Institutional flexibility as a key element for urban renewal and development: The case of Palestinian towns.

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the history of planned interventions of distressed neighbourhood areas. The overwhelming political situation in most of the developing countries, as well as the modern life in the developed world gave the tendency to prefer a formal system for the development and renewal of urban areas rather than that of informal institutions. The above phenomenon is almost linked with societies characterised by great division of labour; heterogeneity of population and sub-groups with different sets of norms and ideologies. As a circumstance, the social division is regarded as a key obstacle on the urban development and renewal of various localities. All of these were shared by the societies of Palestine, Israel, as well as those of Britain and many countries of the developed world. The paper begins with an overview of the hierarchical principles, which define the relationship of the different elements, highlighting the importance of institutional flexibility for urban renewal and development. In order to understand the various obstacles and options for institutional form, both formal and informal, a reflection is illustrated from experience gained in England and Israel. It then moves to examine the case study of Palestinian towns, in particular the Gaza strip, to look at whether the planning processes there offer flexibility and freedom in a manner which reflects the pace of construction and the needs of Palestinian society at the time. The case study will be compared and contrasted with those of Britain and Israel.

Key words: Developed world, Third World cities, formal and informal institutions, social division, urban development and renewal.

1 INTRODUCTION

In all societies, ranging from the most primitive to the extreme advanced, individuals and groups impose constraints upon them to build a structure in which they define their relations with others. It is much easier to be certain about the formal rules that societies device than the informal ways by which the structure of human interactions is of importance. Partly in recognition of this phenomenon, it has increasingly common to assume that informal constraints come from socially transmitted information and are a part of the heritage that we call culture. Assaad (1993) defined Culture as the transmission from generation to the next, via teaching and imitation of knowledge, values, and other factors that influence individuals and their behaviour. The definition, as understood, sheds light on the use of Languages that is considered as an important tool for the delivery of information and is coded for perceptual, attitudinal, moral (behavioural) and factual information.

North (1994) went further to highlight that culture provides a language-based conceptual framework for encoding and interpreting the information that the senses are presenting to the brain. As such, processing information is a key element to understanding a more complex behavioural pattern than is derived from the expected utility model. Therefore, information are needed for institutions to structure human interactions and to limit the constraints and interventions resulted from the latter. Culture, seen as a filter, provides a continuity so that the informal networks to the exchange of problems in the past carries over into the present and makes these informal constraints important sources of continuity in long-run societal change.

In the absence of formal rules (State regulations), the development gives the tendency for informal arrangements. Dense social networks develop gradually a structure of informal institutions at the local level with substantial stability. By comparison, Bedouin society (Tribe members) demonstrates a good example for the monopoly of informal hierarchy, while the society lacks of any form of governmental institutions to regularise the interactions of individuals (see Razaz, 1993). In other words, Tribe members usually unlock their own potential to develop a structure in which they press for change filling their local needs. These members manage over the time to assert their claims and control over land, whereas formal institutions usually have little choices.

To understand what sustains the informal activities one has to go beyond the dyadic relationship between two transactions and to examine the social context in which these activities are embedded. It is important to stress that informality, in general, does not imply a lack of structure and predictability. It simply means that both structure and predictability are available through a different set of rules and norms to those associated with formal institutions (Assaad, 1996). Many activities that are related to social and economic vitality of Third World cities take mostly place outside the regulations and control of the state. Assaad maintained that governmental institutions usually attempt to formalise and shape the activities of individuals and groups by the use of legal and bureaucratic regulations, which clearly demonstrate centralised, hierarchical and standardised organisations. As a result, it is of importance to stress the role of intermediary actors in mediating conflicts and providing the channels of communication between formal and informal institutions which are characterised by unequal powers, different interests, as well as by different roles and norms.

