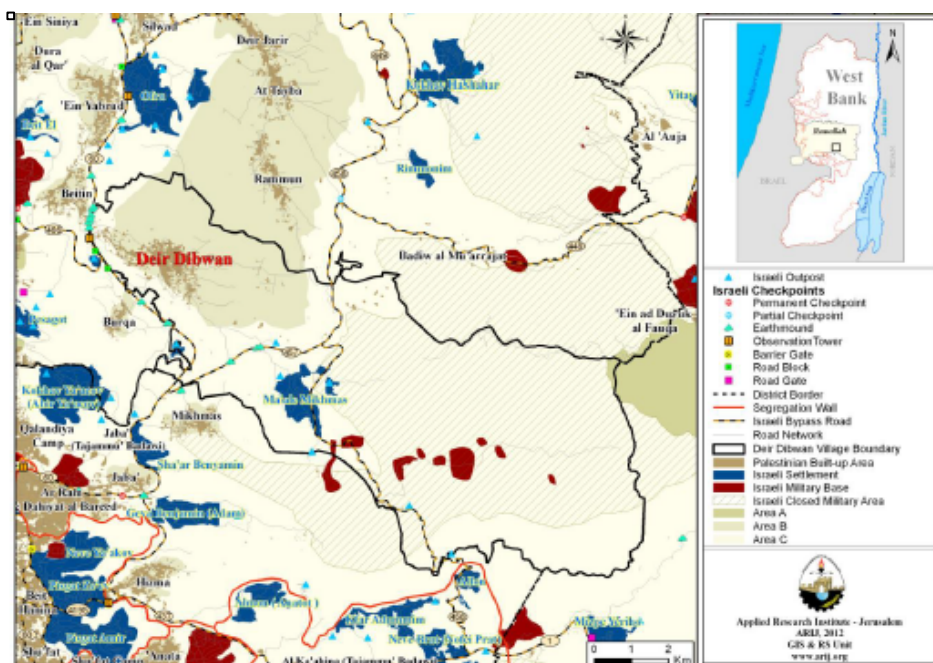
Figure 7-1: Deir Dibwan location and borders

Source: (ARIJ, 2012b)

7.1.1 History

Deir Dibwan was built on the ruins of 'Tel-Ai' after it was destroyed by Joshua in 1090 B.C. (Wagemakers, 2014). The word 'Deir' means a 'monastery' and the word 'Dibwan' came from the name of the missionary 'devan' or 'debwa' or 'bwan' that was in charge of this monastery. Over time, the name of the town shifted to Deir Dibwan (Palmer, 1881). The modern history of the town dates back to the year 1615, when people from East Jordan and Yemen moved to reside in it (CEP, 2011a; ARIJ, 2012b).

In the late Ottoman period, in 1838 to be precise, the American scholar Edward Robinson described Deir Dibwan as "a large and tolerably wealthy place" that produces "large quantities of figs" (Robinson and Smith, 1841b,p.118).

Another French explorer, Victor Guérin visited the village in July 1863 and described it as having five hundred inhabitants and situated on a rocky plateau. The remains of an old construction, which people referred to as Al-Deir (the Monastery), occupied the highest point of the plateau. He also noted several cisterns dug into the rock which, he assumed, dated from ancient times given their

antique quality. An Ottoman village list of about 1870 showed that 'Deir Dibwan' had 161 houses and a population of 459, though the population count included only men (Socin, 1879).

In 1883, the Palestine Exploration Fund's Survey of western Palestine described Deir Dibwan as a "large and well-built stone village, standing on flat ground, with a rugged valley to the north and open ground to the south. There are a few scattered olives round the place" (Conder, 1890, p.9). In a census conducted in 1922 by the British Mandate authorities, Deir Dibwan had a population of 1,382, while in the 1931 census the village had 384 occupied houses and a population of 1688 (Mills, 1932).

In 1945, the population of the village was 2,080 and all Arab, while the total land area was 73,332 donums. Of this, 5,052 were allocated for plantations and irrigable land, 10,695 for cereals, while only164 donums were classified as built-up areas (Hadawi, 1970). In the wake of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and after the 1949 Armistice Agreements, Deir Dibwan came under Jordanian rule under which the village became a municipality in 1956 (ARIJ, 2012b).

After the Six-Day War in 1967, Deir Dibwan fell under the Israeli occupation until the signing of Oslo Agreements in 1993. After that, the town fell under the administrative authority of the PNA.

7.1.2   Economic activities, infrastructure and services

The economy in Deir Dibwan is mainly dependent on agriculture and absorbs 32 percent of the town's workforce. The unemployment rate in Deir Dibwan reached approximately 10.8 percent in 2013 (PCBS, 2013a). Several services are available to the city's residents including a water supply, wastewater disposal, solid waste disposal, transportation, health and education.

Table 7-1 provides a snapshot of the key indicators related to the city of Deir Dibwan economic activities, infrastructure and basic services.

Table 7-1: Deir Dibwan city key indicators as of 2016

Key indicators	Value
PCBS code	301785
Total area (donum)	73,000
Population	6,721
Number of housing units	1,343
Number of employees in the municipality	17 permanent employees
Length of internal roads (Km)	
Paved	21
Unpaved	38
Electricity coverage	96 percent
Source of electricity	Israeli Electricity Company
Telecommunication network coverage	100 percent
Availability of public water network	Yes
Water source	Jerusalem Water Undertake
Water network coverage	99 percent
Quantity of water supplied (cubic metres/year)	217,049
Rate of water supply per capita litres/day	120 litres/day
Availability of wastewater network	No
Quantity of wastewater generated per day (cubic metres)	350
Number of solid waste containers	160
Quantity of solid waste produced (tons per day)	5.2
Public Schools	5
Health Centres	1
Economic Activities (employment by sector)	
Trade sector	26 percent
Government or other public employees sector	15 percent)
Industry	27 percent
Agriculture sector	32 percent
Unemployment rate *	10.8 percent
Active labour force**	24.8 percent
Employed***	89.7 percent

Notes:

* Underemployment exists when a person's employment is inadequate in relation to alternative employment, account being taken of his/her occupational skills (PCBS, 2015a).

** The economically active population (Labour Force) consists of all persons 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed (PCBS, 2015a).

*** Employed refers to: All persons are 15 years and over who were working at a paid job or business for at least one hour during the reference week, or who did not work,

but held a job or owned business from which they were temporarily absent (because of illness, vacation, temporarily stoppage, or any other reason) during the reference week (PCBS, 2015a).

Sources: Data was obtained by the researcher from various sources including: Deir Dibwan Municipality Files (accessed in Jan 2016), and (CEP, 2011b; CEP, 2011a; PCBS, 2008; PCBS, 2013b; PCBS, 2013a; ARIJ, 2012b).

7.1.3 Local Government in Deir Dibwan

Deir Dibwan was elevated from a village to a municipality in 1956 under Jordanian Rule. There are about 17 employees working in the municipality and owned its permanent headquarters (CEP, 2011a). In line with the local government's services and responsibilities listed in the Palestinian Local Councils Law No[1] (PNA, 1997), the Deir Dibwan municipality was responsible for providing a number of services to the residents of Deir Dibwan, including (ARIJ, 2012b):

- Organizing the construction and licensing processes
- Providing headquarters for governmental services (post, security, etc.)
- Implementing projects and case studies that contribute to the town's development
- Protecting historical and archaeological sites in the town
- Protecting governmental properties

The first democratic local elections took place in January 2005 and a municipal council composed of 13 members was elected. In October 2012, the second local elections were held where the former city engineer ran for mayor and was elected as the new mayor of Deir Dibwan (CEC, 2014).

7.1.4 Fragility of Deir Dibwan:

Following the Oslo II Interim Agreement, approximately 172 donums (or 0.2 percent) of the Deir Dibwan's area were assigned as area A whilst 12,487 donums (16.8 percent) of the town's total area were classified as area B. The remainder of the town's land area, constituting 61,630 donums (83 percent), were classified as area C (ARIJ, 2012b)[211].

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[211] For more details about the differences between Areas A, B, and C please refer to Section 4.2.

Deir Dibwan town has been subjected to a number of land confiscations by the Israeli authorities for the construction of Israeli settlements, military bases, outposts and Israeli bypass roads (LRC, 2015). The establishment of such military bases in the heart of Palestinian territories resulted in the intensifying of the Israeli military and security presence within Palestinian communities, thus increasing control over Palestinian citizens.

Attacks carried out by Israeli settlers living in Israeli settlements around Deir Dibwan have a serious and significant impact on both the town's residents and their properties. These attacks allow settlers to control of Palestinian land adjacent to the settlements by preventing landowners from gaining access to these lands. Settlers near Deir Dibwan have enclosed land using barbed wire and planting trees to increase their control over these locations. Settlers have further burnt and uprooted trees planted and owned by Palestinians and attacked landowners to intimidate and deter them from returning to their lands near the aforementioned settlements (Levinson, 2012).

Deir Dibwan has experienced forcible land seizure for the establishment of three outposts on the southeastern side of the town, in the area surrounding the Israeli settlement of 'Ma'ale Mikhmas'. These outposts aim at expanding Ma'ale Mikhmas settlement through the control of further Palestinian lands (MA'AN, 2013).

Over time, the Israeli Government confiscated thousands of donums of agricultural and non-agricultural lands to open several bypass roads that stretch thousands of kilometres from the north to the south of the West Bank. This was done with the purpose of linking Israeli settlements with one another, dividing Palestinian lands and enhancing security control over Palestinian lands. Israel has additionally confiscated more land from Deir Dibwan and land to its east and south for the construction of four Israeli bypass roads (road numbers 60, 457, 458 and 446). The total length of these roads stretches for 20.2 km over the lands of Deir Dibwan. The real threat of bypass roads however, such as those aforementioned lies in the buffer zone formed by the Israeli occupation Force (IOF) alongside these roads, extending approximately 75 m on each side. These buffer zones dramatically increase the total area of land confiscated by the construction of bypass roads. Following the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada during September 2000, three earth mound barriers were constructed on sub entrances of Deir Dibwan (ARIJ, 2012b).

The Strategic Plan of Deir Dibwan

Similar to other municipalities in Palestine, Deir Dibwan engaged in strategic planning as part of the Municipal Development Programme (MDP), implemented by the MDLF. The following sections examine this experience in more detail to uncover the key elements that influence the strategic planning exercise of Deir Dibwan city. To position the strategic plan of Deir Dibwan within the broader historical context of local governments in Palestine, Figure 7-2 presents a timeline of the strategic plan along with the key events that affected local governments in general.
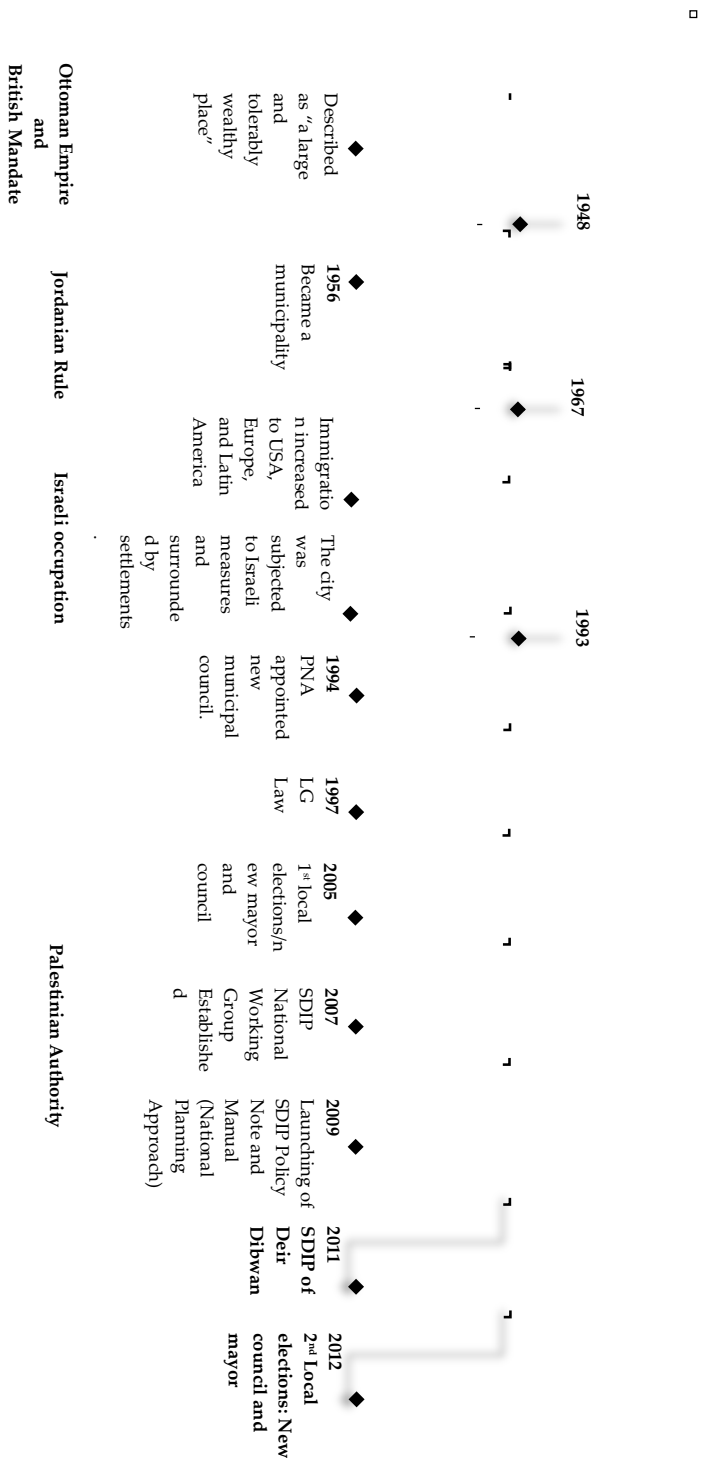
Figure 7-2: Deir Dibwan City Timeline

Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review

Motivation

The newly elected council of Deir Dibwan took office in January 2005 and consisted of 13 members (CEP, 2011a). The majority of the council at that time was elected on the basis of traditional family coalitions. As a result, the new members were respected community dignitaries of "traditional thinking and style when it comes to running the city affairs" with no experience or knowledge about "concepts such as strategic planning, local economic development, and modern good governance"[212]. This situation is not unusual for Palestinian towns of the same size (less than 8,000 people) that are located in the rural areas of the West Bank[213].

For the council, strategic planning was not on the agenda until the young municipal engineer started to advocate the importance of developing a "sort of plan" to manage the municipality and run the city[214]. This idea developed in parallel with the MDLF initiative to offer capacity-building packages to municipalities as part of its Municipal Development Programme (MDP) and included a SDIP support.

> *"The new MDLF programme, which aims at building the capacity of municipalities, came at the right moment. When we looked at the capacity building packages that were available through the programme, I pushed for taking a SDIP package although there were other types of capacity building support. At that time the council was composed of elderly members which required me, as a young city engineer, to guide them in selecting planning as a priority"[215].*

The municipal council was supportive of the idea when it was suggested to him by the engineer. However, "they did not understand the concept or the process. Strategic planning was new to the educated people, so how about senior people"[216]

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[212] Discussion of FG05.

[213] The PCBS uses three categories to describe the Palestinian localities: urban, rural, and camps. Rural areas are all localities whose population varies from 4,000 to 9,999 persons provided they have at least four of the following services: public electricity, public water network, post office, health centre with a full-time physician and a general secondary school PCBS 2015a. Glossary of Statistical Terms Used in PCBS Edition 2015. Ramallah, Palestine: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. .

[214] Interview with MU04.

[215] Interview with MU01.

[216] Interview with MU02.

The principal motive for developing a strategic plan for Deir Dibwan was provided by the requirements and incentives set by the MDLF to all municipalities to be eligible for receiving financial support from MDLF's programme[217]. This, combined with the eagerness of the young engineer at that time, encouraged the municipality to embark on the SDIP exercise.

An important aspect of this motivation came from the engineer. This combined with similar keenness of some council members: "by having a strategic plan for the community, the municipality can use the limited resources more efficiently, and lessen the impact of the Israeli occupation". According to the data obtained from participants involved in the decision to develop the strategic plan, the dimension of occupation, and the threats imposed by the Israeli restrictions on the community were clear in the discussion and the output of the planning process[218].

> *"You cannot ignore the fact that we live under occupation that controls our land, air, water, and even lives; although planning is not easy under these circumstances, it could be a tool to help us to survive and make the best out of this situation"[219].*

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, the majority of informants (69 percent) ranked the MDLF eligibility condition (to have an SDIP to access funding) the active role of the city engineer (65 percent), and the support of the newly elected council (37) as the three main factors behind the initiating of the SDIP process. Figure 7-3 illustrates the main drivers for Deir Dibwan SDIP.

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[217] For more information about the MDLF incentives and ranking system please refer to Section 5.5.

[218] Interview with PE07, and MU05.

[219] Discussion of FG05.
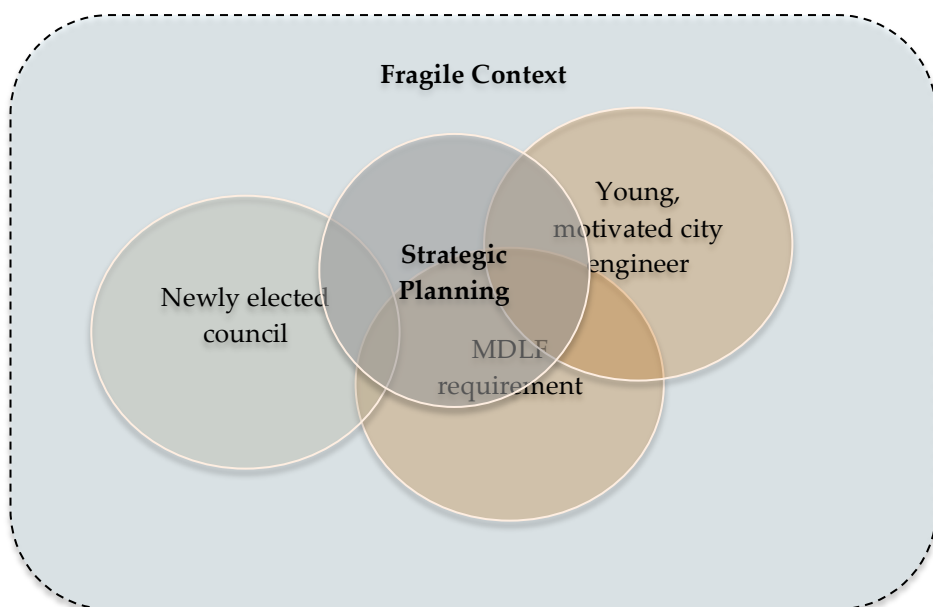
Figure 7-3: Drivers for the SDIP of Deir Dibwan

Source: Author compilation based on interviews with focus groups discussion.

Description of the Strategic Planning Process

As discussed previously (Section 5.5), the development of Deir Dibwan SDIP followed a unified systematic process that was adopted by the MoLG and implemented by the MDLF through a systematic manual and related tools.

In October 2009, the MDLF opened the door for municipalities to apply for capacity building packages, which included the support to develop a SDIP. The city engineer managed to convince the city council to request the SDIP package whom then submitted an application in November 2010. The MDLF approved the request and then hired a local technical consultant (LTC) to work with Deir Dibwan and other municipalities in that area in developing their SDIP. The planning process started in February 2011 and was completed in November 2012 by launching the SDIP document.

At the beginning of the planning process, the LTC, along with the municipality, formed various committees to take care of the planning process and to oversee the formulation of the plan. These committees included:

1. Strategic Development Planning Committee

2. Institutional Building Committee

3. Core Planning Team

4. Stakeholder Committee

5. Specialized working committees

The planning team identified the members of the stakeholder committee after they conducted a stakeholder analysis. A review of the committee membership reveals that the committee was composed of 71 members covering various sectors in the community such as agriculture, industry, education, health, infrastructure, policing, civil society, the young and women. The percentage of women in the committee was 26 percent (CEP, 2011b). The composition of the specialized working committees was prepared by the core planning team and approved by the council prior to the first public meeting. Each committee was headed by a municipal councillor or a senior municipal staff member and at least 77 people participated in these committees, of which 25.4 percent were women (Musleh, 2014).

After the preparation of the community's 'diagnostic report', the first public workshop was held in June 2011 to present the results of the diagnostics to the different stakeholders. A review of the workshop minutes reveals that the workshop was well attended, with more than 200 persons participating of which 24 percent were women. In addition to discussing the results of the diagnostic report, the developmental priorities of the community were identified and agreed upon through a ballot[220].

According to informants, the public participation in the workshops and the planning process was very good, both in terms of attendance and their quality. The stated reasons behind this distinctive high public turnout came from the planning team conducting an intensive outreach and awareness campaign to encourage citizens to participate in the planning process for their community. A major part of that campaign was that council members and the city engineer made special visits to the heads of families and dignitaries in the community to promote the idea of strategic planning and the importance of the participation in this community based initiative; *"Deir Dibwan is a rural society where family relations and traditions are important and-if utilized well- could break through any community initiative such as*

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[220] Minutes of the public workshop 15 June 2011.

strategic planning. In Deir Dibwan, it was interesting to see how the planning team mobilized family relations to improve the participation of citizens in the process"[221].

The SDIP development process concluded by producing the SDIP document, and presenting it to the community in the second public meeting in October 2011. About 210 people attended that meeting, of which 28 percent were women[222]. During that meeting, stakeholders were asked to sign the Societal Contract, which embodied the adoption of the plan by the municipality and the representatives of the local community and their commitment to its objectives and outputs. Figure 7-4 summarizes the SDIP development for Deir Dibwan and presents the key milestones of the process.

□

Pre-SDIP: Preparation and contracting	Phase 1: Organization and Analysis	Phase 2: Strategic Development Framework	Phase 3: Stretegic Plan
Jan 2011: MDLF approved the request from Deir Dibwan for SDIP. Feb 2011: MDLF contracted LTC. March 2011: Work in SDIP started.	Mar-May 2011: Formulation of committees. April 2011: Analysis of stakeholders. June 2011: Diagnostic report produced.	June 2011: Public workshop-community vision formulated, community priorities identified.	June-Aug 2011: Projects descriptions developed. Sep 2011: Implementation plans and indicators. Oct 2011: Final public meeting and approval of the plan. Nov 2011: Institutional assessment completed.

Figure 7-4: Deir Dibwan SDIP timeframe

Source: Author compilation based on review of minutes of meetings, and SDIP documents.

Content of the Plan

The stated vision of the SDIP of Deir Dibwan is (CEP, 2011b): *"Toward a safe, prosperous city that has a green and healthy environment, unique in its economic and urban design, proud of its heritage, and connect between its citizens inside the country and in the diaspora"*

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[221] Interview with PE07.

[222] Minutes of the public meeting of 15 October 2011.

The vision emphasised the importance of connecting with its people outside Palestine, and utilizing them for the development of the city. As we mentioned before, almost 50 percent of the city's original population reside and work outside Palestine; in the U.S., Europe, and South America and they offer an ideal source for funding and networking.

The SDIP encompassed seven main priorities with proposed interventions and goals for each priority. Table 7-2 lists the seven priorities of Deir Dibwan SDIP along with the estimated budget for each priority.

Table 7-2: Priorities and proposed budgets of the SDIP of Deir Dibwan (2011-2016)

Priority	Total proposed budget (USD)	Percentage of the total budget
1. Expand and update the master plan	54,000	0.5 percent
2. Improve and rehabilitate infrastructure	7,683,000	65.0 percent
Wastewater network	4,950,000	
Main and secondary roads	2,733,000	
3. Improve investment (tourist and entertainment area)	510,000	4.3 percent
4. Unplanned and scattered industrial establishments (industrial zone)	2,000,000	16.9 percent
5. Develop health services (health centre)	335,000	2.8 percent
6. Develop the sports and cultural facilities	665,000	5.6 percent
7. Weak organizational structure and shortage in qualified staff	580,000	4.9 percent
Total	**11,827,000**	**100.0 percent**

Source: (CEP, 2011b)

The total estimated cost of the projects of this four-year plan exceeded USD 12 million and about two third of this budget was allocated to improving the infrastructure of the city. Two big projects were proposed in the plan. The first was the construction of a wastewater network (about USD 5 million or 42 percent of the budget), and the other establishing an industrial zone (USD 2 million or 17 percent of the budget).

Buy-in and extent of participation in the plan-making

The community participation in the development of the SDIP in Deir Dibwan was exceptional due to the ability of the city engineer and the municipal council to utilize its traditional family structure by making personal visits to the heads of different families in the town. Participants from the two focus groups stressed on the importance of the "blessings of the dignitaries of the main families for the success of the planning process". Without this blessing, the participation in the plan-making would have been much less.

On a Likert Scale, the community representatives (one focus group meeting with 11 participants), the mayor (the former city engineer), and the core planning team (total of four members) ranked the community participation in the SDIP making as excellent. Table 7-3 represents the results of the Likert Scale.

Table 7-3: How do you assess the participation of the community in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (4)
Focus group participants (N=11)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (10)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=15).

Despite the good community participation in the process, there was some objection and criticism to the concept and process of strategic planning in the community. Although this objection was not significant and did not interrupt the strategic planning, it was however a result of "long mistrust history between citizens and local governments in Palestine due to the fact that local governments never got elected freely by their citizens before 2005, as well as they have been weak and inefficient in responding to community needs". In addition to the increasing

"negative attitude toward public participation and community volunteering in the Palestinian community at large"[223].

The degree of ownership of the plan among the municipality and the community is not the same. Being actively involved in the initiation and formulation of the plan, the mayor (who was the city engineer at that time) is genuinely committed to the implementation of the SDIP.

> *"The current mayor knows the plan by heart and he always refers to the plan and checks with its priorities before approving any action or project"*[224].

The same applies to key staff members of the municipality such as the financial manager/accountant and the engineer.

> *"When I prepare the budget for the municipality, the first thing I do is to look at the SDIP. There is no requirement from the Ministry to do so, but I do it because I am a true believer in the importance of using the plan that we did in managing municipality affairs"*[225].

The same applies to the city engineer who "uses the plan in making sure that the proposed projects are within the priorities of the SDIP, as well as the proposed budgets are in line with what was suggested before"[226].

A number of municipal council members confirmed the commitment of the municipal council to the elements and priorities of the SDIP. This was obvious from reviewing the decisions taken by council between the years 2011 and 2014, and from the data obtained through interviews. The researcher reviewed documents, minutes, and annual reports of the municipality and found that the discussion of the municipal council referred to the SDIP at various occasions before approving or rejecting any project. As shown in Table 7-4, between 2011 and 2015 the municipality has improved the level of alignment between the SDIP proposed projects and those projects that were approved and implemented each year.

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[223] Interview with MU04.

[224] Interview with MU03.

[225] Interview with MU02.

[226] Interview with MU03.

Table 7-4: Projects approved and implemented based on strategic plan

Year	No. of projects implemented	No. of projects from the SDIP	Percentage
2011	12	5	42 percent
2012	23	19	83 percent
2013	27	25	93 percent
2014	31	30	97 percent
2015	30	30	100 percent

Source: Authors compilation based on municipal records and council minutes, 2011-2015.

In the community, the level of knowledge and buy-in depends on the individual themselves and the degree of involvement of this individual in the planning process. Although the planning team and the municipality "exerted tremendous effort to educate the citizens about the plan, the knowledge in the community is still limited to certain people who participated in the planning process. Those people are devoted and committed to the plan"[227].

Planning outcomes

The planning process had a number of positive outcomes. For instance, the participation of community members in the planning exercise and in the discussion of the priorities of the city reduced the gap, and improved the trust and interaction between citizens and the municipality. Several informants indicated that "introducing strategic planning as concept is positive by itself as people were not aware of it before. Another important and positive result of strategic planning was the strong relationship between the council and municipality and the people of the city, which resulted in restoring the trust between the citizen and the municipality"[228].

Strategic planning was also an opportunity for the municipal council to understand its role and responsibilities toward the community. According to the consultants who supported the planning process, most council members at the beginning of the planning process saw the role of the municipality as limited to

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[227] Focus group discussions on 4 October 2013.

[228] Focus group discussions on 4 October 2013.

"cleaning the streets, collecting solid waste, and lighting the streets for the city". By the end of the planning exercise, and as a result of coaching for the council and the core planning team, as well as the opportunity for the council to engage more with the different sectors in the community, the council started "to think of beyond the traditional job description of the local governments in Palestine, where they became more interested in improving the socio-economic conditions of the community where the municipality leads local development in partnership with private sector, and civil society"[229]. For some council members, having a strategic plan that included "a shared vision and commitment to develop the society" could be used as "a tool for the public to hold the municipality accountable for achieving what was agreed on during the planning process"[230].

Citizens who participated in the focus group discussion also listed "the improved relationship between citizens and the municipality" as one of the positive outcomes of the strategic planning: "the strong interaction between the municipality and the people has improved trust and understanding between the two sides"[231].

By 2015, many of the proposed projects in the SDIP have been implemented and funded from the municipality's own resources, donations from the diaspora, and from other external sources such as from the MDLF. Information obtained about the SDIP implementation indicates that implementation of most of the priorities progressed, except for projects that required external approval or high budgetary spending; the included the expansion and update of the master plan, establishing an industrial zone, and the construction of the wastewater network[232]. A new master plan has been developed, but is still waiting upon MoLG review and approval, which delayed progress in reaching stated goals. Projects such as the wastewater network require a huge amount of funding (around USD 5 million) and is difficult to finance without the government support or a large donation. Most importantly, the execution of a wastewater network would entail the construction of a wastewater treatment plant. This is almost impossible in such a the fragile context where the approval of Israeli authorities was necessary. The same applies for establishing an industrial zone where the Israeli authorities did not allow for such projects given its controls over the land in the periphery of the city (area C) [233].

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[229] Interview with PE08.

[230] Interview with MU06.

[231] Focus group discussions on 4 October 2013.

[232] Interview with MU1.

[233] Interview with NI06.

Participants in the focus group discussion were aware of the impact of the political situation on the achievement of these projects commenting.

