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CAN THE PROCESS OF MASTER PLANNING BECOME A TOOL TO RALLY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT? TEBNIN (SOUTH LEBANON) AS CASE STUDY

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Can the Process of Master Planning become a Tool to Rally for Sustainable Development? Tebnin (South Lebanon) as Case Study.

In many cases, a master plan is a tool that is used to stimulate sustainable development through regulating land uses and building ratios. However, today Tebnin is faced with a particular challenge: the adopted master plan stands against the vision of a sustainable development process that could improve the town's long term social, economic and environmental conditions.

The absence of public participation in the planning process has led many cases such as the village of Tebnin to agricultural and environmental deterioration. The emphasis on the real estate market value will eventually have a negative impact on the agricultural and environmental concerns. Therefore to protect the agricultural and environmental sectors of Tebnin, the objective of this thesis is to assess the possibility of generating and sustaining an alternative discourse vis-à-vis agricultural land and to identify those stakeholders through community participation who are willing to sustain and support this discourse. Incentives will be necessary for the viability of this discourse to counter the national real-estate vision. Interviews and surveys were conducted with forty agricultural landowners and farmers located in Tebnin.

These findings indicate the importance of community participation in regards of increasing awareness of the current situation in Tebnin and in finding solutions to strengthen the physical framework in which a long-term agricultural sustainable vision of the village can be supported.

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To
My Father, My Family and
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first master plan[1] for the village of Tebnin (South Lebanon) was approved in 2006 after over three years of negotiations between a handful of local stakeholders, the Municipality, and the Directorate General of Urbanism. Due to a set of legal restrictions and social/professional circumstances, no participatory process was involved in the making of the master plan. This is despite the fact that the planning literature has widely converged on the advantages of participation in master planning: it can be used for the purpose of educating and raising awareness in the local community about its responsibilities and rights regarding contemporary and future planning challenges, it facilitates communication between local people's voices and decision-makers, and it empowers local communities by giving them the authority to take decisions regarding the future development of their regions (Gelber and Carson 2001).

A rapid comparison of the various drafts that led to the final approved plan indicates that despite the absence of a formal participatory process, major changes had been introduced during the process of approving the master plan. These changes were most notably about raising building exploitation factors throughout the village and re-zoning areas considered agricultural into actual or potential development areas where building exploitation factors are considerably higher.

There are several important concerns with the approved land-use zoning. First, the approved zoning furthers the possibility of reducing dramatically the agricultural

[1] A master plan in Lebanon is a land-use document developed by the Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGU), one of four directorates of the Ministry of Public Works responsible of setting land-use policies and building ratios.

practices with devastating long-term environmental and social concern (Oweidat 2005). Indeed, many of the traditional agricultural fields of the town have been earmarked for building and water channels were disregarded. Thus, although some 66% (5,000,000 m2) of Tebnin's total area (7,477,671 m2) is currently used for agriculture (Oweidat 2005), only a small fraction of the village was zoned as "agricultural lands" in the 2005 Master Plan, that is an estimated 605,929 m^2 or 8% of Tebnin's total area. Given that a large percentage of the village dwellers currently rely on agriculture as part of their subsistence strategies and that the agricultural reserves of the town constitute an important source of food security, their reduction presents a negative trend at the local and regional scale.

The dynamic role of agriculture in rural areas contributes significantly to environmental, economic and social objectives. Another concern that stems from the recent master plan is that it allows for sprawling building practices, which not only generates negative environmental impacts but also creates a built fabric that is difficult to service for a Municipality short on funds. Sprawling also generates water table contamination in the absence of a sewer network and threatens the traditional landscape heritage of the region, which consists of a small built-up core surrounded by agricultural tracts. Finally, the master plan didn't take into account the traditional built fabric of the old village core, a dense morphology of courtyard houses and winding streets and narrow street perspectives. By imposing setbacks, for instance, it forces a new architectural typology in the area that leads to the deterioration of the spaces of the historic core.[2]

[2] The problems associated with the master plan were thoroughly examined during the planning and design workshop that was held in the Department of Architecture and Design in the Fall 2011/2012. As a student enrolled in the workshop, my assessments of the master plan build on my findings and those of classmates enrolled in the class.

A. Thesis Question and Hypothesis

This thesis will tackle the following questions, could a process of participatory master planning that would involve stakeholders in the agricultural sector, modify the existing zoning of the village in ways that would support a long-term agricultural sustainable vision for the village? More specifically, could a participatory master planning effort serve as a framework to rally farmers and agricultural landowners behind a sustainable, agriculturally-based vision for the future?

My research indicates that most dwellers in Tebnin were unaware of the 2005 Master Plan process and were never involved in its decisions. Furthermore, even after dwellers had been informed of the deficiencies of the current Master Plan, such as the absence of protection for natural waterways and the earmarking of fertile land as built-up areas, they remained reluctant to engage in public meetings because:

- they felt uncertain about outcomes of such meetings since historically they haven't been heard and conflicting values among participants (ex. dwellers for preserving agricultural lands and ones against) might lead to problems that could escalate between families
- they showed suspicions that their time and resources will not be spent effectively since decision makers never showed signs of willingness to engage dwellers in decision making

As a result, I will argue in my thesis that participatory master planning is not likely to produce the desirable outcome of preserving agricultural lands by involving agricultural stakeholders in the planning process. However, deliberations over the master plan still may usher the formation of new stakeholder groups who would support alternative to real estate interests and help foster a broader vision for the future of the village than the narrow, private real estate interests that have guided the currently

adopted regulations.

Participatory master-planning will at least, I argue, create opportunities for awareness raising, mutual learning, and allow for the circulation of discourses that may on the long run strengthen the importance of environmental protection strategies.

B. Agricultural Profile

Agriculture has historically been an integral part of the rural system in South Lebanon. Agricultural stakeholders in Tebnin argue that due to the lack of policy attention given by the government, agriculture's function has noticeably been devalued by policy makers leading to a failed system of sustainable agriculture. Nugent (2001) emphasizes that sustainability refers to "the ability of something to endure in time," and for that to happen, agriculture "should be profitable and economically viable, environmentally sound, socially just and culturally acceptable" (Veenhuizen 2007).

According to a report published by the Lebanese Customs Administration (2006), agriculture accounts for an estimate of 13% of total exports and 15% of total imports. Most exports are destined to the Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and others. European markets have been difficult to penetrate due to the lack of quality production and intense competition from regional countries that benefit from low production cost and governmental subsidies unlike Lebanon (Salibi 2007).

The Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture argues that the agricultural economy used to provide a full or partial income to more than 40% of Lebanon’s population in the mid 1960s. However, the negligence in agriculture, due to the lack of government expenditure and a long-term agriculture developmental vision, caused a devastating drop in the contribution of the agricultural economy to the GDP (Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture 2011). The downturn of the agricultural economy had led many farmers to

seek alternative employment, either in the industrial or in the services sector. The Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Trade emphasizes that the services sector that include trade, telecom, tourism and banking are the main contributors to economic growth in the past 12 years, while the agricultural sector has only contributed marginally to this sector (Ministry of Economy and Trade - Lebanon 2012).

The regression of the agricultural sector in Lebanon has reached its climax during the Lebanese civil war in 1975 that led to the deterioration of the political and economic stability, causing the sharp depreciation of the Lebanese pound and resulting in dollarization of agricultural inputs. Southern rural areas have been subject to heavy damages and losses during conflicts with Israel ever since 1948. Due to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon in 1978, many farmers in South Lebanon lost access to their lands and opted to migrate with their families either to the capital city, Beirut or abroad, seeking employment and safety.

The agricultural share to GDP has significantly declined between 1969 and 1991, from 12% to 6.2% (UNDP 1993). Despite the agricultural downturn in Lebanon, many agricultural stakeholders argue that agriculture still represents an important source to the livelihoods in Lebanon, especially in rural areas. Agriculture takes place in different forms in rural areas, ranging from subsistence farming to commercialized agriculture. However the lack of governmental financial and legislation support for rural farming is a main cause for the lack of agricultural potentials in rural areas such as Tebnin. The challenge is to make the central and local government realize that rural agriculture

- is a vital element of subsistence strategies for a large section of rural dwellers
- has economic potentials to grow into a main input of economic growth if

proper mechanisms are put in place

- has an important role in protecting the environment
- preserves local livelihood as a means for dwellers to make a sustainable living.

Today, Tebnin is faced with a particular challenge: the adopted master plan stands against the vision of a sustainable development process that could improve the town's long term social, economic and environmental conditions. Changing the master plan runs however against the propertied interests of those who see in land a real estate value that improves when building coefficients rise. As pointed above, evidence indicates that it was in fact these interests that lead to the reduction of areas earmarked for agriculture in the first place. Given the advantages of participatory planning, could a discussion of the master plan on the basis of participatory planning change the tides?

C. Significance

As a planner committed to the protection of the natural environment in this and other villages in Lebanon, I believe that my investigations are particularly important to inform processes in which the current, often irreversible processes of environmental deterioration can be put to halt. Given that master plans and more generally building regulations are misused in Lebanon, the significance of my research lies in trying to use the master plan as a tool to build stakeholders in ways that can raise awareness of the agricultural and environmental deterioration that is taking place in Tebnin. Given that the case of Tebnin's master plan and its negative outcome on the environment and agriculture is widespread in many areas and villages of Lebanon, this research will inform us about ways to improve the local master planning process. Its focus on agriculture is particularly important because many rural areas in Lebanon are following

the same path of Tebnin, losing their agricultural and environmental significance to a real estate vision set by developers, at the expense of food security and long-term environmental concerns. This thesis argues that participatory planning is not likely to produce the desirable outcome if not incentives are given. However, it may still form a new stakeholder group that would create opportunity for awareness raising, mutual learning and on the long run strengthen the importance of environmental protection strategies. At later stages, dwellers will move from participation to negotiations where the master plan becomes the framework to discuss a vision for the future.

D. Tebnin Case Study Profile

Tebnin is a village located in South Lebanon, within the district of Nabatiyyeh, in the Bint Jubayl Caza, at a distance of 106 km from the Lebanese capital of Beirut and only 22 km away from the Lebanese/Palestinian border. It is situated across several hills at an approximate altitude of 650 – 700 m above sea level. Tebnin occupies 7,477,671 m2 and is located 25 km southeast of Sur and 8 km northwest of Bint Jubayl (Oweidat 2005). Tebnin is mostly known for its crusader's citadel, one of the most prominent archeological sites in the region. Furthermore, Tebnin benefits from its position as an institutional and commercial hub that includes a governmental hospital, a police station, an Islamic court of law, financial banks, several restaurants that attract visitors from the region, and a weekly market that brings sellers and buyers from the region.

The total registered population in Tebnin is estimated at 9,400 people. The majority are Muslim (Shiite), with a sizable minority of Christians. According to the Municipality of Tebnin, the village's permanent inhabitants are estimated to be between 3,500-4,000 people. A large portion of Tebnin's population lives in Beirut and abroad.

Fig. 1. Tebnin Ariel Photo.
Source: Directorate General of Urbanism, 2009.

The agricultural sector in Tebnin, like other areas in Lebanon, is facing many hurdles that prevent its development. It is plagued by high production costs, mainly due to insufficient water supply, poor market channels and weak forward linkages that could support it. A dormant agricultural coop and a Municipality with no long-term agricultural vision push the agriculture sector to deteriorate faster, especially after the 2005 Master Plan zoned most agricultural lands as mixed-use zones where buildings

can be developed.

Since the 1970s, the downturn of the agricultural economy in Lebanon and the region has led many farmers in South Lebanon to seek alternative employment in Beirut and beyond, either in the industrial or in the services sector. Since then, the number of farmers has sharply decreased, reducing the role of agriculture to subsistence and leaving only a handful of local families depending on agriculture for commercial use.

The thesis will test the assumption that the master plan can provide an adequate framework for initiating a participatory planning process that would generate a new group of stakeholders interested in protecting the natural environment and sustaining agricultural practices for environmental and socio-economic reasons.

E. Methodology

The methodology consisted of three steps:

The first step was to profile the agricultural sector in Tebnin in order to assess processes through which agricultural production occurs and whether there is indeed a conflict of interest between property owners and stakeholders in the agricultural sector. More specifically, I mapped the following issues:

- A survey of currently planted areas (550 planted lots out of 1000 lots surveyed) I used satellite maps to identify crops such as olives and tobacco
- A map of property ownership, identifying property owners (diverse families engaged in agriculture) and patterns of ownership;
- A mapping of structures of agricultural exploitation, showing the distribution of agricultural production processes (landowners planting their land, farmers renting, agents renting and employing farmers..)

In order to analyze further the process of production,

- I interviewed a total of 40 landowners and farmers. The landowners and farmers were selected on the basis of a snowballing strategy whereby respondents directed me to other counterparts. One of the main difficulties that I faced in date gathering was the ability of locating agricultural landowners and agents. This was because most of these actors have different professional occupations during the day and are not permanently present on the land. Furthermore, a sizable portion of those landowners only visit the village on weekends. It must be noted that some specifications in the case study of Tebnin cannot be replicated in other villages in South Lebanon due to political, social and economical differences.

- To be able to get more information about the social context in which the practice of agriculture is embedded, the agricultural production and how they are distributed, I have interviewed 40 agricultural stakeholders that come from different families whom I was able to locate through the help of the Municipality and local dwellers.

- I visited the lots and observed the different kinds of production taking place.

The interviews helped me tally processes of land acquisition and purposes of production (farmer planting his land, renting his land for income generation or/and food security), inquire more about landownership and reasons for agricultural engagement (commercial or/and subsistence). I have distinguished between owners/subsistence and owners/income generations of the agricultural sector to generally measure its economical benefits on their households' income and/or food security.

I have discussed and assessed with the agricultural stakeholders the current economical importance of agriculture to Tebnin's households to analyze the economic importance of agriculture to households in Tebnin. Through my interviews, I have

assessed the contribution of agriculture to income generation and/or to food security, keeping in mind that farmers tend to have different socioeconomic profiles. Furthermore, and perhaps due to the informality of the practice, most farmers were unwilling to provide exact data reflecting their quantity production or the incomes they earned from this production. Analyses that are based on short-term field work and interviews tend to change in time due to seasonal changes of production, costs of raw material, market prices and other.

My interviews followed an open-ended script divided into two large sections or moments. The first section of the interview tested the knowledge of my respondents of the master plan and how they viewed its impacts. More specifically, respondents were asked whether they knew there was a master plan and, if so, what they thought its impact was. The second section of the interview consisted of a mix of awareness raising and testing the participatory assumptions. I explained to respondents the negative impacts of the master plans on their ability to maintain their agricultural practice, the threats on ecological continuities, etc. I then asked them whether they would be willing to get involved in a process of adjustment:

- I have inquired about the zoning process, and whether respondents believed that the current master plan is “good” or “bad” to their practice. Questioning them about the Master Plan is important to see if they are aware of the negative impacts it holds regarding the future agricultural practices. I also needed to assess the willingness of agricultural stakeholders in getting involved in participatory planning. Information about the present status of the agricultural cycle must be acknowledged. Data on agricultural demand, production, markets, costs and returns have also been obtained to assess the current value of the agricultural sector in Tebnin.
- Through my interviews, I have shared information about the problems of the

current zoning and its dangers. I asked agricultural stakeholders to share their thoughts on the master plan. Finally I have asked them if they would be willing to attend public meetings to review/change the master plan and/or advocate particular practices and give out their opinion on possible solutions, hoping that stakeholder participants will have their own ideas about the nature of the master plan problems and could express their own opportunities for change.