Within the above, it is stressed the importance of institutional building, aiming to improve the performance of organisation. Therefore, some of the objectives for institutional building concern improving the efficiency of local government and the quality of administration. The overriding concern, overall objectives, is efficiency; the internal concern of institutions. In Third World cities, McGill (1995) suggested the achievement of the essential requirements, concerning infrastructure provision and the power position of local government. Accordingly, managing urban development has to focus on the urban necessities in the developing world. In such cases, there is a need to organise and recognise the process of city building. The understanding of city building is thus to provide a proper infrastructure provision and urban services. As far as the cities of developing countries are concerned they demonstrate frequent inability of urban government to organise itself and to anticipate its own urban growth.

The case of developing countries show that the governmental institutions, together with their principles of bureaucratic and routine procedure, are ill equipped to deal with the informal modes of transacting in a non-corporate private sector (see McGill, 1996). As a result, social classes of different neighbourhood areas create gradually informal institutional arrangements, which substantially aim to improve the living conditions by mobilising a development path relying on unlocking local potential. However, the process of informal activity may not provide the urban service required at the local level. For better management of urban development, this paper stresses the need to bridge the institutional gab between the municipal authority (formal structure), on the one hand, and the informal institutions, on the other.

In contrast, the understanding of institutionalisation, in the developed world, has recently moved away from considering institutions as a structure (e.g. Weber, 1947) towards the product of human actions, in particular interactions (e.g. Habermas, 1984). These interactions go on to consider communication tasks of various actors creating links between institutional form and social system. The introduction above throws briefly light on core understanding of the principles inherited from the importance of institutions to carry

out the urban development and renewal. In what follows, a reflection of two examples, the case of England and Israel, will be illustrated bringing more understanding of the principles above.

2 THE CASE OF ENGLISH TOWNS

This section sets the sense by looking briefly at the social segregation of British urban development and at the problems accused by social ills in relation to institutional building. This will assess to measure change in process, the transformation of institutional capacity and the empowerment of local government. In other words, structural changes have affected every sphere of society. Urban areas were usually the domain in which such changes clearly expressed. Therefore, it is worth exploring responses to these changes in urban areas during the historical periods of English towns.

The period, 1960s to the mid 1980s, has placed much emphasis on political perceptions of cities as 'multi-racial' areas, showing a range of social ills, social inequality and deprivation. Smith (1989) reported that residential segregation is a long-standing feature of British society. This reflects upon the social category of race by which the misunderstanding of ethnic monitoring was stressed. Institutions have played an incredible role in creating the social ills. State initiatives, in the 1970s, began to change the employment problems of inner cities by the decline of older industrial cores. The aim was to improve the quality of life in inner cities. However, the social relations, which was central to the creation of disadvantages for black and ethnic minorities, have been warped up with the idea that high density of black population in inner cities was problematic. As Carmon (1999) has shown, institutions addressed separately in their programs for handling social and physical problems; they were most likely separated, organisationally and spatially. Other literature (see Lyon and Newman, 1986) went further to report that Britain, like Sweden and Holland, focused on physical conditions ignoring the participation of the residents in decision-making process, without ensuring social development and integration. The arguments above point to the reasons of social exclusion rooted in institutional framework.

In the late 1980s into 1990s, local authorities have moved away from their traditional role as service providers towards a strategic role as a service enabler. Central government institutions played an incredible role to mobilise such changes by reducing public expenditure on local services (Clark and Stewart, 1988). The approach of enabling authority has encouraged many local authorities and councils to review the structure and needs of local population and to re-assess the potential for partnership with other local agencies. The institutional change was, however, confronted ahead with the need for a strategic response to growing local poverty among different social classes.