> *"The external challenges blocked the fulfilment of some priorities such as the wastewater treatment plant which was faced by the needed approvals from the Israeli authorities as well as the lack of governmental funding. Al of that was beyond the control of the municipality"[234].*

Figure 7-5 illustrates the percentage of implemented projects (as of March 2016) out of the proposed budget for the main sectors identified in the strategic plan[235].
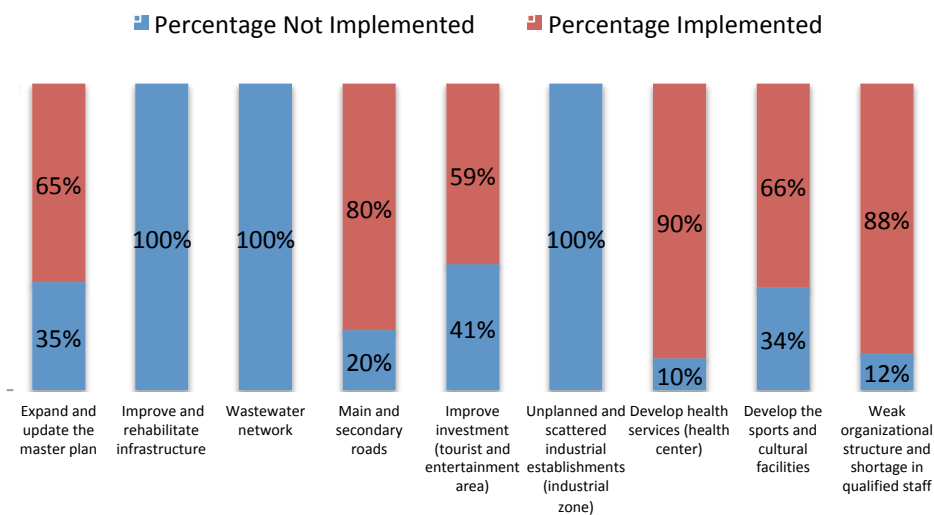
Figure 7-5: Percentage of implementation of Deir Dibwan SDIP from 2011 to 2015

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from Deir Dibwan municipality.

In terms of financial resources, the municipality was able to use the strategic plan to increase and diversify of its sources of funding. Data obtained from analysing the development of the municipality's budget shows an increase in the spending

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[234] Focus group discussions on 4 October 2013.

[235] Data was obtained from Deir Dibwan's Engineering Department and Financial Department.

on development projects between the years 2011 to 2015. Figure 7-6 illustrates the increase of development budget of Deir Dibwan municipality from 2011 to 2015[236].
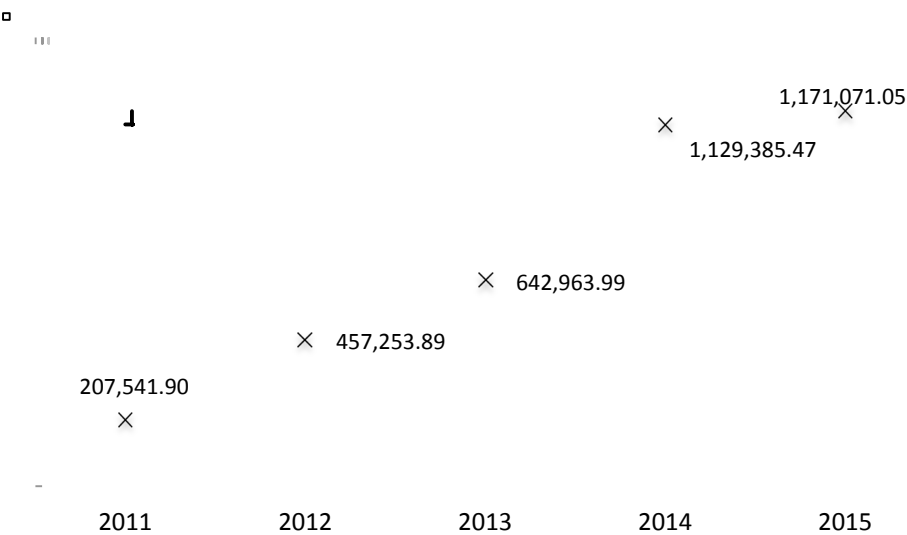
Figure 7-6: Increase in development budget (USD) for Deir Dibwan Municipality from 2011 to 2015

Source: Author compilation based on data obtained from Deir Dibwan Municipality.

Furthermore, the municipality succeeded in raising more funds to finance some projects through donations received from the diaspora community. About 40 percent of the implemented projects were financed through donations from people residing outside the country or from organizations of the diaspora. The remaining funds were received from the municipality's own revenues, funding from MDLF, Arab and Islamic Funds, and Western donor agencies. Figure 7-7 presents this analysis

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[236] Based on data obtained from Deir Dibwan Municipality Financial Department on 22 March 2016.
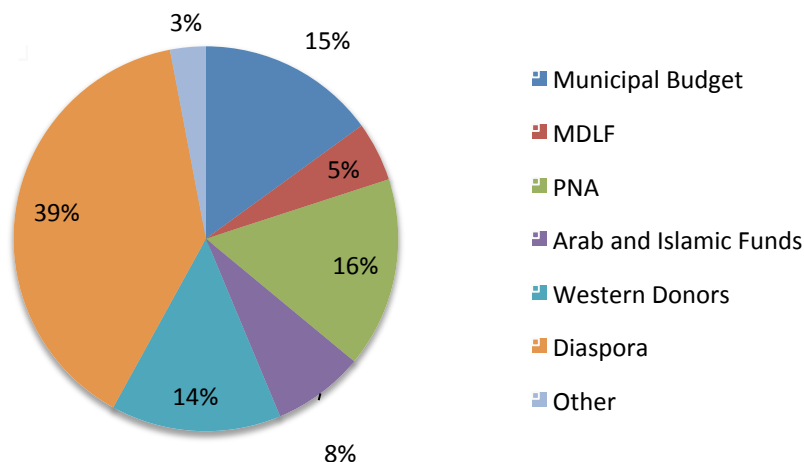
Figure 7-7: Distribution of financial resources for the implementation of Deir Dibwan SDIP

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from Deir Dibwan municipality.

As stated by the Engineering Department, priority for funding and implementing development projects was given to projects that were part of the strategic plan. The researcher has reviewed projects implemented from 2011 to 2015 to see whether or not they were included in the strategic plan and whether the municipal council referred to the plan before making decisions concerning the approval or rejection of any project. Records of the Engineering Department, and minutes of council meetings, indicated a high level of awareness and commitment to the plan.

> *"When we receive any funding, the first thing I do is looking at the SDIP and based on the priorities set in the plan I match the available fund to the priorities and then do some adjustments of the sequence of these priorities within the approved plan"*[237].

The municipality has used the SDIP as a vehicle for financial planning including how it has prepared its annual budget. In preparing the annual budget, the Financial Department of the municipality changed course from its traditional approach of using a fixed percentage to calculate how much money will be needed, to one where it sets itself within the priorities set in the strategic plan to do financial forecasting and planning.

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[237] Interview with MU03.

A comparison of the development budget of the municipality of Deir Dibwan from 2012 to 2015 and the projects identified in the strategic plan, show a noticeable improvement in the way the municipality prepared its annual budget and how it aligned this with the priorities of the strategic plan[239]. The Director of the Budgetary Department at the MoLG also confirmed this observation[240].

Leadership role in Deir Dibwan strategic planning

The case of Deir Dibwan is another example of the importance of leadership of certain individuals in initiating, driving forward, and steering the process of strategic planning. More importantly, it shows how a combination of young talented individuals and traditional local structure (e.g. elderly and heads of families) has positively influenced the strategic planning process and its outcomes.

From the beginning, the engineer of the municipality was instrumental in convincing and guiding the elected council, which was composed of seniors, so that the municipality could start a strategic planning process through the support of the MDLF. A number of council members noted that without the "enthusiasm and hard work of the city engineer, strategic planning as an idea and process would not have been possible"[241].

The leadership of the city engineer was became more influential in the implementation of the plan when he ran for office and became the mayor of Deir Dibwan in October 2012. His faith and involvement in the planning process made it easy for him to use the SDIP as a reference point in the municipality's work and as a basis for approving and executing projects.

"In 2011, I emigrated to the USA, but because I felt the responsibility toward the town and the community, and my willingness to change, I returned and ran for the office of mayor. In addition, I believed in the importance of

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[238] Interview with MU02.

[239] Data was obtained from approved annual budgets of Deir Dibwan municipality for the years from 2012 to 2015 as received from the MoLG Budgetary Department.

[240] Interview with NI13.

[241] Interview with MU04; and MU05.

changing our traditional understanding of local governance and planning"[242].

The character and style of this mayor presents an interesting model of a local leadership that managed to influence the development and the implementation of strategic planning in his city;

> *"Engineer Hassan, who is the current mayor, has a strong and influential personality, he was active in the formulation of the plan, and attended all meetings and workshops. He was also self-motived to learn from this planning experience. His young age made him open minded and willing to accept new ideas"*[243]

This level of involvement from the City Engineer/mayor as a leader was a key ingredient for the success of the strategic planning process as well as for the implementation of the plan itself. All informants in Table 7-5 ranked the involvement of the mayor as very active.

Table 7-5: Assessment of the *degree of involvement* of the mayor in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (4)
Focus group participants (N=11)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (11)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=15).

As assessed by various informants, this high degree of involvement of the mayor resulted in a significant influence being imposed upon the various stages of the planning process, including plan formulation and implementation as shown in Table 7-6.

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[242] Interview with MU1.

[243] Discussion of FG05.

Table 7-6: Assessment of the *degree of influence* of the mayor in the planning process?

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=4)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (3)
Focus group participants (N=11)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (9)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=15).

This research looked at the main leadership traits of the mayor as a leader by asking informants in interviews and in focus groups (combined total =15) to confirm and rank the qualities of leadership that allowed the mayor to play a significant role in the strategic planning process, as well in the management of municipal affairs. Many of these qualities were consistent with the relevant body of leadership literature.

Table 7-7 shows the ranking of these qualities of the mayor as perceived by the various informants. It should be noted that each informant was asked to rank the qualities of the mayor separately.

Table 7-7: Qualities of mayoral leadership in the case study

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 15 informants)	Rank
Visionary Refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that clarifies the current situation and induces commitment to an even better future (Brown and Anfara, 2003; Jing and Avery, 2011; Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)	11	3
Openness Openness is one of the top skills of effective leaders which relates to divergent thinking and is strongly linked to creativity (Judge et al., 2002; McCrae, 1987; Yukl et al., 2002)	13	2
Trust Trust refers to a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the trustee (i.e., a leader) (Avolio et al., 2004; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Rousseau et al., 1998).	14	1
Social intelligence Social intelligence refers to a set of interpersonal competencies, contains two components: (a) awareness of others' needs and problems, and (b) responsiveness to different social situations (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008; Kobe et al., 2001).	13	2
Absorptive capacity Absorptive capacity is the ability to learn which involves the capacity to identify, absorb, and employ new information toward new ends (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Davies and Davies*, 2004) .	13	2
Capacity to change Refers to the ability define the suitable moment influencing, and leading strategic change in organizations (Davies and Davies*, 2004; Higgs	14	1

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 15 informants)	Rank
and Rowland, 2011) .		
Managerial wisdom	14	1
Refers to the capacity to take the right action at the right time (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Malan and Kriger, 1998).		
Decision-making capacity		
Refers to the ability to provide a streamlined focus for decision-making in order to provide momentum for change and innovation (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Partnership skills	14	1
Refers to the ability to act within and beyond the respective personal/family/political circle to introduce or oppose change that affects the community's environment (Greasley and Stoker, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008).		
Low partisanship		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be outward looking and not tied to narrow partisan party/family considerations (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Accessibility	14	1
Refers to the ability of the leader to be relatively visible to the community, engage with citizens, and offer an accessible form of politics (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=15).

Concluding Remarks

The case of Deir Dibwan is another example of the importance of leadership of the city engineer who became the mayor at a later stage in promoting and pushing strategic planning in a small community. In this case, a young talented leader was

able to utilize the traditional local structure (e.g. elderly and heads of families) to influence the strategic planning process and its outcomes.

Being among those many municipalities engaged in the unified approach of SDIP, the case of Deir Dibwan demonstrated how leadership could make the difference through the use of strategic planning and lead to a number of positive outcomes. These outcomes include building trust and fruitful relationships between citizens and the council, educating the municipal council about its role and responsibilities toward the community, and improving the financial status as well as the capacity to deliver services of the municipality.

7.2 The Case of AsSamu' Municipality

AsSamu' is a medium-sized rural city located in the south of the West Bank surrounded by Israeli settlements. It is isolated by the segregation wall which limits the development and expansion of the city. The case of AsSamu' is another example of strategic planning that followed the national SDIP approach. The strategic planning case of AsSamu' municipality illustrates how a charismatic, motivated technical individual (i.e. City Engineer) can assume a leadership role by initiating, promoting, facilitating, and implementing a strategic plan for the community.

The research of this case of AsSamu' was based on document review, along with information gathered through interviews and focus groups. A total of 19 citizens participated in two focus groups and six members of core planning teams were interviewed during the course of this study. Data obtained from interviews with external stakeholders enriched the descriptive value of this case.

Description of the Case

AsSamu' is a Palestinian town in the Hebron governorate located 60 km south east of Jerusalem and 22 km south of the city of Hebron. The total original area of the town is 138,000 donums, including 78,000 donums that remain under Israeli control as defined by 1948 borders. This 138,000 figure also includes 25,000 donums confiscated by Israel for the construction of the separation wall. As a result, only 35,000 donums are still under the municipality's control (CCE, 2011a). According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) the total population of AsSamu' in 2016 is estimated to be 25,949 persons, of which 55 percent are female (PCBS, 2016a).

Figure 7-8 shows the location of AsSamu'.
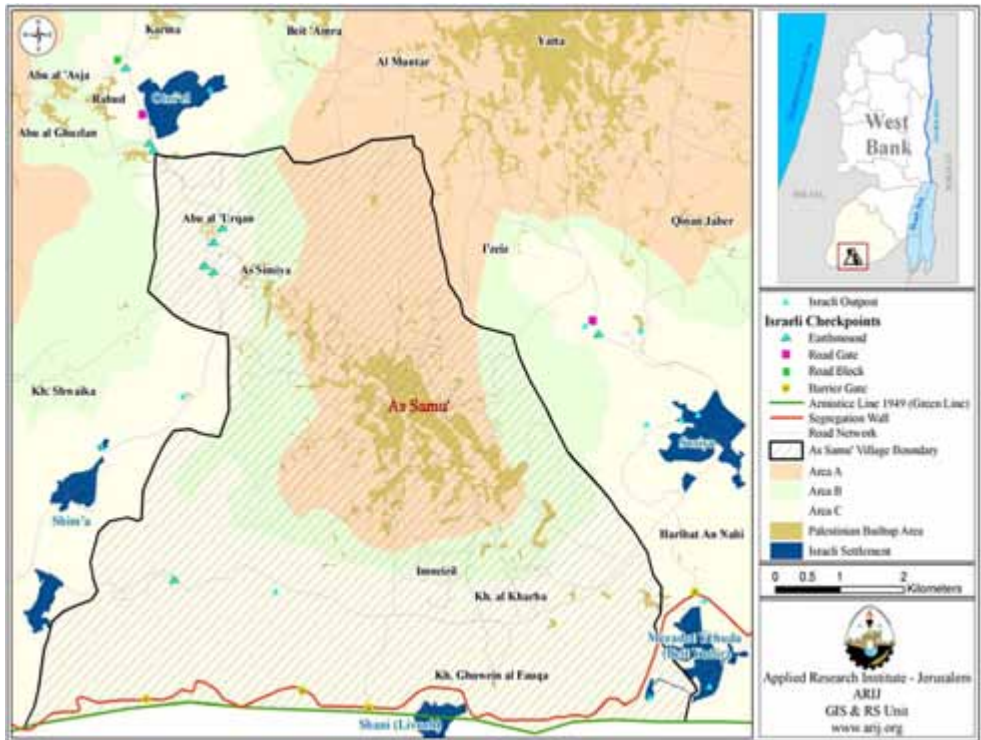
Figure 7-8: AsSamu' location and borders

Source: (ARIJ, 2009)

7.2.1 **History**

'AsSamu' is an ancient town that dates back to the Canaanite period. The name came from the word "Estamou", which means obedience, and current residents trace their lineage to the Arab tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. During the Roman and Byzantine period, the name was changed to "Asthemoe" (Al-Dabbagh, 1965; CCE, 2011a). In the 12th Century, a tower was built at the town by Crusaders on top of a 4th Century temple, which was later converted to a mosque at the time of Saladin (Conder et al., 1882).

In the year 1517, AsSamu' village was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire as part of Nahiya of Al Khalil (i.e. Hebron) of the Liwa of Quds (i.e. Jerusalem). Similar to other people in Palestine at that time, the citizens of AsSamu' paid taxes to the Ottoman rulers on agricultural products. This included wheat, barley, vineyards and fruit trees, in addition to occasional revenues, goats and bee-hives (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, 1977).

AsSamu' was mentioned in the writings of number of early European explorers of the holy land in the 19th Century. For example, Edward Robinson described AsSamu' as a "considerable village" with "unquestionable antiquity" (Robinson and Smith, 1841b).

In a 1922 census of Palestine, conducted by the British Mandate authorities, AsSamu' had a population of 1,600, all which were Muslims (Barron, 1923). According to the official land and population survey conducted by the Mandate Authorities in 1945, the population of AsSamu' reached 2,520, all of them Arab (Hadawi, 1970). In the wake of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and after the 1949 Armistice Agreements, AsSamu' came under Jordanian rule with the rest of the West Bank. In 1965, the first village council was appointed from the village's main families.

On 13 November, 1966, the Israeli military launched a large cross-border attack against the town in response to an al-Fatah land mine incident two days earlier near the West Bank border, which killed three Israeli soldiers on a border patrol (Bunch, 2008). This attack was the largest Israeli military operation since the 1956 Suez Crisis and is considered to have been a contributing factor to the outbreak of the 1967 War between the Arabs and Israel (Eshkol et al., 1966). According to Shulman (2008), the people of AsSamu' were not responsible for the incident which triggered the Israeli retaliation, but nevertheless most of the village was destroyed.

After the Six-Day War in 1967, AsSamu' came under Israeli occupation until the signing of Oslo Agreements in 1993. Afterwards, the town came under the administrative authority of the PNA.

7.2.2 Economic activities, infrastructure and services

Considering AsSamu's location bordering the Green Line and the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, a significant percentage of its residents (i.e. 30 percent) are dependent on the Israeli labour market for their livelihoods. The town's economic base also depends on economic activities such as agriculture, industry, trade and public and private sector employment. The unemployment rate in AsSamu' reached approximately 19.5 percent in 2015 (PCBS, 2015b). Moreover, several services are available to the city's residents including water, wastewater, solid waste, transportation, health, education, and others.

Table 7-8 provides a snapshot of the key indicators of AsSamu's economic activities, infrastructure and basic services.

Table 7-8: AsSamu' city infrastructure and services indicators as of 2016

Key indicators	Value
PCBS code	503320
Total area (donum)	35,000
Population	25,949
Number of housing units	4,950
Number of employees in the municipality	37 permanent employees
Length of internal roads (Km)	
Paved	44.5
Unpaved	25
Electricity coverage	95 percent
Source of electricity	Israeli Electricity Company
Telecommunication network coverage	100 percent
Availability of public water network	Yes
Water source	Palestinian Water Authority
Water network coverage	80 percent
Quantity of water supplied (cubic metres/year)	292,000
Rate of water supply per capita litres/day	35 litres/day
Availability of wastewater network	No
Quantity of wastewater generated per day (cubic metres)	370
Number of solid waste containers	185
Quantity of solid waste produced (tons per day)	13
Public Schools	14
Health Centres	20
Economic Activities	
Israeli labour market	30 percent
Service sector	20
Government or other public employees sector	15 percent
Trade	15 percent
Agriculture sector	29 percent
Unemployment rate (2015)	19.5 percent
Active labour force	29.0 percent
Employed	80.5 percent

Notes:

* Underemployment exists when a person's employment is inadequate in relation to alternative employment, account being taken of his/her occupational skills (PCBS, 2015a).

** The economically active population (Labour Force) consists of all persons 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed (PCBS, 2015a).

*** Employed refers to: All persons are 15 years and over who were working at a paid job or business for at least one hour during the reference week, or who did not work, but held a job or owned business from which they were temporarily absent (because of illness, vacation, temporarily stoppage, or any other reason) during the reference week (PCBS, 2015a).

Sources: Data was obtained by the researcher from various sources including: AsSamu' Municipality Files (accessed in Feb 2016), and (ARIJ, 2009; CCE, 2011a; PCBS, 2016a; PCBS, 2013b; PCBS, 2008; PCBS, 2015b; CCE, 2011b)

7.2.3 Local Government in AsSamu'

The first village council for AsSamu' was established in 1965, when the Jordanian authorities appointed fifteen dignitaries and representatives of families to administer the local affairs of the village. In 1976, the first local elections took place, which resulted in electing eight members for the village council, in addition to seven members appointed by the Israeli Civil Administration. AsSamu' remained a village council until the PNA decided to elevate it to a municipality in 1997, and appointed a mayor and council members (CCE, 2011a).

The first democratic local elections took place in January 2005 when a municipal council composed of 13 members was elected. In October 2012, the second local elections were conducted and resulted in a new mayor and council members (CEC, 2014). In both elections, traditional family structure influenced the results.

There are about 37 employees working in the municipality, which owns its permanent headquarters. In line with the local government's services and responsibilities listed in the Palestinian Local Councils Law No 1 (PNA, 1997), the municipality of AsSamu' is responsible for providing a number of services to the residents of the town, including but not limited to (ARIJ, 2009):

- Organizing construction and licensing processes
- Providing headquarters for governmental services (post, security, etc.)
- Implementing projects and case studies that contribute to the town's development
- Protecting historical and archaeological sites in the town
- Protecting governmental properties

7.2.4 The Fragility of AsSamu'

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement, AsSamu' was divided into politically classified areas 'A', 'B' and 'C'. Approximately 2,000 donums (6.0 percent of the town's total area) are assigned as area A where the PNA holds all responsibilities for internal security and public order, whilst 8,750 donums (25.0 percent of the town's total area) are classified as area B where the PNA has complete control over civil matters and Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. The remainder of the town's land area, constituting 24,250 donums (69.0 percent of the total area), is classified as area C, where Israel retains full control over security

and administration related to the territory. In addition, Palestinian building and land management is prohibited in Area C unless a consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration is granted (CCE, 2011a).

AsSamu' is surrounded by the Shem'a settlement, located on 100 donums of land to the west, and Shani and Lasefer settlements, on 50 and 850 donums of land respectively, to the south. In addition, a bypass road crosses the town from the west and south, which seizes 1,110 donums of land. There is one permanent checkpoint in addition to around five flying checkpoints on the main roads leading to AsSamu' (ARIJ, 2009).

Since 2003, The town has been suffering from the burden of the 10 km-long segregation wall, composed of a series of wires that encircle the town from the east, west and south. Wall construction resulted in the confiscation of around 1,000 donums of the town lands, in addition to isolating another 1,000 donums behind the wall. Around 1,000 trees have been uprooted due to the construction of the wall[244].

In addition, various reports by (OCHA-oPt) documented continuous settler violence against AsSamu' residents and lands from the nearby Israeli settlements of Ma'on and Asa'el (OCHA-oPt, 2010a; OCHA-oPt, 2015; OCHA-oPt, 2009).

The Strategic Plan of AsSamu'

Similar to other municipalities in Palestine, AsSamu' engaged in strategic planning as part of the Municipal Development Programme (MDP), which was implemented by the MDLF. The following sections look into this experience in more detail to uncover the key elements that influence the strategic planning exercise of AsSamu' city. To position the strategic plan of AsSamu' within the broader historical context of local governments in Palestine, Figure 7-9 presents a timeline of the strategic plan along with the key events that affected local governments in general.

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[244] Interview with MU38.
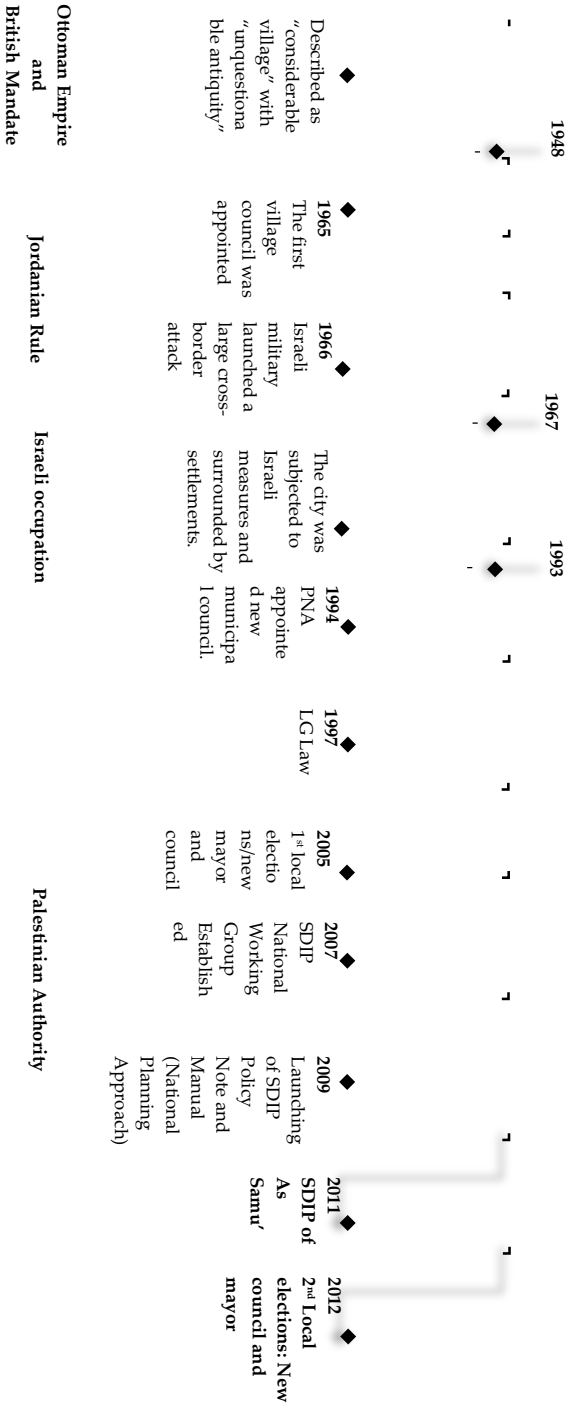
Figure 7-9: As Samu' City Timeline

Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review

Described as "considerable village" with "unquestionable antiquity"

Ottoman Empire and British Mandate

1948

1965 The first village council was appointed

1966 Israeli military launched a large cross-border attack

Jordanian Rule

1967 — The city was subjected to Israeli measures and surrounded by new Israeli settlements.

1993 — PNA appointed new municipal council.

1994 1st local elections/new mayor and council Established

Israeli occupation

1997 LG Law

2005 1st local elections/new mayor and council Established

2007 SDIP National Working Group

2009 Launching of SDIP Policy Note and Manual (National Planning Approach)

Palestinian Authority

2011 SDIP of As Samu' council and mayor

2012 2nd Local elections: New council and mayor

Motivation

A combination of factors made it possible for strategic planning to take place in AsSamu'. The initiative of the MDLF to support municipalities in developing their SDIPs as part of a national planning approach, was timely for the AsSamu' City Engineer who presented the idea to the municipal council in July 2010. The council was receptive to the idea, which made it possible for the technical team to submit a request to the MDLF to support the municipality in preparing a strategic plan;

> *"The City Engineer was enthusiastic about having a strategic plan for the city in order to identify the current needs and set the direction for the future. When he presented the idea to the council it was approved immediately and the council offered its political and logistical support to it"*[245].

Operating under occupation where the municipality is "facing mounting challenges in planning and caring for its territory and citizens with limited resources and unstable conditions made strategic planning a crucial survival and development instrument for resistance at the local level"[246].

For the City Engineer, strategic planning was a tool for "transferring the municipal work from a random approach to a systematic way of dealing with priorities and resources" [247].

Moreover, strategic planning was also encouraged by the fact that the municipality was included in the MDLF ranking and incentive system, which was a condition for receiving funding from MDLF.

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, the majority of informants (73 percent) ranked the MDLF eligibility condition of having an SDIP in order for the municipality to access funding, followed by the active role of the city engineer (71 percent), and the support of the newly elected council (44) as the three driving factors behind initiating the SDIP process. Figure 7-3 illustrates the main drivers for AsSamu' SDIP.

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[245] Interview with MU34.

[246] Discussion of FG06.

[247] Interview with MU35
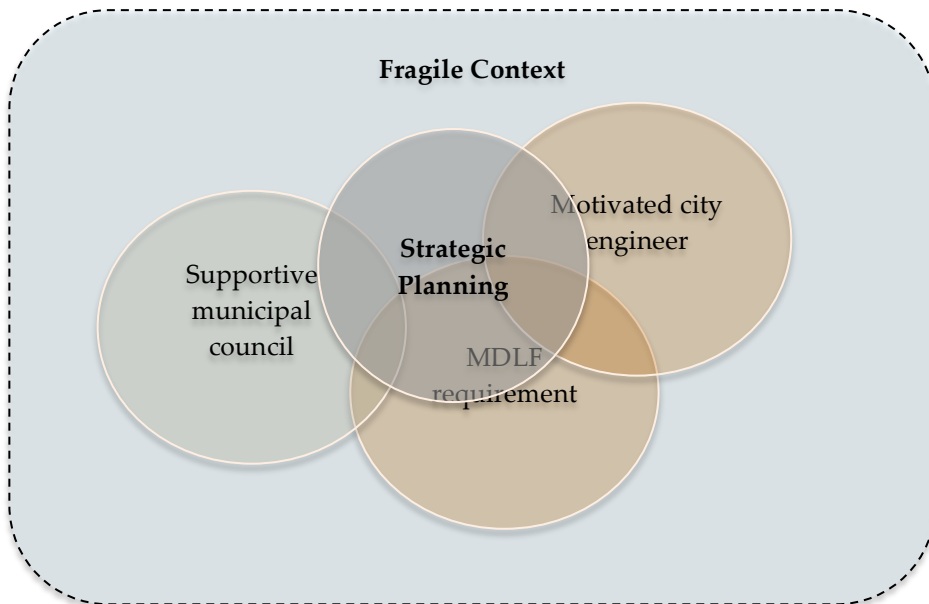
Figure 7-10: Drivers for the SDIP of Deir AsSamu'

Source: Author compilation based on interviews with focus groups discussion.