F. Thesis Structure

Thesis structure is divided in the following way: in Chapter 2, I developed the literature review, outlining the ways in which planning scholars have addressed the main assumptions adopted by the thesis, namely (i) the importance of preserving agricultural lands to the economy and environment of the area and (ii) the significance of community participation in the planning process and decision-making. Chapter 2 analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of participation, giving examples where participation had been a success and where it had been a failure. Chapter 3 profiles the case-study, focusing on the agricultural sector in South Lebanon, specifically Tebnin. Chapter 3 analyzes the current role of agriculture in Tebnin and its impact on the economic welfare of its inhabitants. It identifies and maps all areas that were traditionally planted in the village and are still considered as part of the field, even if they are not planted; and identified the property owners of these areas. This should work to inform us about (i) the distribution of property in the area –whether it is concentrated in few hands or across people and (ii) whether they are present or absent. This chapter also includes the surveyed landscape of agricultural practices: what is planted on the basis of the categories created by Oweidat (2005) and through field work. Chapter 4 reveals the results and findings of our research questions with the agricultural

stakeholders that include landowners of agricultural practices and farmers. Finally a recommendation and conclusion chapter would elaborate on possible solutions after assessing the research findings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review outlines the empirical findings and theoretical conclusions listed in the planning literature about the two key assumptions underlining the thesis: (1) the importance of agriculture as a tool for poverty alleviation and sustainable development and (2) the ability of participatory planning to act as a framework for raising awareness and integrating public input into the planning process and decision making. In the last section, the chapter summarizes the main conclusions and their relevance to the case study at hand.

A. Agriculture as a Tool for Fostering Sustainable and Equitable Development

Most researchers and development practioners concur on the fact that the agricultural sector is one of the most important sectors for economic development because it contributes to:

- Environmental protection: includes soil conservation, the protection of rural green open space, improving water collection, reducing air pollution, increasing biodiversity that would eventually play a positive role in minimizing ecological and health risks;
- Poverty reduction: particularly through providing cheaper food for domestic consumption and employment generation;
- Food security: particularly by securing local and affordable food production;
- Social safety net or a buffer during times of crisis: particularly through community building (FAO 2004).

Over the past decade, international organizations have invested sizable efforts to improve the productivity of the agricultural sector in developing countries through attracting investors to agricultural science and technology (Meijerink and Roza 2007). However, while many scholars such as Meijerink and Roza (2007), Johnston and Mellor (1961) and others are strong advocates of agricultural development for economic growth, other scholars such as Brooks dismiss agriculture as a possible engine of economic growth. Brooks (2006) argues that international competition with its integrated markets caused prices to fall fast; therefore rural incomes have been negatively affected despite increased productivity (Brooks 2006). Weak governmental and agricultural institutions in developing countries had a negative impact on supporting local farmers and conserving agricultural lands. With the rising costs of agricultural productions, governments in many countries failed to subsidize or give incentives for farmers to continue working the land. With the lack of governmental support, many rural farmers began to drop agriculture and migrate instead to the city looking for employment. Many poorly equipped farmers saw no solution to sustain their agricultural production and therefore turned away from this sector.

Despite these reservations, planners generally concur that agriculture is one of the main poverty reduction tools used in the relatively underdeveloped and poor countries of the world (Meijerink and Roza 2007). Their recommendations are endorsed by international organizations such as the World Bank. The 2008 World Development Report argues that growth in the agricultural sector contributed proportionally more to poverty reduction than growth in any other economic sector. Therefore, the report argues, when striving to achieve the goals of poverty alleviation, ensuring environmental sustainability and other objectives as part of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, focus should be on the agricultural and

environmental sector (Meijerink and Roza 2007, 2). Since 1992, several world summits have raised awareness about the importance of conserving agricultural practices and reassessing approaches that work towards achieving food security (Moore 1996).

Several arguments are forwarded to support this view. Irz *et al.* (2001) for instance argue that agricultural growth contributes greatly to poverty reduction in rural and national economies: At the local (rural) level, a larger number of small farms generate increased job opportunity in the agriculture and food chain sector. At a national level, increased agricultural production tends to decrease food prices which eventually benefits consumers, particularly poorer ones who spend most of their income on food consumption.

There are several advantages to farming, the most notable of which is its ability to effectively reduce rural poverty through both subsistence and exchange economies (Birner and Resnick 2010). The success of agriculture-base poverty alleviation strategies have for instance been well documented in China where the agricultural productivity of specifically small-farming has considerably lifted China's struggling rural farmers out of poverty through satisfying their subsistence needs (Chi 2009). Others have argued for the importance of agriculture for environmental reasons that include soil conservation, watershed services and other.

There are many reasons to believe that several of the advantages of agriculture are applicable in Lebanon. A recent study of this sector indicates that agriculture is a main source of income to about 30-40% of the population (FAO 2006). Another study claims that agriculture is assumed to reach up to 80% of the local GDP in the Sour region, South Lebanon, representing a major source of income to dwellers (ICU and UNDP 2008).

This points to the fact that subsistence and commercial agriculture that

encourages agricultural practices as part of a diversified portfolio of income generation activities has an important potential in alleviating the spending pressures of low-income households in Lebanon as long as land is available.

The agricultural sector is a substantial contributor to the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, specifically in poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability (Veenhuizen 2007). Baiphethi and Jacobs (2009) argue that food expenditure in rural areas can account for as much as 60-80% of total household income. They emphasize that subsistence agriculture can contribute on reducing the "vulnerability of rural and urban food-insecure households, improving livelihoods and helping to mitigate high food price inflation" (Baipethi and Jacobs 2009). Many authors such as Veenhuizen (2007); Armar-Klemesu (2000); Berg (2002); Maxwell (2000); Cabannes (2006) and others argue that the present challenge is to know how to mobilize the resources available and enhance agricultural development as an objective to eliminate hunger and improve livelihoods.

The above-listed arguments in favor of farming and the positive assessment that this sector of the economy could potentially have on poverty alleviation, form the basis of the main assumption held in this thesis that agriculture is an important sector for the investigated case study of Tebnin. It further supports the assumption that investments in agriculture could revitalize and improve the local economy of the region. This is not to say that the task will be easy: many challenges face the agricultural sector in Tebnin and the rest of South Lebanon and they will be outlined in the case study analysis presented in Chapter 3. The possible advantages of agriculture however outweigh these disadvantages, generating the necessity to work against current hurdles towards the reinvigoration of the agricultural sector.

B. Community Participation

The literature on planning has been rife with recommendation about the importance of participatory planning for at least two decades. Since the early 1990s, scholars and planning professionals have debated both the importance and limitations of participatory planning. However, scholars researching planning practices widely converge on the necessity to adopt community participation as a necessary aspect of the development and articulation of planning intervention. Case studies documented in higher income countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Australia are proving the importance of participation where the "community" is no longer simply the target or object of development but an active subject in the plan development process" (pp3: Kaur 2007). The advantages of participatory planning are also emerging with cases of participatory budgeting and master planning, etc.

1. The Forms of Participation

Despite consensus on the benefits of participatory planning, it is clear that neither scholars nor professionals agree on what is exactly meant by "participatory planning". In this section, I will briefly outline the different forms of participation that I encountered in my readings and lay out the advantages/disadvantages of these forms of participation. I will later show how and why I believe participation is important in my case study as a form of awareness raising and stakeholder building.

In a widely cited article that dates back to 1969, Arnstein lays out a scale of citizen-participation that starts with the basic "information sharing" in which planning project beneficiaries are informed about the planning interventions designed in their areas and moves up to higher levels of power devolution that culminate with sharing

agenda setting and decision making. Through this and many other articles, planning theorists have shown that participation can occur in varying levels of intensity, requiring different levels of involvement from project participants (i.e. sharing in costs, coordinating in decisions about the choice of projected intervention, collaborating in the intervention process) and hence different scales of power devolution on the side of the project planners. Clayton *et al*. (2003) points out to seven different types of participation:

- *Manipulative Participation*: participants listen and do not get heard, their participation is only used for manipulation
- *Passive Participation***:** participants are just informed of decisions made, no role in planning process and decision making.
- *Participation by Consultation*: participants listen and give information only when asked, they have no role in decision making
- *Participation for Material Incentives*: participants only engage in public meetings in return for incentives, such as money, food and other
- *Functional Participation:* participants are used as a means of information sharing to reduce costs to external agencies. They discuss problems and means to find solutions however their role in decision making is minor
- *Interactive Participation:* participants get involved in action plans and decide on how available resources are efficiently used, decision making is reached through consensus
- *Self-Mobilization (Citizen Control):* participants take initiatives, they communicate with external agencies and institutions for technical advice only and decision-making is solely made by them.

2. Advantages of Participation

Aref (2011) defines participation as “a direct involvement of marginalized groups in a development process, which aims to build people’s capabilities to have access to and control of resources, benefits and opportunities towards self-reliance and an improved quality of life” (Aref 2011). Community participation informs planners about the actual viability of their projected intervention, which in this case would be the viability of the agriculture sector. Since stakeholders in the agricultural sector know best about the current situation of the agriculture, they are seen to be the most qualified to inform planners of the challenges they face.

Advantages of community participation listed in the literature include the fact that the dwellers:

- can become aware of their rights and responsibilities in the planning process and decision making
- can inform/learn from the process, allowing for lesson-sharing
- get a sense of ownership over the project
- would walk out from their narrow set of personal interest to think of the common good

Mathur (1997) points out that the need for participation would empower local communities to come out from their narrow interests and get involved in developing projects such as roads, schools, and other. For example, first forms of participation took place in India in 1952 that initiated community development programs in rural areas, assuming that such programs would make people work together to reach successful end-results. However, Mathur argues that this was not the case; communities tend to be "a collection of factions with diverse interests each trying to promote interests of their own" (Mathur 1997). Mathur believes that participation through small stakeholder

groups could be productive as it had been observed in Nepal. Farmers and landless agricultural labor in Nepal joined forces and formed a group called the Small Farmer Development Agency (SMDA) that aimed to strengthen its participation position with local governmental officials. For the first time, the SMDA was able to have a role in decision-making and provide initiatives to reach a consensus between the different parties.

Ataov (2007) argues that in any community, the individual citizen or dweller must have the opportunity to participate in decision making policies that affect their lives, in other words the right for self-determination (Ataov 2007). Ataov emphasizes the positive contribution community participation has provided in the case-study of Kocaeli, Turkey. The implementation of a housing project in Kocaeli has built the grounds for two conditions for a democratic society, creating active citizenry participation and enabling political mechanism for participation. Atoav argues that community participation had played an important role in directing governmental institutions on the road of acceptable solutions. The rapid and unorganized industrial development gave rise to environmental problem that has been pointed out by the community. The Chamber of Industry of Kocaeli reacted to the local community by initiating the construction of organized industrial districts. Community participation in the case of Kocaeli took many forms including conferences, meetings, workshops and other. Knowledge of each phase of consultation has been built over previously generated knowledge. Ataov concludes that the notion of the local government in Turkey moved into a new phase, a phase where participation in planning was legally enforced. Field interviews indicate that the recent participatory planning in Kocaeli has influenced the formation of this new legal framework which demands “that each local authority produces both spatial and institutional strategic plans through ‘the effective

participation of local stakeholders'" (Atoav 2007).

Community participation can help in creating a framework in which the future image and development of rural areas such as Tebnin can be comprehensively discussed. The rationale of involving people is to integrate public input into the planning process and decision making. Kaur (2007) stresses that through intensive community participation, people begin feeling a sense of ownership over the project. The assumption, widely held in the literature (Carson and Gelber 2001; Kaur 2007; Ataov 2007; Healy 1997; Burby 2003; Innes 1996; Tekeli and Pinarcioglu 2004; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000) is that once people get involved in participatory discussions, they will walk out of the individual narrow set of personal preferences and begin to think and act as a community for the interest of the village.

Community participation is an area of concern when it comes to agricultural development. Aref (2010) argues that no developments and no partnership can take place with no participation. Agricultural stakeholders, including farmers, should be involved in any decision making process with the collaboration of governmental institutions such as the Municipality and non-governmental such as the Agricultural Cooperation Groups. Finally, and immediately derived from the above point, is the fact that a successful planning process necessarily needs to give dwellers a sense of ownership towards decision making to facilitate the implementation of any plan. Community participation is clearly absent from the planning process in many developing countries such as Lebanon.

C. Participation Planning in Lebanon

The Academic Urban Observatory of MAJAL and the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) argue that no efforts have been made by the Lebanese planning

authorities to integrate and institutionalize public participation in the planning process (MAJAL 2009). They denounce the current planning process in Lebanon as highly politicized and recurrently based on the self-interests of powerful individuals. MAJAL and LTA emphasize that the Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGU) in Lebanon is the technical and financial authority responsible for setting the planning policies including master plans under the Urban Planning Code 1983. According to article 11 of the Urban Code, the Municipality has the right to intervene in the planning process when a master plan is being implemented for its village. Even though the DGU is officially responsible for conducting all the necessary steps towards the production of a master plan, it appoints private consultants in order to develop the necessary studies. However, and in order to limit the private interests influencing the master plan, the DGU requires consultants not to integrate community participation as part of their methodology. Instead, the consultant's interactions with local stakeholders is limited to gathering information from the Municipality, without involving the latter in the decisions related to the future organization of its territories. In practice, however, Dr. Serge Yazigi explains that anecdotal data point to the fact that individual property owners – particularly the powerful among them- learn about master planning early on and they interfere on the making of the master plan at multiple levels. Since such interventions are however illegal, they remain "under the table" and, as a result, unaccountable. The reforms that MAJAL and LTA are proposing in that regards include allowing or -rather requiring- the consultant to engage in public debates with the local community and municipal council and to avoid the intrusion of personal interests by powerful people. They argue that by making the interventions of property owners public, they render the latter accountable to a public notion of the common good, even if the latter contradicts their private interests. They also argue that the consultant must

present a report to the DGU reflecting on the participatory approach used in the planning process and how it was incorporated in the consultant's diagnosis and final scenario (MAJAL 2009). MAJAL and LTA aim to have a role in promoting a cultural of planning transparency and help in depoliticizing the planning process.

In an interview with Dr. Serge Yazigi, the director of MAJAL which promotes sustainable planning strategies and a lecturer at ALBA (Academie Libanaise de Beaux-Arts) and Saint Joseph University, he argues that the master planning process in Lebanon is in dire need for evolution and development. Yazigi explains that master planning in Lebanon is producing zoning laws and regulations that are inadequate, insufficient, and at most times lacking a vision and avoiding the importance of preserving the key aspects of an area, such as heritage sites, agricultural lands and other. He stresses that politicians and developers with strong connections are using master plans to their own private interests. Yazigi argues that a clear vision is needed to transform the master planning process: not only is participatory planning necessary, but furthermore planning should happen at several levels such as at a regional scale and it should include a process of strategic spatial planning that leads to some consensus in prioritizing areas of development before actual land uses are defined. To be able to enhance the master planning process, building laws must be modified and enhanced to cope with modern context.