In the 1990s, there was a call for "City Challenge" approach to urban regeneration considered as a new institutional framework that was emerging in local governance. The approach clearly focused on a more 'people-centred' concept of urban regeneration (Carmona, 1998). The intention of City Challenge policies aims directly to address the problems of deprived communities by the integration of physical, economic and social development. According to Davoudi (1996), the initiative involved local authorities putting together plans for the redevelopment of neighbourhoods which they considered to be of critical importance to the regeneration of their areas in association with businesses, the community and with the voluntary sector. Objectives of these plans, Davoudi reported, were mainly concerned with developing disadvantaged areas, which represent development potential for the city and a major constraint on city-wide development. Second, It concerned with linking disadvantaged areas and residents to a city's mainstream economy. Hence, British urban regeneration of the 1990s was mostly linked to the concept of social exclusion. In other words, it reflects a new concern for social and cultural factors. In what follows, this paper seeks to focus on recent changes in institutional building in relation to ethnic minorities in Britain.

The work of Atkinson (2000) touched on the assumption that communities living in excluded spaces lack social cohesion and therefore are in need of organised structure through the establishment of formal institutions. Accordingly, we need to distinguish between two meanings: excluded spaces as a result of powerlessness rather than choices and, secondly, traditional working-class areas, which have high rates of long-term unemployment. In both cases, residents show a clear division from their society. Philips (1998) has shown that resident's areas of deprived communities, such as Black, Indian and Pakistani groups, in Britain, are often poorly served with regard to social capital, which would actually isolate these communities from participating in urban renewal. As Healey (1997b) pointed out, two factors are of importance as sources for urban renewal namely; social relations and networks within a locality. The relation-building, Healey reported, through which sufficient consensus building and mutual learning can take place to develop social, intellectual and political capital to promote co-ordination among the co-existing relations within places. With this in mind, it is necessary to start looking at local social relations and how these relations may contribute to empowerment, community participation and urban renewal.

A way, which might contribute for equal opportunity of residents, is to recognise the legitimate right of local population to participate as an equal partner in designing and implementing the urban agenda. As a result, there would be a tendency to focus on informal structure, such as community-based organisations. However, the UK experience, Atkinson reported, has shown that not only time is needed to allow a greater participation, but also more resources are needed to enable communities to organise themselves and put forward suitable detailed proposals in order to run local regeneration schemes. An added difficulty (see Rose, 1996) is a part of a new form of government whereby the governmental institutions seek to form the community in a manner which reflects upon a method that creates certain norms of behaviour that will be internalised by individuals and communities. As stated somewhere else (see North, 2000) the governmental institutions seem to be unwilling to change their style of dealing with issues at the local level. As a result, together with circumstances revealed above, urban development and renewal of various localities in Britain give the tendency for formal system rather than informal structure.

The case of Israeli towns

Town and country planning of Israeli towns is of interest both to cases in developing countries and to those of the developed world. In recognition of its planning history, Israel, on the one hand, was a developing country by its establishment in 1948. On the other hand, it has been transformed to a developed country since mid or late 1970s, in particular after the six-day war in 1967. The planning system there, from 1948-1980s, underwent ongoing evolutionary processes (Fruchtman, 1986). While the system took its origins similar to the English planning system of the British Mandatory of Palestine, it has been developed into a new nation typical of the some forward-looking policies of many developing countries, such as national planning, central direction and experimentation with innovative land use policies. According to Fruchtman, the English planning system was, to some extent, the model for the Israeli system. However, it is important to stress that there are still tremendous differences between the English and Israeli system in respect of territory, population and the degree of development. The diversity of social, physical and economic structure brings the understanding for different paths of development in these two countries.