Description of the Strategic Planning Process

As discussed previously (Section 5.5), the development of the SDIP for AsSamu' followed a unified planning process that was adopted by the MoLG and implemented by the MDLF through a systematic manual and related tool.

At the beginning of the planning process, the LTC along with the municipality formed various committees to take care of the planning process and to oversee the formulation of the plan. These committees included:

> 1- Strategic Development Planning Committee
> 2- Institutional Building Committee
> 3- Core Planning Team
> 4- Stakeholders Committee
> 5- Specialized working committees

The planning team suggested the members of the stakeholder committee after conducting a stakeholder analysis. A review of the committee membership reveals that the committee was composed of 97 members covering various sectors in the community such as agriculture, industry, education, health, infrastructure, policing, civil society, youth and women. The percentage of women in the

committee was about 33 percent (CCE, 2011b). In addition to the stakeholder committee, other specialized working committees were formed and headed by a municipal councillor or a municipal senior staff member. In total, about 86 members participated in these committees, of which 29 percent were women (Musleh, 2014).

After the preparation of the 'diagnostic report' of the community, a public workshop conducted in May 2011 presented the results of the diagnostic report to the different stakeholders. The community participation in this workshop was enormous which made the participation level of AsSamu' the highest in all Palestinian towns and cities engaged in strategic planning. More than 700 persons took part, which indicated serious interest from the community to participate in the development of the strategic planning exercise[248].

The SDIP development process concluded by producing the SDIP document and was presented to the community in a public meeting in September 2011. About 330 people attended that meeting, of which 26 percent were women[249]. During that meeting, stakeholders were asked to sign the societal contract, which embodied the adoption of the plan by the municipality and the representatives of the local community and their commitment to its objectives and outputs.

Figure 7-11 summarizes the SDIP development for AsSamu' and presents the key milestones of the process.

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[248]Interview with PE09, and MU35

[249] Minutes of the public meeting of 9 September 2011.

Phase Pre-SDIP: Preparation and contracting
Jan 2011: MDLF approved the request from Deir Dibwan for SDIP.

March 2011: MDLF contracted LTC.

April 2011: Work in SDIP started.

Phase 1: Organization and Analysis
April 2011: Formulation of committees.

May 2011: Analysis of stakeholders.

May 2011: Diagnostic report produced.

Phase 2: Strategic Development Framework
June 2011: Public workshop-community vision formulated, community priorities identified.

Phase 3:Stretegic Plan
June-July 2011: Projects descriptions developed.

Aug 2011: Implementation plans and indicators.

Sep 2011: Final public meeting and approval of the plan.

Oct 2011: Institutional assessment completed.

Figure 7-11: AsSamu' SDIP timeframe

Source: Author compilation based on review of minutes of meetings, and SDIP documents.

Content of the Plan

The stated vision of the SDIP of AsSamu' is (CCE, 2011b):

> *"AsSamu' is a modern, safe, organized town that is preserve its heritage and traditions and is developed environmentally, culturally, and economically with effective local and external partnerships"*

As the society of AsSamu' is known for its conservatism and traditional values and ethics, it was important for the participants in the strategic planning to stress the importance of "preserving heritage and traditions". This made possible the success of this particular planning process in AsSamu' as it had the endorsement of as much of the community as possible.

The plan had 14 main priorities with proposed interventions and goals for each of these priorities. Table 7-9 lists the priorities of the AsSamu' strategic plan along with the estimated budget for each priority:

Table 7-9: Priorities and proposed budgets of the SDIP of the SDIP of AsSamu'
(2011-2015)

Fields	Total proposed budget (USD)	Percentage of the total budget
1. Infrastructure	1,718,000	21.5 percent
2. Social Services-Health	204,000	2.6 percent
3. Social Services-Education	2,441,000	30.6 percent
4. Social Services-Higher Education	71,000	0.9 percent
5. Social Services-Poverty and marginalized groups	685,000	8.6 percent
6. Social Services-Handicapped	153,000	1.9 percent
7. Social Services-Youth	820,000	10.3 percent
8. Social Services-Women	75,000	0.9 percent
9. Economy-Agriculture	554,000	6.9 percent
10. Economy -Local Economy	4,000	0.1 percent
11. Planning	331,000	4.1 percent
12. Environment and Public Health	42,000	0.5 percent
13. Community Safety	12,000	0.2 percent
14. Institutional Development	870,000	10.9 percent
Total	**7,980,000**	**100.0 percent**

Source: adopted from (CCE, 2011b)

The total estimated cost of the interventions of this four-year plan reached USD 7.98 million, half of which was allocated to improving the infrastructure of the city and building schools (education). A variety of interventions target women, the youth, the disabled and marginalized groups within the social services field (about 22 percent of the budget) which is a reflection of the community's interest to enhance social services as a way for maintaining societal coherence, and respecting community values.

Buy-in and extent of participation in plan-making

The analysis of the citizen's engagement in the planning process indicates a high level of participation during the planning process as well as a good degree of ownership for the developed SDIP.

The participation of the community in the planning was considered by internal and external stakeholders as one of the best examples among all SDIPs in Palestine. The MoLG and MDLF rewarded AsSamu' with the "Best SDIP" award in 2014 due to its "well developed, fully engaging strategic plan"[250]. More than 700

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[250] Results of the MoLG and MDLF completion for the best SDIPs in June 2014.

citizens attended the first public workshop from the community representing most of the families, political factions, and institutions in addition to individuals. According to MDLF, no other municipality has managed to reach this level of participation. The stated reason behind the high level of community participation was the "proper stakeholder analysis that was conducted at the beginning of the planning process which led to forming a unique group of specialized committees"[251], in addition to the "inclusion of all parts of the society such as women, the youth, and disabled groups as well as the key institutions in the town"[252].

The participation of the community continued throughout the various planning milestones where working groups and committees discussed the details of the strategic plan and its priorities through intensive meetings and discussions. This engagement of citizens in general has generated in a great deal of buy-in from the community into the planning process as well as an enhanced ownership of the plan itself. "People who were part of the planning exercise adopted and promoted the idea, as they realized that the municipality respected their participation and role in the planning and thus resulted in strengthening the trust between the municipality and the community"[253].

On a Likert Scale, the community representatives (two focus group meeting with 19 participants), the mayor, and the core planning team (total of six members) ranked the community participation in the SDIP making as excellent. Table 7-10 represents the results of the Likert Scale.

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[251] Interview with MU35.

[252] Interview with PE09.

[253] Discussion of FG06.

Table 7-10: How do you assess the participation of the community in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (6)
Focus group participants (N=19)	☒	☐	☐ (1)	☐ (1)	☒ (17)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=25).

The strategic planning scene faced some objections from a minority of citizens. Some objections were due to the high, and often "unrealistic", expectations that some citizens had regarding the planning outputs. Other citizens believed that the "municipality listens to the view of the community and then does whatever it likes"[254]. However, this perception has "changed as a result of the inclusiveness of the planning process and the way the municipality adopted to the community's opinions and needs"[255].

There is also a high level of ownership from both the community and the municipality. Participants of the focus group meetings noted that the "remarkable participation of the community in the planning process helped in enhancing the ownership of the community at large toward the plan and its implementation". Another important element for enhancing the community buy-in was "listing the participants from the community in the final SDIP document, which created the feeling that citizens participated and had a stake in the plan-making"[256].

On the side of the municipality, data obtained from interviewing the municipality's key staff and council members revealed the plan acts as a reference point for making decisions regarding the municipality's budget and projects. The "charisma of a committed City Engineer who, has a city manager role too, and the real participation of the staff and council members in the planning exercise" were

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[254] Discussion of FG07.

[255] Discussion of FG07.

[256] Discussion of FG07.

among the main cited factors for the high level of municipality's commitment to the plan[257].

Planning outcomes

Both the planning and the implementation of the plan itself resulted in a number of positive outcomes. The discussions from the focus groups and with informants from internal (i.e. municipal staff, and council members) and external (i.e. MoLG, consultants, and MDLF) stakeholders listed a number of improvements in the performance of the municipality in welfare terms as a result of strategic planning. These included: the creation of a popular base and an elite group of institutions; intellectuals and community activists ready to be mobilized and help the municipality when needed; more willingness and readiness for volunteering in the community; improvement of trust between the municipality and the citizens; better infrastructure services especially related to roads and transportation, and the capacity building that was provided to the planning team as part of the plan-making.

One striking example of the improvement of strategic planning on the way the municipality is performing was the decision by the council to "start institutionalizing strategic planning through assigning strategic planning functions to a new unit headed by the City Engineer himself". This decision helped with the integration of the plan with key municipal functions and decisions and "improved the ability of the municipality to promote the plan inside the community and to the donor community". Consequently, the plan has "became the essential reference point for designing and proposing projects" and provided the "legitimacy for municipality's actions".

By 2015, about 78 percent of the proposed projects in the SDIP have been implemented and funded from the municipality own resources, and from other external sources such as MoLG, MDLF, and donors. The municipality's planning unit prepared a matrix in 2015 to review the progress of the SDIP achievements through updating the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were included in the plan itself. From analyzing the matrix, one can conclude that the majority of KPIs had been achieved or was likely to be achieved by the end of the SDIP. However, the reality of certain KPIs presented a challenge due to external factors such as: the insufficient availability of funding from the government/or external donors (e.g. construction of a community cultural centre, and rehabilitation of agricultural

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[257] Interview with MU39, and MU40.

land), or the restrictions of the Israeli Military Authority (e.g. increasing the drinking water per capita, and improving the electricity supply)[258].

During interviews and focus group discussions, informants said that the implementation of some projects was hampered by insufficient financial resources and/or the complexity of the fragile political situation.

> "*Despite all the efforts that was produced by the municipality to obtain the necessary permits for rehabilitating the water network in the community, the Israeli Civil Administration did not give the green light to start the execution of any water-related projects*"[259]

> "We *faced a challenge in implementing agricultural projects due to the unavailability of funding and the lack of interest for the rehabilitation of agricultural land by relevant bodies*"[260]

Figure 7-12 illustrates the percentage of implemented projects (as of December 2015) out of the proposed budget for the main sectors identified in the strategic plan[261].

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[258] SDIP Monitoring Matrix of AsSamu', February 2015.

[259] Interview with MU35.

[260] Discussion of FG07.

[261] Data was obtained from AsSamu' Engineering Department and Financial Department.
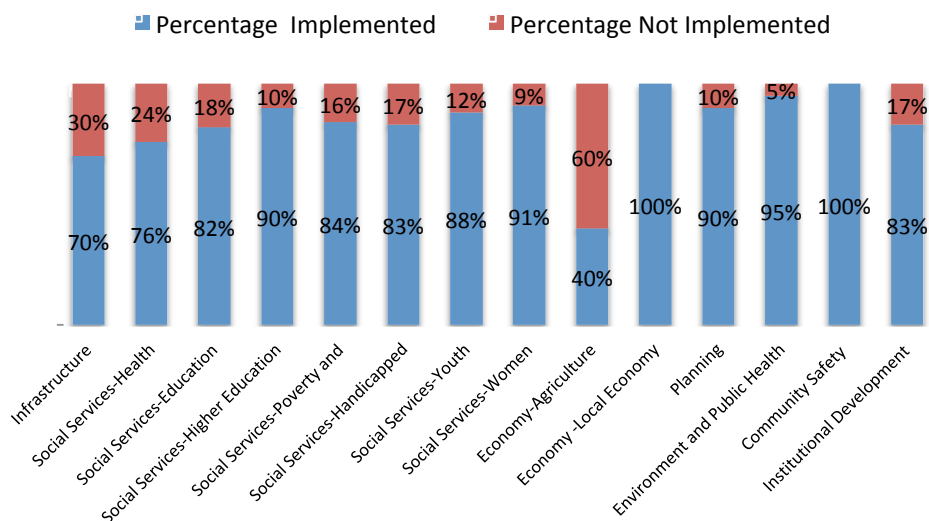
Figure 7-12 Percentage of implementation of AsSamu' SDIP from 2011 to 2015

Source: Author compilation based on audited financial data from AsSamu' municipality.

In terms of financial resources, the municipality was able to use the strategic plan to mobilize more funding to finance many of the development projects that were included in the SDIP. Data obtained from analysing the development budget of the municipality shows an increase in the spending on development projects between the years 2012 to 2015. Figure 7-13 illustrates the increase of the development budget of the AsSamu' municipality from 2011 to 2015[262].

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[262] Based on data obtained from As Samu' Municipality Financial Department on 13 February 2016.

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                                                  ×           ×
                                                1,959,642    2,104,948

      ┛
                         ×  1,289,850
    1,005,259
      ×


    –

    2012            2013            2014            2015
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Figure 7-13: Increase in development budget (USD) for AsSamu' Municipality from 2012 to 2015

Source: Author compilation based on data obtained from AsSamu' Municipality

Furthermore, the municipality succeeded in increasing its own revenues as a result of the "improved confidence of citizens in its planning and technical capabilities as a result of the strategic planning"[263] and the "feeling that the municipality is working toward the community's identified priorities"[264]. According to financial data obtained from the municipality, the efficiency of tax collection in the municipality increased by 250 percent between 2012 and 2015[265]. About a third of the implemented projects were financed by the municipality, and slightly more than fifth was funded by the private sector. Figure 7-14 presents this fact.

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[263] Interview with PE09.

[264] Discussion of FG07.

[265] Data was obtained from As Samu' Financial Department on January13, 2016.

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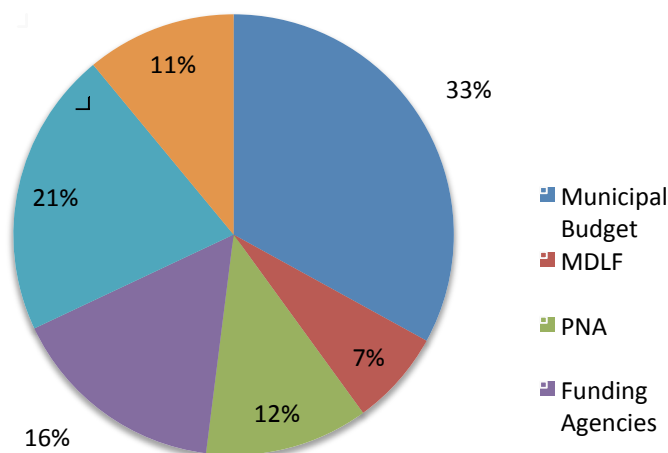
Figure 7-14: Distribution of financial resources for the implementation of AsSamu' SDIP

Source: Author compilation based on data obtained from AsSamu' Municipality.

The preparation of the strategic plan influenced the way of which the municipality prepares its annual budget. The municipal council and the financial department as a "financial planning tool for the development projects of the municipality" use the SDIP. At the end of each year, the council asks each department to identify the projects and activities for the following year. Following that, the financial department, reviews the long list of proposed activities as received from the various departments, and prioritize the proposed activities based on specific criteria. At the top of these criteria is the alignment of any activity with the priorities identified in the SDIP. The financial department then submits a proposed annual budget to the council for review and approval. The council reviews the proposed budget and verifies its alignment with the SDIP as well whether the needed resources are available for its execution[266].

Leadership role in AsSamu' Strategic Planning

Similar to the case of the city of Deir Dibwan (Section 7.1), the strategic planning case of the AsSamu' municipality presents an example of the leadership of a

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[266] Data were obtained from the Financial Department, and MU38.

technical person (i.e. City Engineer) leading the initiation, promotion, and implemention of a strategic plan for the community.

The role of the City Engineer was instrumental in leading the strategic planning process toward the achieved outcomes. He was the one to suggest to and convince the municipal council to embark on the development of strategic plan as a way to "increase the limited resources and overcoming the challenges faced by the community"[267]. The City Engineer was motivated by "a genuine eagerness to mobilize the community, as much as possible, toward reaching a common vision for the betterment of the city"[268]. Most importantly, the City Engineer was disquieted by the "continuous restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities which limited the expansion of the city and threatened its social and economic development"[269].

Another important aspect related to leadership of the SDIP in AsSamu' were the collective efforts of civil society organizations and other institutions in the community. These efforts enhanced the promotion and advocacy of the plan, and the outreach to many citizens. The involvement of these grassroots organizations was the result of a comprehensive Stakeholder Analysis (SA) that was conducted at the beginning of the planning process and through which nominated the members of the specialized committees. The "improved trust between the citizen and the municipality throughout the strategic planning made each person feel that s/he is responsible and a leader when it comes to developing and implementing the SDIP"[270].

This level of involvement from the City Engineer as a leader was a key ingredient for the success of the strategic planning process as well as for the implementation of the plan itself. All informants (Total number=25) as Table 7-11 shows ranked the involvement of the City Engineer as very active.

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[267] Interview with MU35.

[268] Interview with PE09.

[269] Interview with MU35.

[270] Discussion of FG06.

Table 7-11: Assessment of the *degree of involvement* of the City Engineer in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
City Engineer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=6)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (4)
Focus group participants (N=19)	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☐ (1)	☒ (17)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=25).

As assessed by various informants, this high degree of involvement of the City Engineer resulted in a significant influence in the various stages of planning including: formulation, and implementation (Table 7-12).

Table 7-12: Assessment of the *degree of influence* of the City Engineer in the planning process?

	Limited	Fair	Average	Strong	Very Strong
City Engineer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (6)
Focus group participants (N=19)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (4)	☒ (15)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=25).

This research examined the main leadership traits of the City Engineer through asking informants in interviews and focus groups (total of informants=25) to confirm and rank the qualities of leadership that allowed the City Engineer to play a significant role in the strategic planning process as well in the management of municipal affairs. Many of these qualities consistent with the relevant body of leadership literature.

Table 7-13 shows the ranking of these qualities of the City Engineer as perceived by the various informants. It should be noted that each informant was asked to rank the qualities of the City Engineer separately.

Table 7-13: Qualities of the City Engineer leadership in the case study

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 25 informants)	Rank
Visionary		
Refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that clarifies the current situation and induces commitment to an even better future (Brown and Anfara, 2003; Jing and Avery, 2011; Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)	10	4
Openness		
Openness is one of the top skills of effective leaders which relates to divergent thinking and is strongly linked to creativity (Judge et al., 2002; McCrae, 1987; Yukl et al., 2002)	13	2
Trust		
Trust refers to a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the trustee (i.e., a leader) (Avolio et al., 2004; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Rousseau et al., 1998).	14	1
Social intelligence		
Social intelligence refers to a set of interpersonal competencies, contains two components: (a) awareness of others' needs and problems, and (b) responsiveness to different social situations (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008; Kobe et al., 2001).	13	2
Absorptive capacity		
Absorptive capacity is the ability to learn which involves the capacity to identify, absorb, and employ new information toward new ends (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Davies and Davies*, 2004) .	14	1
Capacity to change		
Refers to the ability define the suitable moment influencing, and leading strategic change in organizations (Davies and Davies*, 2004; Higgs and Rowland, 2011) .	14	1

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 25 informants)	Rank
Managerial wisdom		
Refers to the capacity to take the right action at the right time (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Malan and Kriger, 1998).		
	12	3
Decision-making capacity		
Refers to the ability to provide a streamlined focus for decision-making in order to provide momentum for change and innovation (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Partnership skills		
Refers to the ability to act within and beyond the respective personal/family/political circle to introduce or oppose change that affects the community's environment (Greasley and Stoker, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008).		
	14	1
Low partisanship		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be outward looking and not tied to narrow partisan party/family considerations (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Accessibility		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be relatively visible to the community, engage with citizens, and offer an accessible form of politics (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).	13	2

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=25).

Concluding remarks

The case of Deir Dibwan is another example of the leadership of a technically trained individual (i.e. City Engineer) taking the lead in forming and undertaking a strategic plan for the community. The role of the City Engineer was instrumental in leading the strategic planning process toward the achieved outcomes.

Among the positive outcomes of the strategic planning in this case included: the creation of a popular base and an elite group of institutions, intellectuals, and community activists; greater appetite for volunteering in the community; improvement in the level of trust between the municipality and the citizens; better infrastructure services especially related to roads and transportation, and the capacity building that was provided to the planning team as part of the plan-making.

7.3   The Case of the Birzeit Municipality

Birzeit is an example of a small rural city in the middle of West Bank. The strategic planning in Birzeit followed a blue print for the strategic planning approach that was developed by a USAID. For political reasons, donors boycotted the municipality until the mayor was able to turn things around and regain donor support and trust. In terms of leadership, the case of the strategic plan in Birzeit provides an example of the leadership role played by an "intellectual mayor" who was supported by "a technical city manager".

The research of the case of Birzeit was based on a document review, along with information gathered through interviews and focus groups. A total of 13 citizens participated in one focus group meeting, and six members of core planning teams were interviewed during the course of this research. Furthermore, data obtained from interviews with external stakeholders enriched the description and analysis of this case.

Description of the Case

Birzeit is a Palestinian town in the Ramallah governorate located 7.5 km north of Ramallah City. The total original area of the town is 14,000 donums, out of which 6,751 donums are included in the master plan (Committee, 2010). The town is famous for hosting the first institution of higher education established in Palestine, which carries the town's name 'Birzeit University'. Since its establishment as a college in 1942, the university has played a key role in the Palestinian political, social, and cultural life (Said, 1999). According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) the total population of Birzeit in 2016 is estimated to be 5,796 capita, of which 53 percent are females (PCBS, 2016b).

In addition, the University has more than 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students, almost half of which reside in Birzeit (BZU, 2016).

Figure 7-15 shows the location of Birzeit City.
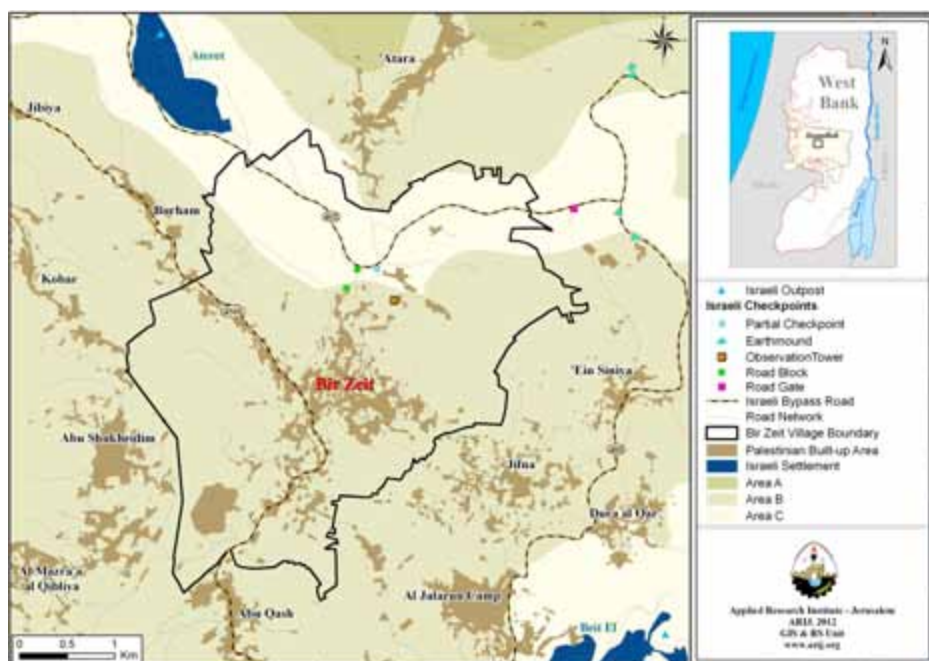
Figure 7-15: Birzeit location and borders

Source: (ARIJ, 2012a)

7.3.1 **History**

In Arabic the name, 'Birzeit' means literally "the well of oil". The town was named for the olive oil stored in the harvesting cisterns, as there are many olive oil trees in the town. The town's origins date back to the Byzantine period (Al-Dabbagh, 1965). There are still some remains and archaeological sites in the town such as 'Khirbat Birzeit' which have been dated to the Crusader era (Pringle, 1997; Boas, 2010).

In the year 1517, Birzeit village was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire as part of Nahiya of Jabal Quds (i.e. Jerusalem Mountain) of the Liwa of Quds (i.e. Jerusalem) with a population of 26 households. Similar to other people in Palestine at that time, residents of Birzeit paid taxes to the Ottoman's on farmed produce, including wheat, barley, olive trees, vineyards, fruit trees, and goats and/or beehives (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, 1977).

In July 1863, the French explorer Victor Guérin visited Birzeit and found it to have a population of 1,800 inhabitants, of those 140 were Latin Catholics. The others were 'schismatic Greeks' and Muslims. He described the village to have "well

grown irrigated gardens with naturally fertile soil. It abounded in vines, figs and pears. He also noted some beautiful walnut trees"(Guérin, 1874). In 1882, Birzeit was described by the Survey of Western Palestine conducted by the Palestine Exploration Fund as "a Christian village of moderate size, containing a Greek Church and a Latin Church, with a well to the north, and olives round it" (Conder et al., 1882). At the end of the 18th Century, Christian missionaries established three boys schools to serve the people of Birzeit (Al-Dabbagh, 1965).

In the 1922 census of Palestine conducted by the British Mandate authorities, Birzeit had a total population of 896; 119 of which were Muslims and 777 Christian (Barron, 1923). In the official land and population survey conducted by the Mandate Authorities in 1945, the population of Birzeit reached 1,560, all of them were Arabs, while the total land area was 14,088 donums (Hadawi, 1970). The first village council of Birzeit was established in 1925, and was composed at that time of five members (Committee, 2009).

Birzeit was famous for its high level of education from the early 1900s. Al-Dabbagh (1965) noted, "the most obvious character of Birzeit is its flourishing educational life, where more than 90 percent of males and 50 percent of females are educated" which is considered a very high percentage for Palestine for that period.

During the British mandate era, a local community leader, Ms. Nabiha Nasir (1891-1951) established a girls elementary boarding school in 1924 in Birzeit, which many years later developed to become Birzeit University. Six years after that, the school became a mixed sex school in 1930, and then transformed into a secondary school (Abualrub, 2009). In 1942, Birzeit secondary school was upgraded and renamed as Birzeit College. There was no electricity in Birzeit at that time - it became available only in 1951 - and the town had to depend on an array of kerosene lamps when light was needed. There was no running water either; underground reservoirs were used to collect rainwater, which was then manually pumped daily to fill water tanks on the rooftop. Heating was non-existent and life was austere (Baramki, 1987).

In the wake of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and after the 1949 Armistice Agreements, Birzeit came under Jordanian rule with the rest of the West Bank. The year 1948 was a turning point in the history of both the town of Birzeit and its college. The town served as one of the headquarters of Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, the chief commander of the Palestinian forces which was known as "the Army of the Holy War" (Khalaf, 1991; Nevo, 1996). As one way of expressing their pride in supporting the national Palestinian cause, Birzeit's female students knitted sweaters for al-Husayni's troops.

The State of Israel was proclaimed on 15 May, one day after the British Mandate ended, and many Palestinians had been forced to leave or flee in terror from their cities and villages inside the boundaries of the new State of Israel. They walked in the summer heat to Birzeit and other neighbouring towns. The college, as well as the churches and the mosque opened their doors and offered shelter until it was possible for the refugees either to settle temporarily in tents or to continue their slow, agonizing trek to Ramallah and to towns across the Jordan River (BZU, 2016). In 1962 the village council of Birzeit became a municipality governed by 13 city council members (Committee, 2009).

After the Six-Day War in 1967, Birzeit came under the Israeli occupation where Birzeit, through its University, played a significant role in the Palestinian national struggle (Abu-Lughod, 2000). During that time, Birzeit through its vigorous student movement, played a significant role in shaping Palestinian national identity and the call for the establishment of a sovereign state (Zelkovitz, 2014). The town was continuously subjected to numerous military operations against its University and students living in the town.

Birzeit was at the front line of resistance against the threats that Palestinian national identity, education and society were facing (Abualrub, 2009; Abu-Lughod, 2000). In the face of these threats and challenges, Birzeit College decided not only to continue operating but also to expand their educational programmes. In 1976 Birzeit University awarded its first Bachelors Degrees in eight disciplines aimed at offering higher education opportunities for "Palestinians who lost access to such education due to the occupation" (Baramki, 1987).

In January 1988, a month after the start of the first Palestinian popular uprising – "Intifada" – against the Israeli occupation, Israeli Military authorities decided to close Birzeit University along with all other Palestinian universities. The response to the Intifada by the Israeli authorities caused great disruption to Palestinian daily life, which forced Palestinians to attempt against all odds to overcome the severe economic hardship through reliance on their community-based economy (Said, 1980). Birzeit town was subject to continuous military operations, closures, and other political activities. During that time students and teachers organized themselves (often in an ad hoc manner) to continue their studies through "underground" classes in homes, offices, religious and civic centres. This adaptation was not without its risks and teachers and students were often arrested in army raids. (Wall, 2007). The political, cultural, and social environment of Birzeit has shaped the future of many Palestinian youth as rational, nuanced, and conscientious leaders in the Palestinian struggle for statehood (Zelkovitz, 2014).

In 1992, after 51 months of closure, Birzeit and other Palestinian universities reopened following peace negotiations between Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. Following the signing of Oslo Agreements in 1993, Birzeit was placed under the administrative authority of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

7.3.2 Economic activities, infrastructure and services

The economy in Birzeit is principally dependent on the agricultural and service sectors, which employ 30 percent and 25 percent (respectively) of the town's workforce respectively (ARIJ, 2012a). Basic services such as a water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal, transportation, health, education, and others are available to citizens in the town.

Table 7-14 provides a snapshot of the key indicators related to the city of Birzeit economic activities, infrastructure and basic services.

Table 7-14: Birzeit infrastructure and services indicators as of 2016

Key indicators	Value
PCBS code	301635
Total area (donum)	14,000
Population	5,796
Number of housing units	1,850
Number of employees in the municipality	38 permanent employees
Length of internal roads (Km)	
Paved	40.0
Unpaved	11.0
Electricity coverage	97.6 percent
Source of electricity	Israeli Electricity Company
Telecommunication network coverage	100 percent
Availability of public water network	Yes
Water source	Palestinian Water Authority
Water network coverage	98 percent
Quantity of water supplied (cubic metres/year)	326,598
Rate of water supply per capita litres/day	50 litres/day
Availability of wastewater network	No
Quantity of wastewater generated per day (cubic metres)	526
Number of solid waste containers	290
Quantity of solid waste produced (tons per day)	4.5
Public Schools	7
Health Centres	6
Economic Activities	
Israeli labour market	10 percent
Service sector	25
Government or other public employees sector	20 percent
Trade	15 percent
Agriculture sector	30 percent
Unemployment rate *	19.7 percent
Active labour force **	42.5 percent
Employed ***	80.3 percent

Notes:

* Underemployment exists when a person's employment is inadequate in relation to alternative employment, account being taken of his/her occupational skills (PCBS, 2015a).