In a context where administrative decentralization has been slow to come, the DGU holds this responsibility rather than the Municipalities that usually lack financial capabilities and experienced professionals to enable them to engage into participation planning studies. The consultants commission by the DGU usually avoid involving dwellers in the planning process. However, many countries such as Turkey have mandated community participation in any planning process that should take place

(Ataov 2007).

Yazigi, who is familiar with the planning process in Lebanon, argues that empowering the communities and giving them a share of decision-making is unacceptable to many politicians because it will be regarded as a threat to their control of the planning process and therefore to their personal interests. He emphasizes that the lack of community participation results in ineffective master plans that are not endorsed by local communities and/or do not respond to these communities' prerogatives and, as a result, they are rarely implemented. Therefore Yazigi insists that a third party that is solely responsible to make sure successful community participation takes place should always be integrated in the planning process.

Since community participation is a two-way form of exchange, planners simultaneously tend to educate dwellers of the potentials of agriculture and its importance on the environment.

The process of community participation would reflect on a positive contribution to both parties, the consulter and consulted. "It can bring new levels of expertise and information to the consulter, in a dynamic, cost-effective and integrated way. It can make the consulted feel that they can be involved in the decision-making that affect them" (Carson and Gelber 2001). This process is beneficial to the consulted because it would educate them in plan-making and decision-making. Carson and Gelber stress that such community consultation has great potential to develop the 'deliberative capacity' of the consulter and consulted.

D. Shortcoming, Limitations and Challenges of Participation

Despite an overwhelmingly positive assessment of participation, scholars have also warned of the difficulty of setting up a participatory planning process. One of the

main challenges pointed out by this literature is the ability to engage stakeholders on issues related to the vision of the city and/or town and its future development, rather than on personal interest issues. Kaur (2007) laments the limited adoption of participatory planning practices in developing countries. This is clearly illustrated in the 2021 Master Plan of Delhi, India (Kaur 2007). Kaur explains that while the public was invited to submit suggestions for and objections to the 2021 Master Plan of Delhi for the governor to take into consideration, no efforts were made to understand the necessities and desires of the community when they could have been transferred into real action-items. The public has only been invited to send comments at the latest stages of the Master Plan. Many citizens in Delhi were disappointed because they felt no sense of ownership and no desire for commitment. Kaur argues that most objections sent by the public were personal interest objections rather than objecting to the understanding of the future vision of the city. Kaur argues that the engagement of community participation should be initiated from the initial stages of planning in order for community members to become more involved in the public interest of their cities or villages rather than just following their own personal interests or being marginalized from decision-making (Kaur 2007).

A second limitation to participatory planning relays through many negative experiences that proved to be costly, time consuming and difficult to sustain. Along the same lines, Francis Cleaver (1999) points out to the difficulty of encouraging participation. Many individuals find it easier and more beneficial not to participate. “Non-participation and non-compliance may be both a rational strategy and an unconscious practice embedded in routine, social norms and the acceptance of the status quo” (Cooke and Kothari 2001, 51). It could also be the outcome of a strategy that users deploy to protect themselves from what they see as repeated, failed external

interventions. For example, Cleaver reveals how women in Nepal saw it more appropriate not to participate in the irrigation association that took place because they believed that their absence from community participations will help them not attract attention towards their unlawful extraction of water. Cleaver argues that such a case and much more cases show that many people believe that participation can harm their personal interests and be easily used for manipulation and therefore avoid it.

A third limitation to participatory planning finds that it tends to perpetuate existing patterns of inequality within a community. A handful of such case studies were documented, for instance, in a volume eloquently titled *Participation: The New Tyranny*. The authors, Cooke and Kothari (2001) argue that while no one can oppose participation in its claim of sharing knowledge and negotiating power relations, those same notions may conceal and reinforce oppressions and injustices in different manifestations. Cooke and Kothari (2001) argue that the broad object of participatory development "is to increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalized people in decision-making over their own lives" (Cooke and Kothari 2001, 5). The justification of a participatory approach is linked to terms such as sustainability, relevance and empowerment. Reflecting on community participation, Cooke and Kothari argue that the "notion of a 'community' conceals however power relations within communities and further masks biases in interests and needs based on age, class, gender, religion, ethnicity and caste" (Cooke and Kothari 2001, 6). Participation is also easier said than done, and it is often difficult to convince people to take part in planning processes, especially when the benefits are either tangential or long term.

Monty Roodt in the article "Participatory development: a jargon concept?" argues that participation is a word that has been manipulated by different groups of people to mean entirely different things (Roodt 1996). Roodt emphasizes that

participation should be a tool used for all people to get involved in planning, decision-making, implementation and development. However in many participation projects, dominant groups of elites often tend to monopolize the decision-making process. Roodt argues that groups that compete for power usually take advantage of community participation for manipulation. In this regard, Roodt reflects on the importance of identifying the significant decision-makers and influential people and find out whose interests do they serve. It is also vital to identify the people who are usually excluded from the participatory process and understand their reactions and the reasons behind this exclusion. Some exclusion may reflect on the way people use their traditions as a means to exclude other people. For example, many communities do not allow women to participate in the participation process because of their 'traditions'.

Participatory planning can also be challenged because of the dependency of poor people on local elite groups. In Hari Mathur's article "Participatory Development: Some Areas of Current Concern", Mathur (1997) argues that the dependence of poor community members on the richer ones often prevents them from taking their decision independently, extending hence patters of inequality. Since participation is also time consuming, Mathur further stresses that "participation demands time and energy, but the struggle for existence consumes all of their energy and time. Often the poor are much too busy with many other commitments to be able to find time for participation. It is a luxury that they just cannot afford" (Mathur 1997).

The process of involving poor people in community participation along with the other members of the community based on equal roles is an integral part of the participatory model.

E. How Does Participation Happen?

Kaur argues that it is essential that other countries begin initiating intensive community participation, either through stakeholder meetings, public meetings, consultations and other forms during the early stages of planning because this process will increase the chances of success in producing the set of desired outcomes (Kaur 2007). Carson and Gelber (2001) point out to the importance of including representatives from the different factions in a community, including minority and marginalized representation. Representatives may be chosen randomly or by consensus between whom they represent. Representatives should represent certain stakeholders in a community; they must be leaders of their own cause. Equality between all participants is a vital component at any participatory meeting. Participation should be an effective tool for dwellers rather than outsiders to identify their problems and set their local priorities.

F. Conclusion

Back to the case study investigated in this thesis, the literature review in this section confirms the main assumptions made by the thesis: agricultural development, particularly in a context where it is possible to set-up small scale, locally run agricultural production, appears to be an important factor to reduce rural poverty by using agriculture as a source of diversifying family income.

The literature review further confirms that through participation, interest groups such as agricultural stakeholders can have a role in making decisions that will affect their lives. Many projects cannot be successfully implemented if citizens or dwellers have no sense of ownership and control over it. Advocates of community participation such as Arnstein (1969) associate citizen participation with citizen power

or control, arguing that the excluded and marginalized groups would have the right to self-determinate their future through their participation.

With respect to our case study, those findings confirm the necessity to engage in participatory planning. It is vital to initiate community consultations, meetings and other forms of participation to educate dwellers and increase their awareness regarding the importance of conserving agricultural practices. In this context, the master plan could act as a tool to foster participation. Such participation by all dwellers will help planners find compatible solutions to conserve the agricultural sector in Tebnin.

CHAPTER III

PROFILING THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN TEBNIN

Lebanon extends over 10,452 km2, of which only 2,730 km2 are used for agriculture, despite the prevalence of fertile lands and the relative abundance of water in the regional context (Abou Zeid 2007). Agriculture only contributed to 6.24% of the Lebanese GDP in 2011 according to a World Bank report published in 2012. This is due to a number of historical and contemporary challenges such as the high production cost mainly due to water scarcity, the high cost of new infrastructure, the damaged or neglected infrastructure, the incompetent educational and training institutions, poor marketing channels, lack of quality seeds and resources, lack of government expenditure and support to this sector (only 1.5% of the government budget), the lack of private investments and the weak forward linkages that could support this sector(Ministry of Agriculture - Lebanon 2011). It is in this context that one needs to understand the agricultural sector of Tebnine: a fertile, largely undervalued land. In this chapter, I will profile the agricultural sector in Lebanon. I begin by conducted interviews with the landowners, farmers and other agricultural stakeholders to assess their productions.

A. Agricultural Profile of Tebnin

According to the master plan study developed by Nashqat Oweidat (2005), the planner who was commissioned to develop Tebnin’s Master Plan by the Lebanese Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGU), Tebnin's historical agricultural used lands was estimated to be 66% (5,000,000 m2) of Tebnin's total area (7,477,671 m2) in

the mid 1950s. Today, only 8% of the village's total area is maintained for agricultural practices (Oweidat 2005).

During the 1940s, many farmers moved to tobacco production since it was a more profitable business. As tobacco farming became more appealing, the agricultural production of fruits, vegetables, and seeds began to decline. Moreover, the REGIE officer in Tebnin argues that though tobacco was a profitable business, its decline in the late 1970s was inevitable with the increasing cost of production. He stressed that famers in Tebnin are investing up to 15-17 hours of work per day for an income that can barely support a family of three. For that reason, many tobacco farmers since the 1970s migrated to cities seeking employment in the service and industrial sectors. Even though the agricultural sector in Tebnin has been neglected, our survey shows that an estimated 55% of the 1000 lots surveyed still engage in agricultural production challenging the difficulties of this sector. In my discussion with Tebnin's local elders about the village's agricultural history, they argue that families that lived in rural areas in South Lebanon such as Tebnin relied significantly on producing their own food rather than purchasing from markets. They emphasize on the social cohesion that once significantly existed between families in the same and neighboring villages and imposed farming cooperation, trading goods, and sharing available resources for food security and at times profiting from their production surplus.

One of the interviewees, M B. a history teacher and an agricultural expert, argues that between the years 1910 and 1940, most if not all village dwellers were engaged in agriculture, even Muslim clerics used to engage in agriculture for food security.

The survey I conducted of 43% of Tebnin's total lots (1000 out of the 2300) reveals the vitality of the agricultural sector and its diversity. Figure 1 below indicates

that the areas surveyed in Tebnin are mostly the historical agricultural lands reflected by the survey conducted for the Master Plan, located at the peripheries of the residential city core of the village. The survey does not reflect the lots that are located in the old city core around the citadel, yet still points to an estimated 55% (550 lots) of the total lots surveyed engaged in agricultural production. Agricultural production includes olives, seeds, fruits and vegetables (apples, lemon, tomatoes, cucumber...), tobacco and other. Seeds include a variety of beans, sunflower, corn, watermelon, brinjal, lentils, wheat, chickpeas and other (Figure 2 and Figure 3). The variety of agricultural production shows that agriculture in Tebnin still remains one of the main forms of practices land-use.

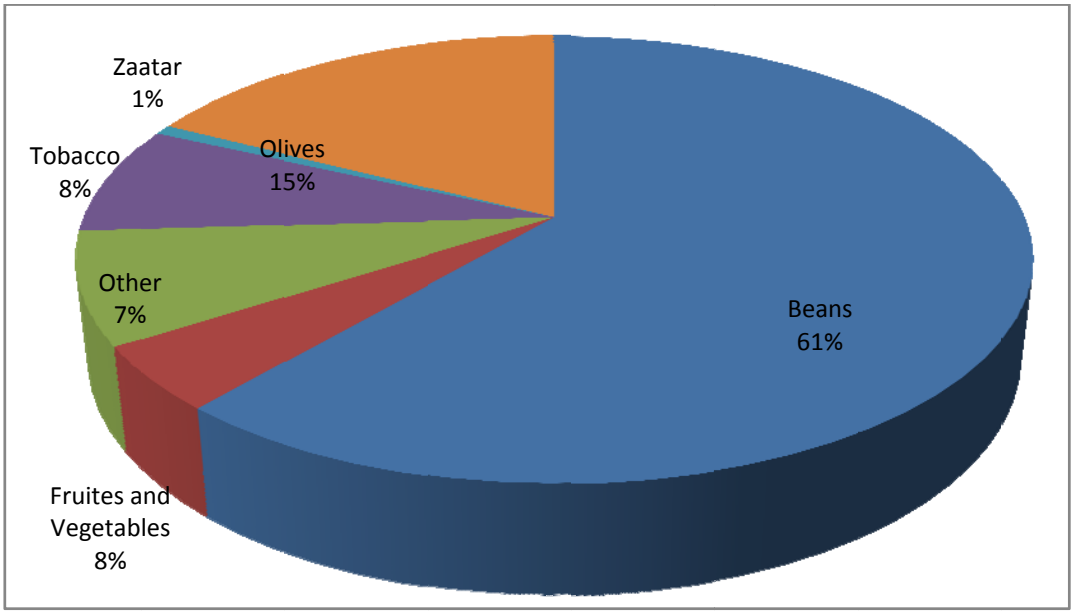

Fig. 2. Types of Production 550 lots - Source: Surveyed by author 2012

Fig. 3. Tebnin Map, Surveyed Areas

B. Agricultural Profile of Tebnin

1. Patterns of Ownership

Ownership in Tebnin is generally distributed among diverse families such as FZ, HD, MD, BY, WE, KH, HI and others, indicating that landownership is distributed among the different families in the village. Given historic tradition, a limited land

market, and poor security conditions, most –if not all- land is owned by families who can trace their historical roots to the village for several generations. The size of most surveyed lots ranges between 1 - 8 donoms (0.1-0.8 hectare) implying that the majority of farmers are engaged in small-scale farming.

Almost 82% (450 lots) of the 550 lots used for agricultural uses are planted for subsistence use and 18% (100 lots) are planted for commercial use.

2. Types of Planted Areas

Figure 4 indicates that the most produced agricultural products in Tebnin are the variety of seeds. Our finding show that 83% of the total seeds production in Tebnin is used for subsistence agriculture and only 17% used for commercial use.

3. Types of Agriculture

Figure 5 below indicates that subsistence agriculture is currently dominating the agricultural production in Tebnin. Since over 80% of subsistence agriculture involves the production of the various kinds of seeds, my fieldwork shows that 54% of the seed farmers are landowners themselves, and/or their workers. However, it is common in Tebnin for an agent who usually is a local from the village, to rent the land from the landowner for the very cheap price of 50,000 -100,000 Lebanese Liras for 1 donom (1000 m2) of land per year.