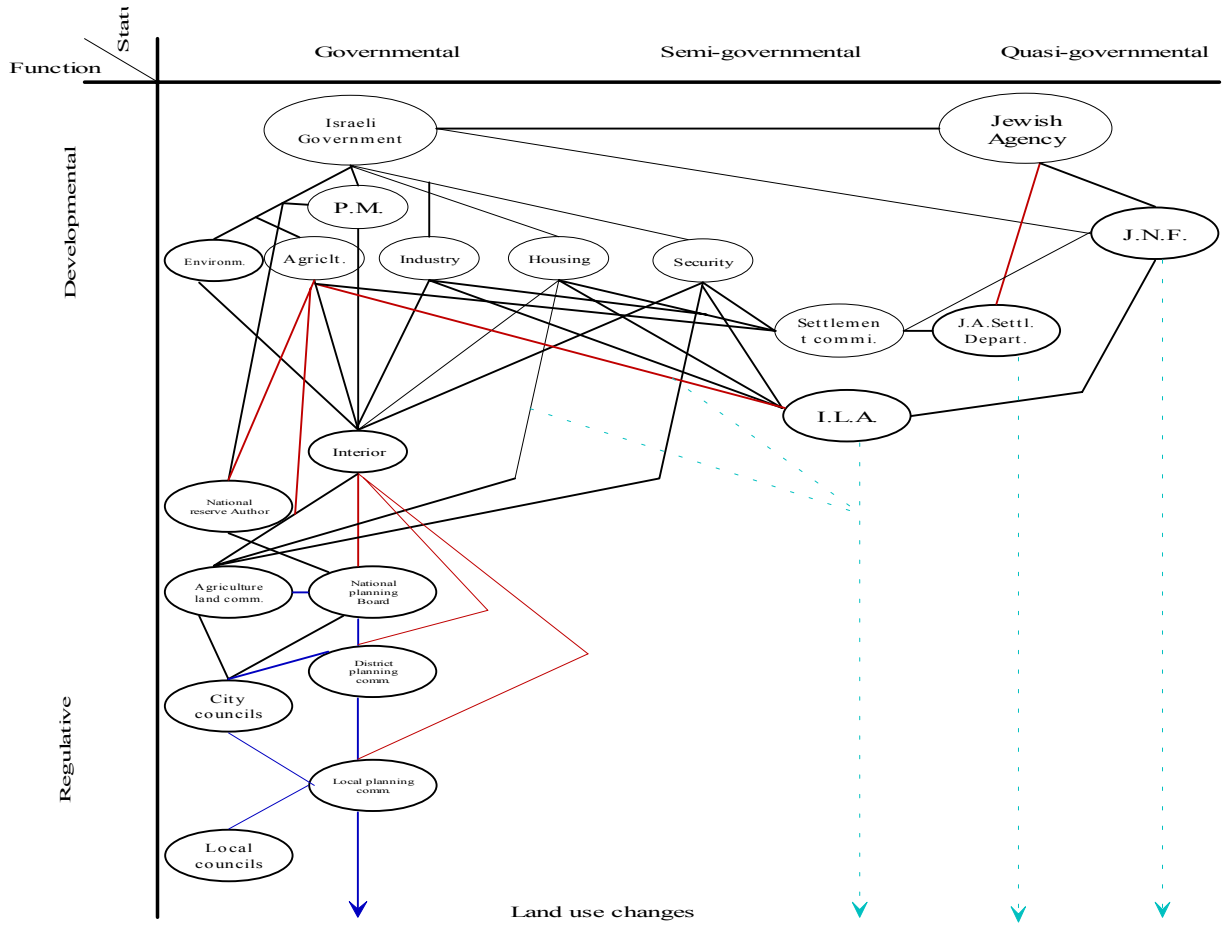
Within the above, it is worth noting that the Israeli planning system may seen as a control system translating the goals of government into plans, which serve as a guide for public and private development (Law-Yone, 1977). At this point it is important to shed light on planning institutions and their power, interpreting the complexity of occurred transformation within organisation. The formative years, since 1948, gave the emphasis of a high pressure for building up new Jewish settlements, land colonisation, and securing

national territories (see Alexander et al., 1983). Institutions at that time were less co-ordinated, together with a low inner-directed propensity to change. On the other hand, powerful Ministries with large development budget pushed forward with their development projects at all costs. Alexander maintained that the party-political element is an important factor as to which Israel has always been governed by a coalition. As a note, it is worthwhile to distinguish two-sided planning system. The first was characterised by a positive, dynamic, innovative, uncoordinated rush to build up the state, while the other was more passive, regulative, administrative system reacting to initiatives by other, in particular to religious parties.