** The economically active population (Labour Force) consists of all persons 15 years and over who are either employed or unemployed (PCBS, 2015a).

*** Employed refers to: All persons are 15 years and over who were working at a paid job or business for at least one hour during the reference week, or who did not work, but held a job or owned business from which they were temporarily absent (because of illness, vacation, temporarily stoppage, or any other reason) during the reference week (PCBS, 2015a).

Source: Data was obtained by the researcher from various sources including Birzeit Municipality Files (accessed in Feb 2016), and (Committee, 2009; ARIJ, 2012a; PCBS, 2016b; PCBS, 2009; PCBS, 2013b; PCBS, 2016c; PCBS, 2013a; PCBS, 2012c)

7.3.3 Local Government in Birzeit

The first village council of Birzeit was established in 1925, and was composed at that time from five members (Committee, 2009). In 1962, the Jordanian authorities elevated Birzeit to a status of municipality and were governed by 13 city council members (Committee, 2009).

During the Israeli occupation period (from 1967 to 1994), the mayor and council members were appointed by the Israeli Military Commander and their loyalty was often directed to the Israeli authorities with little consideration to building Palestinian institutions or serving the Palestinian community. After 1994, a new municipal council was appointed by the newly established PNA but without a vision or knowledge about local governance and the principles of good governance[271]. The first democratic local elections took place in January 2005 and a municipal council composed of 13 members was elected. In October 2012, the second local elections were conducted and resulted in a new mayor and council members (CEC, 2014).

There are about 38 employees working in the municipality, which owns its permanent headquarters. In line with the local government's services and responsibilities listed in the Palestinian Local Councils Law No 1 (PNA, 1997), Birzeit municipality is responsible for providing a number of services to the residents of the town, including (ARIJ, 2012a; Committee, 2009):

- Establishment and maintenance of the drinking water network
- Solid waste collection, road construction and restoration, street cleaning and social development services
- Organization of the construction and licensing processes
- Implementation of projects and studies for the town
- Provision of offices for governmental services
- Protection of historical and archaeological sites in the town

7.3.4 Fragility of Birzeit:

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement, Birzeit was divided into politically classified areas 'B' and 'C'. Approximately 10,612 donums (75.8 percent of the

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[271] Interview with MU07..

town's total area) were assigned as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has a complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. It is worth noting that that the town's entire population resides in area B. The rest of the town's area, constituting 3,388 donums (24.2 percent of the total area), is classified as area C and sees Israel retain full control over security and administration related to the territory. In area C, Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless with the consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within area C are agricultural areas and open spaces (OCHA-oPt, 2009).

There are no Israeli settlements on Birzeit's lands, although the Israeli occupation authorities confiscated large areas of Birzeit land for military and settlement purposes, including the establishment of military checkpoints in addition to bypass roads to link Israeli settlements. Israel confiscated more lands for the construction of bypass road no. 465 to connect Israeli settlements near the town from its eastern side to those from its northwest and western sides. The real threat of bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the Israeli Army along these roads, which extends to approximately 75 m on each side of the road. These buffer zones dramatically increase the total area of land affected by the construction of the bypass roads (ARIJ, 2012a; Committee, 2009).

Following the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000, the Israeli occupation authorities established many Israeli checkpoints on the lands of Birzeit. One of the main checkpoints was located to the north – the Atara military checkpoint (OCHA-oPt, 2010b). This checkpoint forms a gate to the northern part of Ramallah city and separates it from the northern cities of the West Bank. It represents a significant obstacle to the movement of Palestinian civilians to and from Ramallah while causing daily suffering to Palestinians (including arrests, shootings, traffic crises, and closures). Additionally, Israel established two concrete barriers near the Atara checkpoint and a watchtower. These checkpoints are designed to restrict movement and enhance control over Palestinians.

Despite the fact that there are no Israeli settlements in Birzeit, the town is not immune from attacks by Israeli settlers. Birzeit is surrounded with settlements from its eastern, north western and western sides (Desk, 2016). Furthermore, the Israeli occupation forces continuously harass Palestinian students and lecturers who attend Birzeit University in the form of violations and harassment; all in an attempt to scare and terrify in order to prevent them from continuing their education at the university (PCHR, 2015; Wall, 2007).

The Strategic Plan of Birzeit

The engagement of Birzeit in strategic planning came through the support of Global Communities, which coincided with national efforts to reform the strategic planning approach between 2008 and 2010. The following sections explore and examine this experience in more detail to uncover the key elements that influence the strategic planning exercise in the city of Birzeit. To position the strategic plan of Birzeit within the broader historical context of local governments in Palestine, Figure 7-16 presents a timeline of the strategic plan along with the key events that affected local governments in general.
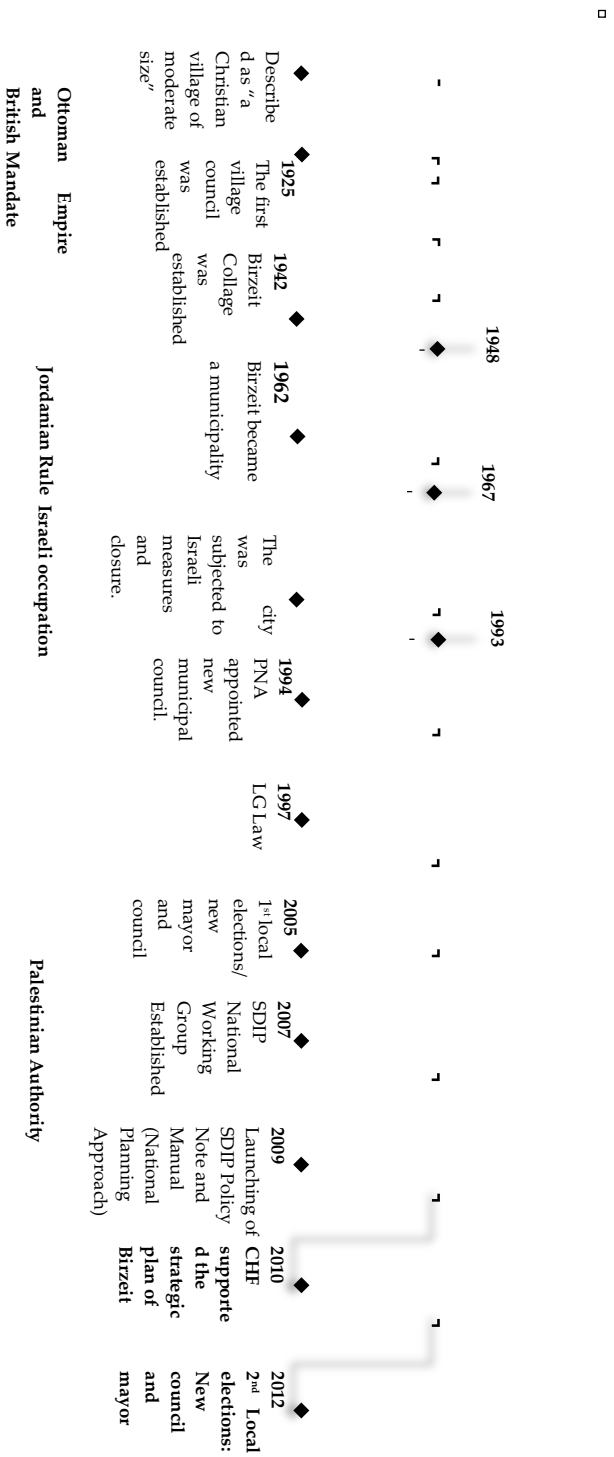
Figure 7-16: Birzeit City Timeline
Source: Author's compilation, based on historical review

Describe d as "a Christian village of moderate size"

1925 The first Birzeit village council was established

1942 Birzeit Collage was established

1962 Birzeit became a municipality

1948

1967

1993

The city was subjected to Israeli measures and closure.

1994 PNA appointed new municipal council.

1997 LG Law

2005 1st local elections/ new mayor and council

2007 SDIP National Working Group Established

2009 Launching of SDIP Policy Note and Manual (National Planning Approach)

2010 CHF supporte d the strategic plan of Birzeit

2012 2nd Local elections: New council and mayor

Ottoman Empire and British Mandate

Jordanian Rule   Israeli occupation

Palestinian Authority

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Motivation for strategic planning

Before the first local elections in 2005, Birzeit municipality like most of the Palestinian local governments lacked prior experience of strategic planning and the best practices of good local governance[272]. This was due to the fact that the PNA, as any newly established central authority, was concerned with instituting and strengthening the powers of the nascent central institutions. As a result of this, local governments were ignored and marginalized (UNDP, 2004).

The elections of 2005 brought a new mayor – a professor in Economics at Birzeit University and a mixture of "traditional" and "intellectual" council members. For the first time in the history of local governments in Palestine, "a mayor with such high educational qualifications was brought to office in a democratic election"[273]. The mayor, who had previous experience of financial and strategic planning, found himself in a situation where "there was no real institution in the municipality". Therefore "restructuring and increasing the human resources and building the capacity of the municipality were the top priorities at that time". However, this was not possible due to the limited financial resources and the budget deficit that the council had inherited from the previous administration.

> *"I realized that it is important to restructure the municipality and institutionalize our work, and we also needed to build the capacity of the municipality and increase its resources. However, the available budget at that time did not allow for that. This is why I started to think of formulating a vision and structure for the town"[274].*

Despite the sincere willingness of the mayor to make changes, these plans did not see the light of day for number of reasons. This was due, in the main, to some council members being affiliated with the left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)[275]. Because of the presence of this group, the newly elected council faced a boycott from a number of international donors, which made it difficult to seek funding from those donors. Also, the "traditional" mentality of some council members that resisted new ideas, and the lack of practical experience on how to run a municipality by the mayor and the council formed an obstacle to

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[272] Interview with MU07.
[273] Interview with ID04.
[274] Interview with MU07.
[275] Interviews ID08, PE01, and PE02.

the introduction of planning[276]. To add to these challenges, in 2006 the internal conflict between the council members caused six of the thirteen members to resign from the municipality. The main reason behind this conflict was "the resistance of the six council members to the new reform ideas that the mayor wanted to introduce in managing the city affairs such as strategic planning, and automated system for financial management"[277]. A year later, a new City Manager, with experience in municipality's administration, was hired to help the mayor deal with the mounting challenges that the municipality was facing at that time[278].

The new City Manager and the mayor joined forces to restructure the municipality as well as to seek external support to offset the financial deficits of the municipality.

> *"I asked the help of the ministry for making a new structure and they asked me to wait for the standards structures that the ministry is working. I chose not to wait, and started to work on the structure with the newly appointed city manager"[279]*

The combination of an intellectual leadership (i.e. the mayor), and an experienced ambitious technical staff (i.e. the city manager) sparked new thinking and new effort toward improving the internal capacity of the municipality as well as welfare of the community.

The first step was to develop a short-term 'operational plan' for the municipality that focused on increasing revenues and decreasing expenditures. After that, the mayor and the City Manager formulated a vision for the city as a "Green, historic and college city" This vision was formulated and discussed with the municipality's council without getting into the complexities or requirements of a real strategic planning exercise[280]. The purpose of creating a vision was to guide the reform process in the municipality and to use it for the communication and outreach to the donor community.

The persistence of the mayor and the City Manager, and their outreach to donors, convinced one of the major donors, USAID through their subcontractor Global

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[276] Discussion of FG08.

[277] Discussion of FG08.

[278] Interview with MU12.

[279] Interview with MU07.

[280] Interview with MU16.

Community (GC), to include Birzeit as one of the eligible municipalities to receive funding[281]. This occurred in parallel to the introduction of the MDLF Ranking System, which made it conditional to have a strategic plan to be eligible for funding. All these factors encouraged the municipality to seek the help of Global Communities to develop its first strategy plan in March of 2010.

Based on data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions, the majority of informants ranked the mayor's leadership (69 percent), and the support of the city engineer (63 percent) as the main drivers of Birzeit's strategic plan. Other factors behind the initiation of the strategic plan process included the donor boycott (41 percent), and the MDLF requirement (40 percent). Figure 7-17 illustrates the main drivers for Birzeit Strategic Plan.
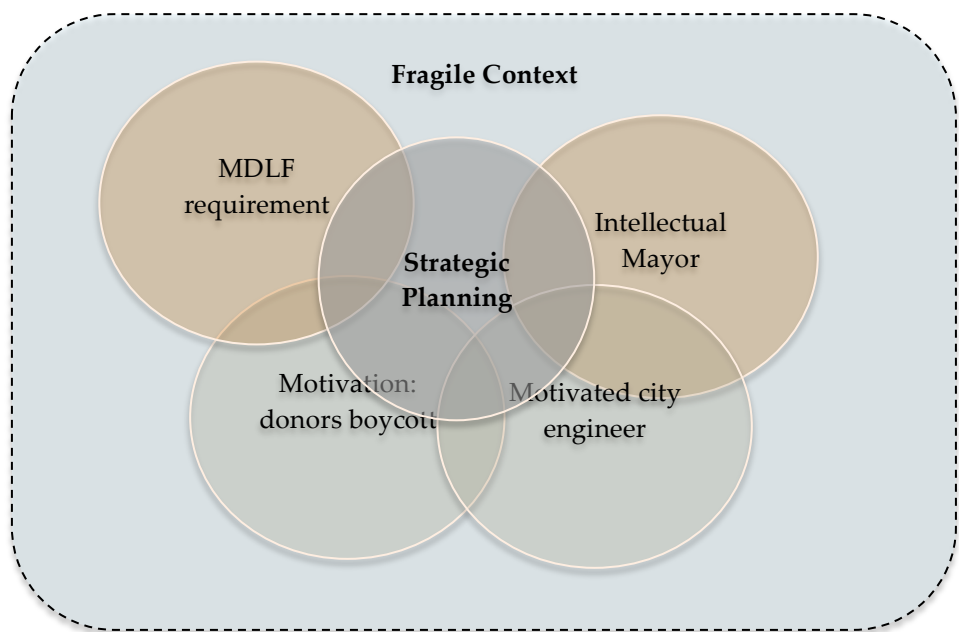
Figure 7-17: Drivers for the Strategic Plan of Birzeit

Source: Author.

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[281] Interview with ID07.

Description of the Strategic Planning Process

As part of the Local Democratic Reform Programme (LDR), funded by USAID and implemented by the Co-operative Housing Foundation International (CHF)[282], a community-based strategic planning process known as Strategic Development Framework (SDF) was developed and implemented in LGUs in Palestine (West Bank only) (Minis and Chetwynd, 2011b).

The SDF approach was based on a methodology developed by a local consultant that brings stakeholders together to develop a Strategic Planning Framework-SPF (vision and objectives for 16 years), a Community Integrated Development Plan-CIDP (four-year implementation horizon), a Sector Investment Plan-SIP (two-year capital investment plan), and a Corporate Plan-CP for the local government's internal improvements [283].

This strategic planning approach was introduced in 2009 in parallel to the MoLG's development of a national unified SDIP approach. For political reasons, and due to restrictions imposed by the US Government on working in Gaza and with certain LGUs, the SDF was implemented in 22 LGUs in the West Bank[284].

The implementation of the CHF's strategic planning approach took place at the same time when the MDLF supported the implementation of the national SDIP. Despite a number of differences between the two approaches in terms of technique, terminology and key outputs, they are both built on the assumption that community participation and stakeholder engagement are central to the development of a shared vision and the identification of community priorities. Since it is not the purpose of this research to go into the details of the differences and similarities between the two used approaches, we only provide a brief comparison between them in the Table 7-15.

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[282] Founded in 1952, CHF is an international development and humanitarian aid organization that operates in approximately 25 countries. 2012 CHF International changed its name to "Global Communities" GLOBALCOMMUNITIES. 2015. *http://www.globalcommunities.org/history* [Online]. [Accessed 2 June 2015 2015]..

[283] Interview with ID09.

[284] Interview with ID07.

Table 7-15; Comparison of SDIP and LDR/CHF Strategic Planning Approaches[285]

Area of Comparison	SDIP Approach	LDR/CHF Planning Approach
Stakeholders	1. From **Municipality**: • Strategic Planning committee (**3** members) • Core planning team which include (**4-7** members- heads of municipality departments, and **3-5** from community) 2. From **Outside**: • Specialized Committees (**12-15** committees) with an average of **5** members for each committee (total members-**60-75**) • Special Experts were selected from community as needed. • All citizens will be invited in the preparatory phase to get the endorsement of launching the strategic planning process (usually over at least **100** participants attend) • Representatives from private sector, civil society, individuals, others (around **50-60** participants for 1st workshop (2 days) and **50-60** participants for 2nd workshops(one day) representing community) • All the citizens will be invited to endorse the final SDIP before sending it to MoLG for approval (at least **100** attend).	• Stakeholder committee (**10-12** members) • Strategic Planning Framework (SDF) Committee (**10-12** members) • Technical committees (**10-12** committees and each one include **4** members), total members around **45** • **First workshop:** around **40-45** participants representing **technical committees** • **Second workshop:** around **40-45** participants representing **technical committees** • **Third workshop:** around **40-45** participants representing **technical committees** • **Final Workshop**: around **40-45** participants representing **technical committees** • Selected experts from community

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[285] Compiled by the researcher based on reviewing the manuals and relevant documents of the two approaches.

Phases & Activities	• **Phases: 3** Main phases to finalize the strategic plan and **2** for(implementation and evaluation
	• **Main Activates & Steps**:
	  i. Setup & Preparation
	  ii. Stakeholder Analysis
	  iii. Situation Analysis
	  iv. Vision & Objective Formulation
	  v. Project Identification
	  vi. Preparing Implementation & Monitoring Plans
	  vii. Prepare SDIP Document & Obtain Approval
	  viii. Design Implementation Procedures
	  ix. Fundraising
	  x. Establish Partnership
	  xi. Evaluation
	  xii. Updating
		• **Phases**: 8 Phases
		• **Main Activates:**
		  i. Form SDF team
		  ii. Stakeholder Analysis
		  iii. Form technical committees
		  iv. Public awareness
		  v. Situation Analysis
		  vi. Prepare Community profile
		  vii. Analysis & Identify development axes
		  viii. Prepare diagnostic report
		  ix. Vision & Objective Formulation
		  x. Analysis & Identify development issues
		  xi. Identify general strategic objectives
		  xii. Identify basic strategic objectives
		  xiii. Identify development initiatives
		  xiv. Prepare CIDP
		  xv. Prepare investment plan
		  xvi. Fundraising
		  xvii. Updating

Main Outputs	• **Diagnostic Report** • **Complete SDIP Document** (one package) which include: Vision (5-10 years), development issues, development objectives, projects and programmes, implementation plan, monitoring & evaluation plan, map linking development objectives with physical plan, endorsement from community representatives. • **Institutional Building Report** for the municipality	• **Diagnostic Report** • **Strategic Planning Framework (SDF)** which include (vision (16 years), strategic axes, strategic objectives, development issues) • **Community Integrated Development Plan (CIDP),** which include (SDF & CIDP Matrix) and the period for CIDP 4 years) • **Sector Investment Plan** which include implantation plan for the selected sectors (**2** years period) • **Corporate Plan** for the municipality
Terminology	Implementation Plan	Investment Plan
	Specialized Committees	Technical Committees
	Thematic Groups	Sector Group
	Development Fields	Development Axes
	Field oriented (example: social services field)	Sector oriented (example social services sector)
	Development Objective	Strategic Objective
	Programme	Development Initiative
	Strategic Development and Investment Plan (**SDIP**)	Community Integrated Development Plan (**CIDP**)

General Notes	SDIP include project summary (brief proposal for each project-3 pages)	CIDP doesn't include project summary
	Involvement of community: specialized committees do the technical issues and the community representatives identify vision, development issues.	**Involvement of community**: Technical committees do all the activities.
		Difficult to link projects with National Plan
	Easy to link project and programmes with National Plan (same coding)	No Linkage with physical planning
		No linkage with Municipality Budget
	SDIP include linkage between physical & strategic Planning (Spatial)	No Endorsement from community
	Linking the Municipality budget with SDIP	
	Endorsement from Community	
Implementation Period	4-6 months	8-12 months.

Source: Author compilation based on SDIP and LDR/CHF documents.

It was not until 2012 that CHF agreed with MoLG to use the unified SDIP as the basis for their technical support to selected LGUs in Palestine[286]. Since this, all municipalities in Palestine have had their strategic plans developed using this unified methodology and associated mechanisms[287].

For our case, and based on the request from the Birzeit municipality, the CHF agreed to support the development of a strategic plan in March 2010. The process started in April 2010 by forming the Strategic Planning Framework (SDF) Committee. The SDF Committee included ten members from the municipality and the community and its role was to oversee the strategic planning process and coordinate with the external consultants that were contracted by CHF (Committee, 2010).

The process of formulating the strategic plan took about eight months and included a number of workshops and meetings that were limited to the members of the technical committees only. A review of the technical committees' membership reveals that the committee was composed of 42 members covering various sectors in the community such as infrastructure, investment, tourism, social and cultural development, health, and education. The percentage of women in the committee was 27 percent (Committee, 2010). Additionally, and based on the stakeholder analysis that was conducted during the early stage of the planning, a stakeholder committee was also established consisting of 12 members representing the main institutions and families in the community. The stated role of this committee was to help mobilize the political and community support to the process, and to validate the findings and results of the strategic planning process[288].

After the preparation of the 'diagnostic report' of the community, the SDF Committee and the technical committees formulated their visions, strategic objectives, and the proposed interventions to achieve their objectives. The strategic planning process was concluded in November 2010 by producing the Community Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), which covered four years (from 2011-2014). The CIDP was then endorsed by 25 organizations representing the different sectors in the community (IDMC, 2010).

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[286] Interview with ID07.

[287] Interview with NI12.

[288] Interview with MU11.

Figure 7-18 summarizes the CIDP development for Birzeit and presents the key milestones of the process.

□

Phase I: Preparation
- Mar 2010: CHF approved the request from Birzeit.
- Apr 2010: CHF contracted consultants, and work started.
- May 2010: Formulation of committees.

>

Phase II: Community Diagnostic
- May 2010: Stakeholder Analysis/Situation Analysis
- June 2010: Prepare Community profile/ Prepare diagnostic report .

>

Phase III: Community Visioning
- July 2010: Vision & Objective Formulation

□

Phases IV-VI: Development Issues Identification and Analysis /Strategic Objectives Identification/Community Interventions Design
- July 2010: Analysis & Identify development issues
- Aug 2010: Identify general strategic objectives/ Identify basic strategic objectives
- Sep 2010: Identify development initiatives

>

Phase VII: CIDP and Investment Plan preparation
- Oct 2010: Prepare CIDP
- Nov 20101:

Figure 7-18: Birzeit CIDP timeframe

Source: Author compilation based on review of minutes of meetings, interviews and CIDP documents.

Content of the Plan

The stated vision of the CIDP of Birzeit is (IDMC, 2010):

> "*Green, innovative, and university city in the fields of education, culture, and tourism. It forms a distinctive centre for the surrounding areas relying on authentic heritage and human values*"

The vision reflects the unique nature of Birzeit, a uniqueness forged partly by the existence of Birzeit University and the role it played in the Palestinian national struggle and development.

The plan encompassed five development fields with proposed interventions and goals for each field. Table 7-16 lists the main development fields of Birzeit strategic plan along with the estimated budget for each field.

Table 7-16: Development Fields and budgets of the CIDP of Birzeit (2011-2014)

Development Field	Total proposed budget (USD)	Percentage of the total budget
Planning and organization	340,000	9.08 percent
Infrastructure and public services	2,450,000	65.40 percent
Social Services	560,000	14.95 percent
Economic Development	356,000	9.50 percent
Security and public safety	40,000	1.07 percent
Total	**3,746,000**	**100.00 percent**

Source: (IDMC, 2010)

The total estimated cost of the interventions of this four-year plan reached USD 3.746 million. As seen with other strategic plans of Palestinian municipalities, the majority of the budget was allocated to improving the infrastructure and public services. More than two thirds of the total budget was spent on infrastructure including improving internal roads, water supply system, electricity, and wastewater network. The most costly investment proposed came with the construction of a wastewater network, which was identified by the community as the top priority. However, as in other Palestinian municipalities, this project was not implemented due to the lack of funding.

Another observation was the focus on providing services and housing for university students, which are an integral part of the fabric of the community.

Buy-in and extent of participation in the plan-making

The strategic planning approach, which was used for the development of Birzeit CIDP relied on the participation of selected stakeholders and community members through specialized committees. Compared to the SDIP approach, wide public participation was not part of the planning process.

The limited community participation has weakened the sense of ownership at the community level. Participants in the focus group noted "the community had some idea about the existence of a development plan, but was not fully aware of the content, or implementation of such plan"[289]. This weak ownership was also obvious at the municipality level after the election of the new council in 2012, where the new mayor and some council members felt that the developed CIDP was the "legacy of the previous mayor and council and the new council is not accountable to"[290]. However, due to pressure from donors (i.e. Global Communities) and the MDLF funding conditions, the CIDP was kept as a reference document for determining the priorities of the municipality[291].

Informants who participated in the focus group (N=13) indicated that the CIDP was realistic and represented the real issues and needs of the community. Nevertheless, the main loophole of the plan was "the non-realistic financial estimation of the various projects, as well as the impractical assumptions related to securing the needed funds from the different financial resources"[292].

This problem was attributed to the planning methodology employed and although this was considered to be "suitable for identifying the problems and needs, it was weak in relation to mapping out the challenges and obstacles that might face the implementation of the plan such as the instability, the donors agenda, and the limited financial resources"[293].

On a Likert Scale, the community representatives (one focus group meeting with 13 participants), and the mayor, and the core planning team (total of six members), ranked the community participation in the CIDP making as average. Table 7-17 represents the results of the Likert Scale.

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[289] Discussion of FG08.

[290] Interview with MU14.

[291] Interview with NI03.

[292] Interview with MU07.

[293] Discussion of FG08.

Table 7-17: How do you assess the participation of the community in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Mayor	☐	☐	☒(1)	☐	☐
Core planning team (N=6)	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (4)	☐	☐
Focus group participants (N=13)	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (10)	☐ (1)	☐

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=19).

Planning outcome

During the strategic plan's formulation process and its four years of implementation (2011-2014), a number of positive outcomes were observed. The discussion of the focus groups and with internal (i.e. municipal staff, and council members) and external (i.e. MoLG, consultant, and Global Communities) informants, several improvements in the municipality's performance as a result of the strategic planning were noted in regards to community welfare.

Having vision and strategic direction from the outset was considered by many as a positive sign and indicated the seriousness and willingness of the municipality to enhance its role and to improve the welfare of the community. Following the endorsement of the plan, the mayor and his staff developed "the first action plan" in 2011 which was a "learning experience for many of the municipality staff" and "an excellent tool for translating the objectives into tangible actions"[294]. For the first time in Birzeit, interventions and projects were linked to objectives, the budget, and indictors. In addition, an evaluation was conducted for the level of achievement of the 2011 action plan, which indicated that about 75 percent of the plan has been fulfilled[295].

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[294] Interview with Mu07.

[295] Interview with ID08.

The municipality used the plan as a fundraising tool as well as to improve revenue collection and reducing the its budgetary deficit. Between 2010 and 2014 the municipality managed to triple its total budget from USD 628,307 to USD 1,564,356. Although a number of internal and external factors contributed to this increase, the most quoted factor behind this improvement was "the ability of the municipality to raise funding from several sources through the strategic plan itself"[296]. Nevertheless, the weak ownership and commitment to the plan by the new council (after 2012) has slowed down the rising financial trend of the municipality as shown in Figure 7-19.

By 2015, about 57 percent of the proposed projects in the CIDP have been implemented and funded from the municipality's own resources, and from other external sources such as the MoLG, MDLF, and from donors. A monitoring and evaluation matrix was prepared in 2015 to review the progress of the CIDP achievements through updating the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were included in the plan itself. From analyzing the matrix, one can conclude that a large percentage of the KPIs had been achieved. However, some KPIs that are related to the improvement of wastewater services, water network, and preparation of the city's master plan have not been achieved due to insufficient funding (Team, 2015).

The following chart illustrates the percentage of implemented projects (as of December 2015) out of the proposed /allocated budget for the main sectors identified in the Strategic Plan[297].

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[296] Interview with ID08,and NI11.

[297] Data was obtained from Birzeit Engineering Department and Financial Department.
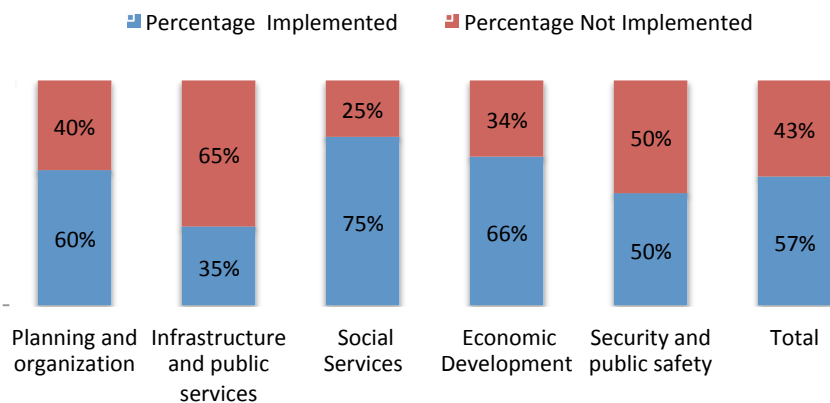
Figure 7-19: Percentage of implementation of Birzeit CDIP from 2011 to 2015

In terms of financial resources, the municipality was able to use the strategic plan to mobilize more funding to finance many of the development projects that were included in the CIDP. Data obtained from analyzing the development budget of the municipality shows an increase in the spending on development projects between the years 2008 to 2015. Figure 7-20 illustrates the increase of development budget of Birzeit municipality from 2008 to 2015.
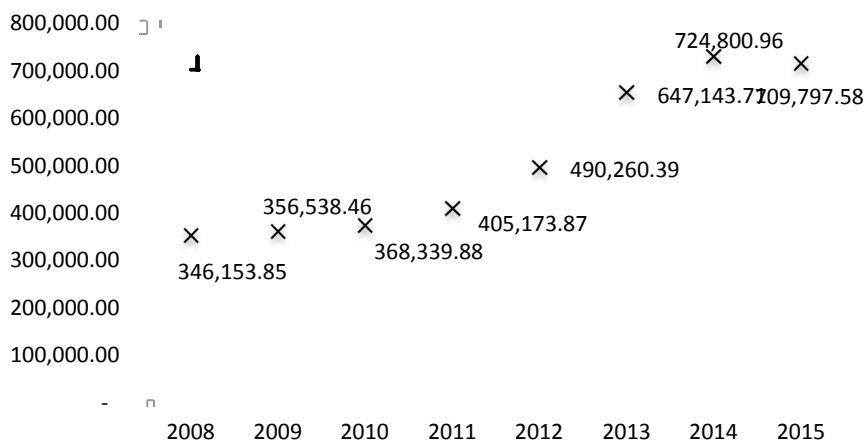
Figure 7-20: Increase in development budget (USD) for Birzeit Municipality from 2008 to 2015

Source: Author compilation based on data from Birzeit Municipality Financial Department.