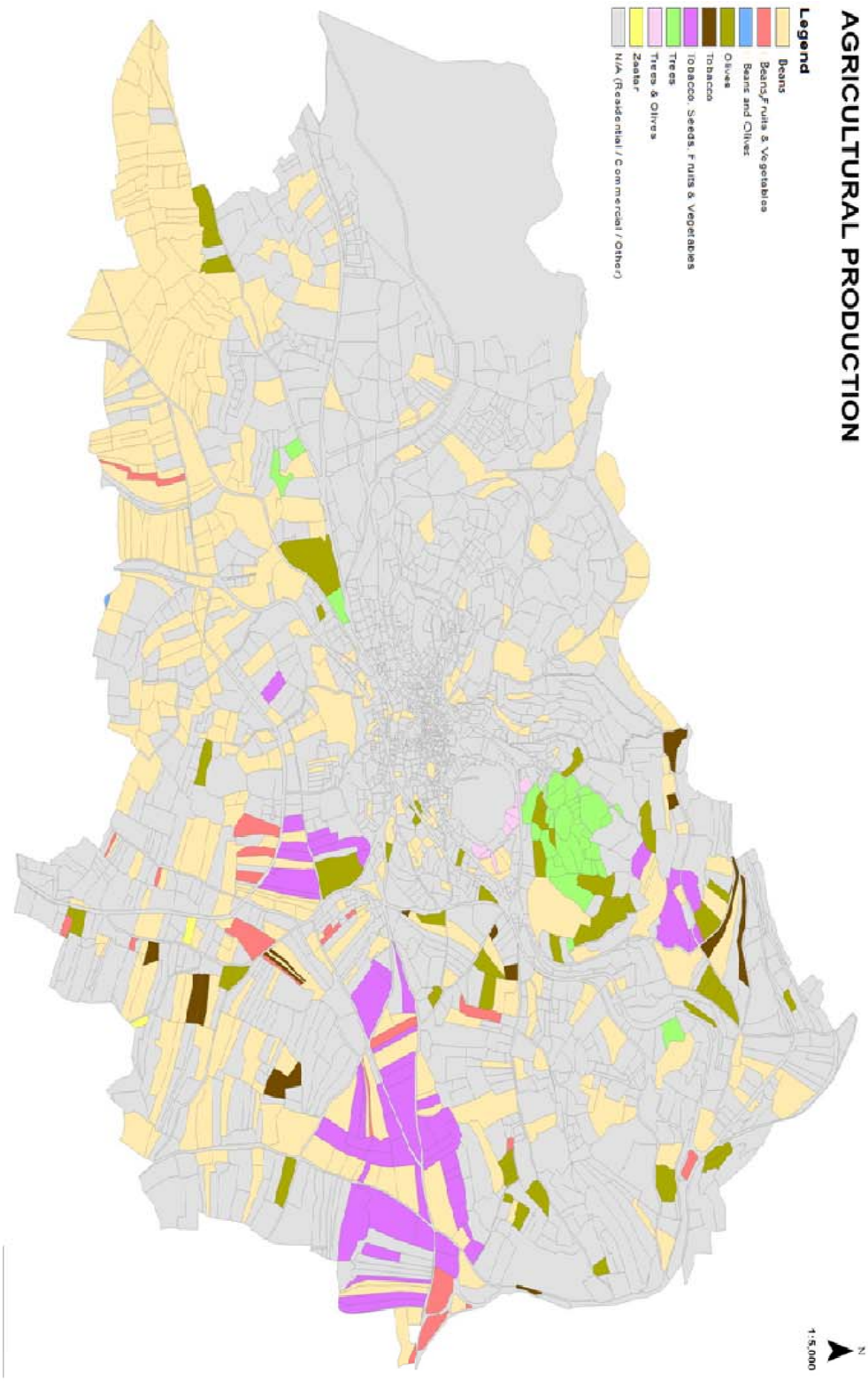

Fig. 4. Tebnin Agricultural Production Map
Source: Surveyed by Author, 2012.

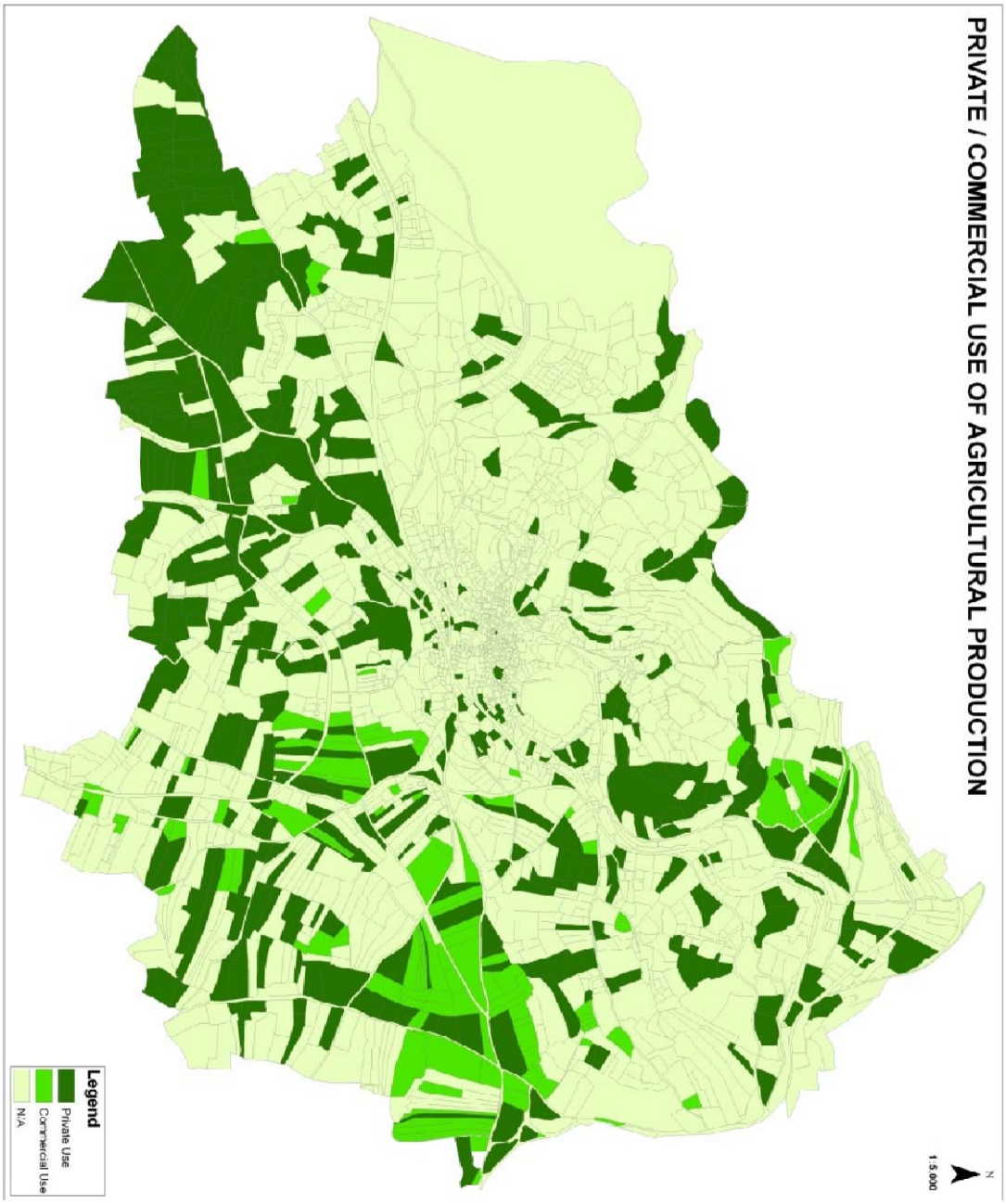

Fig. 5. Agriculture production in Tebnin
Source: Surveyed by Author, 2012.

The cheap cost of land rent in Tebnin is due to the lack of demand for agricultural lands. This reveals that dwellers are losing interest in pursuing agricultural practices and therefore allowing sprawling building practices and causing long-term negative environmental impacts.

C. Agricultural Stakeholders

With the assistance of Municipal members and local dwellers, I was able to locate 40 dwellers from a variety of families in Tebnin that are engaged in agriculture in different areas of the village. As noted in the methodology section, locating agricultural stakeholders was a difficult process since agriculture represents a minor source of income for most of them. I was able to locate only 3 inhabitants from the age group 15-30 years- to include in my interview sample, showing that the population engaged in the practice of agriculture is relatively older, the young ones have migrated to the cities and/or refusing to work in this sector. Most of my interviewees were 46-60 years old.

My field work allowed me to identify the following in the agricultural sector:

- Landowners: Tebnin's Municipality estimates that over 10% of Tebnin's permanent landowner inhabitants engage in mixed farming or commercial farming. While more than 50% engage into subsistence agricultural practices.

- Farmers: There is a low number of farmers from Tebnin because many have resorted to industrial and services employment outside the village due to agricultural problems.

- Municipality: The Municipality, which is the local representative, elected public authority, has not played an active role in articulating a long term developmental vision for this or other sectors of the economy. Its main role vis-à-vis the agricultural sector has been to facilitate the activities of international organization and to support at some limited instance the Agricultural Coop.

- Agricultural Cooperative/ Farmer's co-op: It is a cooperative that consists of 257 members. Over half of the members are farmers. It is currently a dormant coop and has no productive role in the agricultural economy of Tebnin due to disagreements between its managing board. This foundation could have the most vital function in the

agricultural sector of the village. It is the cooperative institution where farmers pool their resources in certain areas of activity. It is currently not providing any guidance and assistance to farmers and does not supply farmers with inputs for agricultural production, including seeds, fertilizers, fuel and machinery services. The cooperating association in Tebnin is a need for the farmers to acquire better outcome. The management of this foundation is considered to be a failure by many locals and by the municipality due to managerial problems.

- The Ministry of Agriculture: Represented by the Agricultural office in Bent Jubayl, should be the main governmental agency to support institutions such as the Agricultural Coop and individual farmers to enhance and develop their agricultural productions. The Agricultural Office has the role to aid farmers and agricultural coops with agricultural equipments and technology, educating and enhancing their agricultural skills, making sure farmers are being efficient in their production, helping farmers to market their products and other supportive roles. However the Agricultural Office is absent from its responsibilities due to the lack of financial support from the central government that has only dedicated 1.5% of the government's budget to agriculture in Lebanon.

D. Arrangements for Planting the Land

My fieldwork has revealed four types of arrangements between landowners and agents/farmers.

- Landowners and their families are the farmers themselves. They assume full responsibility from production to distribution. (The landowning farmers only use the expertise of an agricultural engineer) There are no signs of cooperation with other farmers.

- Landowners may hire cheap labor (Syrian workers) for farming. The labor will receive a daily salary (average 10,000-15,000 LL/daily).

- Farmers or agents rent land from landowners to engage into agriculture, used most cases in Tobacco agriculture, where farmers have been provided a license for Tobacco production by the REGIE.

- Landowners enter into sharecropping partnership with farmers or agents (all agents surveyed in Tebnin are from the village itself). Sharecropping is often used in Tebnin because it imposes efficiency on the farmer for greater profits. “Sharecropping occurs when a farmer uses the landowner’s farmland in exchange for a share of food output. Share depends on what each has to offer” (Todaro and Smith 2006, 446).

E. Subsistence and Commercial Agriculture

Agriculture in Tebnin faces obstacles that prevent its commercialization such as high production costs due to the lack of water supply, electricity, knowledge, skills, technology and other. The output of subsistence farming in the 450 lots that have been surveyed are usually consumed by family, relatives and friends. Even though low-income families engage into subsistence agriculture for food security, we have observed that middle and high income dwellers also engaged in agricultural production for self-use. Many of the lots noted below in figure 5 as private or subsistence, are owned and used for subsistence agriculture by school teachers, government employees, engineers, business men and other. Many of the middle and high-income property owners who visit the village only on week-ends tend to engage in subsistence agriculture for self-use; consuming organic and healthy agricultural products.

Local people use subsistence agriculture as one of their livelihood strategies. Subsistence farmers are engaged in agriculture using the simplest traditional methods

and tools, consulting local agricultural engineers or experts for assistance. It should be noted that subsistence agriculture in Tebnin is at most times used as one of the diversified income sources of a low-income household.

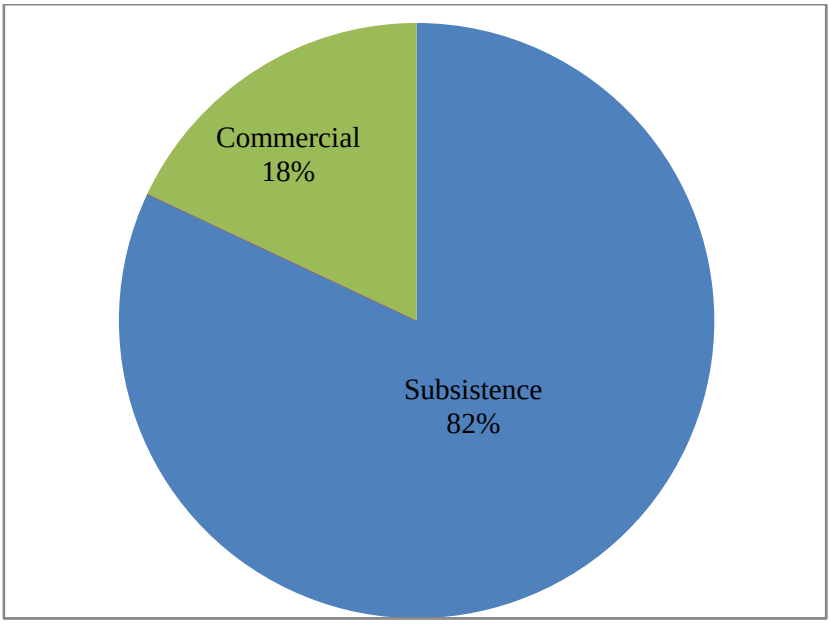

Fig. 6. Subsistence vs. Commercial Use (550/1000 lots)
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

The downturn of the agricultural economy in Lebanon due to the mentioned above has also had an impact on the commercial agricultural production in Tebnin. Many landowner farmers engaged in commercial agriculture argue that with the cost of water, chemicals, expertise, technological innovation and limited marketing locations, the profit margin tends to be very low, to the extent that hiring labor would be unaffordable. Mr. HM, a landowner and farmer, stresses that with all the high production cost incurred, his produce (tomatoes, cucumbers...) is sold in retail shops in Bent Jubayl at a low price determined by the retailers. With the absence of an open agricultural market in the region, retailers have the upper hand of imposing prices on

farmers. With low market channels for agricultural products, farmers at a certain point had decided to turn to tobacco and benefit from the state-run monopoly agency REGIE, responsible of subsidizing tobacco farmers. However, even though the REGIE officer in Tebnin indicates that there are around 70 tobacco licenses in the village, he argues that with the increased food prices and cost of living, farmers are finding tobacco agriculture unprofitable. There is a need to develop the current commercial agriculture by assisting and supporting farmers to access improved inputs and finding them reliable markets to sell their outputs.