Currently, the planning system constitutes mainly of two components: developmental and regulatory arms (Law-Yone, 1991). Developmental planning authorities are considered as a private funded body, which embodies the informal structures of the Jewish Agency (JA) and the Jewish National Fund (JNF) for the development of land across the country. According to Yiftachil (1995), the role of the two agencies is to develop rural land, roads and other throughout the country. The importance of these agencies is inherited from that they inhabit quasi-governmental authorities empowered by the central government. They contributed also, as stated somewhere else, to build Jewish settlements in Palestine prior 1948.

Regulatory planning authorities rely on Planning and Building Law of 1965 (1983). They run their activities under Israeli's Ministry of Interior comprised of three hierarchical tiers: a National Planning Board, six District Committees and Local District Committees. According to the Law of 1965, Regulatory Planning Authorities are responsible for urban and regional development as well as for the preparation of statuary outline plans for all Jewish settlements.

To reflect upon the objectives and goals of Israeli planning system, in line with Israeli policies and practices, social polarisation has played an incredible role in determining the way by which such a system operates, since the day of Israeli state. There are two types of polarity: exclusion and segregation between the Israeli community itself, and between the Jews and Palestinians. The first is between two main groups, known as Ashkanazi and Sephardi Jews, as a result of incredible waves of immigrants flooding into the country. According to Yftachel (2000), there is a cultural and economic gab between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. As a further note, the latter is mostly characterised by large families, strong clan ties and a great affinity with Jewish tradition. These characteristics have widened the gab between the western-oriented society (Ashkenazi) and a society similar to Third World's culture (Sephardi). From that it arises the question of how the Israeli planning system will address the issue of ethnic polarisation.



Key words:

Formal development processes

Informal development processes

Formal decision-making

Chairperson appointment

Source: Yiftachel, 1995

In addition, radical changes driven by massive new immigrants, together with around 500,000 Palestinians who fled out of the country escaping the war occurred in 1948 (Zureik, 1979); put weight for Jewish majority in Palestine. Whereby in the past the three known communities, Palestinians, British and Jewish had different perceptions to planning processes and development. Subsequently, the occurred changes transformed a state into a Jewish majority offering a great advantage for the formulation of a consistent planing system. In recognition of these changes, Kallus (2000) argued that Jewish settlements have played an important role since the state of Israel has been established. They have been regarded as a mechanism to integrate new Jewish settlers at the neighbourhood level and as a basis of new towns according to national schemes. As such, the political factors are the driving force beyond the function of Jewish settlements namely; building up the Israeli nation and securing its territories.

The second polarity is the social division between Jews and Palestinian residents. Most of Palestinian towns have remained to a large extent poorly served and are lacking a comprehensive development strategy (Meyer-Brodnitz, 1986). The resident's areas of Israeli Arab citizens demonstrate a rapid process of urban growth. Khamaisi (1992) has pointed to the problems facing Palestinian settlements, such as plan preparation and approval, land supply and public housing construction. Bollens (1998) went further to argue that Israeli territorial policies have created significant instability in the physical spatial and political structure of many Palestinian towns. The methods used in doing so, Bollens reported, are prohibiting Palestinian control over their own settlements, the fragmentation of Palestinian group identity and increasing Palestinian group deprivation. As noted above, problems facing Palestinian settlements are widely perceived as partially emanating from persistent neglect by the Israeli planning and development system. It is stressed, therefore, the need to pay a particular attention to urban pluralism and to participate Arab minority in development.