Furthermore, the municipality succeeded in increasing its own revenues as a result of the "enhancing the efficiency of collection, which led to increasing revenues"[298]. According to financial data obtained from the municipality, the efficiency of tax collection increased by 300 percent between 2006 and 2015[299]. Some 23 percent of the implemented projects were financed from the municipality, and slightly more than a quarter was funded by funding agencies. Figure 7-21 presents this fact.
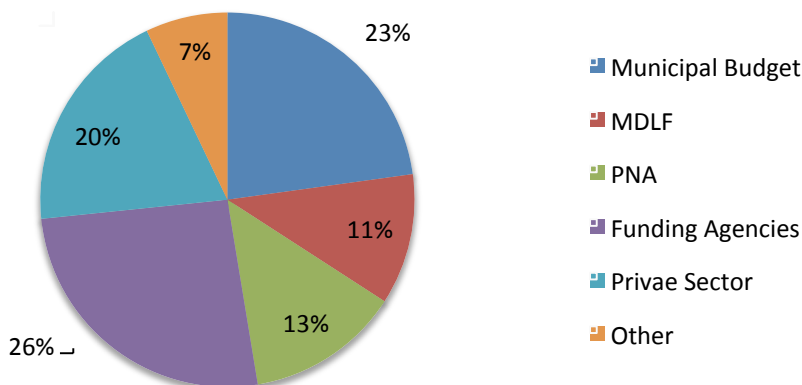
Figure 7-21: Distribution of financial resources for the implementation of Birzeit CDIP

Source: Author compilation based on data from Birzeit Municipality Financial Department.

The municipality used the strategic plan as an input for the preparation of the annual budget. According the reviewed annual budgets, the percentage of investments that came from the strategic plan has increasing from 11 percent in 2011 to about 25 percent in 2013. The staff of the municipality indicated the improvement of the management of the municipal affairs, where the strategic plan "has transferred the municipal work from unorganized individual decision-making to a more systematic approach"[300]

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[298] Interview with MU10.

[299] Data was obtained from Birzeit Financial Department on 17 April 2016.

[300] Interview with MU08.

Leadership role in Birzeit strategic planning

The case of Birzeit strategic plan is a strong example of the leadership role an "intellectual mayor" can perform when supported by 'a technical city manager'. The "blend of skills, political well and decision-making capacity created a conducive environment for initiating, formulating, and implementing the strategic plan of the city"[301].

From the early days of his elections, the mayor brought with him distinctive academic knowledge and professional experience and tried to "manage the city affairs in a different style than the old traditional school"[302]. For that reason, he was faced with "a significant opposition from council members with traditional and tribal mentality that did not accept the new ideas of the mayor "[303]. The conflict between those two styles of governance led to the resignation of traditional-mentality council members (five council members out of 11).

The mayor admitted that his attempts to reform the municipality would not be possible if the new "executive actor", represented by "an energetic City Manager", was not hired during that time.

The focus group participants noted the "crucial role played by the mayor in shaping the vision of the community, as well as in facilitating the planning process through an active participation in the discussions and meetings that took place during the strategic planning"[304].

This leadership role has influenced the outputs of the strategic planning process in a number of cases.

> "The *development of a physical plan was not regarded as a priority by the different committees. However, the mayor strongly believed in the importance of having a physical plan to guide the spatial development of the community, so he exercised everything possible to convince the participants*

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[301] Interview with PE10.

[302] Interview with MU07.

[303] [303] Interview with MU11.

[304] Discussion of FG08.

of this. As a result, the physical plan was included as one of the top priorities in the strategic plan"[305].

The executive authority and power given to the City Manager was also key for the success of the strategic plan.

> "*The City Manager had the enthusiasm, and technical capacity required for leading the strategic planning. He complemented the political and strategic thinking of the mayor through translating the vision and ideas into actions on the ground*"[306].

As assessed by various informants (Total number=25), this high degree of engagmenet on the part of the mayor resulted in a significant influence in the various stages of planning including: initiation, formulation, and implementation (Table 7-18).

Table 7-18: Assessment of the *level of influence* of the mayor in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=6)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (5)
Focus group participants (N=13)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (11)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=19).

In addition to the mayor, the level of involvement from the City Manager as a leader was also a key ingredient for the success of the strategic planning process as well as for the implementation of the plan itself. All informants as Table 7-19 shows ranked the involvement of the City Manager as high.

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[305] Interview with PE10.

[306] Interview with ID09.

Table 7-19: Assessment of the *degree of involvement* of the City Manager in the planning process?

	Poor	Fair	Average	Active	Very Active
mayor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒ (1)
Core planning team (N=6)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (2)	☒ (4)
Focus group participants (N=13)	☐	☐	☐	☐ (1)	☒ (12)

Note: Scores marked with x represent the averages of the respondent scores, while numbers between parentheses present the actual informants per each rank.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=19).

This research analyzed the main leadership traits of the mayor as a leader through interview and focus groups analysis (total of informants=29). Here informants were asked to confirm and rank the qualities of leadership that allowed the mayor to exercised his role in the strategic planning process and his role in seeing through the implementation of the CIDP. Many of these qualities have been raised in the relevant literature on leadership.

Table 7-20 shows the ranking of these qualities of the mayor as perceived by the various informants. It should be noted that each informant was asked to rank the qualities of the mayor separately.

Table 7-20: Qualities of the mayor leadership in the case study

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 19 informants)	Rank
Visionary		
Refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that clarifies the current situation and induces commitment to an even better future (Brown and Anfara, 2003; Jing and Avery, 2011; Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)	14	1
Openness		
Openness is one of the top skills of effective leaders which relates to divergent thinking and is strongly linked to creativity (Judge et al., 2002; McCrae, 1987; Yukl et al., 2002)	13	2

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 19 informants)	Rank
Trust		
Trust refers to a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the trustee (i.e., a leader) (Avolio et al., 2004; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Rousseau et al., 1998).	11	4
Social intelligence		
Social intelligence refers to a set of interpersonal competencies, contains two components: (a) awareness of others' needs and problems, and (b) responsiveness to different social situations (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008; Kobe et al., 2001).	13	2
Absorptive capacity		
Absorptive capacity is the ability to learn which involves the capacity to identify, absorb, and employ new information toward new ends (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Davies and Davies*, 2004) .	13	2
Capacity to change		
Refers to the ability define the suitable moment influencing, and leading strategic change in organizations (Davies and Davies*, 2004; Higgs and Rowland, 2011) .	14	1
Managerial wisdom		
Refers to the capacity to take the right action at the right time (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001; Malan and Kriger, 1998).		
Decision-making capacity	14	1
Refers to the ability to provide a streamlined focus for decision-making in order to provide momentum for change and innovation (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Partnership skills		
Refers to the ability to act within and beyond the respective personal/family/political circle to	14	1

Quality	Number of times mentioned (based on 19 informants)	Rank
introduce or oppose change that affects the community's environment (Greasley and Stoker, 2008; Minkler et al., 2008).		
Low partisanship		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be outward looking and not tied to narrow partisan party/family considerations (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).		
Accessibility		
Refers to the ability of the leader to be relatively visible to the community, engage with citizens, and offer an accessible form of politics (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).	14	1

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion (total of informants=19).

Concluding remarks

The case of Birzeit strategic plan presents an example of a strategic planning experience that benefited from the combined leadership role of an "intellectual mayor", who was supported by "a technical city manager".

This mix between a "political" leader and a "technical" leader have resulted in a improving in the performance of the municipality and the welfare of the community. The leadership of the municipality used the plan as a tool to raise more funds as well as for improving revenue collection and reducing the financial deficit. About 57 percent of the proposed projects in the plan have been implemented and funded from the municipality own resources, and from other external sources.

7.4   Concluding remarks

This chapter presented three cases of externally initiated strategic plans that followed a unified planning approach, and the role of leadership, motivation, and community participation in those plans.

Those plans were prepared as an attempt by the municipalities to secure funding after the MDLF made it conditional for municipalities to have a strategic plan before receiving any financial support for their development projects. In this type of strategic planning, a more structured, participatory planning process (i.e. SDIP) was followed using standardized, one-size-fits-all, manuals and tools through the support of external technical consultants. The MDLF, through financial support from various donors, rolled out SDIPs to all municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the capacity building packages under the Municipal Development Program (MDP). Most municipalities requested the SDIP package so that they could get access to more funding from MDLF and other donors. It was only when the leadership of the municipality, whether a committed mayor and/or energetic technical staff members stepped in to steer the process and facilitate agreements, when implementation of strategic plans led to tangible outputs and better performance.

The experience of the municipality of Birzeit is another example of strategic planning that followed an externally driven model. In this case the mayor and his team sought the help from an external source (i.e. USAID funded project). The leadership and tenacity of the Mayor and the City Manager were key in restoring the support of donors to the city as well as developing the first strategy plan of the city following the Strategic Development Framework (SDF) planning model. Compared to the SDIP model, the SDF planning approach did not entail wide public participation within its version of a planning process, and only selected stakeholders and community members were involved through specialized committees.

The presented cases offered an insight on the influence of committed leadership on a unified strategic planning approach and the difference it makes on the outcome of the planning exercise. The next chapter builds on the investigated case studies and provides analysis and comparison to shape the findings and conclusions of this research.

Chapter 8
Findings and Recommendations

> Plans and planners have an important role to play in organizations, when matched with the appropriate contexts.
>
> *Henry Mintzberg*
>
> *in (Mintzberg, 1994) page 415*

This chapter concludes this dissertation and provides a comparative analysis of the case studies in Chapters Six and Seven. The aim of this comparative analysis is to provide the principal findings and key paradigms from these strategic planning experiences from Palestine. This chapter reiterates the main questions and hypothesis that guided this research (Section 8.1). It provides a contextual analysis of the strategic planning experience of Palestinian local government and then relates this to broader political and financial contexts of Palestinian local governance (Section 8.2). and presents a detailed comparative analysis of the five cases (Section 8.3). The remaining sections of this chapter discuss the various themes and elements that emerged from the case studies including: fragility, leadership, motivation, community participation, and the role of donors. Policy implications for development practitioners and policy-makers as well as suggestions for future academic research are presented at the end of this chapter (Section 8.11).

8.1   Recapitulation of Research Questions, and Propositions

Despite the geo-political, economic, social, and institutional specificities of Palestinian local government, the researcher believes a lot can be learned from the Palestinian experience when looking toward fragile state contexts in other developing countries.

This research was driven by the following main question:

What is the impact of local leadership on strategic planning as a vehicle to improve the performance of local governments in a conflict/fragile context such as Palestine?

The first proposition pertinent to the main question is:

> P1: In fragile contexts characterized by a weak governance structure at the central (national) level, limited resources, and conflicting interests, the role of strong leadership is vital for the success of strategic planning as well as for dealing with the challenges faced by local institutions and communities.

To be able to investigate the main research question and to expand our knowledge and understanding of strategic planning, the study investigated a number of sub-questions related to specific propositions.

In addition to the first propositions, propositions 2, and 3 are also linked to the first group of sub questions, which revolve around the role of leadership and the qualities and characteristics of leaders:

> SQ1: How does leadership influence the quality of plan making, adoption and implementation of SP in LGs?
> SQ2: What are the main traits of leaders (political, economic, personal, motivation, etc.) that influence the role of leadership in local governments?

The propositions that address these are as follows:

> P2: The more involved the leadership is in the strategic planning process, the more influence this leadership will have on the pace of designing and implementing strategic planning and its outcomes. This will lead to better ownership of and commitment to the plan.

> P3: Traditional leadership tends to resist reform initiatives (such as strategic planning) and obstruct the introduction of new tools and practices to the municipal work.

Additionally, this research sought to identify other influencing factors that affected the realization of strategic planning within the Palestinian context by addressing the following sub-questions:

SQ3: What are the potential factors other than that of leadership that could influence success or failure of strategic plans?

SQ4: What is the current level of up-take of strategic planning agendas in the Palestinian municipalities?

SQ5: What is the role of foreign aid and donors in strategic planning in Palestine?

SQ6: What are the policy implications and reform measures that should be applied to achieve the objectives of the strategic planning?

The following propositions have been formulated to address these sub-questions:

P4: For strategic planning to work under unstable conditions (both at the national level-fragile Palestine-and local level –unstable communities-), several key ingredients should exist, including: availability of incentives, effective leadership, access to financial resources and local ownership.

P5: Donor boycott of Hamas and left-wing-led municipalities produced positive unintended results from the use of strategic planning.

Figure 8-1 **Model of the key ingredients for the success of strategic planning under fragile situation**

Source: Author's compilation, based on literature review

At the end of this chapter we return to the research questions and hypotheses in the light of the case studies so to identify what has been learned, what is novel in the findings and what challenges the prior expectations of the researcher or those in the academic literature.

8.2   Contextual Analysis of Strategic Planning in Palestine

As detailed in the historical overview (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5), local governments in Palestine predate the establishment of the National Palestinian Authority (PNA) and fulfil a specific and important role. Over recent past decades, municipalities have become flourishing spaces for Palestinian nationalism despite the efforts of successive rulers (e.g. Britain, Jordan and Israel) to muzzle it.

After the First Intifada and the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, Palestinian local governments remain charged with a strong symbolic significance as the central arena for Palestinian politics, despite being in bad shape after decades of neglect and foreign control. Since the establishment of the PNA in 1994, municipalities have also been a remarkable place to observe and understand the competition around power repartition between the different layers of Palestinian powers, the rivalry between various political notables and the campaign led against Hamas' elected representatives.

To situate the strategic planning experience in the Palestinian municipalities, it is important to link this to the positive political atmosphere that emerged after the Second Intifada and the first Palestinian municipal elections that were held between 2004 and 2005.

Following the end of the Second Intifada, growing optimism in the region was reported as a result of a successful election process and the smooth transition to a new president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Mahmoud Abbas, after the death of Yasser Arafat (UN, 2005). Moreover, both Palestinians and Israelis accepted a new peace plan, known as 'the Roadmap', which was designed by the Quartet for the Middle East[307] (Hadas, 2004).

Under these new conditions, the traditional leadership of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) sought to strengthen the political structure through popular legitimacy, thinking that such legitimacy would give the PNA the needed political will to act decisively to restore law and order and reassert its monopoly of power (Fogg et al., 2009). A series of elections took place from 2004 to 2006 including

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[307] The Quartet included: the United States, the European Union, the UN and Russia.

presidential elections (on 9 January 2005), parliamentary elections (on 25 January 2006), and local council elections (CEC, 2014). Local elections took place in four rounds between December 2004 and December 2005 (CEC, 2014). In these elections, the Islamic Resistance Movement (known as Hamas) managed to out-mobilize the mainstream Palestinian national movement, Fatah, which remained in power since the establishment of the PNA in 1994.

These elections represented hope for change inside the Palestinian territories (Pina, 2006) and brought forward new leaders to municipalities that were eager to "prove that they can serve their constituents in a better way than pervious mayors who were appointed based on political and family affiliation"[308]. Moreover, while charges of widespread corruption and mismanagement have plagued the Palestinian parties of Fatah and Hamas, their affiliated elected mayors and council members were seen as largely untouched by corruption. Thus many Palestinians "had more confidence in those mayors and council members to protect the public money and manage and fight corruption, favouritism and nepotism"[309].

The Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, which was conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research in March of 2006, confirms this observation. According to the poll, more than half of the respondents, believed that Fatah lost the elections due to the voters' desire to punish it for corruption, its divisions and fragmentation, and its failure to enforce law and order. First and foremost voters wanted to punish it for the spread of corruption in the PA (PSR, 2006). In their analytical study of the results of the elections, Fogg et al. (2009) noted that the outcome of the elections was influenced by public perceptions of corruption and demands for good governance. Fatah lost the elections because voters believed Hamas could deliver better governance in this critical area of fighting corruption.

The previous background is vital to understand the general political context that influenced the functions and capacities of the Palestinian municipalities.

In all of the five cases, elections led to new councils and mayors representing different political groups and leadership styles. Figure 8-2 illustrates the timeline of the local elections including the five selected case studies.

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[308] Interview with NI09.

[309] Interview with PE04.

Phase V Voting: ■
September 29, 2005
There are plans to hold a final municipal poll

Phase IV Voting: ■
December 15, 2005
4 large cities
Fatah won   13%
Hamas won 74%

surrounding cities
Fatah won   35%
Hamas won 26%

Birzeit

Nablus

Phase III Voting: ■
September 29, 2005
Fatah won   53%
Hamas won 26%

I S R A E L

Lake Tiberias

Jenin

Tulkarm   Tuabs ■

Qalqilyah ■   Nablus ■ ■

WEST BANK

Mediterranean Sea

AsSamu′

Phase II Voting: ■
May 5, 2005
West Bank
Fatah won   44%
Hamas won 36%
Gaza
Fatah won   64%
Hamas won 28%

al-Bireh ■

Ramallah
Beitunia
East Jerusalem ■

Jericho ■

Bethlehem

1994 Treaty Line

GAZA STRIP

Beit Hanoun   Erez Crossing
■ ■ ■ Gaza

Kissufim Crossing
■

Khan Yunis

■ Rafah

1950 Armistice Line

Phase I Voting: ■
December 23, 2004
Fatah won   38%
Hamas won 35%

Hebron ■

Dead Sea

1949 Armistice Line (Green Line)

Phase I, Part 2: ■
January 27, 2005
Fatah won   22%
Hamas won 65%

Beita
Deir Dibwan

Figure 8-2: The research case studies elections within the overall municipal elections results

The elected mayors and council members of the five cases were passionate about bringing change and serving their communities. As noted by the mayor of the city of Birzeit, Dr. Yousef Naser:

> "*When I came to the position, my aim was to prove to the people that we can achieve if we decide and join efforts. It is always possible to change despite the restrictions and conditions we live in*" [310]

The mayor of the city of Nablus, Adly Yaish, echoed this enthusiasm.

> "*It was the first time for our people elect their representatives for the city council, which was exciting and challenging at the same time. Being elected by the citizens bestowed upon us a huge responsibility to make a difference and serve our city*"[311]

Both the communities, and the municipal staff responded positively to the elections of new councils. Citizens who participated in the focus groups of this research stressed the fact that local elections enabled them to "exercise the right to vote and elect their own representatives despite any political difference", and that they felt that "newly elected councils turned the page for running municipal affairs in a more participatory and professional manner which was not the case during the previous era where councils have been appointed by the central authority based on political, and tribal criteria"[312].

For municipal staff and government officials, local elections presented a real opportunity for reaffirming local legitimacy, and improving municipal services.

> "*I started working in the municipality one year after the elections. It was obvious to me the council's genuine eagerness to make change, and the existence of qualified, and experienced members*" [313]

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[310] Interview with MU97.

[311] Interview with MU17.

[312] Focus groups of FG01, FG03 and FG08.

[313] Interview with MU09.

As soon as they got elected, many newly elected mayors and councils were confronted by tremendous challenges and needs, which stimulated new ideas and initiatives;

> "*After the local government elections in 2005 which was won by Hamas, many of the newly elected leaders started looking into ways to improve the management of their cities including strategic planning, and because of many intellectuals who were elected, and the new optimistic spirit people wanted to push for changes*"[314]

At that time, many municipalities that were captured by Hamas or left-wing Palestinian factions were also confronted by a financial embargo by Western donors and a "no contact policy" with elected leaders (Brown, 2008). In response, a number of municipal leaders looked at strategic planning as a way to "respond to the citizens' needs, and improve the living conditions in their cities, given the limited financial and technical resources that were available to them at that time"[315].

The five selected cases for this research included a variety of strategic planning experiences and models that have been practiced by Palestinian municipalities during the past ten years; The presented cases varied from independently-initiated strategic plans (i.e. Nablus and Beita), to externally-initiated strategic plans that followed the MDLF's SDIP approach (i.e. AsSamu', Deir Dibwan), or the USAID model (i.e. Birzeit). Despite many differences (e.g. size, capacity, location, and strategic planning model), the research looked at several specific elements across the investigated cases which shaped strategic planning at the local level in Palestine. This included: the role of leadership in initiating, preparing, and implementing strategic planning, motivation and local ownership, public participation, and the availability of financial resources. Table 8-1 summarizes the key features of each selected community as well what the relevancy of each case to strategic planning.

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[314] Interview with ID06.

[315] ID11.

Table 8-1: Key features of the selected cases and their relevance to strategic planning

Community	Key Features	Relevancy
Nablus	• Location: North West Bank • Population: 153,061 capita (2016). • Total Area: 32,947 donum. • The city became a municipality in 1869. • Main commercial centre in the West Bank.	• The 2rd largest municipality in the West Bank. • Boycotted by donors as a result of Hamas wining the local elections in the city. • Engaged in a independently-initiated strategic plan (2006), as well as externally driven SDIP (2011). • Two types of leaders: (a) An entrepreneur/non-traditional mayor; and (b) an authoritarian mayor backed by family/political history.
Beita	• Location: North West Bank • Population: 11,017 capita (2016) • Total Area: 17,622.020 donum. • Became a municipality in 1997. • Medium town size known for its commercial and agriculture activities.	• A middle size town in Palestine. • Similar to Nablus, the municipality was boycotted by donors due to political reasons (i.e. Hamas dominant council). • Engaged in a independently-initiated strategic plan (2005), as well as externally driven SDIP (2011). • The Mayor and his team initiated the first strategic planning to respond to donors boycott. • Several types of leaders: (a) An entrepreneur/non traditional mayor; (b) a traditional mayor who delegated the development of the plan to the city engineer (facilitative leadership style); and (c) an empowered city engineer who led the preparation of the 2nd plan (technical leadership style).
AsSamu'	• Location: South West Bank • Population: 25,949 capita (2016) • Total Area: 35,000 donums. • Medium town size known for its commercial and agriculture activities. • Village council was established in 1965 and became a municipality in 1997.	• A large size rural community with strong social/family connections, and civil society involvement. • 2011 Strategic planning was driven by MDLF conditions for SDIPs. • Leadership role was assumed by the City Engineer (technical leadership) who was delegated by the mayor and the council to steer the strategic planning process.
Birzeit	• Location: Middle West Bank • Population: 5,796 capita (2016) • Total Area: 14,000	• A small size college town known for the role of its university in the Palestinian national movement, and the culture/education of the society. • Due to political reasons the city was

Community	Key Features	Relevancy
	donums. • Village council was established in 1925 and became a municipality in 1962. • Christian-Muslim mixed population.	boycotted from donors. • 2010 Strategic plan was based on USAID/GC approach, and was • Leadership was a combination of an intellectual Leadership (i.e. the mayor), and an experienced ambitious Technical Staff (i.e. the city manager).
Deir Dibwan	• Location: Middle West Bank • Population: 6,721 capita (2016) • Total Area: 14,000 donums. • Village council was elevated to a municipality in 1956.	• Small town size where half of its population live and work in the diaspora. • 2011 Strategic plan was based on the MDLF unified approach of SDIP. • Leadership was a combination of young talented individual (City Engineer who became the Mayor later), and traditional local structure (e.g. elderly and heads of families).

Source: Author's compilation from field research, and literature review

The strategic planning experiences of the selected cases should be positioned within the broader political and financial context that affected Palestinian local governments. As mentioned previously, following the end of the Second Intifada, local governments elections took place between 2004 and 2005 which brought new leadership to many municipalities that were eager to serve their communities and make a difference in the management of municipal affairs. Many of these mayors were faced by a boycott from international donors due to their political affiliation. This situation encouraged some mayors to look for solutions for the mounting needs of their communities in light of the scarce financial resources and lack of donors support. As Figure 8-3 shows, in 2006 three municipalities, including the selected cases of Nablus and Beita, embarked on strategic planning to identify priorities, and diversify financial resources. It was not until 2007, when a new Palestinian caretaker government (the 13th government) was formed, that Western donors resumed their support to the Palestinian development priorities as outline in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) of 2008.

The formation of the new government headed by Dr. Salam Fayyad[316] was considered by many academics and donors as the start of the PNA' neo-liberal era

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[316] Dr. Salam Fayyad is a liberal Palestinian politician and widely respected among the international organizations and donors. He was the former Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority (2007-2012) and the former Finance Minister (2002-2005). Prior to that he worked at the World Bank in Washington DC (1987-1995) and later served as the IMF representative to the PNA BBC. 2007. *Profile: Salam Fayyad* [Online]. Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6757273.stm..

(Khalidi and Samour, 2011). This was famous for its post-2007 state-building project, popularly known as "Fayyadism" (Tartir, 2015). The new government advocated for "more coordinated and holistic planning approach that integrates local, regional and national planning levels as part of achieving the national objective of ending the occupation through building strong state institutions"[317].

With the support of international donors, Fayyad government launched a number of initiatives aiming at reforming the local government sector, and building the capacity of local governments on the areas of planning, financial management, and service delivery.

> *"The program of the 13th government known as 'Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State' gave special attention to the local government sector as it touches on the daily life of citizens, and enhance the ability of our people to stay on their land. Our Program includes helping local governments in linking their plans with national plans, encouraging the amalgamation of neighbouring small localities, and increasing the contribution of local governments in the local and national development"*[318]

The positive political and developmental atmosphere that existed during 2007-2008 encouraged the MoLG to discuss with GIZ the idea of having a unified strategic planning approach for municipalities.

> *"After the formulation of Fayyad' government, a meeting with GIZ was arranged to discuss strategic planning. GIZ had prepared a concept and the municipalities of Nablus, and Beita presented their strategic planning experiences. After this, the ministry formed a national planning team which oversaw the development of the national planning approach known as Strategic Development and Investment Planning-SDIP"* [319]

The independently-initiated strategic plans that were developed by few municipalities under the leadership of their mayors, were among the key factors in moving forward the thinking of a unified national strategic planning approach. The experiences of the municipalities of Nablus, Beita, and Maithaloun were instrumental in shaping the national planning approach (i.e. SDIP) through the

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[317] Interview with NI16.

[318] From the speech of Dr. Salam Fayyad, former Prime Minister, at the MDP launching ceremony on December 9, 2009.

[319] Interview with NI11.

membership of the three mayors in the national planning team. The experiences of those municipalities as well as the leadership of their Mayors were mentioned in the forward of the SDIP Policy Note.

"Since the 2005 local government elections an increasing number of Local Government Units have been adopting various forms of strategic planning to meet their complex challenges. Planning and providing certainty in times of uncertainty is the hallmark of Palestinian municipal leadership. This leadership has in recent times increasingly been seeking new and innovative ways in which to serve their communities. In the face of scarce resources and pressures of urbanization, unemployment, resource and land restrictions municipal leaders have been turning to strategic planning as a tool with which to use their limited resources to maximum effect. The methodology and rates of success in strategic planning has varied and it was felt that for the concept to be a useful developmental device, it would be necessary to assist the local government units so that strategic planning can be applied to municipalities across all of Palestine. (MoLG, 2009a, p.2).

The SDIP approach was then adopted by the MoLG as a national, strategic planning regime for all municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza, which was then lunched by Dr. Salam Fayyad, the prime minister at that time.

"Strengthening local governments, elevating their institutional and economic levels, and pushing forward the development wheel in these localities, are among the government's main goals as we genuinely believe that reforming and strengthening local government institutions will have a direct positive impact on the citizens well-being and welfare. From that, the government supported the idea of unifying the strategic development planning at the local level, and linking local level planning with the planning at the sectoral and national levels"[320].