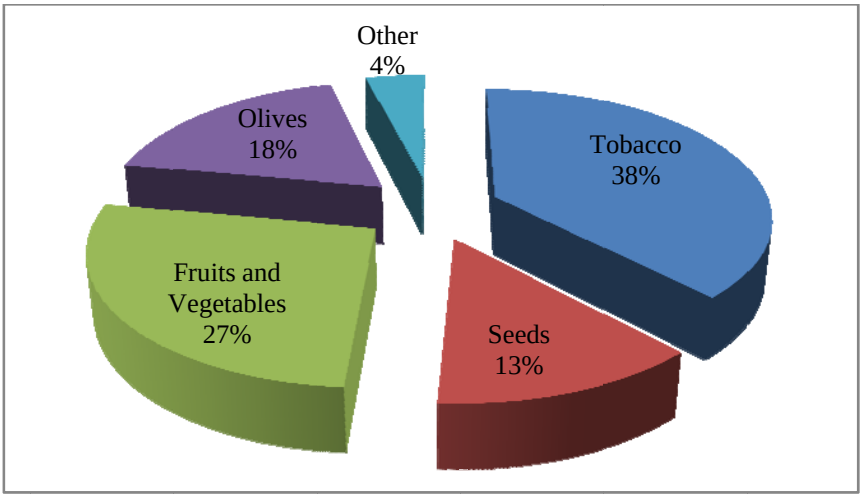

Fig. 7. Commercial Agriculture (100 lots surveyed)
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

The commercial agricultural lots that we have surveyed show that they have contributed to income generation and employment opportunities. There is an average of 5-15 people working in a commercial farm, especially in tobacco farming. Even though tobacco is 38% of the commercial agriculture of the 1000 lots surveyed, local dwellers argue that tobacco production is decreasing and more farmers are turning to producing fruits and vegetables.

Fig. 8. Tebnin Planting Map
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

Figure 8 above shows that the number of local dwellers who manage agricultural lands or agents exceeds the number of landowners when it comes to farming. This is mainly because many landowners are temporary inhabitants or expats who tend to rent their lands for a fixed rental wage. In subsistence agriculture, 54% of

farmers are the landowners themselves and their families while 46% are agents. Our fieldwork reveals that at many cases, agents enter share cropping arrangements with landowners. Furthermore, we have observed how most of the agents in subsistence agriculture enter into sharecropping with temporary inhabitants that mainly live in Beirut. However in commercial agriculture, over 70% of the farmers are agents while 30% are landowners. Our survey shows that most agents engaged in commercial agriculture tend to rent land from temporary landowners such as expats and from permanent landowners who usually own several lots in the village.

Figure 9 indicates that landowners engaged in agricultural practices either are permanent or temporary inhabitants. Our fieldwork reveals that most low-income dwellers depend on agricultural production that is cost-effective within their own limited resources and budgets. The Agricultural Coop general manager argues that the high cost of water supply is one of the main reasons why farmers avoid planting fruits and vegetables or any other form of production that demands large quantities of water supply. One water truck tank that totals up to 20 barrels (4000 liters) is estimated to cost about 35,000 Lebanese Pounds, a relatively modest sum that is nonetheless unaffordable to most low-income dwellers in the village. Instead, most subsistence farmers and some commercial farmers rely on rainwater (as indicated below in Figure 10) for agricultural products that demand low water usage such as seeds and olives.

Fig. 9. Tebnin Permanent or Temporary Inhabitants Map
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

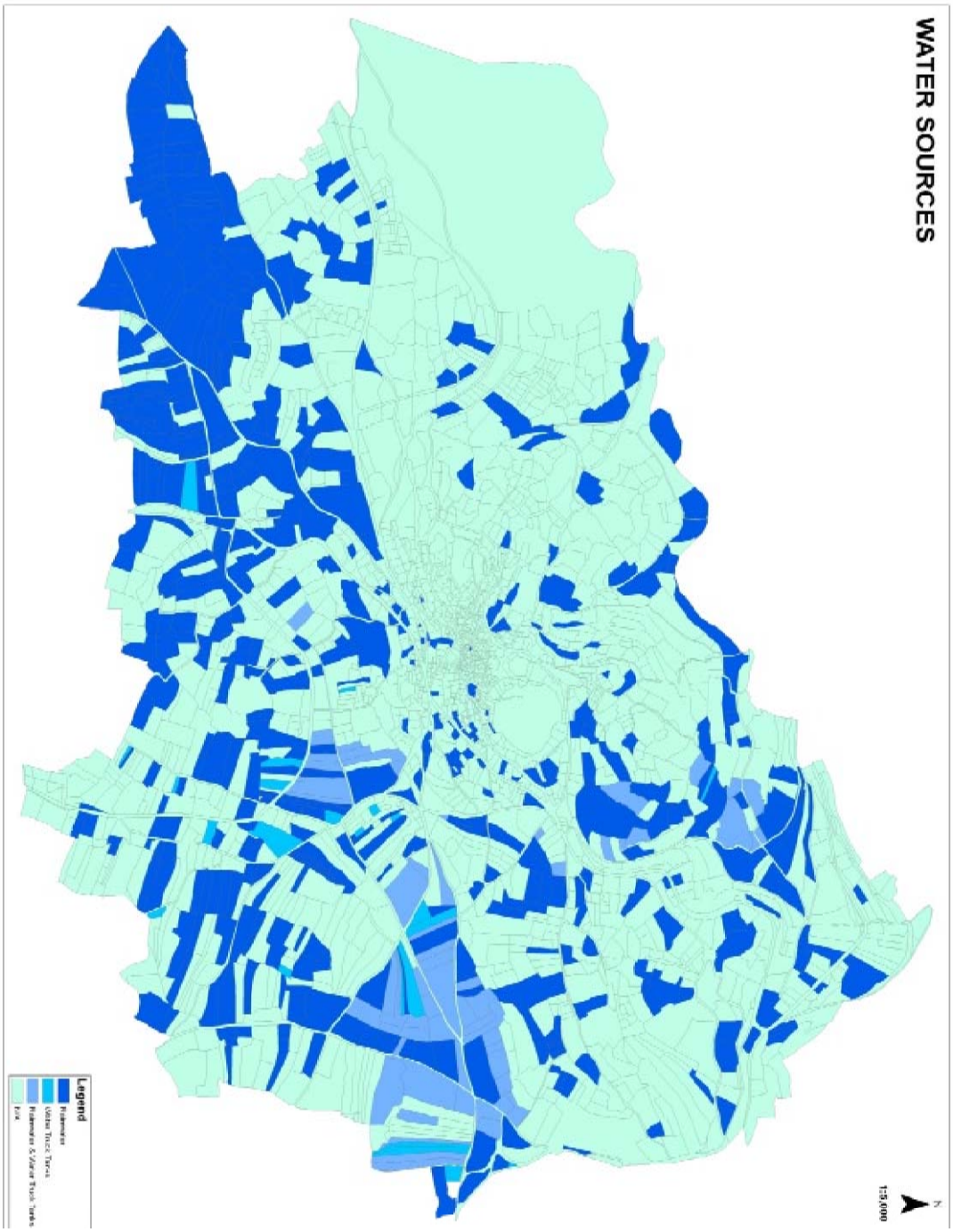

Fig. 10. Tebnin Water Sources Map
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

Over 85% of farmers who engage in seeds production rely heavily on rainwater rather than on water trucks. According to our fieldwork, water trucks are mostly delivered to large subsistence and commercial farms that engage in diverse agricultural productions such as fruits, vegetables and other. Keeping in mind that Tebnin's Master

Plan clearly disregards the preservation of water channels, our finding reveals that preserving natural waterways is an important factor to enhance and develop the agriculture sector in Tebnin since the high cost of water is a common problem to all agriculture stakeholders.

F. Policy and Development

As mentioned earlier, the central government has dedicated only 1.5% of its budget to the Lebanese agricultural sector in 2009. The main governmental agency responsible for agriculture in Tebnin and the region is the Agricultural Office that is located in Bent Jubayl. For us to analyze and assess the role of the central government in developing the agricultural sector in Tebnin and the region, I have interviewed Hussein Al Sakka, the chairman of the Agricultural Office in Bent Jubayl, which represents the Ministry of Agriculture in the Caza. Al Sakka explains that the role of the office is to provide guidance, awareness, medical support and training for farmers. He argues that the farmers that are presently working are ‘old fashioned’ and refuse to cooperate with each other, which makes it difficult for them to accept learning new production techniques. He emphasizes that due to the lack of financial support, the Ministry of Agriculture can only provide limited support. However, local farmers I met in Tebnin and the region denied that they had received any kind of support from the Agricultural Office. Many farmers and local inhabitants argue that the Agricultural offices are ‘useless’ and inadequate. Within the 2011-2014 Vision of the Ministry of Agriculture, there is an emphasis on reforming and empowering the Agricultural Offices in Lebanon to be able to be more competent and beneficial to farmers. Al Sakka stresses that for farmers to increase and enhance their output productions; they must cooperate and learn new techniques rather than insisting on their old traditional farming practices.

The absence of the central government in policies and development in favor of the agricultural sector is obvious. Interestingly, the Municipal authorities in Tebnin admit that the agricultural sector has been neglected for decades and that the Municipality has no agricultural vision in that aspect. The Municipality only had a role in being a mediator between certain NGOs and the Agricultural Coop. Municipal authorities argue that due to the lack of access to research data within the agricultural domain, agriculture has been devalued and has only been used as a reserve area for urban expansion. According to Allen (2001), for any development and policy strategy to take its course in the agricultural sector, it is necessary to engage the low-income households (ex. farmers of Tebnin) in analyzing the current situation, defining the future priorities, being involved in action plans and implementation. Unfortunately this is not the case of Tebnin; our field interviews with the various agricultural stakeholders indicate the deficiency of community participation in planning and decision-making.

G. Conclusion

- The local agricultural sector in Tebnin has deteriorated over time during the absence of a clear agricultural development vision. Even though many dwellers have lost interest in pursuing agriculture in the village, agricultural practices still take place mostly in the form of subsistence. As mentioned above, 82% of the respondents are engaged in subsistence agriculture and only 18% for commercial use. Our analysis shows that though the agricultural economy is weak in Tebnin, the potentials of developing and enhancing this sector is there through tax incentives, planning regulations, micro-credits and other.

- Landownership is distributed among the diverse families of the village. Over 60% of landownership goes back to family inherited lands held by the heirs. The

business relationship between the landowners and the agents for sharecropping is a common method used in the village. Figure 8 above indicates that agents and landowners are involved in many agreements in the different areas of the village, which reflects stable business interactions among dwellers.

CHAPTER IV

STAKEHOLDERS AND THE POTENTIALS OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Having profiled the agricultural sector in the previous chapter, I now turn to outlining the potentials of participatory planning for improving the current conditions, particularly in relation to land uses. I look at the (i) current knowledge about the master plan, (ii) people's perception of the sector and (iii) whether they would be willing to participate in a master planning process that would change these conditions.

A. Profile of Respondents

According to the Municipality of Tebnin, over 60% of the permanent inhabitants in Tebnin engage in agriculture. In order to assess the importance of agriculture in Tebnin and learn about the awareness among local dwellers of the Tebnin 2005 Master Plan- particularly in relation to the agricultural zoning and its effects on their activities, I have interviewed 40 agricultural stakeholders, most of which are permanent inhabitants of the village. Agricultural stakeholders interviewed include several groups: subsistence farmers (local farmers and landowners who work as school teachers, government employees, engineers and other) and commercial farmers who are engaged in agriculture for commercial use, either as their sole income or as one of several. It is noteworthy to remind ourselves here that the majority of landowners and farmers interviewed are aged between 46 and 70 years (Figure 11). This is particularly important to note because it informs us that the young generation have lost interest in working in agriculture and thus migrated to cities for employment.

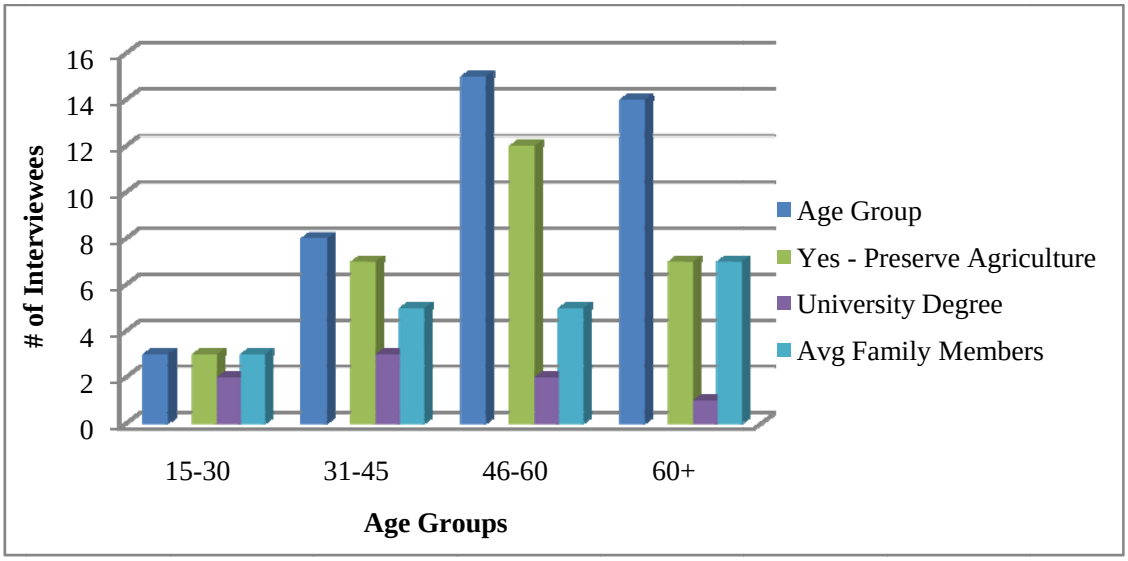

Fig. 11. Profile of farmers: Age Groups and Academic Degrees

How do local stakeholders perceive the agricultural sector? Interviews indicate that agricultural stakeholders in the age group of 60+ (least ones with university degrees) and few others in the other groups are pessimistic about the future of agriculture as a productive sector of the economy and its potential role in local economic development. Respondents argue that there are too many obstacles that prevent the agricultural cycle from operating to its potential, such as the lack of water supply, marketing channels and others that will be discussed later on. They argue that families are growing and younger generations are interested in modern matters such as technology, banking and other sectors of the economy rather than agriculture. In the absence of agricultural innovation, the agricultural sector is doomed to deteriorate and lose the significance it once had.

Still 72% of the interviewees, including the young respondents (Figure 12) concur that agriculture is vital to preserve. They argue that with the right support and guidance from the government, the agricultural coop, NGOs and other, developing the agricultural sector would lead to high economic, social and environmental potentials.

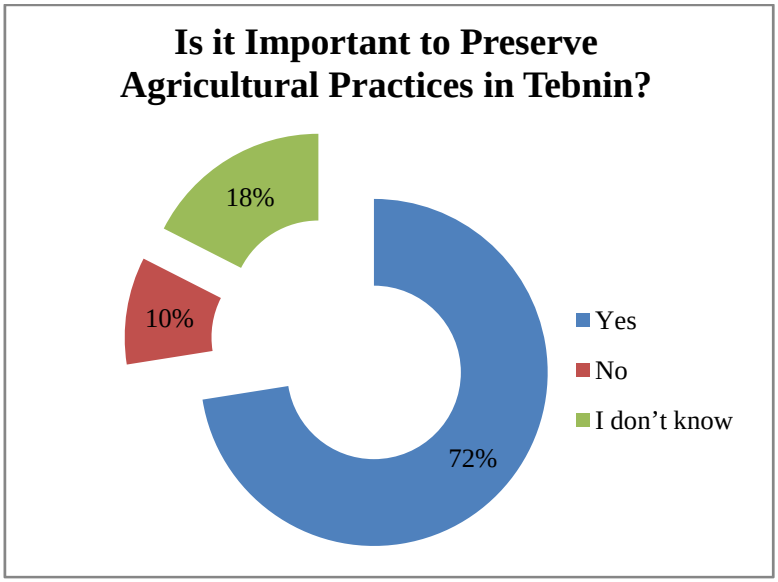

Fig. 12. Tebnin Agricultural Dwellers Interview
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

Several reasons were provided for the necessity to preserve agriculture:

- Agriculture as part of Tebnin's heritage: Several respondents believed that agricultural is important to preserve as an essential element of our heritage. This is best exemplified in this quote, stated by an old farmer: "historically we grew up working in the agricultural sector, it is part of our past, our heritage and we must not let go of it."