In the southern part of the country, the desert of Negev, the Bedouin society demonstrates a good example showing the relationship between Jews and Bedouin minority in planning and development schemes. In most cases, illegal residence and Arab invasion are crucial issues for Bedouin residence on traditional tribal land and resistance to involuntary concentration in towns designated by the state in Negev and Galilee (Fenster, 1993). The demolition of housing, built by the Bedouin on private Arab land in the Galilee, was followed most likely by strikes and community efforts to rebuild the homes. This reflects upon the informal structure in confronting the state regulations, which block the opportunity for the Arab citizens from using their own land for residential purposes. Apparently, the strategy is to increase the pressure on Arab Bedouins to immigrate to the state-planned towns submerging the identity of Bedouin society and fulfilling the land of Jews. As a note, the tribal members have a property of the land; however, they may not have a property right on the basis of state regulations. Yiftachel (1999) has raised an interesting question of how do other sectors of Israeli society, such as Moshavim and Kibbutzim, which regularly build without planning permissions, escape treatment as invaders?

At the end of this session, the case of Israeli towns shows a planning system giving rise to social intricacy and ideological diversity. It can be argued that the conflict was rooted in the pre-1948. However, as described above, some significant factors were the result of the radical social changes since the day of Israeli State. The commitment to ideological goals and social value were more evidence in planning than in improvised activities. A key factor in understanding the Israeli planning system is thus uncovering the sophisticated institutional setting, which reflects upon the complexity of the social changes. Such a system does not serve the Arab citizens and Bedouin society aiming to transfer the land property from Arab to Jewish hands. These factors, as important as they are, result in giving the tendency for informal structure to carry out the development at Arab localities. Whereby Israeli formal institutions maintain their monopoly to formalise the character of development namely; poorly served. In this vein, lets us move on to explore, in depth, the division of social classes in relation to institutional building in the territories of Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

3 THE CASE OF PALESTINIAN TOWNS

In the light of the current uncertain political situation, Palestinian planning institutions demonstrate a lack of control over development. They lack practical experience in managing and running such institutions, as well as the resources and facilities to implement proposed goals aimed at urban development and renewal (Palestinian National Authority, 1998). According to Khamaisi (1999), the planning institutions of the PNA are comprised of three tiers: a high planning council, district committees, and municipal as well as local committees issuing building permits. Khamaisi maintained that the structure of these institutions are similar to that of the planning institutions that have been devised during the British Mandate in accordance with the Towns planning ordinance of 1936. Subsequently, it can be drawn that both Israeli and Palestinian planning bodies originate from the same source namely; the British planning model.

On the other hand, there has been little discussed throughout the literature about the informal institutions in Palestine, such as community-based organisations. From that many questions arise: what are these informal institutions? Do they exist in Palestine? What is their position of power in the planning process? What are their circumstances? And what are their relationships to the formal system in Palestine (PNA)?

When the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) took power over Palestinian territories following the Cairo Agreement, the powers of the central committees were transferred to a Local Government Ministry. The latter reconstructs these committees, consisting of representatives in various ministries. However, given the presence of Jewish settlements and so-called *yellow* and *white* areas[1] the current power of these committees to develop their localities (Palestinian National Authority, 1996) might be restricted. The Cairo agreement subjected many aspects of planning to security arrangements, which are revised by the Israeli authorities every six months. This agreement has restricted the possibility for land use and building construction around and beyond both the security and *yellow* areas (see Al-Haj, 1990; Thaher, 1995). This demonstrates the extent to which Israeli authorities affect the ability of present Palestinian institutions to control the land.

In addition, a Liaison and Co-ordination committee, comprised of Palestinians and Israelis, has been established to solve problems arising from the Oslo agreement, including problems relevant to planning and building (Halabi, 1997). One of the main objectives of a Liaison committee, Halabi reported, is to make decisions concerning building constructions and outline plans adjacent to Palestinian villages in Area C (Israeli control areas). As a note, this committee is a general committee; not planning concerned, operating outside both Palestinian and Israeli planning structures. The Liaison committee is regarded as an exception case as to where planning decisions can take place through the Palestinian-Israeli co-ordination.