Figure 8-3 illustrates the timeframe of key events related to strategic planning in Palestine

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[320] From the speech of Dr. Salam Fayyad, former Prime Minister, at the SDIP launching ceremony on September 18, 2009.
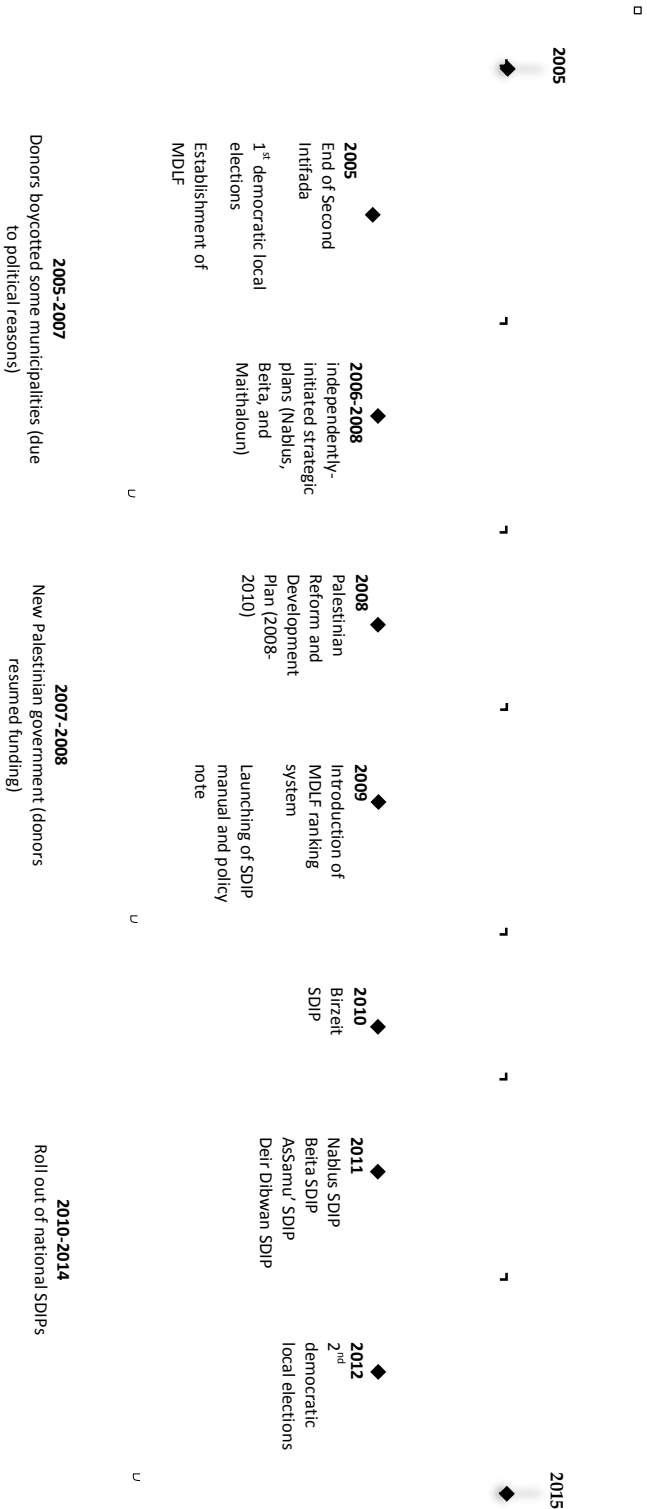
Figure 8-3: Key events related to the strategic planning of Palestinian municipalities

Source: Author's compilation, based on literature review

Timeline content:

2005

2005
End of Second Intifada

1st democratic local elections

Establishment of MDLF

2005-2007
Donors boycotted some municipalities (due to political reasons)

2006-2008
independently-initiated strategic plans (Nablus, Beita, and Maithaloun)

2008
Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010)

2007-2008
New Palestinian government (donors resumed funding)

2009
Introduction of MDLF ranking system

Launching of SDIP manual and policy note

2010
Birzeit SDIP

2011
Nablus SDIP
Beita SDIP
AsSamu' SDIP
Deir Dibwan SDIP

2010-2014
Roll out of national SDIPs

2012
2nd democratic local elections

2015

8.3 Comparative Analysis of the Case Studies

This research presented five cases of strategic planning in the Palestinian local governments. As described in Chapter Three, the five cases were selected were done so based on purposive sampling strategy which employed a mixture of homogeneous and heterogonous samples (Patton, 2005). This study examined five Palestinian municipalities that offer unique windows into the strategic planning experience in the fragile situation of the West Bank of Palestine[321]. The selection of the five cases aimed at covering different locations and governorates, capacities, leadership and political power, size, and environments. The first selection criteria were whether the strategic plan was internally motivated or externally driven. Out of the three municipalities that have formulated strategic plans on their own (i.e. Maithaloun, Beita, and Nablus) two cases were selected including: Beita (medium size), and Nablus (large size). After this, another three municipalities that formulated strategic plans based on externally driven planning methodologies were selected (i.e. AsSamu', Deir Dibwan, and Bir-Zeit) in a way that broadly covers the different types and size of West Bank municipalities. Leadership type and involvement in strategic planning process were also sought in the selection of the case studies. The selection of these cases meant to ensure as far as possible the representation in the sample, to be able to draw conclusions about the current practices of strategic planning in the municipalities in Palestine.

8.3.1 Types of Strategic Planning

Based on the investigation of the selected case studies, two types of strategic planning experiences could be recognized. These are:

The first type of strategic plans were the independently-initiated plans, which included the first strategic plan of Nablus city (2007-2011), and 1st strategic plan of Beita city (2006-2016).

Those plans were formulated after the elections of Hamas dominated councils and aimed at determining the priorities of the municipalities given the massive community needs, the scarce financial resources, and the boycott of donors. The newly elected mayors in both cities, who came from a private sector background,

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[321] Due to the current political situation and access restrictions, Gaza municipalities were not part of the sample.

initiated the idea of developing a plan to overcome the financial deficit that their municipalities accumulated during the past years of the Intifada.

In Nablus, a core team from the council and the municipality staff facilitated the preparation of the plan under the supervision of the mayor. Throughout the planning exercises, community involvement was limited in terms of size, frequency, and timing. The low participation rate and frequency of the communication led to lack of awareness and ownership of the plan by the community at large, although higher commitment and ownership were recorded among the municipal staff (Section 6.2).

Similar to the case of Nablus, the newly elected mayor of Beita advocated finding ways to understand the local community issues and needs. For that reason, he formed a core team to establish a comprehensive database about the community (section 6.1). The 'snow ball' effect of the process led unintentionally to the formulation of a The-Year Strategic Plan for the community. The community participation in preparing this plan was weak and poorly structured, so clearly impacted citizen ownership and awareness of the plan and its output. This lack of community awareness and commitment disrupted the continuity of the planning process five years after the plan was initiated.

The leadership of both the mayor of Nablus and the mayor of Beita was influential in steering the planning process as well as implementing the plans. Data obtained from interviews and focus groups indicated a high degree of involvement of mayors, as well as great respect of and confidence in their leadership (Section 6.1, and Section 6.2). Coming from a private sector background, the mayors of Nablus and Beita are examples of a 'non-traditional' leadership style that was new to the local government sector in Palestine. Our analysis showed that the high level of involvement of the mayors as leaders was a key ingredient for the success of the strategic planning process as well as for the production of the strategic plans (Section 6.1, and Section 6.2).

Another example of independently-motivated strategic plan was the experience of municipality of Birzeit (Section 7.3). In this case however, the mayor and his team sought the help from an external source (i.e. USAID funded project). At the beginning of the council term, the newly elected council faced a boycott from several international donors due to the affiliation of some members to left-wing Palestinian factions. The newly elected mayor, who was a university professor in Economics, and the City Manager joined forces to improve the internal capacity of the municipality as well as the welfare of the community. Under the leadership of

the mayor and the City Manager a short-term 'operational plan' for the municipality as well as a community vision were formulated. The leadership and tenacity of the Mayor and the City Manager were key in restoring the support of donors to the city as well as developing the first strategy plan of the city following the Strategic Development Framework (SDF) planning model. Compared to the SDIP model, the SDF planning approach did not entail wide public participation within its version of a planning process, and only selected stakeholders and community members were involved through specialized committees (Section 7.3).

In the Birzeit strategic planning experience, the combination of an 'intellectual mayor' and an empowered 'city manager' created an enabling environment for initiating, formulating, and implementing the strategic plan for the city. The executive authority that was delegated to the City Manager, as well the active involvement of the mayor in the various stages of planning were found to be the key for the success of the strategic planning (Section 7.3).

The second type of strategic plans was the externally initiated plans that followed a unified planning approach. This included the Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) model, which was adopted by the MoLG and implemented by the MDLF.

The SDIP was prepared in the cities of Nablus, Beita, AsSamu', and Deir Dibwan as an attempt by the councils of these cities to secure funding after the MDLF made it conditional for municipalities to have a strategic plan before receiving any financial support for their development projects.

In this type of strategic planning, a more structured, participatory planning process (i.e. SDIP) was followed using standardized, one-size-fits-all, manuals and tools through the support of external technical consultants. The MDLF, through financial support from various donors, rolled out SDIPs to all municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the capacity building packages under the Municipal Development Program (MDP). Most municipalities requested the SDIP package so that they could get access to more funding from MDLF and other donors. According to informants from MoLG, MDLF, and planning experts, the motivation of most municipalities to engage in strategic planning was "mainly for funding reasons and not due to their appreciation of the value of strategic planning to the advancement of the municipality and the community"[322]. It was only when the leadership of the municipality, whether a committed mayor and/or

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[322] Planning expert's focus group on 4 February 2017.

energetic technical staff members stepped in to steer the process and facilitate agreements, when implementation of strategic plans led to tangible outputs and better performance. The investigated cases provided examples of different styles/types of leaders who pushed for the success of the SDIP (Beita, AsSamu', and Deir Dibwan) or obstructed the implementation of an already developed SDIP (Nablus).

8.3.2   **Outcomes of Strategic Planning**

Several positive outcomes of strategic planning have been documented in the five municipalities.

In the case of the first strategic plan of Nablus, having a strategic plan has enabled the municipality to improve its infrastructure capacity as well as the services provided to citizens. This improvement was also reported by the participants of the focus groups and by the staff of the municipality. Moreover, analysis of the Nablus data of the two rounds of the 'Client and Citizen Satisfaction Survey' conducted for the MDLF, revealed that citizen satisfaction with the Nablus Municipality significantly increased from the first round of the survey in 2008 to the second round in 2012. The results of the survey also highlighted improvements in the delivery and management of the services and relationships with the citizens (Alpha, 2009; Alpha, 2013).   Although this recorded improvement can be attributed to various factors, informants from the focus groups as well as from external stakeholders pointed to role of the strategic plan in improving the management of the city's services as well as on enhancing the financial position of the municipality[323];

> "By having a sort of strategic plan, Nablus municipality was able to improve its management capacity, make better decisions, utilize the available resources, and create new opportunities. All that enhanced service delivery, and increased revenues"[324].

Probably the most obvious example of the positive impact of strategic planning on Nablus municipality was its ability to move from a financial deficit to surplus between the years 2005 and 2010. Analysing the financial data of the municipality as documented in the annual independent audit reports shows a clear improvement in all aspects related to financial position (Section 6.2)

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[323] Discussion of FG03, and FG04; and Interview with NI09, and NI05.

[324] Interview with NI07.

Being among the first municipalities to engage in strategic planning process, the preparation of the first strategic plan of Beita was a major factor in triggering and shaping the development of the national planning approach and methodology (i.e. SDIP). The mayor and his team used the plan as a tool to monitor the performance through aligning the plan with the municipal budget. In the field of financial management, data obtained from Beita municipality indicated an improvement in the financial status of the municipality in terms of development budget and the percentage of projects from the strategic plan included in the annual budget. An upward trend was observed in the finances of the Beita's development projects between 2005 to 2012. In addition, the municipality was able to secure more funding and diversify its sources through better management of its own financial resources, partnering with private sectors (e.g. Banks and investors), and reaching out to external donors and funding agencies. As a result of the leadership change that took place in Beita following the local elections in 2013, the implementation of the second strategic plan (i.e. SDIP) was halted. This negatively affected the achievement of the SDIP objectives and resulted in delays in implementing the proposed projects.

For smaller communities, like Deir Dibwan where social relations and family traditions are highly cherished, strategic planning was instrumental in improving the trust and interaction between citizens and the municipality. Strategic planning also provided an opportunity for the municipal council, dominated by members with a of traditional mentality, to understand its role and responsibilities toward the community. The implementation of the strategic plan was advanced in most priorities except for projects that required approvals from the Israeli Authorities or high budgets, including the expansion and updating of the master plan, establishing an industrial zone, and the construction of a wastewater network. Financially, the Deir Dibwan municipality was able to use the strategic plan to increase and diversify its sources of funding. It was also able to raise more funds to finance some projects through donations received from people in the diaspora.

In the case of AsSamu' municipality, various improvements in the performance of the municipality and the welfare of the community were reported as a result of strategic planning. These included: better infrastructure services especially related to roads and transportation; increased trust between the municipality and the citizens; enhanced capacity of the planning team and the municipality's staff; and a broad-base of support (including from elite group of intellectuals and community activists) have been created which can be mobilized to help the municipality when there is a need. At the financial side, the strategic plan helped the municipality to increase its own revenues as a result of the improved trust

between citizens and municipality. This was also forged the opportunity to mobilize more funding to finance many of the development projects included in the SDIP.

Although the Birzeit municipality followed a different strategic planning approach, positive results were also observed. The municipality used the plan as a tool for fund raising as well as for improving revenue collection and reducing the financial deficit. For the first time in Birzeit, interventions and projects were linked to objectives, the budget, and indicators. The municipality was able to use the strategic plan to mobilize more funding when compared to the pre-plan period to finance many of the development projects that were included in the plan. As a result, more than half of the proposed projects in the plan have been implemented and funded from the municipality's own resources and from other external sources such as MoLG, MDLF, and donors.

In the following sections, key facets pertaining to strategic planning at the local level in the fragile context of Palestine are illustrated and directed to this study's research hypothesis and questions.

8.4 Strategic Planning Under Conditions of Fragility: Is It Working?

As stated in Chapter Four, Palestine is considered to be one of 'the middle-income fragile states' according to the OECD. The fragility of Palestine involves various elements including the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and blockade of the Gaza Strip, as well as the political divide between Gaza and the West Bank. These factors limit the control of the central government (i.e. the Palestinian Authority) over land, borders, and natural resources.

This fragility also affects the functions and responsibilities of local governments. Many local governments do not have full control over their territories, which makes it difficult for them to plan, develop infrastructure, or provide services. The imposed restrictions on mobility and natural resources hinder the ability of local communities to advance local economic development and thus affect their welfare and prosperity negatively;

> "*Local governments in Palestine operate under multifaceted pressure that is unique to the situation of Palestine. They need to be responsive to their*

constituents while they don't have the proper control over their land and resources, as well as the access to sufficient financial resources"[325]

Practicing strategic planning under unstable, fragile conditions is challenging due to the limited control over unpredictable, ever changing situations. The researcher claim that the investigated cases in this research reflect the broader conditions of Palestinian local governments in terms of their subordination to Israeli occupation measures and constraints such as the continuous settlement activities, settler violence, confiscation of land, blockades and restrictions on mobility. Planning under such conditions is not an easy task, and requires special skills and tools that need to be considered during the planning process. Although many informants from the five cases highlighted the impact of the political and security situation on the ability of municipalities to plan and provide services, and indicated that the "occupation effect was always at the back of the minds of the planning teams and community leaders", this awareness has not been reflected in the planning process or its outputs. One reason for this was that the strategic planning methodologies and tools were developed by consultants and donors who came from more developed and stable contexts such as the U.S., and Europe (e.g. Germany, and Netherlands).

> *"We are still underestimating the impact of occupation and restrictions especially on local economic development. Municipalities in general don't have control over 80% of land, borders, roads, and natural resources. We donors are constantly underestimating the challenges of occupation. We do that for political reasons and to avoid sensitive issues. We like it the easy way which is not realistic"*[326]

In general, the SDIP documents and reports of the investigated municipalities do not mention the Israeli occupation, except incidentally as an obstacle. The occupation was addressed mainly in the diagnostic reports that were prepared at the beginning of strategic planning exercises. In some municipalities, the impact of occupation on the various developmental sectors was discussed, but in others, it is barely mentioned. The plans included spatial maps that linked the proposed projects to the physical plans of each community. It is clear that the selection of geographic locations of the proposed projects took the limitations imposed by the geo-political classification of Areas A, B, and C (Section 4.2) into consideration. In the five cases, the majority of the proposed infrastructure projects in the strategic

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[325] Planning experts focus group on 4 February 2017.

[326] Interview with ID04.

plans were located within the boundaries of Areas A or B, where the municipalities have more control and authority over land and construction. The real challenge came when the priorities of the community included major infrastructure projects such as wastewater treatment plants, sanitary landfills, expansion of the municipal building boundaries, and construction of new industrial zones. Such projects are only possible in Area C where Israel has full control over planning and security issues. In all the investigated cases, the projects proposed for Area C could not be implemented due to the lengthy and complicated process of obtaining the necessary permits from the Israeli authorities. In some of the investigated cases, the difficulties in obtaining licenses for environmental projects and for projects in Areas C has led to either dropping of projects, restructuring them, or changing their location to Areas A or B. This change doesn't necessarily cover the same community target group, or the same sector, leading to reduce benefits in comparison with the original projects.

Furthermore, in some cases the occupation measures were addressed as part of the security and disaster management developmental issues. When addressing developmental issues with significant restrictions caused by the occupation and its measures, these developmental issues were given lower priorities or completely excluded from the priorities.

The MDLF conducted an evaluation of a number of SDIPs in 2014. According to this evaluation, some SDIPs have addressed a number of occupation-related issues as part of their diagnostic reports. Figure 8-4 presents some of these issues.

Agricultural aspects
- Agricultural inputs are controlled and restricted by Israelis
- Israeli control of agricultural markets
- Obstacles imposed by Israeli on export of agricultural products
- Loss of fertile agricultural land to the Israeli.
- Agricultural Land confiscation leading to significant reduction in income
- Destruction of agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation networks, and green houses
- Uprooting of trees
- Confiscation of wells.
- Inability to reach own land
- agricultural land behind the wall

Economic aspects:
- lack of stability leading to a decreased investment and limited the economic development.
- Economic dependency on the Israeli
- Closure policy and its impact in work inside the green line.
- Obstacles imposed by Israelis on export and import of any commercial products due to lack of boarder control by the Palestinian.
- Impact of Israeli occupation on the tourism sector
- Impact of siege on Gaza on movement of people and goods; resulting in reduced income; increased poverty.
- The importance of developing agricultural.

Closure of areas and preventing use
- Closure of grazing areas
- Land confiscation and/or closure
- Israeli military camp restricts the physical development of the town.

Environment and resources
- Lack of control over water resources.
- Pollution created by Israeli military camps
- Inability to conduct forest management and utilization
- Israeli control of the energy production.
- confiscation of historical and archeological sites or limiting access to such sites,
- Desertification as a result of diverting the water of the Jordan river by the Israeli

Figure 8-4: Issues related to the Israeli Occupation as mentioned in the Diagnostic Report of SDIPs.

Source: (Musleh, 2014)

In this study's case studies, different limitations and fragility conditions have affected the way in which each municipality handled strategic planning in terms of process and execution. Municipalities that developed strategic plans on their own (e.g. first strategic plan of Nablus and Beita) were more capable of dealing with limited resources, and occupation restrictions. The leaders and planning teams of those municipalities sought alternative financial sources including increasing and diversifying the collection of local taxes and fees, as well as partnering with private sector organisations and investors. This was because strategic planning was approached as 'a learning by doing' process rather than according to a "one size fit all manual". In addition, the fact that several donors imposed a boycott of these

municipalities encouraged these municipalities to approach planning in a 'flexible, realistic manner'[327] with more motivation.

The presented cases can illustrate that active involvement and leadership of committed local actors (e.g. mayors, and technical staff) was able to partly offset the unstable conditions and the fragile contexts under which the local governments operate in Palestine. It is important to understand the relationship between 'context' and 'practice'. In this regard, we agree with the view of Healey et al. (1999) that planning practices are not solely technical exercises driven by a rationalist logic, and that context could not be isolated from planning practice. The specific context of fragility in the Palestinian cities and towns is integral to the shape of planning practice and the way planning is managed by internal and external actors. The lack of and unpredictability of financial resources, the capacities of the people involved, and the influence of individuals and groups upon the planning process are among the key elements that determine the fate of strategic plans. The plan-making examples that were presented in this research are a clear illustration of how committed leadership operating under very difficult situation can positively affect the nature of strategic planning as a technical approach, which is an active social process that builds on and transforms established ways of doing things (institutional relations) and accepted ways of looking at things (policy agendas) to create locally new institutional capacities for influencing the future (Healey et al., 1999).

The 'learning-by-doing' approach of the first strategic plans in Beita and Nablus were among the stimulating factors leading to the adoption and development of a national planning methodology in Palestine. This approach underlies successful community-based initiatives that are conditioned by local culture and social systems (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Key concepts that underpin community-based initiatives, such as strategic planning, community participation, and local economic development, must be adequately detailed in a context specific manner.

The way in which the two independently-motivated strategic plans of Beita and Nablus were developed, where planning was done without a formal manual or procedures, can be categorized following Mintzberg (1993) as 'strategic vision' which depends on a single creative strategist figure. In this type of strategic planning this research has demonstrated the significant role mayors play as strategists, driving forward strategic planning as a means to overcome the challenges that their communities were facing. On the other hand, the other

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[327] Interviews with informants from the municipalities as well as from MoLG and MDLF confirmed these observations.

strategic plans that followed a unified, formal planning process (e.g. SDIP manual) could be labelled as 'strategic learning' where strategic planning relied on a variety of actors capable of experimenting and then integrating ideas as they emerged in the process (Mintzberg, 1993).

This research argues that a 'strategic vision' approach of strategic planning has proved to be more relevant and efficient in the context of the fragile context of Palestine. The data presented in the independently-initiated plans of Nablus and Beita showed high levels of commitment and ownership as well as greater success in the execution and implementation of the plans, despite the many external limitations faced during the planning process and its execution. In the externally-initiated strategic plans, the combination of energetic leaders, the incentive scheme imposed by MDLF, and the support of local councils, allowed for 'strategic learning' to take place and produced notable outcomes.

The influence of instability on strategic planning has frequently been investigated in literature focused on the private sector and private companies. So far, however little attention has been paid to the role of instability in the case of local government, especially in developing countries and fragile states (Brinkerhoff, 2007a; Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000a; Grant, 2003; Mintzberg, 1993). It is argued here, that this is an area that still requires more research and investigation by both academics and development practitioners so that policies as well as practical actions can to be better formulated. For example, the business management literature has looked at the impact on 'corporate strategic planning' of 'perceived country-level uncertainty' and the 'turbulence' under which companies are operating. In this regard, the increased volatility of the business environment make it difficult for companies and businesses to execute systematic strategic planning. This is due to the influence of rapid change that require the development of flexible and creative strategies that clearly contradict principles of formal, rigid planning. Brews and Hunt (1999) argue that unstable environments require *more* planning than those cases set in more stable environments as operational processes, in the latter, are already well established and refined.

8.5 Leadership in Strategic Planning

One of the main focuses of this research is the influence of leadership on the quality of strategic planning in terms of making (process), adoption (ownership), and implementation (realization).

This focus expressed in the Key Proposition (P1) that in fragile contexts (characterized by weak governance structure at the central level, limited resources, and conflicting interests) the role of strong leadership would be vital in the success of strategic planning as well as offsetting the challenges faced by local institutions and communities.

The research examined the impact of the level of involvement of the leadership on the realization of the strategic plan, and the ownership of the plan by the municipality and the community,

The five case studies provided various examples of how the different leadership modalities played a critical role in initiating strategic planning ideas, driving the process, as well as mobilizing resources toward achieving tangible results for the community. To assess the degree of influence of the leadership on the strategic planning process, we relied upon information derived from extensive interviews with various stakeholders and actors as well as from reviewing documents such as progress reports, minutes of meetings, and municipal council decisions in addition to financial data for each case. The analysis of the data pointed to the fact that the more involved the leader was in the strategic planning process, the higher ownership by the participants, commitment, as well as realization would be achieved. A number of informants stressed the vital role played by individual leaders, often the community considers them champions, in leading the municipality during times of mounting challenges and uncertainties. Those champions: "were able to understand the challenges they need to overcome, come up with innovative ideas, and mobilize their community around a common vision and goals"[328]

To better evaluate linkage between the degree of leadership involvement and the degree of influence leaders had over strategic planning, we asked informants selected from each community, as well as external stakeholders (e.g. from the Ministry, donors, MDLF, local government and planning experts) to rank each leader from the five cases in terms of involvement and influence[329]. In addition to the ranking, we asked these informants to describe each leader with key words or one sentence. Table 8-2 summarizes the results of this exercise.

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[328] Interview with NI07.

[329] For more details on the number and type of informants refer to the relevant case study section in Chapter 3.

Table 8-2: Involvement and influence of mayors in the case studies

Leader	Degree of Involvement					Rank	Level of Influence					Rank	Key words
	0	1	2	3	4		0	1	2	3	4		
1st Mayor of Nablus					✔	**1**					✔	**1**	Businessman, visionary, humble, and uncorrupted.
2nd Mayor of Nablus	✔					**4**		✔				**4**	Powerful, autocrat, politician, and arrogant.
1st Mayor of Beita					✔	**1**					✔	**1**	Accessible, visionary, decision maker, trustable.
2nd Mayor of Beita			✔			**2**			✔			**2**	Traditional, partisan (family and political party), and formalistic.
1st Mayor of Birzeit					✔	**1**					✔	**1**	Intellectual socially accepted, visionary, and delegating.
2nd Mayor of Birzeit			✔			**2**			✔			**2**	Traditional, and partisan (family and political party).
Mayor of AsSamu'		✔				**3**			✔			**3**	Traditional, tribal mentality, and delegating.
City Engineer of AsSamu'					✔	**1**					✔	**1**	Energetic, inclusive, visionary, and technically skilled.
Mayor of Deir Dibwan		✔				**3**		✔				**4**	Traditional, family/tribal mentality, and delegating.
City Engineer of Deir Dibwan (who became a Mayor later)					✔	**1**					✔	**1**	Energetic, visionary, technically skilled, and manual worker.

Ranking key: The research used a Likert scale of 5 levels (from 0 to 5) where: 0 indicates no influence or involvement, while 4 indicates the highest influence or involvement.

Source: Authors compilation based on interviews and focus groups discussion. Scores are averages of respondent assessments.

The previous table shows a strong correlation between the degree of involvement of leadership and the level of influence on strategic planning. The more involved the leader in strategic planning, the greater the influence of this leader had upon the outcomes of this process. Moreover, the cited key words for the different

leaders, provided additional insight into the main traits of two types of leaders in the context of fragile context of Palestinian municipalities; the first type of leadership was referred to as 'champions' who are more accessible to the community, have a vision for the improvement of the city, and are open to new ideas and tools. The second type are 'traditional' leaders who rely on their family or political affiliations, and find it difficult to accept new ideas such as strategic planning. Only when the latter type of leader delegated the task of preparing strategic planning to energetic, skilled staff members did strategic planning start to generate positive results.

This research strongly suggests that the leadership skills and power exercised by the various mayors and technical staff were critical in driving both the planning process and its outputs. The personal commitment and thoughts of the mayors in Nablus, Beita, and Birzeit as individual leaders inspired not only the supporting team and council members but also external stakeholders including donors and other municipalities. We point to what Purdue (2001) called "the contingency school leadership model". This describes the demands placed on these as new elected leaders by the institutional and fragile environment that they faced and the way in which the limitations from these shaped their leadership style. This aligns with the understanding that broader national policies, challenges, local government structures, and culture have important impacts on how community leaders act.

The complexities of the situation that those mayors found themselves in, with donors boycotting their cities, scarce financial resources, massive community needs, and high expectations from their constituents, require a capacity to tap into a variety of resources and put together a shared vision that can guide community development. This capacity was seen by many as one of the key ingredients of effective urban leadership at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Greasley and Stoker, 2008). The leadership literature highlights the vital role of the 'visionary leaders' who are able to create a strategic vision, communicate that vision through framing and the use of metaphor, model the vision by acting consistently, and build commitment towards that vision (Jing and Avery, 2011). The cases of Beita, Nablus, and Birzeit are clear examples of this type of leadership which contributed to high levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, motivation, and thus improving the performance of the municipality as an organization (Jing and Avery, 2011).

Another facet of the investigated cases is the impact of a strong leadership on the attitudes, and performance of other actors who were involved in the process and worked closely with the leader. This was obvious in the case of Beita city, where

the engineer who was part of the core planning team in the first strategic plan, played an integral role in facilitating and guiding the SDIP planning process. In Birzeit, the executive authority given to the City Manager empowered him to assume a key role in the success of the strategic planning exercise. A similar observation can be made for Nablus, where the experience gained by the city's International Relations Manager from the first strategic plan, and the guidance of the leader (i.e. the mayor) enabled the Manager to assume a more active and influential responsibility in the second planning exercise.

Another important example of leadership was the ability of the AsSamu' municipality to encourage and mobilize other community stakeholders to actively engage in strategic planning. The involvement of the different grassroots organizations was instrumental in enhancing the promotion and advocacy of the plan, and the outreach to many citizens. This active involvement was the result of a comprehensive stakeholder analysis (SA) conducted at the beginning of the planning exercise. The SA tool was used then to identify and invite relevant community groups and individuals to become members of the specialized committees.

Three different types of mayor's leadership styles have emerged from the case studies: (i) the entrepreneur or innovative leader who had a vision and was involved in the planning process; (ii) the traditional leader who relies on family/political faction support but provided a facilitating environment for planning through delegating some authority to a qualified technical staff, and (iii) the authoritarian leader who did not believe in participatory approaches like strategic planning. Each of these types presented a particular form and level of involvement as well as influence in shaping the strategic planning process and outcome.

Table 8-3 illustrates the relation between each leadership type and strategic planning in the five cases.

Table 8-3: Mayors leadership type and strategic planning in the case studies

Leadership type	Examples	Involvement	Influence
Entrepreneur/innov ative leader	1st Mayor of Nablus, 1st Mayor of Beita, 2nd Mayor of Deir Dibwan, 1st Mayor of Birzeit	Highly involved through initiation of the SP, participate in meetings and guide the discussion	Ability to motivate others to participate in the planning process, and led the municipality (council and staff) to adopt and execute the plan.
Traditional leader	2nd Mayor of Beita, 2nd Mayor of Birzeit, Mayor of AsSamu', Mayor of Deir Dibwan	Supported the process but with limited day-to day involvement, mostly for official reasons (opening of workshop, attending key meetings). Delegated the responsibility of leading the SP to other key staff.	Enabled other key staff to lead and manage the process. Provided some political support when needed (e.g. council approval of the plan, and endorsing priorities/projects based on the plan). .
Authoritarian traditional leader	2nd Mayor of Nablus	No involvement, and prevented the execution of the plan as he "did not believe on the product of previous council".	Delayed the implementation of the SP, and created tension between the municipality and MDLF/MoLG.

Source: Author compilation based on the case studies.

The individual leadership involvement and influence of the first type of mayors in the planning process were necessary within "local practices of governing" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2006) which are linked to "local cultural practices and knowledge-making traditions" (Hulme, 2010) under which strategic planning took place. The engagement and influence exerted by those mayors as local leaders supports the relevant literature on leadership in particular the importance of "leadership-based creativity" which emphasizes the role of key individuals as main drivers for overcoming barriers to change and innovation (Mumford, 2002).