- Agriculture as a source of income generation and food security: Several interviewees argue that even though the agricultural sector has deteriorated over time, many families still benefit from agriculture as part of its income generation and/or food security.

Figure 12 indicates that 18% of the interviewees reveal that they have no knowledge if agriculture is still an important source to preserve since they are unaware if agriculture in Tebnin is contributing positively to the village or not. A number of interviewees made it clear that they are not 'qualified' to decide whether agriculture should be preserved or not. They believed that such a decision should be assessed by

those engaged in agricultural practices.

Figure 13 demonstrates that most of the interviewees engaged in agriculture are either completely uneducated or left school at an early stage. It is interesting to conclude that all the interviewees with a university degree concur that agriculture is an important sector to preserve and enhance. While many uneducated interviewees saw that agriculture lost its significance and therefore there is no need to preserve it. Educated stakeholders believe that even though agriculture has presently lost its true economic value, with the right solutions and incentives, the agricultural sector could revive and become once again an important component of economic growth.

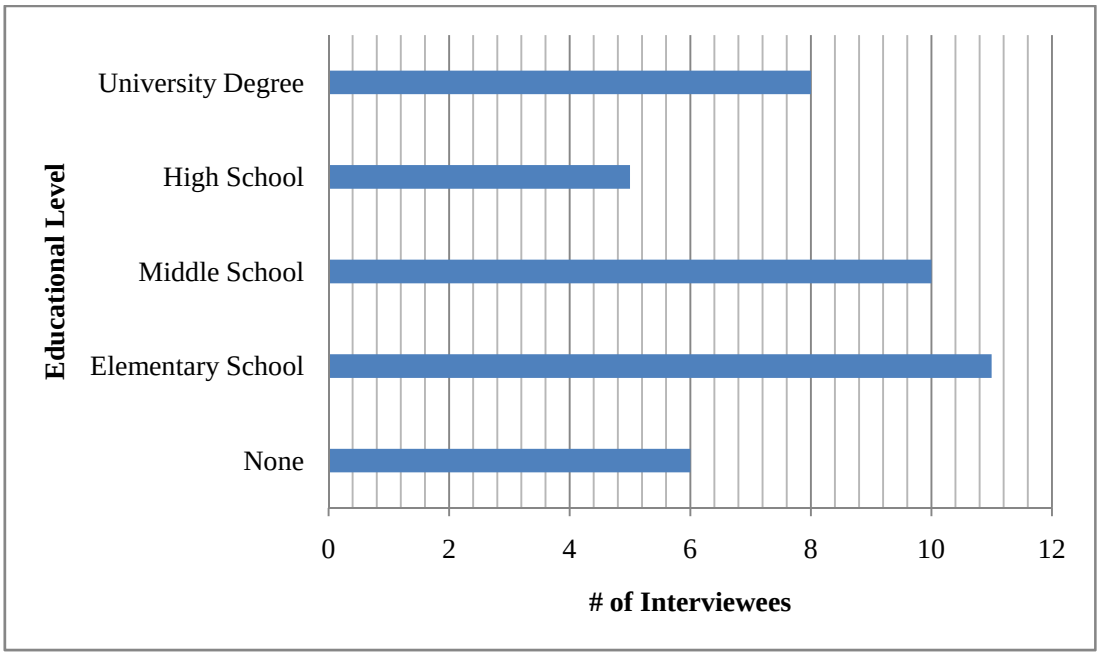

Fig. 13. Interviewees Education Level
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

All of the interviewed stakeholders are engaged in agriculture for subsistence or/and commercial use. Figure 14 shows that 47% of the interviewees work in agriculture for subsistence use, enjoying the agricultural contribution to their food

security. Only 20% work in agriculture for commercial use and 33% engage into both, subsistence and commercial use.

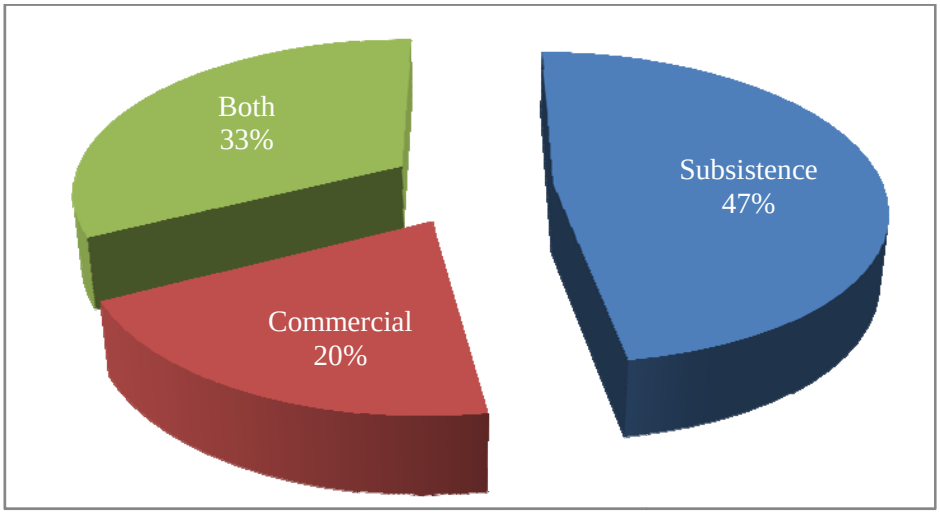

Fig. 14. Agricultural Use
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

How does agriculture factor as a sector of the local economy? Even though the agricultural sector has declined drastically ever since the 1950s, agriculture continues to contribute to the villagers' food security and maintains its role as a strategy for income generation. My questionnaire (Figure 15) indicates that thirty-three of the forty respondents claim that agriculture contributes to over 20% of their food demands and twenty-two claim that agriculture contributes over 20% of their income generation. Figure 16 and Figure 17 show detailed percentage contribution of agriculture to interviewed stakeholders.

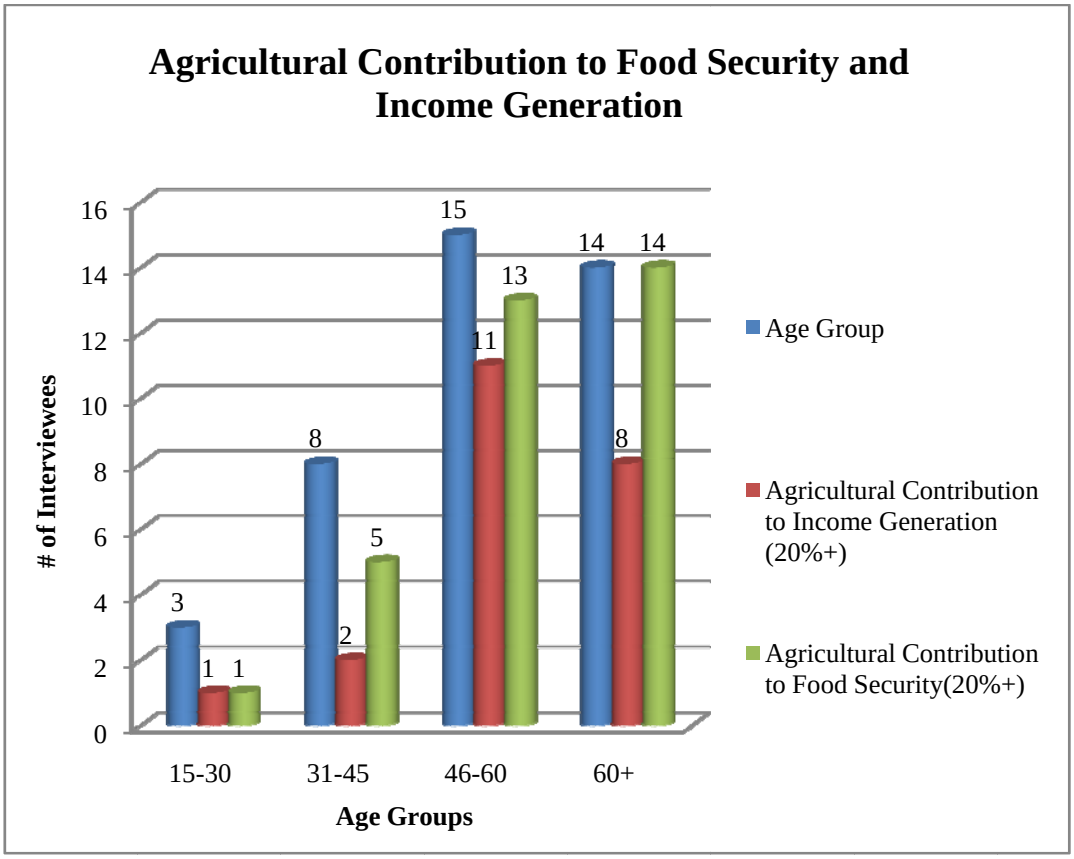

Fig. 15. Contribution of Agriculture to the Different Age Groups
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012.

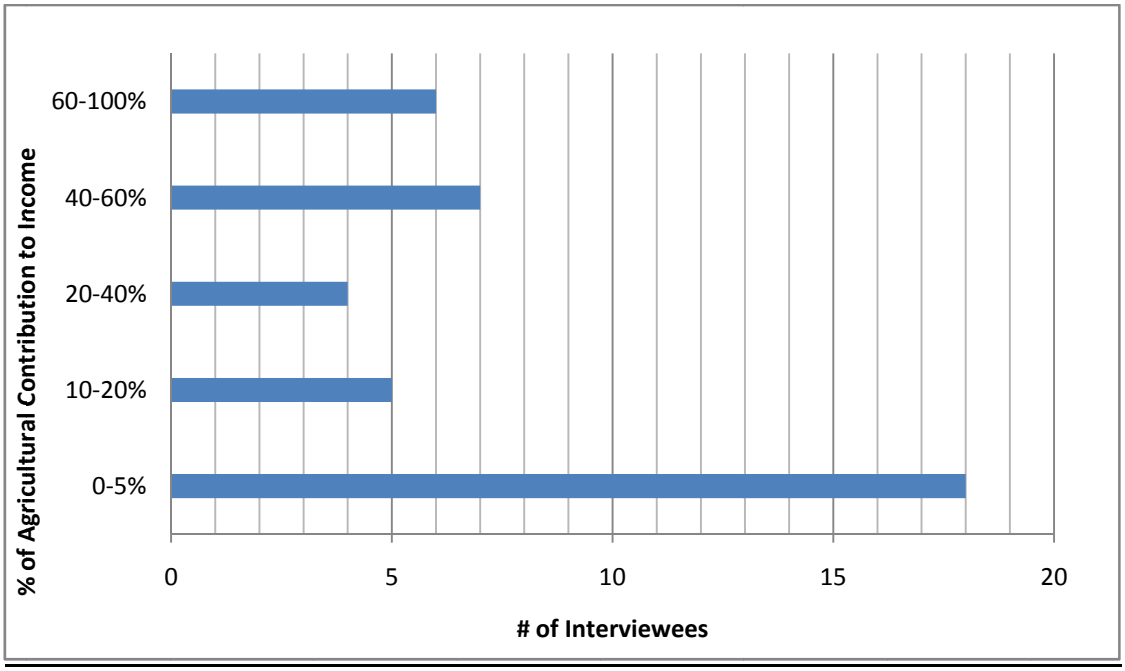

Fig. 16. Contribution to Income Generation
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012

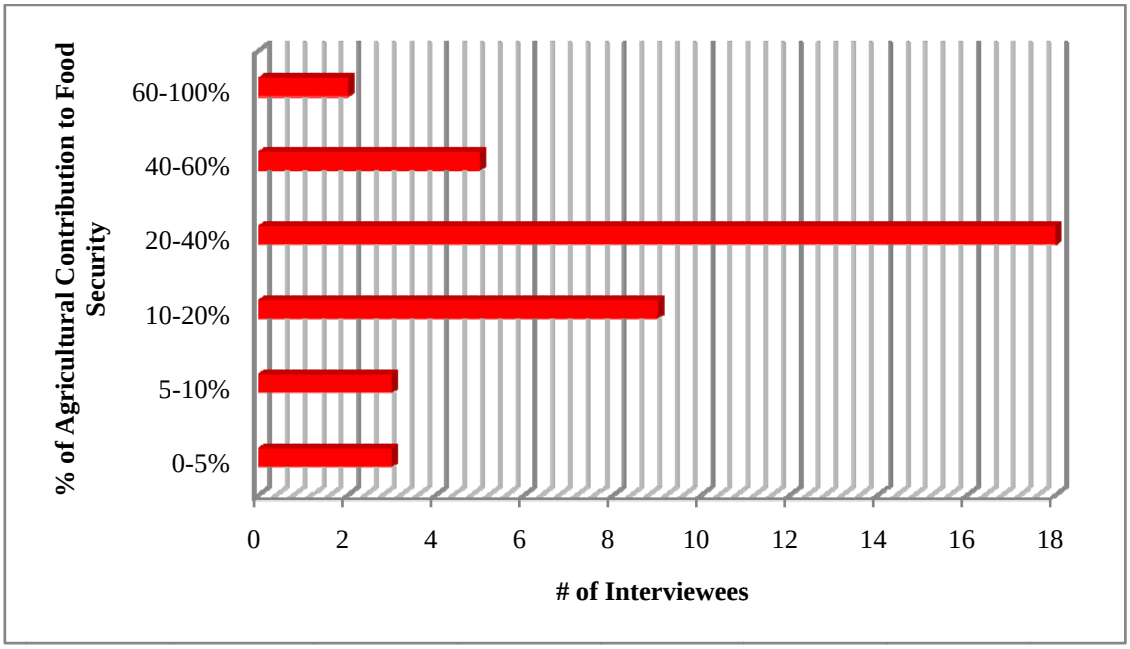

Fig. 17. Agricultural Contribution to Food Security

Figure 16 indicates that about half of the agricultural stakeholders engage in agriculture for subsistence uses only. While the rest of the interviewees take agriculture as either a full or partial part of their income generation. Six dwellers interviewed, including farmers and/or landowners, take agriculture as a full time job and depend on its income generation for a living. Figure 15 shows us that interviewees in the age group of 46 - 60+ rely greatly on agriculture as a partial part (20%+) of their food security. We can see that all interviewees in the age group of 60+ are engaged in subsistence agriculture while most interviewees in the 46+ age group is engaged in the commercial side of agriculture. Figure 17 illustrates that subsistence agriculture is contributing 20-40% to almost half of the interviewees' food security.