Israeli planning policies are considered as a major cause of the lack of development (Tougan, 1995). As Tougan reported, they have weakened the ability of indigenous institutions and have exercised several military restrictions on building materials and other resources needed for development. The absence of national, district and local plans on the Palestinian side, in the period between 1967-1994, has resulted in unbalanced planning terms in comparison with the Israeli side (see Coon, 1992). This imbalance, in turn, encourages Israeli planning institutions to maintain their planning policy for the implementation of their own plans resulting in

[1] Yellow: the joint competence is exercised in overlapping areas (B Areas). White: PNA territories (A Areas).

further fragmentation and conflict with present Palestinian planning institutions. This conflict, consequently, diminishes the prospect for sound professional planning for the benefit of Palestinian residents.

Since the planning system is seen as a programmed intervention by the state in the management of land use and environmental change, it is necessary to consider the different means of state interventions, which have produced spatial change (Healy et al., 1988). In Palestine, municipal and village areas have been governed by several colonial powers, the last of which (Israel) did not make any provision for urban renewal and development and also tended to distort the existing structure (Coon, 1992). Furthermore, there is no doubt that at present bureaucratic control over Palestinian planning institutions can impede the Palestinian development processes, in particular during the transitional period (see Halabi, 1993). All of these constraints show clearly the need for efficient institutional form to supervise and implement an enabling framework for urban renewal and development. Having studied the planning institutions established by the PNA, this paper highlights the necessity to re-construct these institutions enabling them to cope with the current stage of Palestinian National Authority, the transition period, and the future stage of Palestinian statehood. The paper moves on to look at, in depth, the social relations in the cities of Gaza with regard to institutional building.

3.1 The division of the cities in Gaza

Division overwhelms the nature of the cities in Gaza. There are two types of division: exclusion and segregation between sub-cities, and between these and Jewish settlements. The first is between the individual groups of Palestinian society resulting in the classification of people explicitly as seen at the neighbourhood level. The second is regarded as a segregation of national territories, which is described by ethnic and political polarisation.

The nature of division varies considerably from one locality of the Gaza Strip to another. The city of Khan Younis shows clearly both types of division, whereas the city of Gaza tends to be more divided by segregation between its sub-cities. Rafah, in the southern part near to the Egyptian border, has its own style of occurred division. In line with the withdrawal from Sinai due to the Israeli-Egyptian Camp David in 1977, the city is divided into two sub-cities. The first lies in the Gaza Strip, while the other part is in Egypt. Additionally, Rafah shows other two types of division known in the Strip.

Compared with the division in Rafah, this paper suggests comparison with the city of Nicosia, divided into two parts between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot areas. Political and military factors overshadow the divided Nicosia given the particular shape and character of the city. The heart of Nicosia has suffered not only where battle has damaged its structure and urban life, but also in much of the old city and of the downtown outside the walls (see Gumpert & Drucker, 1998). As a result, two suburbs are described by political factors, which are the driving force for the division in Rafah and also Nicosia, as well as in other towns of the Gaza Strip. In other words, urban conflicts in these divided cities are usually addressed within an accepted political framework.

Social behaviours and identities mostly shape the character of divided cities. With this in mind it is useful to throw light on the characteristics of the social class patterns, which seem to influence the nature of urban polarisation. The literature concerning Palestinian society highlights some constraints on development, stemming from the nature of such a society (see Bollens, 1998; Nachleh, 1980; Yiftachel, 1995). As such, the society demonstrates non-western Arab development processes and unclear ownership patterns. As a constraint, this paper defines Palestinian society as a "Deeply divided society[2]" based on Lustick's criteria (1979) namely that boundaries between rival groups are sharp enough to lead to independent membership groups with few overlaps.

In the Gaza Strip, social classes are classified through physical conditions: population density, geographical segregation and symbols in the city's townscape manifest deep cleavages, which prevent any sense of social integration. The classes concern: the indigenous residents, refugees, Bedouins and returned Palestinians. The last are the part of Palestinian society who have returned from the exile since 1994 creating further social division within the society, while the Bedouin groups are dispersed among other social classes and do not show any remarkable characteristics in their social identity.