While the role of the second mayor of Beita in SDIP development was not as influential as that of the first mayor, his role as a facilitator of the process, where a technical team and several committees were given delegated tasks and roles, should not be ignored. The role of the mayor in this case coincides with the

concept of a "facilitative leadership" (Greasley and Stoker, 2008; Svara, 1994). Building on this concept, the mayor of Beita was fairly visible to constituents, in contrast to the first mayor who was constantly and very visible and was able to engage with citizens and offer an accessible form of politics through the participatory SDIP process. By following the unified SDIP methodology however, the second mayor was also able to collaborate with public officials and other politicians under his own authority. This also provided space for his team to work effectively with other public agencies, as well as with the private, voluntary, and community sectors.

One prominent feature of the leadership of the first mayor of Beita and the first Nablus mayor was an entrepreneurialism that was new to Palestinian municipalities at the time. The background of those mayors as businessmen coming from private sector influenced how the municipalities dealt with community needs and priorities given the scarcity of financial resources. It is worth noting here that the whole strategic planning approach came with the 'new public management' approach which adopted approaches from business. Therefore, it was more suitable for mayors from a business background and more difficult to adopt for traditional leaders and traditional bureaucrats. The leadership characteristics of the "entrepreneur" mayors could feed into the discourse about the shift from "managerialism" to entrepreneurialism in the context of urban governance (Harvey, 1989) Although, the discussion on the "entrepreneurial" nature of cities has been ongoing since the 1970s in the developed world, little it has been little studied in the context of developing countries, and even less in fragile conditions such as Palestine (Harvey, 1989).

The effective role of the core planning team and the specialized working committees in Beita 's second strategic plan was a good example of what Yukl (1999) calls an "alternative perspective of describing leadership". According to this concept, leadership is not limited to an individual who has the charisma and ability to perform all essential leadership functions. However, some of these functions (e.g., making important decisions) may be shared by several members of a group or a specific leadership function may be performed by different people at different times (such as the municipal engineer, the mayor himself, or members of the core planning team).

While the effect of the second type of leadership (i.e. traditional leader) in the strategic plan development was not as influential as that of the first type (i.e. Entrepreneur/innovative leader), the role of the mayors of the second type as facilitators of the process who gave the delegation to a technical team and several committees should not be ignored. The role of mayors in this type of leadership coincides with the concept of a "facilitative leadership" (Greasley and Stoker, 2008;

Svara, 1994). Building on this concept, the mayors of the second type were moderately visible to constituents, on the contrary of the first type who were constantly visible, and were able to engage with citizens and offer an accessible form of politics through the participatory SDIP process. By following the unified SDIP methodology, the "traditional" mayors were also able to collaborate with public officials and other politicians in their own authority but also provided the space for their teams to work effectively with other public agencies, as well as with the private, voluntary, and community sectors. Many authors assert that leadership behaviours can facilitate the improvement of both leaders' leadership capabilities and induce or encourage employees to perform better and improve their commitment which ultimately contributes to enhancing organizational performance (Jing and Avery, 2011; Purdue, 2001). The second type of leadership is in line with this literature.

The Nablus case presents an interesting example of the impact of leadership change (at the higher level) and the different effects of two types of local leadership on the progress of the strategic planning as well as on the way municipal affairs were managed. In 2012, Mr. Ghassan Shakaa, a veteran leader of Fatah movement (Lynfield, 2012) and a member of the PLO Executive Committee [330], was elected as the new mayor of Nablus along with other new council members. As soon as he was elected, Mr. Shakaa expressed his reluctance to continue implementing the SDIP that was developed during the last year of the previous council and mayor's term[331]. Despite all the attempts made by the MoLG and the MDLF to convince the new mayor to adopt the SDIP and restart its implementation, the mayor refused to do so and insisted on "the need to revise the plan and improve it" so as to align it with his own vision and priorities for the city[332].

Although several newly elected mayors tried to renege on the strategic plans they inherited from their predecessors, the MDLF and the MoLG were usually able to ensure an on-going commitment to them in these municipalities in a short time after the elections. The new mayor of Nablus was different and was not willing to follow the guidance of the MoLG, or MDLF on many municipal affairs including strategic planning[333].

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[330] The Executive Committee (EC) is the highest executive body of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It has 18 members elected by the Palestinian National Council (PNC). SAYIGH, Y. 1997. Armed struggle and the search for state. *The Palestinian National Movement.*.

[331] Discussion of FG03, FG04.

[332] Interview with NI05, and NI14.

[333] Interview with PE01, and ID04

The new mayor of Nablus is an example of the third leadership type (i.e. authoritarian leader). Being the descendant of a renowned family and one of the senior leaders of the PLO, the mayor considers himself as "a person of superior knowledge and power that is above any lower authority whether the ministry or the MDLF"[334]. This "patriarch of Nablus politics" (Lynfield, 2012) style of leadership differs from the first mayor's style of "a businessman with high partnership skills and openness to the society"[335]. The second style was one that placed this mayor "closer to the public and more able to mobilize the community and encourage the citizens to work with him"[336]. The distinction between "more elitist, political" types of leadership, which uses family heritage and political ties to manage local affairs, and the leadership type of a "popular, service-oriented mentality" is important to understand the dynamics behind strategic planning and municipal governance in Palestinian local government.

> *"There are different kinds of leaders in the Palestinian context. There are those who are realistic and they appreciate the existing challenges as well as the available resources. Those leaders were the catalysts for the strategic planning and drove everybody toward a unified vision for the community. They handled the challenges in a pragmatic way. But this type of leadership cannot achieve all objectives in a short time period.*
>
> *On the other hand, we have the 'dictator' leader who claims that he knows everything. This leader might be able to achieve something or implement projects due the massive power and authorities under his hands. However, eventually this leader will not leave any impact at the institutional or the community levels"[337].*

This 'authoritarian' style of leadership resembles what one informant called as "the traditional leaders" who are supported by a political party or a family or clan. These kinds of leaders are unlikely to change their mind-set as they are convinced that they "own the magic keys and they know the community needs and problems better than anybody else. In addition, they represent a totalitarian and centralizing mind-set without sufficient experience in policy-making or management. Those

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[334] Interview with ID01.

[335] Discussion of FG03, FG04.

[336] Interview with NI07.

[337] Interview with ID07.

leaders contribute negatively to the development of local government in general and in strategic planning in particular[338].

8.6   Motivation: External versus. Internal

The decision to initiate the strategic planning exercise, as the case studies have shown, was driven by several factors. Those drivers could be categorized into two groups:

1. **Independently-initiated** plans: a response to pressing community needs, and donor boycotts of the municipality due to political reasons. In this type, role of leadership was critical in initiating and steering the process.

2. **Externally-initiated** plans as based on a standardized planning approach: where funding to municipality becomes conditional on the drafting and implementation of strategic planning. For this type of planning, the existence of a strong leadership was instrumental in leading to positive results (e.g Nablus SDIP, and Birzeit SDF). On the other hand, when committed leadership did not exist, the gap was filled by technical staff and external pressure was needed to move the plan forward.

Each of those categories, have had an impact on the process, ownership, and outcomes of strategic planning. The following table summarizes the results of this impact on the basis of our case studies:

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[338] Interview with NI11.

Table 8-4: Motivation Impact on Strategic Planning

Motivation	Impact		
	Process	*Ownership*	*Outcome*
Independently-initiated	Learning by doing, no blue print or unified methodology.	High degree of ownership by the Mayor and the staff who were involved in the SP.	Better informed decision-making, improved financial status, high percentage of implemented projects
Externally-initiated	Driven by donors (e.g. through MDLF, or GC) condition for funding. Followed a standard methodology (unified manual) for all municipalities despite many difference.	Ownership varies among municipalities depending on the involvement of individuals/actors, and the existence of a strong/committed leadership. Standardized community participation enhanced the awareness of the community in general.	Improved financial situation of the municipalities due to funding received following the development of the plan. Reference to the plan is made in council decisions, and identification of projects.

Source: Author compilation based on the case studies.

8.7   Politicizing Development: Aid and De-development

The experiences of strategic planning in the cities of Beita, Birzeit, and Nablus raises questions about the sincerity of donors and international organizations toward the concepts of democracy, local ownership, and respect for peoples' choices. The majority of donors decided to boycott municipalities and terminate any form of support for, or co-operation with, cities as a response to the victories of Hamas and other left-wing groups in the local elections in 2014-2015.

> *"Many western countries including U.S., Germany, France, and others consider Hamas as a terrorist group and do not accept any contact with or funding to institutions that managed by Hamas. Soon after the elections most donors decided to boycott municipalities won by Hamas despite the fact that council members were elected democratically by their constituents and*

that these municipalities' aims were to provide services to ordinary citizens and not political bodies"[339].

According to the donors that boycotted these municipalities, Hamas used the 2004-2006 elections to reaffirm its legitimacy and popularity in the Palestinian society by engaging in the different authorities of the Palestinian government (Aljamal, 2014). However, this view was criticized by planning experts.

> *"While the western democracies respect the results of any election in their countries, their response to elections in Palestine was a political hypocrisy, and it shows how development aid is highly influenced by political agenda and interests"[340].*

The perception of informants as expressed by the previous quote supports the argument that the action by donors following the local elections contradicts one of main principles of state building: local actors must be placed at the heart of the process of state building and the creation of sustainable national institutions (Francois and Sud, 2006). As the analysis demonstrates, the boycott imposed by donors on the municipalities and their mayors prompted a search for alternative ways of dealing with limited financial resources and community priorities. Without this challenging situation faced by mayors and their teams, the concept of 'plan-making', which then evolved into 'strategic plans', would not have surfaced. Ultimately, many donors reconsidered their position and realized that their action was useless and counterproductive.

The situation of these municipalities has links to the discussion in the literature on the "conditionality of aid". Many authors believe that aid tied to conditions are threatening the application of the Paris declaration promoting democratic ownership and building local capacity through organic processes on the ground (Mahmud, 2008; Pallai and Driscoll, 2005). Bringing community members and stakeholders together to define priorities and agree on a shared vision increases the interest in and sense of ownership of the process and its output (Work, 2002). Creating this sense of ownership is one of the principal ingredients needed to enhance the sustainability of initiatives and quality of life improvements.

The cases of the cities of Nablus and Beita for example, as expressed by several informants in the focus groups, showed how the communities reacted to the "external pressure and punishment imposed by donors on the elected council".

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[339] Interview with ID06.

[340] Discussion of FG09.

These reactions "put aside the internal political disagreements to stand behind the municipal council as it was the choice of the people"[341]. More importantly, this "solidarity position" of the community at large has "galvanized the mayors and the municipality to stand up and mobilize citizens through strategic planning"[342].

The case of Birzeit city provided an example of how the persistence of the mayor and the teamwork of the political and technical levels of the municipality were able to change donor attitudes toward the municipality and produce a resumption of funding. The high level of commitment and ownership of the mayor and his team was crucial for the realisation of the strategic plan and the implementation of many of its projects.

8.8   Driving forces

On basis of the case studies, we observe the presence of several factors that shaped the strategic planning process and influences its results. Informants for each case study cited various drivers that can be grouped under two main categories:

(i) Internal forces, which include: leadership of the mayor, strong technical staff, and support of the council.
(i) External forces, which include: the donor boycott, restrictions of the occupation, and conditional funding.

Based on the data obtained from informants, the most important forces were the leadership of the mayor, the boycott exercised by foreign donors on certain municipalities, and conditionality in funding. With regard to the later, the majority of municipalities were obligated to follow the unified planning approach (i.e. SDIP) developed by the MDLF in order for them to receive funding for development projects. For the municipalities that had initiated strategic planning on their own however, the first two factors combined, had the biggest impact on strategic planning. Figure 8-5 illustrates the different weights given by informants to the various driving forces. It should be noted that each informant was asked to rank these forces according to the level of influence in initiating and driving the strategic plan of each city. The researcher then calculated the averages of these ranking and translated the results into the spider diagram.

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[341] A number of citizens who participate din the focus groups expressed that.

[342] Discussion of FG09.

Figure 8-5: SP driving forces
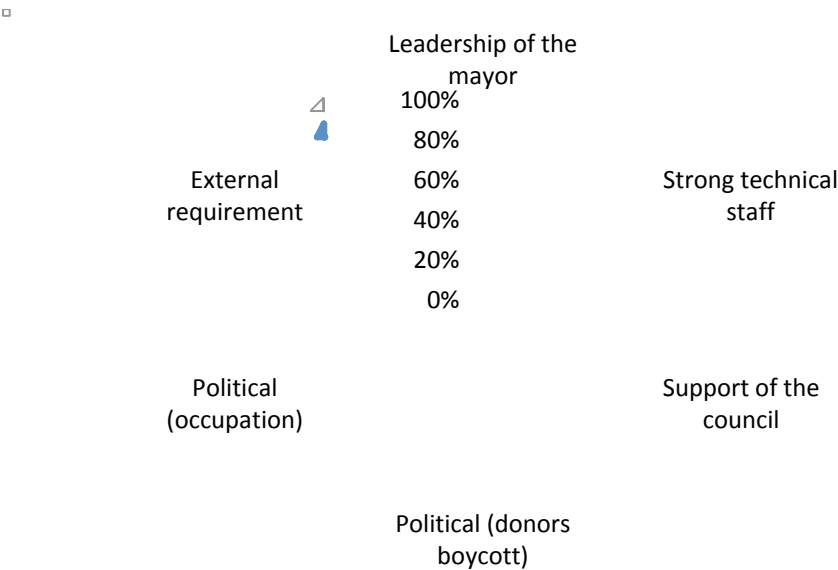
Even within individual cases such as Beita, and Nablus, where two different strategic plans were developed for each city, it is clear that one of the principal differences between the two strategic plans in each case was the motivation behind strategic planning.

As explained previously, the first plan for Beita or Nablus was a response from the municipality to the political decision by donors to boycott the city after elections, which were won by Hamas. The second plan (i.e. SDIP) was externally motivated by the MoLG, MDLF, and the desire of the municipalities to be included in the MDLF Performance System to receive more funding. As a result, we could observe differences in the degrees of ownership and commitment among actors who were involved in each process. The symposium on capacity development organized by the JICA and other partners in 2003, identified strong leadership and political commitment as a joint basis for ownership (UNDP et al., 2003). The case of the independently-initiated strategic plans of Nablus and Beita provide a concrete example of the significance of both local leadership and commitment for the degree of ownership of strategic planning at the local level. This is in line with the views of Bergamaschi (2007) that national reform approaches and strategies such as the SDIP can only emerge from national players who are committed to the process and hold a greater sense of accountability towards the community.

8.9 **Community Participation: Standard versus Ad Hoc participation**

The level and influence of community participation in strategic planning is one of the most important elements for the success and failure of the planning process. The case studies revealed variation in degree and type of community participation where different lessons could be learned from each case as explained below.

The community participation level is highly related to the historical relationships with the municipal council, and the confidence of people in the leadership of the planning process. The more trust, the better the participation. The investigated cases showed that the role of a 'champion' (whether a mayor or a technical staff) and the level of confidence citizens had in the ability and openness of the leadership during the strategic planning, were key ingredients for more effective and implementable strategic plans.

The level of participation was also influenced by socio-political context, the types of organizations in the municipalities, and the degree of citizens empowerment. For example, in AsSamu' the existence of an active civil society in the town, and commitment of the municipal staff to engaging the community in the process, made it possible for wider and stronger involvement of different community groups in the formulation of the strategic plan.

It is also important that this citizen component of the participation question is not ignored. According to citizens who participated in the various focus groups, the community acknowledged the importance of their participation. Moreover, the community having confidence in their own capacity to create change generated more active involvement in the plan-making process and greater community ownership over the plan's outcomes[343]. The importance of this greater the degree of agency was observed in the discussions of the focus groups and interviews.

Variation exists between one municipality to another in terms of their relations with civil society. This was highly related to the mayor and the council members perceptions of the role of civil society organizations. In the case of Nablus, for example, the first mayor was keen on having an "inclusive process that brings everyone together to better identify community priorities and participate in the

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[343] Discussion of FG05 and FG07.

realization of the community vision"[344]. The same applies to the first mayor of Birzeit, who understood "how crucial it is to utilize the society actors in the promotion of strategic planning among citizens"[345]. Another noteworthy example was the employing the use of tribal and traditional family structures in the case of Deir Dibwan where the involvement of the elderly and dignitaries were used to lobby the community in the planning process.

The case of Beita offers another angle to view how the donor boycott enhanced the engagement of the community at large and put aside political partisanship. In order to respond to the boycott, the mayor and the council have taken the strategy to work for the benefit of the whole town and to neglect their party affiliations while working within the municipality. Council members of one party even came to the defence of other members affiliated with opposing parties. Council members worked as one for the benefit of the town, resulting in an increase in the level of trust between citizens and the municipality. This itself fostered increased participation of the various social groups and political affiliations.

The differences in community participation in the case studies provide insights to debates concerning communicative or collaborative planning approaches and their outcomes The theoretical underpinning for this approach is what Habermas (1984) called 'communicative action'. Here, legitimacy is grounded in rationality and the force or persuasiveness of the better argument. It is argued that such dialogue can forge collaboration, trust, understanding and transformative potential in the community (Healey, 1997). It is argued however that, despite the increased adoption and use of collaborative approaches to planning at both the city/regional and local levels in a number of northern and southern countries, neither the effectiveness of such collaborative/consultative approaches to decision-making, nor their outcomes, have been studied extensively; either the North or the South of the globe (Rakodi, 2001). In this regard, the complexities of the fragile conditions under which Palestinian local governments operate require even more in-depth understanding and analysis of the Palestinian communities. This conforms to Rakodi (2001) call for more rigorous analysis of the policy dialogue and decision-making in southern cities, especially innovative collaborative planning approaches.

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[344] Interview with MU17.

[345] Interview with MU07.

8.10 Strategic Planning: 'Learning by Doing' versus 'Blueprints'

Comparison between the two types of strategic plans (i.e. independently-initiated and externally driven) introduces a discussion on the effectiveness and relevance of imposing 'whole-sale' blue print approaches versus the promotion of evolving, learning by doing, organic processes on the ground (Pallai and Driscoll, 2005).

In the case of independently-initiated strategic plans (i.e. Nablus, and Beita) planning was done without a standardized manual or methodology. The mayor and the core planning teams relied on the available resources and expertise within the community to come up with what they thought were 'strategic plans' for their cities. In Beita, for example, the community diagnostic was done through student and citizen volunteers. The tools and methodology of data collection were designed by a volunteer from the local community who happened to have had some knowledge in statistics and survey design. The data were then used to assess the needs of the community and propose interventions and projects. The same could be said about the first strategic plan of Nablus where the mayor relied on the expertise of a university professor and a technical staff to advise him on the best way to prepare a plan. The preparation of the plan was then accomplished without any external technical assistance or unified approach.

On the other hand, the preparation of strategic plans in Birzeit, AsSamu', and Deir Dibwan followed standardized approaches that used rigid processes, and templates. In these cases, planning relied on external consultants who led and facilitated the planning exercise and provided quality assurance to the outputs of the planning process. A number of informants questioned the impact of this "externally led planning model" on the community's ownership of developed plans as well as the commitment of the municipality toward the implementation of the plans. Planning experts who were interviewed for this research noticed "when a strong, committed leader existed during the planning process, high levels of commitment and ownership of the municipality and the community were observed"[346] despite the fact that the planning was done by external consultants.

The above discussion relates to the argument of Mansuri and Rao (2004) that community-based initiatives and projects should be carried out through a 'learning by doing' approach that stems from the local culture and social system. In Mansuri

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[346] Discussion of FG09.

and Rao's view, any wholesale application of standard view of 'best practice' is unlikely to be useful and might lead to poor design and outcomes that are not in line with the stated intentions. Strategic planning is a case in point. It should be treated as a creative process and not a rigid approach with strict ordering of stages or steps. The selection and sequencing of strategic planning techniques and tools need to be contextual and opportunity-driven (Pallai and Driscoll, 2005).

8.11 Conclusions and Policy Implications

8.11.1 Main Research Findings

This research offers a better understanding of the dynamic of a community-based development initiative (i.e. strategic planning) under a fragile context where citizens, communities, and local governments face tremendous challenges. More specifically, through the detailed case studies presented in this research, the impact of key factors such as leadership, motivation, community participation, and fragile political and financial conditions have been explored.

The analysis of the case studies as well as the data obtained from interviews and literature review, suggest a more complex interaction between strategic planning and the various elements that shaped both the process and outcome of the planning exercise within the fragility context. The most discernible element within this context is the role of leadership in initiating, and steering the planning course. This result clearly supports the first proposition of this research (P1) which states that: "in fragile contexts characterized by a weak governance structure at the central (national) level, limited resources, and conflicting interests, the role of strong leadership is vital for the success of strategic planning as well as for dealing with the challenges faced by local institutions and communities".

This research built on theories, and paradigms that are related to strategic planning, and good governance at the local level and applied these theories, as presented in the academic and professional literature. Based on that, and based on the analysis of the cases studies, the research proposes a revised framework that summarizes how strategic planning is being implemented under the fragile condition of Palestine, and what are the main factors that contribute to the success or failure of strategic planning within unstable, fragile contexts. Figure 8-6 presents the revised framework for the interaction between the various elements and strategic planning under the fragile context of Palestine. A detailed description of this framework follows the figure.
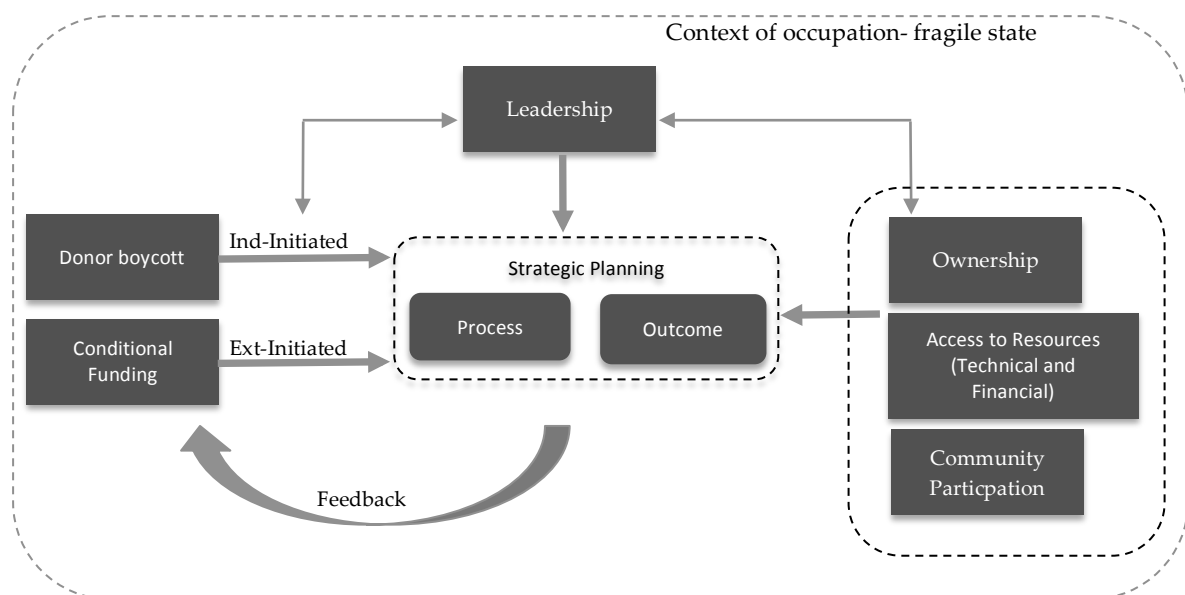
Figure 8-6: Revised Framework of the Elements of Strategic Planning Success or Failure in Fragile Situation

The role of strong, committed leadership is vital for moving forward new ideas and innovative techniques under the broader unstable environment where insufficient, and quite often unpredictable financial resources prevail, along with weak institutional support at both the central and local levels.

In general, the investigated case studies indicated that *the motivation behind initiating and formulating strategic plans* in Palestinian communities could be categorized under two main types:

The first is *independently-initiated strategic plans* that came as a response to pressing community needs, and donor boycotts of the municipality due to political reasons. The role and involvement of leadership was obvious as well as critical in initiating and steering the process.

The second type is the *externally-initiated strategic plans* based on a standardized planning approach where funding to municipality becomes conditional on the drafting and implementation of strategic planning. In this type the existence of a strong leadership was instrumental in leading to positive results. While when

committed leadership did not exist, technical staff filled the gap and the external pressure was needed to move the planning forward.

In these two types, differences in the degrees of ownership and commitment among actors who were involved in the planning process have been observed. The cases of the independently-initiated strategic plans provided a concrete example of the significance of both local leadership and commitment for the degree of ownership of strategic planning at the local level. This follows the line of the discussion of the symposium on capacity development organized by JICA and other partners in 2003 which identified strong leadership and political commitment as basis for ownership (UNDP et al., 2003).

This research illustrated how *active involvement and leadership of committed local actors (e.g. mayors, and technical staff)* was able to partly mitigate against the unstable conditions and the fragile contexts under which local governments must operate in Palestine. With this said, it is important to understand the relationship between 'context' and 'practice'. This conforms with the view of Healey et al. (1999), and is endorsed here, that "planning practices" are not solely technical exercises driven by a rationalist logic, and that 'context' could not be isolated from planning practice.

More importantly, the analysis of the case studies showed strong correlation between the degree of involvement of leadership, and the level of influence on strategic planning. The more engaged the leader is in the formation of strategic planning, the greater the influence of this leader on the outcomes of the planning process. Moreover, the cited key words for the different leaders provided additional insight into the traits of two defined types of leader in this Palestinian context of a fragile municipal state. These include:

(i) The first type of leadership was labelled 'champion' – represented by those leaders who are more accessible to the community, have a vision for the improvement of the city, and are open to new ideas and tools, and
(ii) The second type is a 'traditional' leader who relies on their family or political affiliations, and find it difficult to accept new ideas such as strategic planning. Only when the latter type of leader delegates tasks of preparing strategic plans to an energetic, skilled staff member did strategic planning start to generate positive results.

In terms of *the impact of fragile conditions* on the development and use of strategic planning, the case studies demonstrated that each municipality handled strategic planning in terms of process and execution of the plan in a variety of

ways. Municipalities that developed strategic plans on their own (i.e. independently–initiated plans) were more capable of dealing with limited resources, and restrictions related to the Israeli occupation. The leaders and planning teams of those municipalities sought alternative financial sources including increasing and diversifying the collection of local taxes and fees, as well as partnering with private sector organisations and investors. This was because strategic planning was approached as 'a learning by doing' process rather than according to a 'one size fit all' manual. Additionally, the fact that several donors imposed a boycott of these municipalities encouraged these municipalities to approach planning in a flexible, and realistic manner with greater motivation.

The specific context of fragility in the Palestinian cities and towns is central to how planning is practiced and managed by internal and external actors. The shortage and unpredictability of sources of finance, the capacities of people involved, and the influence of individuals and groups on the planning process are among the key elements that determine the fate of strategic plans. The plan-making cases that were presented in this research are a clear illustration of how committed leadership, under very difficult circumstances, can still positively affect the nature of strategic planning as a technical approach. This is an active social process that builds on, and transforms, established ways of doing things (institutional relations) and accepted ways of looking at things (policy agendas) to create new local institutional capacities to shape the future (Healey et al., 1999).

This research claims that the investigated cases in this study reflects the broader conditions of Palestinian local governments in terms of their subordination to Israeli occupation measures and constraints such as the continuous settlement activities, settler violence, confiscation of land, blockades and restrictions on mobility. Planning under such conditions is not an easy task, and requires special skills and tools that need to be considered during the planning process. Many informants from the five cases highlighted the impact of the political and security situation on the ability of municipalities to plan and provide services. These informants also indicated that the "occupation effect was always at the back of the minds of the planning teams and community leaders". This awareness has not been reflected however in the planning process or its outcomes. One reason for this was that the strategic planning methodologies and tools were developed by consultants and donors who came from more developed and stable contexts such as the U.S. and Europe.

An additional layer of complexity was added to the challenges that faced some municipalities in Palestine was *the position taken by many Western donors to boycott the elected mayors and councils* due to their 'unfavourable' political

affiliation or views. For many citizens, the action by those donors following the local elections contradicted one of main principles of state building which calls for involving local actors in the process of state building and creation of sustainable national institutions (Francois and Sud, 2006). As the analysis showed us, the boycott imposed by donors on the municipalities and their mayors inspired a search for alternatives when grappling with limited financial resources, and community priorities. Without the challenging situation that faced the mayors and their teams the notion of 'plan making', which then evolved into a strategic plan, would not have surfaced. In the end, many donors reconsidered their position and realized that their action was useless and counterproductive.

The differences in *community participation* in the case studies provides insights and contributions to the debates about communicative or collaborative planning approaches and their outcomes deriving from Western experiences with more inclusive planning processes, from the perspective of more fragile contexts. The theoretical underpinning for this approach is what Habermas (1984) called "communicative action" in which legitimacy is grounded in rationality and the force or persuasiveness of the better argument. It was argued that such dialogue can mobilise collaboration, trust, understanding and transformative potential in the community (Healey, 1997).

The above discussion relates to the argument of Mansuri and Rao (2004) that community-based initiatives and projects should be carried out by committed leadership through *a learning by doing approach* that stems from the local culture and social systems. In their views, any wholesale application of standard best practices is unlikely to be useful and might lead to poor design and to outcomes that are not in line with the stated intentions. Strategic planning should be treated as a creative process and not a rigid approach with a strict order or right steps. The selection and sequencing of strategic planning techniques and tools need to be contextual and opportunity driven (Pallai and Driscoll, 2005).

Based on that, and given the experience of the Palestinian strategic planning at the local level, this research argues that strategic planning can be instrumental in helping local institutions in a fragile context to better understand the conditions under which they have to operate. Thus, they can face the numerous challenges in providing services to their constituents, as well as in managing and optimizing their limited resources. However, strategic planning needs to be tailored to the specific situation of Palestinian local governments where it allows for a higher degree of flexibility and adaptability to a volatile environment that is rapidly changing.

Through investigating real cases of strategic planning within the fragile context of Palestine, this research aimed at encouraging more academic work that relies on real-world cases, representing different contexts and cultures. Looking at strategic planning as one of the instruments that affect the efficiency and performance of institutions at the local level in various fragile settings could help in drawing lessons and generate better understanding on how to overcome the challenges that face these types of settings.

8.11.2 Literature Gap and Future Research

As s described in the literature review chapter, the academic literature has looked at various aspects of strategic planning in local government and the themes of quality and performance within this. Nevertheless, there remain gaps that need to be addressed through empirical research that relies on real-world case studies, and insights from different contexts and experiences.