Most agricultural stakeholders still purchase agricultural produce from local retail shops and from regional agricultural markets. Many engage in stock exchanges, trading their agricultural products surplus with other farmers. The subsistence and commercial agricultural production includes different kinds of seeds, olives, fruits,

vegetables and tobacco. Figure 18 demonstrates that majority of farmers are engaged in rain fed agricultural production such as olives and seeds.

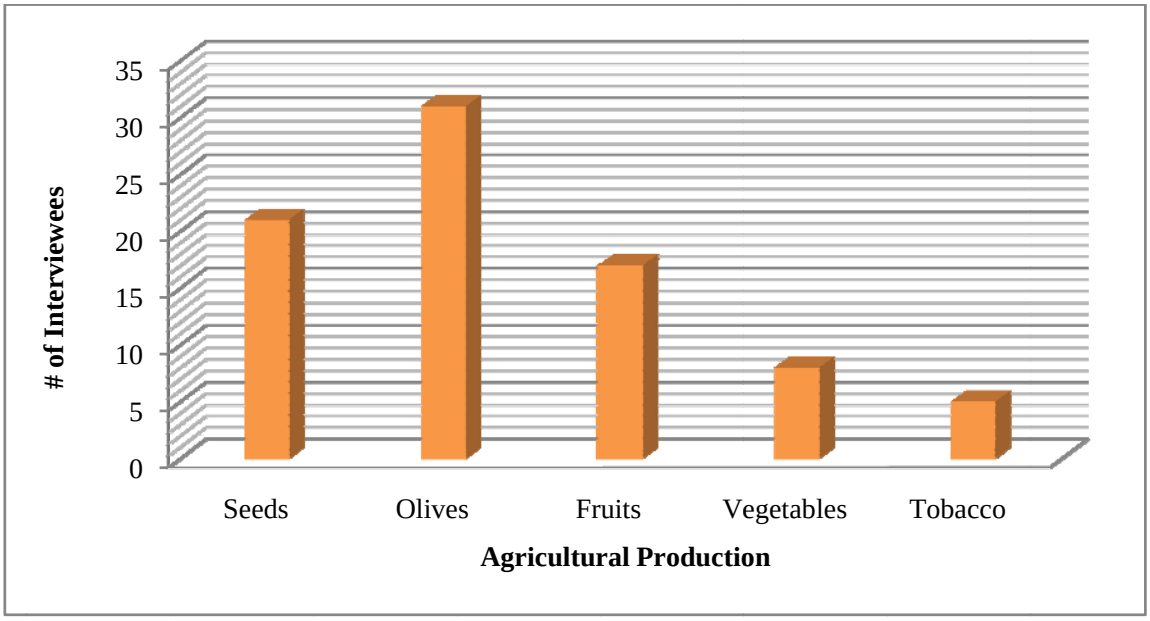

Fig. 18. Agricultural Production of Interviewees
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012

All agricultural stakeholders interviewed argue that the main problem in developing the agricultural sector is the increased production cost and the limited market distributions. Figure 19 indicates that most interviewees stress that the main problem in agricultural production is access to water supply. Farmers engaged in fruits and vegetables have high demands of constant water supply. Water is a problem in Tebnin due to the lack of steady water supply from the government, lack of rainwater storage tanks and high cost of purchasing water tanks from the private market. All farmers agree that the main reason they do not engage into fruits and vegetable production is because of water deficiency. Other obstacles raised by the agricultural stakeholders include the lack of electricity, fertilizers, governmental guidance and

support, micro credits and other. Some agricultural landowners hire labor workers to assist them in their agricultural productions, however since local labor is costly, landowners tend to hire Syrian workers who take an average wage of $10 per day. Few of the farmers referred to rent as an obstacle because it is relatively cheap to rent. Only 13% of the interviewees rented land for agriculture for an estimated amount of 250,000 LL - 300,000 LL per 1 donom (1000 meters squared) annually. All stakeholders engaged in commercial farming agree that finding possible markets to sell their products would attract many dwellers to work again in agriculture.

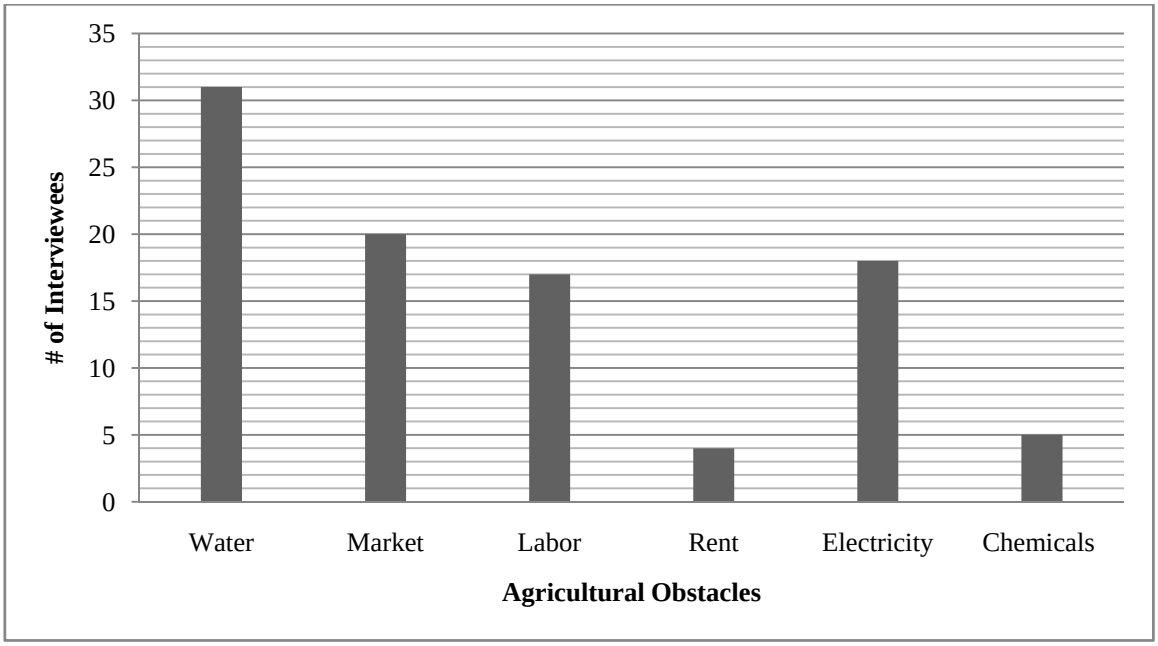

Fig. 19. Agricultural Obstacle
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012

B. Tebnin 2005 Master Plan

As mentioned in Chapter 2, land uses in Tebnin are regulated since 2005 by a Master Plan that was commissioned by the Directorate General of Urbanism and approved by local stakeholders- particularly the Municipality- after several rounds of

revisions. The lands that are zoned for agriculture in the 2005 Tebnin Master Plan limits areas earmarked for agricultural uses to 605,929m2 or 8% of Tebnin’s total area. The 2005 Master Plan fails to protect agricultural lands from urban sprawl and could have significantly negative effects on the agricultural practices.

It should be said however that the master plan doesn’t produce the sprawling built fabric of today’s village, it only supports it. It also makes it possible for certain building schemes to develop and create alternative realities in the agricultural tracts by blocking water ways for example. Fawaz (2013) argues that the master plan reflects a particular way of thinking, one that limits its understanding of land to real estate. It is sustained by a particular discourse circulated in the village by a handful of dwellers, including developers, for whom the value of land is limited to real estate exchange and hence construction ratios. Anecdotal data in the village indicate that at the time of the inception during the discussions about the master plans, these developers were particularly aware of construction ratios and they were alerting dwellers about the negative valuation of their properties should low exploitation ratios be assigned to them. In other words, these developers, explained, represented and discussed the significance of land building ratios to landowners. In that sense, the modifications of the master plans were the outcome of the landowners who were mobilized in this direction. They uphold a particular vision of real estate.

Oweidat argues that according to his studies, 66% of Tebnin's total areas in mid 1950s was engaged in agricultural practices. Even though the Municipality of Tebnin estimates that over half of its current permanent inhabitants engage in agriculture, the Tebnin 2005 Master Plan has only zoned 8% of Tebnin's total area as agricultural.

Despite these realities, my findings reveal that over half of the interviewees

(Figure 20) are not aware of the 2005 Tebnin Master Plan and have not learned about its development and its outcomes. Most of the landless farmers and several landowners argue that they have no knowledge about the Master Plan because they have not been notified by anyone regarding this matter. One of the landless farmers made it clear that since he owned no land, he has no business or interest in the Master Plan. Several landowners and farmers blame the Municipality for not informing them about the Master Plan. As for the other half, interviewees declared that they are aware of the Master Plan through their daily contacts at the Municipality. Such contacts with the Municipality are then the result of their daily visits or through their close relationships with municipal members and employees. For example, a respondent who is a member of the Agricultural Coop is aware of the Master Plan through his relative who works at the Municipality. In other words, circulated information about the Master Plan has only been transmitted through word of mouth; the Municipality took no initiative to directly explain the Master Plan to dwellers. In other words, even the lowest level of participation described by Clayton *et al.* (2003) (see Chapter 2), sometimes referred to as 'passive participation', where decision-makers call upon citizens and inform them of decisions made, did not take place in Tebnin.

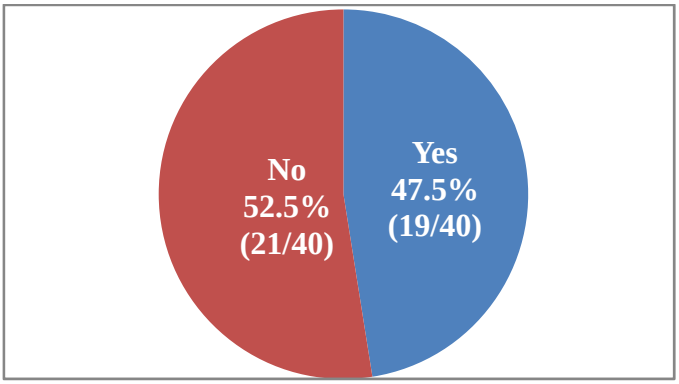

Fig. 20. Aware of 2005 Tebnin Master Plan
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012

Furthermore, most interviewees who are aware that a Master Plan had been adopted for the village are unaware of details of the document, particularly about zoning regulations and the location of agricultural lands. Figure 21 maps the answers I received; indicating that 70% of the interviewees are not aware that only eight percent of Tebnin's total area is zoned as "agriculture". Even though they were uninformed about this fact, all interviewees except one (who works at the Municipality), concur that the 2005 Master Plan is deemed to be ineffective and unproductive since no community participation took place at all. One of the agricultural landowners stated that "since no participation took place, how would they know about our concerns? Such a Master Plan is deemed to fail since we were excluded from the beginning."

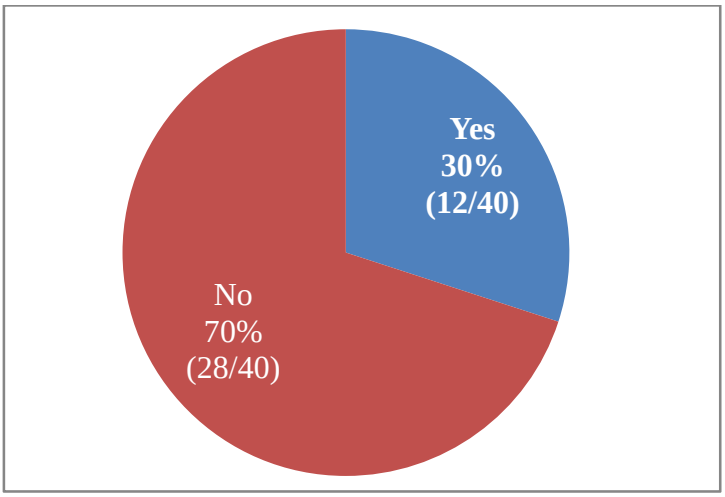

Fig. 21. Did you know only 8% of Tebnin's Total Area Has Been Zoned as Agricultural In 2005 Master Plan
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012

The 30% of the interviewees with knowledge of the agricultural zoning in Tebnin explain their awareness again through their work with the Municipality or connection with Municipal members or employees. Among the interviewees are

engineers and government officials that work with the Municipality on daily basis in construction and legality issues. Their daily contact with the Municipality is the only reason they are well aware of the Master Plan.

The agricultural stakeholders demonstrate great dissatisfaction regarding the planning process that did not engage any participation from stakeholders. The vast majority of interviewees argue that even though zoning agricultural lands as mixed-use have increased the real estate values of properties, dwellers must come along to agree that agricultural lands must be preserved for the public good of the village. One farmer questions: "do people realize the importance of preserving agricultural lands? Do they know that soon the beautiful open space of Sahel Al Khan and Waddi Yahoudeya would be transformed into a dense polluted residential area? We are losing our heritage, our traditions, our agriculture, our environment and thus our village and yet we cannot do anything about it." The majority of the agricultural stakeholders argue that if incentives were provided, such as micro credits, water supply, marketing channels and other, the demand for agricultural lands will increase and hence facilitate the process of convincing landowners to accept new zoning regulations that would protect their interests and the interests of the public good.

On the other hand, a few interviewees insisted that preserving agricultural lands is 'useless' and 'ineffective' because they do not foresee agricultural solutions to their problems. Whilst most others believe that having an incompetent agricultural sector should not be the reason to eradicate agricultural existence. They argue that agriculture has historically provided employment and food security to dwellers, a clean environment and social cohesion.

To be able to enhance the agricultural sector, assistance is needed to overcome the obstacles that prevent agricultural growth. Dwellers believe that the central

government, the Municipality and the Agricultural Coop are the main institutions responsible to improve the agricultural sector in Tebnin. Even though the 2005 Master Plan had a negative role in preserving agricultural practices, agricultural stakeholders argue that there is a need to make the community in Tebnin aware of the importance of protecting agricultural lands by zoning agricultural areas such as Sahel Al Khan as strictly for agriculture.

C. Participatory Planning

Despite stating strong enthusiasm about agricultural preservation, awareness raising, and community participation, I was surprised to find out that many respondents were reluctant to participate in public meetings. Thus, less than half my respondents (42%) responded positively to my inquiry about attending a public meeting while 25% gave a categorical negative.