The characteristic of deep division overwhelms the planning system and raises the question of how present Palestinian institutions may address, in depth, the various priorities derived from such a society. In such a circumstance, a minority group may reject urban and societal institutions making consensus regarding political-power sharing impossible. Yiftachel (1995) suggested that further research into deeply divided societies would allow gaps in knowledge of the use of planning for social control to be filled. Such studies will provide researchers and policy makers with a fuller understanding of how to deal with this phenomenon.

A way that might contribute to an understanding of Palestinian society is to refer to various historical periods in which occupying forces shaped the nature of local communities much more effectively than the society itself. In other words, a historical review reflects upon the changes in cultural behaviour of Palestinian society and its informal hierarchy for development. This paper argues that today's Palestinian society is a "political" society; this denotes that the political factors are key elements to understanding the fabric and nature of such a society. These factors will help to outline the dimension of changes and structural transformation, which affect heavily the society by nature.

In summary, a study of planning in Palestinian society should emphasise three characteristics: the lack of communication in addressing local needs in the decision-making processes, a deeply divided society adding new challenges for planning institutions to cope with its needs and priorities, and a political society giving indicators of political aspects in its fabric.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The complicated state of ongoing transition processes restricts the possibility for Palestinian planning institutions to create a status serving their objectives during the interim period. Although several planning institutions have been established since 1993, Oslo agreement, it seems to be that Israeli planning institutions maintain to control the rules of planning processes and to denominate the outcome of these processes. The state of political affairs contributes to the lack of enthusiasm on both Palestinian and Israeli sides for co-operation and communication in the process of spatial planning. Furthermore, the geopolitical struggle introduces national and public institutions as central participants in the planning process as both Palestinian and Israeli sides do their best to mobilise their public and national institutions to ensure their perspective sides. This, in line with circumstances revealed above, offers the opportunity for Israeli institutions to impact negatively the prospect for sound professional planning in Palestinian territories; the picture there does not look helpfully.

The important question is whether a significant change in the political arena can take place to establish Palestinian sovereignty over their territories. However, the differences between Israeli and Palestinian planning structures have to be addressed. This will offer the possibility for separating the two planning bodies in order to initiate actions. Subject to the conflicting political and administrative

[2] Deeply divided societies are characterised by ascriptive ties which generate an antagonistic segmentation of society, and are constructed on terminal identities with high political salience on a wide variety of issues.

bodies, a deeply divided society and deprived communities overwhelm the social relations in Palestinian territories. As noted above, the established Palestinian planning institutions reflect upon their inability to promote the welfare of all their residents, including those of minority groups, and to devise development plans.

Compared with cases of England and Israel, social division and deprived communities are the challenges facing the planning systems in these two countries. Social ills in English towns, on the one hand, are rooted in the way by which planning institutions address the problems of disadvantaged areas. Accordingly, this paper stresses the need for formal institutions to seek changes by considering the legitimate right of local population as an equal partner in managing development. On the other hand, the case of Israel shows a rise to social intricacy and ideological diversity resulting in radical social changes since the day of Israeli State. Beyond the concern of these changes are arguably the political factors aiming at building up the State of Israel and securing its national territories. With this in mind, the phenomenon of social division is shared by the societies of England, Israel, as well as by those of Palestine. However, the conditions and reasons for such phenomenon show discrepancy among the three countries. As a note but related, institutional building seems to be, in all three cases, a key factor to facilitate access against social deprivation. Subject to the implementation of urban change and regeneration, co-operation, partnership and co-ordination between formal and informal institutions are promising framework to guide and balance planning processes.

Whatever changes of emphasis occur in formal institution strategy, this paper argues that approaches concerning social ills can be applied to different cases, developed and developing countries, while preserving the objectives and conditions of each case.

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