

**Abstract**

Palestinian rural areas are suffering real shortages on many different levels concerning mainly social, economic, infrastructural, services and governance aspects of life. The Palestinian government adopted recently a strategy to amalgamate adjacent rural localities in one unit seeking to tackle the aforementioned shortages. Nevertheless, the strategy focuses mainly on tackling administrative aspects without implementing a comprehensive approach, meaning it does not integrate administrative issues with developmental ones. Furthermore, the process of amalgamation did not involve community and public participation as important components to guarantee the successful implementation of this strategy.

This study tackles one of the areas where the amalgamation strategy was implemented: Al-Yaserreyeh (West Bank, south of Hebron). The new administrative body faces serious challenges in regard to administrative ruling and developmental proceedings as a result of amalgamation. Data used in this study was collected through extensive questionnaires, field

visits, and interviews with decision makers, key persons in the study area, and community members. Maps were also prepared in order to understand the spatial configuration of the localities within the area of study.

Results show that the amalgamation strategy implemented in the area of study, as it was initially defined, was not the implemented in appropriate way to produce a sustainable rural development and good governance. The study proposes another model for rural development to be implemented which depends on joint planning area, developmental and strategic planning, community and decision makers involvement throughout the entire process.

Key words: Amalgamation, Comprehensive Planning, Joint Planning Areas, Rural Development, Community Participation.