

ABSTRACT

Urban population growth is accelerating around the world while land is becoming a decreasing resource. Over 65% of Palestinians are living in urban areas which are much higher than the international percentage which are 50 %. Ramallah-Al Bireh Governorate is the most rapid growing governorate and this is accompanied by a significant pressure on services, employment opportunities, and the need to provide appropriate accommodation for all people coming in from all over the West Bank governorates, cities, villages and camps. This research aims to find suitable areas for absorbing urban growth in the Ramallah and Al Bireh governorate in order to alleviate the pressure on the city center as well as to find accommodations for all young families who looking for the better living conditions and a better environment. This research was conducted through two major phases: Geomorphic Information System (GIS) was the major tool for the site selection in Phase One, while in Phase Two; Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) was applied to compare these sites together considering a set of criteria and different perspectives. Finally, in terms of the overall perspectives, **Site 5 (near Rammun)** is the most suitable for the any new urban development while **Site 3 (near Aboud)** is the least suitable site.

This research is not the first of its kind, but it is distinctive in its approach which addresses the study and modeling of urban growth management in one of the largest urban agglomeration in Palestine “Ramallah Al Bireh”. The results have proven that the approach used can serve as a model, which can be applied in the different governorates of the West Bank, and in regions which are experiencing urbanization similar to that in Palestine.

Key words: Urban Growth, Geographic Information Systems, Multi Criteria Analysis, Criteria, Ramallah Al Bireh Governorate.