Furthermore, in the absence of literature on strategic planning in the fragile states, this research tried to add a further piece to the puzzle by contributing to better understanding of the phenomena of strategic planning and how leadership, motivation, and participation have influenced the quality of strategic planning processes and outcomes in the difficult environment of the Palestinian local governments. Moreover, the lack of literature on the role of local leadership in strategic planning in the context of fragile states, made this research relevant as it contributes to a better understanding of the interaction between various types of leadership in situations like Palestine, the quality of strategic planning, and the performance of local governance.

However, there are still areas that need to be further explored such as the adaptation of strategic planning models at different levels, how can one identify models that are suitable for specific situations (Bryson et al., 2010); and the effectiveness of the new generations of strategic plans in terms of content and process (Tsenkova, 2007).

Moreover, the investigation of the selected case studies in this research pointed out to two distinctive types of strategic planning experiences; independently-initiated strategic plans, and externally initiated strategic plans. This research tried to contribute to the discussion about these two types of strategic planning, and the identification of characteristics and influence of each type. However, further empirical and comparative research would be needed to look at these types of strategic planning in different contexts.

Despite this, the literature has investigated the impact of instability on strategic planning. However the principal focus of this literature was on the private sector and companies with little attention paid to the role of instability and local government in developing and fragile countries (Brinkerhoff, 2007a; Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000a; Grant, 2003; Mintzberg, 1993). This is an area that still requires more research and investigation by both academics and development practitioners so that policies as well as practical actions can to be better formulated.

8.11.3 **Implication for Policy and Practice**

The benefits of academic research would be maximized if it can enhance policy formulation where decision-makers and practitioners can use the findings from research to formulate efficient policies and practical measures. For this purpose, this research concludes with policy implications specific to the realities of strategic planning in Palestine, hoping that these recommendations will advance the design and application of strategic planning in Palestine.

When thinking about the capacity of local government to pursue strategic planning, the attention of both the government (e.g. MOLG) and other agencies (including the MDLF, and donor agencies) has focused on the institutional (i.e. system-wide organizations and procedures) and the individual (i.e. human attitudes and skills) dimensions of capacity. Although this is understandable and necessary, the impact and sustainability of any capacity building effort however eventually depends on a third dimension of capacity concerning the degree that the policy and legal environment of local governments enable them to act strategically. From the perspective of this third dimension of capacity, the critical point is that local strategic planning and management requires a substantial degree of local autonomy to be enshrined in the law and respected in the actual practice of intergovernmental relations. For political (fragility) and historical reasons (which were discussed in details in Chapters Four and Five), decentralization policy and legal framework in Palestine remains highly constraining of local autonomy.

The independent corporate nature of Local Government Unit (LGU) is well recognized in the Local Government Law of 1997, but while the law stresses the specific areas of LGU responsibility devolved or delegated to them by the central government, and their related accountability, it remains silent on an LGU's 'general mandate' for the welfare of their citizens. The introduction of strategic planning was meant to help LGU assume this 'general mandate' or broader developmental responsibility. However, Palestinian LGUs lack a meaningful

degree of constitutionally or legally protected local autonomy that will enable them to embrace strategic development planning practices.

Another aspect, one very relevant in the Palestinian context, is that strategic planning is about difficult and often controversial choices. It calls for tough decisions to give focus to municipal and other actors' efforts, pushing in one direction while slowing in others and inevitably favouring some local interests at the possible expense of others. Strategic planning is therefore a politically risky activity and requires legitimate local leadership with the ability to minimize and manage inevitable conflicts. An effective local leader may use the political capital acquired through a democratic election to make those decisions and manage those conflicts, keeping the community united behind the chosen strategic direction.

Linking strategic planning to national local government sector budgeting: In Palestine, local government sector decentralization is limited and direct sector-LGU interaction mechanisms are altogether absent. National ministries operate in a very centralized mode and their interaction with local governments is limited to communicating and enforcing national standards in the implementation of sector investments and activities, when those are undertaken by the LGUs. Decentralized sector agents have hardly any autonomy and little ability to inform let alone negotiate with the local governments in the strategic planning preparation process. The results are a weak contribution of the central government to the design and implementation of local strategic plans, but also a missed opportunity to associate LGUs to the implementation of national policies and priorities.

So far, attempts to co-ordinate local and national planning have been primarily made, with some disappointing results, through central-level consultations between MOLG and other central agencies. A more effective approach that utilizes sub-national mechanisms should be followed. These mechanisms could include for example consultative/negotiating platforms that will be established at intermediate level (e.g. governorate, or region) where not only exchange of information may take place, but also mutually binding agreements may be reached between LGUs and sufficiently empowered de-concentrated agents of the central government, on how they could respectively contribute to the implementation of strategic planning goals.

Linking strategic planning to LGU budgeting: Most development planners are familiar with James W. Frick say: "don't tell me what your priorities are, tell me where you allocate your money and I will know them". It rings particularly true in the case of strategic planning, particularly SDIPs, in Palestine. For different practical reasons, the SDIP preparation and implementation process remains

essentially disconnected from the corporate planning process of the local government and its primary source of power: the budget. The obligation to reflect the SDIP projects in the local government budget is still practiced by many LGUs as only a formal exercise that does not address the substance of the problem, and thus has not made local governments budgeting any more "strategic". The current SDIP methodology does not oblige financial managers of LGUs to make a realistic forecast of resources available for development projects over the medium term, so that choices can be made in terms of both the use, and additional mobilization, of these resources.

Linking strategic development planning with physical planning: As discussed previously (Chapter Four and Five), the existing physical planning institutions, instruments and practices in Palestine do not help the linkage between physical and strategic development planning. Stated reasons behind this included: the lack of in-house capacity in most municipalities for preparation of physical/land use plans; and physical plans are often prepared to serve land use controls and building permits administration, not to orient strategic choices towards desired urban forms and functions. As a result, physical plans are of little use for the purpose of strategic planning, which would require physical plans to identify and evaluate opportunities for spatially integrated development.

The role of external aid: Improvements of the sub-national planning system in Palestine have not been driven by a national decentralization policy and related requirements of local institutional change. On the contrary, it has taken place in the absence of such policy and in a legal and institutional environment that continues to limit the developmental role of the Palestinian local governments.

The adoption of technically sound and participatory sub-national planning systems in Palestine has not been driven by national decentralization reforms, but rather by the need of local governments to access external funding. Due to the important role of external aid in financing development projects in Palestine, it has also been easy to claim that it could function as a major incentive to institutional reform. More specifically the design and implementation of an institutionally sustainable sub-national planning system may be seriously distorted and ultimately compromised if its adoption is perceived by participating local governments as primarily a 'condition of access' to external aid.

LGU Financing and the role of MDLF: The most pressing constraints on the adoption of place-based and corporate LGU strategic planning are the lack of financial resources and a diverse set of financing mechanisms. A recent World Bank review has comprehensively assessed the shortcomings of the inter-

governmental fiscal relations in Palestine (Martinez-Vasquez and Mbayed, 2015). Based on this assessment, two of those shortcomings are most critical in affecting the ability of local governments to undertake meaningful strategic planning. The first is the lack of regular grants or transfers available from the central government to supplement the shortage of local governments' own sources of revenues. This shortcoming severely limits the LGU fiscal space, therefore becomes difficult to connect plans with budgets or make strategic budgeting decisions.

The second shortcoming is that there is no facility through which local governments may, within a prudential regulatory framework, borrow to fund strategic plans. The main funding mechanism (i.e. MDLF), which currently channels financial resources from Western donors for local infrastructure projects operates in a manner that may complicate the solution to the two above problems. To the extent that the MDLF operations may retard the adoption of a regular system of fiscal transfers and the setup of a dedicated municipal lending institution, it may continue to undermine the institutionalization of genuinely strategic planning and budgeting practices among local governments.

The resources that the MDLF provides to municipalities are often referred to as 'conditional grants' for development projects, and were seen as an important incentive for municipalities to develop strategic plans. However, this may not be entirely justified and ends up being misleading. 'Conditional grants' typically provide recipient local governments with 'budget support' earmarked for spending in an area of responsibility delegated to it. The local government has substantial discretion in the allocation of the transferred resources, within the sector to which they are earmarked and within standards set by the delegating authority, which also reserves the right to evaluate results.

Grants provided by MDLF follow a different mechanism as MDLF does not provide an earmarked sector 'budget support' in an area of delegated responsibility, but rather 'project support' in a core area of local responsibility (municipal infrastructure) and reserves the right to approve ex-ante each one of the projects that the municipality can fit within a financial envelope that MDLF allocates to it.

Moreover, the way in which MDLF currently provides project-financing may create disincentives to the municipal strategic planning and management as (i) it pushes municipalities to build 'project pipe-lines' rather than articulate development strategies and pursue them through a wider range of 'change instruments'; and (ii) it does not really link the allocation of resources to strategic planning capacity.

In summary, the prospects of introducing and improving sub-national place-based and corporate strategic planning would be brighter if MDLF evolved simultaneously in two distinct but complementary directions, thus helping to overcome the two major shortcomings of the current local government financing (and planning) system;

First, MDLF should move towards becoming a dedicated national financial institution for the financing of local governments investment programs (a national development bank for local authorities). In this capacity it would finance local governments projects on their merits, helping the sponsoring LGU to carry out a proper and comprehensive appraisal (technical, financial, economic, institutional, social and environmental) and making such appraisal one of the key factors in the allocation of its resources and in the decision on the appropriate mix of grants and loans it should disburse.

Second, in the absence of a regular central government managed fiscal transfer system to correct vertical and horizontal imbalances within Palestinian local government, MDLF could play a critical role in piloting such system. This would require a shift from the current 'project support' system to a proper 'budget support' system, in order to pilot true inter-governmental fiscal transfers.

Appendices

A.1 Survey Questionnaires

A.2 Profile of Informants

A.3 List of Focus Groups

A.1 Survey Questionnaires

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
1. Mayor of the municipality (who took over responsibility after or/at the end of the SDIP process and mayor who were on board during the process);	
1. When did you start your term?	
2. When did you finish /will you finish your term?	
3. Was there any strategic plan for your community when you started your term?	
4. If Yes: How do you assess your level of *awareness* of the existing plan (from 0 to 4, where 0: not aware, 2:heard about it, 3: had a brief idea, 4: knew the details of the plan)	Driving forces and motivation (Healey et al., 1999)
5. If No: did you have any intention to develop such a plan for your community? Yes/No	
6. If Yes: what was your *motivation* for developing a strategic plan?	
7. If No: what made you change your mind and start the process of developing a strategic plan?	
8. Did you have any *previous knowledge* about strategic planning? Yes/No	
9. If Yes: From were did you get this knowledge? (Formal education, training course, self-reading, practical experience).	
10. How do you assess this knowledge? (From 0 to 4, where 0 = very poor, and 4 =very good)	
11. Was the municipal council *supportive* of the idea of developing a strategic plan? Yes/No	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
12. If No: what did the Council members state as the main reasons for not supporting the developing of the plan? (Political, personal, knowledge base, other, please explain)	Political support (Bryson et al., 2009)
13. Once a decision was made to start the process of developing a strategic plan, did you seek external help?	Attitudes and political will (Albrechts, 2001);
14. If so, from whom?	
15. What kind of help? (Technical, political, financial, others)	
16. If not, why not?	Internal capacity (Jackson, 2005).
17. Were there any *conditions/prerequisites* for providing the external help? Yes/No	Existing municipal and supportive institutional dynamics and systems
18. If Yes: what were these conditions/prerequisites?	(Healey et al., 1999;
19. If you had the choice, would you have accepted these conditions/prerequisites?	Tsenkova, 2007);
20. Why did you think strategic planning would be useful for your municipality?	
21. In what stages of planning were you involved? And in what form/s?	
22. How do you assess your level of *involvement*? (from 0 to 4, where 0= poor, and 4=very active)	.
23. To which extent would you describe your participation in the planning phase? When were your input needed most?	
24. Do you think that your involvement in the process made a difference? Yes/No?	Involvement of top management (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis,
25. If No: what was the reasons for that?	2000b).
26. If Yes: what kind of change/difference? Give examples.	Involvement of
27. How do you assess your *influence* in the strategic planning process? (from 0 to 4,	stakeholders (de Graaf and

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Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
where 0=limited, and 4=strong).	
28. In your opinion, who played the biggest *leadership* role in the strategic planning process? i. You, ii. Council member iii. Internal staff, iv. Community member, v. Others, who?	Dewulf, 2010; Farhoodi et al., 2009).
29. How do you define this "leadership role"? What are the main characteristics?	Leadership involvement (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b).
30. Rank the following leadership characteristics based on what you think the most important:	Leadership style (Ford and Green, 2012).

i. Visionary (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)
   ii. Openness (Judge et al., 2002)
   iii. Trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002)
   iv. Social Intelligence
   v. Absorptive capacity
   vi. Capacity to change
   vii. Managerial wisdom (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001)
   viii. Partnership skills
   ix. Accessibility
   x. Low partisanship
   xi. Decision making capacity (Greasley and Stoker, 2008)
	Leadership skills (Greasley and Stoker, 2008), (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989), (Judge et al., 2002), (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002), (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001)

31. Have you faced any *objections* during the process of developing the strategic plan?	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
Yes/No 32. If yes, from whom? 33. What was the reason for the objection? 34. How did you deal with the objection?	Power relations (Albrechts, 2003a)
35. How do you assess the *participation* of the community in the planning process? (from 0 to 4, where 0=poor, and 4=strong). 36. Do you think that community participation was essential? Yes/No 37. If No, explain why? 38. If Yes, for what reasons?	Participation (Lipietz, 2008), (Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007)
39. Were you aware of any *national/regional plans* that have links with your local plan? Yes/No 40. If Yes, were you able to link your plan with the other plans?	Linkage with other plans/regulatory framework (Davidson, 1996; Halla, 2007).
41. Have you received any technical support from *outsider experts*? Yes/No 42. If No, what were the reasons? 43. If Yes, who were these outside experts? 44. If Yes, was this support instrumental in the developing of the strategic plan? Yes/No 45. If No, why? 46. If Yes, why? 47. Was the role of the outsider experts "supportive" or "leading" in the process? 48. Were you satisfied about the outcome of the strategic planning process? Yes/No	Role of planner (outsider expert) (Mintzberg, 1994)

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
49. **If No, why not?**	
50. **If Yes, why?**	
51. **To what extent do you feel that the programs selected in the strategic plan are *realistic* or a wish list? Please elaborate.**	Realistic planning (Albrechts, 2004)
52. **To what extent you feel that the programs selected in the strategic plan will achieve your vision? Please elaborate.**	
53. **Do you consider the developed strategic plan as your plan? Yes/No**	Commitment (Van den Broeck, 2004)
54. **If Yes, what were the main factors for that?**	Adoption (Albrechts, 2003a)
55. **If No, why?**	
56. **How do you evaluate the level of *ownership* of the community to the plan? Do people consider it as their own strategic plan?**	
57. **Do you utilize the strategic plan as guidance to your work, and decision-making in the municipality? Yes/No**	Linkage with budget and financial improvement performance (Beckett-Camarata, 2003b).
58. **If No, why?**	
59. **If Yes, how?**	
60. **After the development of the strategic plan: What kind of *changes* has the SP brought to the municipality/community so far? Give examples.**	Improving decision-making patterns (Gabris, 1992; Mier et al., 1986)
61. **Was the strategic plan used in preparing the *municipality budget?* What year? Who was involved in this process? Were they aware of the strategic plan? How did they apply it in preparing the budget?**	Linkage between strategic plan and other planning

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
62. Was the strategic plan helpful in preparing/updating *the master (physical plan)* of the community? In what ways? If, not, what were the reasons in your opinion?	processes (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010;
63. In your opinion, did the strategic planning process and output influence the *decision making* process in the municipality? How so?	Beckett-Camarata, 2003b; Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007; Kloot and Martin (Kloot and Martin, 2000).
64. What are the *challenges* that faced you in the process? What worked for you best?	
65. What would you *recommend* for other municipalities to consider in the process?	
66. Would you embark on a SP process again? What would you do differently?	Ownership (Healey et al., 1999) (Pomeroy and Douvere, 2008)
2. Municipality's staff (focal points)	
1. What is your position? How long have you been working in the municipality?	
2. Did you have any *previous knowledge* about strategic planning? Yes/No	
3. If Yes: From were did you get this knowledge? (Formal education, training course, self-reading, practical experience).	
4. How do you assess this knowledge? (From 0 to 4, where 0 = very poor, and 4 =very good)	
5. Who do you consider was the most *influential* individual/group in the process?	Driving forces and motivation (Healey et al.,

Guiding Questions for the Interviews

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
6. In your opinion, what was his/her *motivation* for being involved and active? (i) Political status, (ii) social status, (iii) professional, or (iv) self-interest? Other? (Explain)	1999);
7. Was the municipal leadership (mayor and council) *supportive* of the idea of developing a strategic plan? Yes/No	Political support (Bryson et al., 2009)
8. If No: what were the main reasons for not supporting the developing of the plan? (Political, personal, knowledge base, other, please explain)	Attitudes and political will (Albrechts, 2001);
9. If yes, how were they supportive? Give examples.	
10. Once a decision was made to start the process of developing a strategic plan, did you seek external help?	Internal capacity (Jackson, 2005).
11. If so, from whom?	Existing municipal and
12. What kind of help? (Technical, political, financial, others)	supportive institutional dynamics and systems
13. If not, why not?	(Healey et al., 1999;
14. Were there any *conditions/prerequisites* for providing the external help? Yes/No	Tsenkova, 2007);
15. If Yes: what were these conditions/prerequisites?	
16. If you had the choice, would you have accepted these conditions/prerequisites?	.
17. Why did you think strategic planning would be *useful* for your municipality?	
18. Do you think that your involvement in the process made a difference? Yes/No?	
19. In what stages of planning were you involved? And in what form/s?	
20. How do you assess your level of *involvement*? (from 0 to 4, where 0= poor, and 4=very active)	

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Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
21. **To which extent you describe your participation in the planning phase? When were your input needed most?**	Involvement of top management (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b).
22. **Do you think that your involvement in the process made a difference? Yes/No?**	
23. **If No: what was the reasons for that?**	Involvement of stakeholders (de Graaf and Dewulf, 2010; Farhoodi et al., 2009).
24. **If Yes: what kind of change/difference? Give examples.**	
25. **In your opinion, who played the biggest *leadership* role in the strategic planning process? i. You, ii. Council member iii. Internal staff, iv. Community member, v. Others, who?**	
26. **How do you define this "leadership role"? What are the main characteristics?**	Leadership involvement (Koufopoulos and Chryssochoidis, 2000b). Leadership style (Ford and Green, 2012).
27. **Rank the following leadership characteristics based on what you think the most important:**	Leadership skills (Greasley and Stoker, 2008), (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989), (Judge et al., 2002), (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002), (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001)
i. **Visionary (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)**	
ii. **Openness (Judge et al., 2002)**	
iii. **Trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002)**	
iv. **Social Intelligence**	
v. **Absorptive capacity**	
vi. **Capacity to change**	
vii. **Managerial wisdom (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001)**	
viii. **Partnership skills**	
ix. **Accessibility**	
x. **Low partisanship**	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews

	Linkage with the Literature
xi. **Decision making capacity** (Greasley and Stoker, 2008)	
28. Were there any *objections* during the process of developing the strategic plan?	
29. If yes, from whom?	
30. What was the reason for the objection?	
31. How did you deal with the objection?	
32. How do you assess the *participation* of the community in the planning process? (from 0 to 4, where 0=poor, and 4=strong).	Power relations (Albrechts, 2003a)
33. Do you think that community participation was essential? Yes/No	
34. If No, explain why?	
35. If Yes, for what reasons?	
36. Were you aware of any *national/regional plans* that have links with your local plan? Yes/No	Participation (Lipietz, 2008), (Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007)
37. If Yes, were you able to link your plan with the other plans?	
38. Have you received any technical support from *outsider experts*? Yes/No	Linkage with other plans/regulatory framework (Davidson, 1996; Halla, 2007).
39. If No, what were the reasons?	
40. If Yes, who were these outside experts?	
41. If Yes, was this support instrumental in the developing of the strategic plan? Yes/No	
42. If No, why?	
43. If Yes, in what ways?	Role of planner (outsider expert) (Mintzberg, 1994)
44. Was the role of the outsider experts "supportive" or "leading" in the process?	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
45. **Were you satisfied about the outcome of the strategic planning process? Yes/No**	
46. **If No, why not?**	
47. **If Yes, why?**	
48. **To what extent do you feel that the programs selected in the strategic plan are** *realistic* **or a wish list? Please elaborate.**	
49. **To what extent you feel that the programs selected in the strategic plan will achieve the community vision? Please elaborate.**	Realistic planning (Albrechts, 2004)
50. **Do you consider the developed strategic plan as your plan? Yes/No**	
51. **If Yes, what were the main factors for that?**	
52. **If No, why?**	
53. **How do you evaluate the level of** *ownership* **of the community to the plan? Do people consider it as their own strategic plan?**	Commitment (Van den Broeck, 2004)
54. **Do you utilize the strategic plan as guidance to your work, and decision-making in the municipality? Yes/No**	Adoption (Albrechts, 2003a)
55. **If No, why?**	
56. **If Yes, how?**	
57. **After the development of the strategic plan: What kind of** *changes* **has the SP brought to the municipality/community so far? Give examples.**	Linkage with budget and financial improvement performance (Beckett-Camarata, 2003b).
58. **Was the strategic plan used in preparing the** *municipality budget?* **What year? Who was involved in this process? Were they aware of the strategic plan? How did they apply it in preparing the budget?**	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
59. **Was the strategic plan helpful in preparing/updating** *the master (physical plan)* **of the community? In what ways? If, not, what were the reasons in your opinion?**	Improving decision-making patterns (Gabris, 1992; Mier et al., 1986)
60. **In your opinion, did the strategic planning process and output influence the** *decision making* **process in the municipality? How so?**	Linkage between strategic plan and other planning processes (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010; Beckett-Camarata, 2003b; Nefas and Rauleckas, 2007), Kloot and Martin (Kloot and Martin, 2000).
61. **What are the** *challenges* **that faced you in the process? What worked for you best?**	
62. **What would you** *recommend* **for other municipalities to consider in the process?**	
63. **Would you embark on a SP process again? What would you do differently?**	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
3. Citizens from community focus groups 1. Ice breaking: introduce yourself, your name and what you do? 2. Are you aware of the strategic plan of your community? What do you think about it? 3. Have you participated in the development of the strategic plan? In what way? 4. Who led the process of developing the strategic plan? Was he/she influential? 5. Do you believe that the strategic plan reflects your needs and aspiration as a citizen in the community? 6. In your opinion, has the strategic plan made any difference in the performance of the municipality? And in the community wellbeing? 7. Final: What would you recommend to improve the future strategic planning processes?	Ownership (Healey et al., 1999) (Pomeroy and Douvere, 2008) Community engagement and participation (Reddel and Woolcock, 2004), (Coaffee and Healey, 2003), (Brody et al., 2003) Local leadership (Bryson, 1988), (Healey, 1996)
4. Officials (Ministry/Implementing Institutions) 1. What was your motivation to adopt strategic planning approach for municipalities? 2. Explain the adopted approach in terms of methodology, context, and outputs? 3. In your opinion, how do you assess the level of adoption of strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities?	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
4. What are the most key factors that contributed to the success or failure of the strategic plan in any municipality? Give examples. 5. What kind of support your institution is providing to support municipalities in their strategic planning? 6. In your opinion, did the strategic planning process and output affected the performance of municipalities? In terms of budgeting, physical planning, and decision-making? Give examples. 7. What are the challenges that faced and still facing the process? Are there plans to overcome these challenges? 8. What are the recommendations (policy and operational) to improve the strategic planning? **5. Officials (Donors/Development Partners)** 1. What was your motivation to support strategic planning approach for municipalities? 2. What kind of support did you provide? 3. How do you assess the adopted approach in terms of methodology, context, and outputs? 4. What was your role in influencing the strategic planning? 5. What are the most key factors that contributed to the success or failure of the strategic plan in any municipality? Give examples.	

6. In your opinion, did the strategic planning process and output affected the performance of municipalities? Give examples.

7. What are the challenges that faced and still facing the process? Are there plans to overcome these challenges?

8. What are the recommendations (policy and operational) to improve the strategic planning?

9. Would you continue supporting strategic planning? Explain?

6. **Experts and Consultants**

1. In what stages of planning were you involved? And in what form/s?

2. How do you assess your level of *involvement*? (from 0 to 4, where 0= poor, and 4=very active)

3. To which extent you describe your participation in the planning phase? When were your input needed most?

4. Do you think that your involvement in the process made a difference? Yes/No?

5. If No: what was the reasons for that?

6. If Yes: what kind of change/difference? Give examples.

7. How do you assess your *influence* in the strategic planning process? (from 0 to 4, where 0=limited, and 4=strong).

8. In your opinion, who played the biggest *leadership* role in the strategic planning process? i. Mayor, ii. Council member iii. Internal staff, iv. Community member, v.

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature

Others, who?
 	
9. **How do you define this "leadership role"? What are the main characteristics?**
 	
10. **Rank the following leadership characteristics based on what you think the most important:**
 	
    1. **Visionary (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989)**
    2. **Openness (Judge et al., 2002)**
    3. **Trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002)**
    4. **Social Intelligence**
    5. **Absorptive capacity**
    6. **Capacity to change**
    7. **Managerial wisdom (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001)**
    8. **Partnership skills**
    9. **Accessibility**
    10. **Low partisanship**
    11. **Decision making capacity (Greasley and Stoker, 2008)**
 	
11. **How do you assess the *participation* of the community in the planning process? (from 0 to 4, where 0=poor, and 4=strong).**
 	
12. **Do you think that community participation was essential? Yes/No**
 	
13. **If No, explain why?**
 	
14. **If Yes, for what reasons?**
 	
15. **Was the role of you as an outsider expert "supportive" or "leading" in the process?**	

Guiding Questions for the Interviews	Linkage with the Literature
16. Were you satisfied about the outcome of the strategic planning process? Yes/No 17. If No, why not? 18. If Yes, why? 19. To what extent do you feel that the programs selected in the strategic plan are *realistic* or a wish list? Please elaborate. 20. In your opinion, how do you assess the level of *adoption* of strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities? 21. What are the most *key factors* that contributed to the *success or failure* of the strategic plan in any municipality? Give examples. 22. In your opinion, did the strategic planning process and output affected the *performance of municipalities?* In terms of budgeting, physical planning, and decision-making? Give examples. 23. What are the *challenges* that faced and still facing the process? 24. What are the *recommendations (policy and operational)* to improve the strategic planning?	

A.2 Profile of Informants

Category/ Number	Code	Affiliation
Case Studies		
1	MU01	Deir Dibwan Municipality
2	MU02	Deir Dibwan Municipality
3	MU03	Deir Dibwan Municipality
4	MU04	Deir Dibwan Municipality
5	MU05	Deir Dibwan Municipality
6	MU06	Deir Dibwan
7	MU07	Birzeit Municipality
8	MU08	Birzeit Municipality
9	MU09	Birzeit Municipality
10	MU10	Birzeit Municipality
11	MU11	Birzeit University
12	MU12	Birzeit
13	MU13	Birzeit Ladies Society
14	MU14	Birzeit Municipality
15	MU15	Birzeit Municipality
16	MU16	Birzeit Municipality
17	MU17	Nablus Municipality
18	MU18	Nablus Municipality
19	MU19	Nablus Municipality
20	MU20	Nablus Municipality
21	MU21	Nablus Municipality
22	MU22	Nablus Municipality
23	MU23	Nablus Municipality
24	MU24	Nablus Municipality
25	MU25	Nablus Municipality
26	MU26	Nablus Municipality
27	MU27	Baita Municipality
28	MU28	Baita Municipality
29	MU29	Baita Municipality
30	MU30	Baita Municipality
31	MU31	Baita Municipality

32	MU32	Beita Municipality
33	MU33	Baita Municipality
34	MU34	As Samou' Municipality
35	MU35	As Samou' Municipality
36	MU36	As Samou' Municipality
37	MU37	As Samou' Municipality
38	MU38	As Samou' Municipality
39	MU39	As Samou' Municipality
40	MU40	As Samou' Municipality
National Institutions		
41	NI01	Municipal Development Fund (MDLF)
42	NI02	Municipal Development Fund (MDLF)
43	NI03	Municipal Development Fund (MDLF)
44	NI04	MDLF
45	NI05	MDLF
46	NI06	MDLF
47	NI07	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
48	NI08	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
49	NI09	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
50	NI10	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
51	NI11	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
52	NI12	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
53	NI13	Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
54	NI14	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD)
55	NI15	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD)
56	NI16	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD)
International Donor/Organizations		
57	ID01	World Bank
58	ID02	World Bank
59	ID03	KfW
60	ID04	GIZ
61	ID05	GIZ
62	ID06	GIZ
63	ID07	Global Communities

64	ID08	Global Communities
65	ID09	Global Communities
66	ID10	VNG International
67	ID11	UN Habitat
68	ID12	Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS)
Planning Experts		
69	PE01	ABC Consultant
70	PE02	GIZ
71	PE03	An Najah University
72	PE04	NCD Consultants
73	PE05	An Najah University
74	PE06	Birzeit University
75	PE07	CEP Consultancy
76	PE08	CEP Consultancy
77	PE09	Birzeit Centre for Continuing Education
79	PE10	Management Consulting

A.3 List of Focus Groups

No.	Location	Code	Description	Number of Participants	Males	Females
1.	Deir Dibwan Youth Club	FG05	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	11	7	4
2.	Birzeit Society	FG08	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	13	7	6
3.	Baita Youth Club	FG01	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	9	6	3
4.	Baita Youth Club	FG02	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	13	8	5
5.	Nablus Water Department	FG03	Members of community participated in the	13	8	5

No.	Location	Code	Description	Number of Participants	Males	Females
			strategic planning process			
6.	Nablus Cultural Center	FG04	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	15	9	6
7.	As Samu'	FG06	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	9	6	3
8.	As Samu'	FG07	Members of community participated in the strategic planning process	10	4	6
9.	Planning Experts.	FG09	Experts and consultants involved in the strategic planning in Palestine	9	6	3
	Totals			**102**	**61**	**41**

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