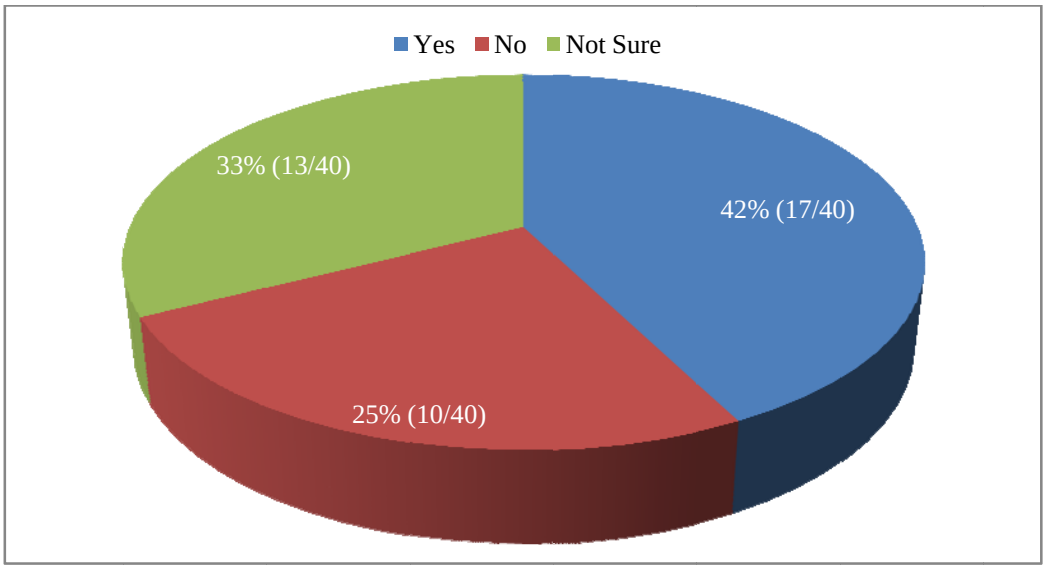

Fig. 22. Interested in Being Involved in Public Meetings
Source: Surveyed by author, 2012

Why is that the case? The first reason given by respondents is that public meetings are a waste of time particularly because they distrust representative authorities and did not believe that they will listen to them and/or account their opinion. 58% of the interviewees were either hesitant or unwilling to attend public meetings because they believe that the actual decision-makers in such matters are politicians as well as the "connected" dwellers who usually do not attend meetings. One farmer emphasizes that "we farmers have no say and will never have a say, why would they listen to us? I would prefer to spend my time working and providing for my family rather than wasting it believing they would listen and act upon our concerns. It is clear that decision-makers only act upon their personal interests." Other interviewees stress that they have never been asked about their opinion about anything, therefore they will not attend meetings of 'manipulation' just to provide the image of participation. Since it has become a norm that the only time decision-makers are willing to meet and listen to the concerns of the agricultural stakeholders is right before parliamentary and municipal elections.

Another reason stated for the distrust in public participation is that farmers are not organized in a credible body that could bargain for their shared interest. A board member of the Agricultural Coop emphasize that the Coop had been initiated since August 1964 for the purpose to get all agricultural stakeholders' resources together and strengthen their position on any negotiating table. He points out that since problems are being observed between board members of the Coop, the agricultural stakeholders have lost faith in such an institution and therefore each decided to work on their own. Such a case would scatter the agricultural stakeholders and weaken their position to be heard. He argues that "if we represent a group of over 250 members of farmers and landowners, then decision-makers will have no choice but comply with our demands."

He like other stakeholders believe that the only way to attend any kind of participation meetings would be when they have an organized and effective Coop that could represent them. After this has been achieved, there is a need to rebuild the trust between them and the decision-makers. Since participation has been absent for a long time, people tend to get used to the status quo, where dwellers have no role in participation and decision making, and therefore live accordingly. If decision-makers do not show any sign of willingness to share their decision powers with them, then it would be difficult to engage in productive meetings.

A third reason given by respondents is the history of accumulated negative experiences that have generated a disincentive for participation. Some farmers rejected participation because they argue that historically neither the central government nor the Municipality showed any interest to assess and support the welfare of the farmers in the region. Talking to agricultural stakeholders revealed that over half of the interviewees do not believe that community participation will be dynamic and productive.

Finally, a number of respondents, mostly landless farmers, felt that they had no time to take part in such meetings which they considered a luxury. They were struggling to make ends to survive with their families, therefore they could not afford taking time to participate in public meetings.

Others, nonetheless, insisted that participation was valuable and expressed their faith in such a process. 42% (which include mostly landowners) insist that participation is a need to express their problems and a means to discuss potential solutions with decision-makers. Unlike farmers, landowners showed more willingness to attend public meetings. A number of landowners cited a history of positive experiences. They argued that participation had been successful in the past through the one-on-one meetings with the Mayor, discussing with him their problems and working out solutions. They believe

that public meetings with the Mayor of Tebnin could be productive.

In conclusion, the negative past experiences if public participation and the distrust that exists between the stakeholder and decision makers does not encourage a public meeting to take place. Many dwellers argue that incentives must be given to prove the seriousness of involving all stakeholders in public meetings and giving them a voice in decision making.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis investigated whether planning tools such as the master plan can be used as an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of the agricultural sector, transform its perception in the local community, and consequently increase the possibilities for a long term, sustainable development vision in the investigated region. Starting with a normative position that argued for the necessity for community participation as a prerequisite for sustainable development, the thesis looked at whether community involvement in land-use planning could lead to the formation of pressure groups that would defend agricultural zoning and facilitate the adoption of a land-use plan that would protect a long-term sustainable agriculture sector.

My fieldwork in Tebnin included a survey of local agricultural practices, a mapping of these practices in relation to patterns of ownership and processes of agricultural production, as well as interviews with farmers and agricultural landowners engaged in commercial and/or subsistence agriculture in order to unravel their knowledge of the master plan, their position and/or relation to agricultural practices, and their willingness to support a land-use zoning that would protect agriculture.

A. Thesis Findings

My main findings showed the following:

- Despite the dominant perception among policymakers that practices of agriculture are foregone, my findings reveal a vibrant agricultural practice in the village. More specifically, there exists an active agricultural sector in Tebnin, one that supports

a wide range of dwellers (over 60%) who actively use this sector as part of their subsistence strategies. Households still engage in agricultural practices integrate this strategy either by renting land or by planting their own property. There also exists a small group of farmers (less than 20%) who rent land for commercial uses but their activities are severely limited due to the difficulty of rendering the agricultural practices profitable. There is substantial appreciation for agriculture among the weakest economic groups who, if given incentives and proper conditions, would be interested in this sector.

- The analysis of the master plan adopted for Tebnin in 2006 indicates that despite the centrality of agriculture and its distributive role in the economy, only 8% of the village is zoned as agriculture. Given that over 60% of the village is currently planted, we can conclude that the master plan doesn't protect current agricultural practices, let alone future ones.

- The survey of landownership patterns in Tebnin indicates that agricultural land is widely distributed in relatively small parcels across the community. This provides additional incentives to think about the agricultural sector as a distributive sector of the economy where poverty alleviation and/or inclusive incentives and subsidies can have equitable outcomes.

- Interviews with community members indicate that over half the dwellers are unaware of the details of the master plan. Among those dwellers, there is a clear difference between propertied and non-propertied farmers whereby the latter group is at least twice less likely to know about the details of the master plan.

- Channels of communication bias well-off, well connected dwellers, as well as those who are involved in the building sector have direct access to information from the municipality. My survey indicates that while only 26% of the landless farmers

interviewed were aware of the master plan, 66% of landowners had knowledge and access to this information. There hence is a strong bias in the current processes of information that disadvantage more vulnerable groups.

- My findings also indicate that dwellers are reluctant to take-part in a participatory planning process, particularly those among them who described that they were unaware of the master plan. To justify their lack of involvement, dwellers listed (i) distrust with governmental authorities, (ii) time constraints, and (iii) previous negative participation experiences that discourage them from supporting a participatory planning process.

B. Recommendations

Building on the above findings, the thesis makes the following recommendations:

- The thesis first recommends a revision of the current framework of planning whereby the ban on community participation which is legislated in the urban planning law is lifted to allow a wider circulation of information. My findings indeed indicate that the current ban on participation in the making of the master plan, which is legislated by Lebanese Law, leads to a bias in who has a voice: more powerful, networked actors who are somehow connected to the municipality and/or own property know about land-uses and land-use allocations through private channels while others, particularly landless farmers who depend on agriculture as part of their subsistence strategies, are poorly informed about the planning process and unable to influence the master plan.

Instead, it will be necessary to create an explicitly open process of information sharing as part of master planning that requires sharing information with dwellers and

provides transparent channels of influencing decision making. The commonly thought-of process of participatory planning which consists of setting up community meetings is insufficient to change the tides since dwellers do not feel that they will be given the role of influencing decision-making and/or participation is seen by some as a luxury which they cannot afford, but also co-optation process that they are unwilling to engage in. As a result, the thesis also avoids, at least in the first stages, large-scale participatory meetings that can be seen as manipulative consultations. One-on-one consultations should be resorted to instead, providing small-scale incentives to build trust with the stakeholders. Instead alternative venues and forms of participation are sought. Further research would need to be done in order to determine how such venues can work.

- The thesis further recommends that incentives are given for farmers, particularly those who live in the village year round, to get together, institute their relations, and begin to build coalitions that not only would render their work more productive but also strengthen their voice when influencing the master plans. In the current institutional structure, for example, landless farmers are not allowed to join the farmer's cooperative. Such restrictions should be lifted. Furthermore, in line with the current practice of the municipality to allocate space in the municipal building for cooperative, further efforts should be made to strengthen information sharing with the municipality as a way to infiltrate agricultural interests and coalesce them the same way building practices are currently encouraged.
    - Since over 60% of the dwellers still engage in subsistence agriculture in Tebnin, there is a need to revive the notion of a 'common good' by advocating for agricultural protection. It will be important to emphasize on the importance of preserving subsistence agriculture as part of the dweller's survival strategies.

– Work towards reinstating a relation of trust between planning authorities and dwellers, perhaps through local authorities by creating incentives and protections before engaging in a revision of the master plan, as a token of commitment.

– Test processes of deliberative/mediation planning where local, landless dwellers who benefit from agriculture are explicitly invited to the discussion of the master plan and given voice to help build a stakeholder group that supports this kind of practices.

– Given that the local, permanent residents are on the one hand more vulnerable and, on the other, less vocal, it is possible to think of reforming and empowering existing agricultural focus groups such as the Agricultural Coop to have productive meetings with the decision-making authorities.

C. Agricultural Development

Agricultural practices in Tebnin are still widely taking place in the form of subsistence agricultural rather than commercial. A master plan can be a tool used to protect agricultural lands and water channels; however it cannot be by itself the solution for agricultural development. Furthermore more actions must be taken to enhance and improve the agricultural sector. Although the scope of this thesis was not to unravel agricultural policy, some of the information gathered among stakeholders is important to note here:

- Creating and empowering competent farmer organizations and cooperatives
- Integrating agriculture in planning and policymaking
- Providing access to available fertile lands for farmers to use
- Tackling production issues (constructing water storage tanks and providing

quality seeds and fertilizers, facilitating micro-credits to farmers...)

- Facilitating training and educational activities for farmers
- Raising awareness in communities of the importance of preserving agricultural activities as a public good towards the environment and the economy
- Help create economic and market-oriented farming (branding, marketing...)

For farmers to produce quality products that can compete on a national and international level, a study must be done to assess the socio-economic factors of farmers, the culture, climate, soil condition, political economy and the expatriate market. The important principle that must be extracted from such information should show the strengths and weaknesses of the farmers, an understanding of local dynamics and linking local issues to concerns that include institutions, planning and policies (FAO 2007). The findings of such a study would help farmers figure which food products to brand and market. Since Tebnin like other villages in South Lebanon consist mostly of small-scale farms, incentives must be given to sustain and develop such farms. Incentives range from regulatory incentives (ex. planning tools used to preserve agricultural practices) to financial ones (ex. providing micro credits).

D. Participation Planning

In light of this literature review, and adopting –as announced in my hypothesis above- the assumption that participatory planning can improve stakes in a sector with important potentials, I imagined my intervention to initiate community consultation using the master plan as a tool for deliberative/participatory meetings. Participation should not be used as only a means to obtain information, it must evolve to take part in raising awareness and decision making. All affected stakeholders must be incorporated in public meetings, either through self-representation or through cooperatives and focal

groups. Community consultations can take place in the following steps:

As mentioned above, it is necessary to rebuild the trust factor between decision-makers and dwellers. Rebuilding the trust can be achieved through many facilitators, who can be the planners, politicians, clerics and other key figures that can have an impact on convincing dwellers to attend. Initiating joint exploration and situation analysis commission between stakeholders and decision makers. This will facilitate the process of exchanging perspectives, goals, interests and agreeing on common concerns. The commission under the supervision of the Municipality will discuss potential solutions on the basis of win-win strategies. Further research needs to be done in order to redefine the modalities in which such trust can be built.

- Providing incentives to encourage the landless and/or economically weak farmers to participate: Right incentives should revolve around the notion of building a trustworthy relationship between stakeholders and decision-makers. Tax reliefs, fertilizers, water, micro credits and other incentives can have a role in encouraging vulnerable agricultural stakeholders to engage in public meetings.

- After incentives had been given, once all agricultural stakeholders show willingness to participate in a public meeting, the consultant of the Tebnin Master Plan is to present his work to the dwellers and make them aware of the zoning laws and regulations behind the master plan. He must also make the dwellers understand that master plans usually consist of red lines, reflecting on areas that must be protected such as the archeological sites and agricultural lands.

- Discussion between the dwellers, the consultant and the municipal members revolve around the notion of revising the existing master plan. An open debate to take place regarding the master plan. Ways to preserve the agricultural lands and enhance the agricultural economy would be discussed.

– Determining appropriate locations for agricultural zoning districts. Identifying areas in Tebnin where farming/agricultural production is currently being practiced or areas that are otherwise well suited for agricultural zoning. (ex. Sahel Khan).

– Defining specific zoning regulations. Enlisting the stakeholder group to define the specific lot size minimums and other development restrictions to apply within the agricultural zoning district.

– Identifying the specific local zoning and development regulations that must be amended to establish agricultural zoning districts.

– Providing tax incentives for agricultural zoned lands: Removing estate and property taxes on agricultural zoned lands could be a productive method to convince dwellers to preserve agricultural zoned lands.

- Monitoring implementation: The commission, which consists of municipality members and agricultural stakeholders, will monitor the implementation of all agreements made by consensus of all parties.

Leeuwis (2000) stresses that "three fundamental conditions must be met before serious negotiations can take place:

– there must be a divergence of interests among stakeholders

– stakeholders must feel interdependent in solving problematic situation

– the key players must be able to communicate with each other" (Leeuwis 2000).

The actors who are willing to engage in participatory planning must feel concerned with the issue discussed or else they will not feel the pressure to negotiate and reach an agreement with the other actors. At the same time, all parties must have the

ability to communicate with each other in the process of 'each needs the other' to be able to reach an agreement. If barriers are observed in the communication process between all actors, then public meetings would have a high probability of failure. Facilitators will have the role in creating and sustaining acceptable conditions for negotiations and discussions. Finally, it is important to note that participation in Tebnin by all relevant stakeholders will only take place if the essential conditions of trust building and communication ability are met.

Further research needs to be conducted in order to:

- Identify the crops, largest market channels, and integrate the master plan participatory initiatives with projects that encourage agriculture.
- Figure out which institutions should have the upper hand in developing the agriculture sector in Tebnin and what kind of reforms must be undertaken to reach this objective where landless farmers like agricultural landowners would be empowered to have a say in decision-making.
- After intensive participation has taken place by the dwellers and decision makers, a procedure must be initiated to revise and modify the Tebnin 2005 Master Plan in order to protect agricultural lands.

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