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Neoliberal Urban Transformations in the Arab City: The Case of Amman

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To my parents

Ahmad & Jamileh

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Abstract

Neoliberalization processes have swept the world since their operationalization in the 1970s. Cities have been at the forefront of neoliberalism driven transformation, resulting in a network of uneven development that stretches all around the world, in all its various contexts. The Arab cities have not been exempt from the reach of neoliberalization processes; Arab cities have undergone massive transformations in the past four decades. However, they have been understudied and under analyzed in that regard. The variegated nature of neoliberalization processes requires deep analyses of the underlying mechanism that facilitated them in various local context. Amman, an Arab city with a unique character where given that it is a relatively new city, it has witnessed an exponential growth in a short period, offers great insights into the spatial and urban manifestation of neoliberalization processes in the region and what they entail. The city witnessed two phases of neoliberal restructuring, in the 1990s under the reign of King Hussein, and in the 2000s under the reign of King Abdullah II, which is still evolving until today. The second phase ushered a new reality into the city's urban fabric through a collection of neoliberal urban spaces that have reconfigured not only the physical structure of the city, but also its governing and socio-political structures. This research argues that neoliberalization processes in Amman have established a parallel reality in the city through a dichotomy in its spatial development strategies that have led to new and deepening geographies of inequality, a weakening public governing body and a powerful network of politico-economic elites directing the city's future toward their personal gains. This proposition will be investigated through a theoretical, historical and socio-spatial analysis of three urban developments in Amman, Al Abdali Development, The Jordan Gate Towers and the Royal Village.

KEYWORDS: NEOLIBERALIM, NEOLIBERALIZATION PROCESSES, URBAN RESTRUCTURING, CITY RE-ORDERING, ARAB CITIES.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For over two decades now, rampant urban transformations has swept most cities of the Arab region in what has been referred to as a 'modernization' project by state actors to place these cities on the global map. Modernization in this instant meant the introduction and implementation of neoliberalization processes, represented in the free-market regulations, and its spatial manifestation of local urban restructuring.

Despite the global and transnational nature of the neoliberal project that is built around the international flow of capital, tracing neoliberal patterns shows that this globalization manifests itself and is localized differently in different cities. Although it can be easy to identify the similarities between neoliberal urban transformations around the world, and even more so in the 'Arab city',[that has been the birth place of mega-projects over the past couple of decades as the flagship of neoliberal restructuring], unpacking the unique and site-specific processes and mechanisms underlying these transformation and their implications can be more complex. To approach this hypothesis, the work carried out in this thesis investigates the neoliberal transformations in Jordan vis-à-vis the urban spatial reordering of the capital city of Amman, and the institutions, tools and mechanisms emerging from as well as facilitating it. This investigation takes place against a regional backdrop of the landscape of neoliberal urban restructuring in the Arab world, drawing on regional comparisons to map the origins of this project as well as its cultural and socio-economic preconditions and implications.

The global financial crisis in 2008 and the severe economic impacts it had on the Arab region, accompanied by other factors, led to the breaking out of the Arab spring protests in 2011, which led to many changes in the region. In Jordan, the country resorted to the International Monetary Fund IMF in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis to receive financial aid. Protests broke out in Jordanian cities in 2011 and consequently in 2018 against the implementation of the neoliberal policies imposed by Washington based institution, namely the IMF and the World Bank. Despite the social reaction to these austere policies and their urban manifestations including the several failing neoliberal projects that mark Amman's skyline, it is still the direction in which the governing system in the country is heading to this day. This suggests that the governing system that facilitated neoliberlaization processes has been also reconfigured by them; by producing new spaces and entities on different levels and sectors of this system. This is most evident in the urban dimension, where neoliberal spatial restructuring and its underlying mechanisms, tools and institution exist in parallel with the established spatial planning system in the country, especially in Amman.

This dichotomy between formal spatial planning and the neoliberal spatial transformation can be noticed on different levels in Jordan. First, the uneven development between Amman and the rest of Jordanian cities, and second, the uneven development within Amman itself with the development of urban enclaves of capital accumulation that tend to the needs and profit of the elites and the oligarchic network of the city. To understand this dichotomy, the research will analyze the history of the spatial planning system in Jordan, its tools and limitations, the shift towards neoliberalization in the '80s and '90s of the 20th century and its continuous transformation within the existing governance structure, leading to the emergence of a parallel planning system that produces neoliberal urban projects. This analysis will pay special attention to land property laws and regulations that play a vital role in understanding these transformations.

The research will apply a theoretical framework that facilitates both a structuralist approach of political economy and variegated neoliberalism, and a poststructuralist approach as related to the concept of governmentality, as the governance techniques in Jordan do not always follow a single path or logic. This framework will be applied to the analysis of case studies of uneven development in Amman. The findings of these analyses will be incorporated in an attempt to identify and overcome the shortcomings of the existing planning culture in Jordan and to contribute to the establishment of an effective form of spatial planning tools and mechanisms.

To address the abovementioned issues, the thesis is divided into seven sections. The first one is the introduction. The second section provides the theoretical framework that guides the development of this thesis. Starting by historical account of neoliberalism and neoliberalization and their impact on urbanism, followed by an attempt to reconcile structural and post-structural analyses of neoliberalism and how it can be used to address neoliberal urbanism in Arab cities, a definition of the category of Arab cities and the case study of Amman subsequently follows, and the section ends with the methodology adopted in this research. The second section goes deeper into understanding the historical dynamics in the Jordanian capital Amman in terms of its spatial development, up until the roll out of neoliberal policies in the 1990s and what those have entailed in spatial terms. The third section provides an overview of the formal spatial planning system in Jordan, its main elements and characteristics. The fifth section is dedicated to understanding the transformation of spatial policy in light of neoliberalization in Amman, three projects are analyzed in this section to investigate the neoliberal urban transformations taking place in the city, discussions and finding are presented in the sixth section, and the thesis is concluded with main finding and prospects in the seventh section.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Neoliberalism in Literature

The concept of neoliberalism remains a hot contested debate, even following the 2008 global economic crisis when questions were being raised by scholars around whether or not neoliberalism has received its fatal blow. “Neoliberalism is not dead,” declared the prominent Marxist geographer David Harvey (2021), as we continue to witness an increased monopolization of power and the world continues to move toward further concentration and centralization of capitalist class power. The concept of neoliberalism in the political-economy analyses is therefore still more relevant than ever, despite the problematic of its conceptualization and definition. While in its most basic theorization, neoliberalism is supposed to be about individualism and competition, carrying with it an emancipatory rhetoric of freedoms and liberal “democratization”, in practice it has long been about monopoly power (Harvey, 2021).

Political economists have deployed the notion of neoliberalism in the decades of debates since the late 1970s to describe the “ongoing transformation of inherited regulatory formations at all spatial scales” (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). These transformative processes gained prominence in the 1980s as the critical pillar of the “free-market ideological doctrine” and were operationalized by its forerunners; politicians like Thatcher and Reagan (Brenner, Peck and Theodore, 2010). According to Harvey (2005), the neoliberal economic project emerged out of a backlash against the welfare state in the late 1970s. According to Larner (2000), “the most common conceptualization of neoliberalism is as a policy framework marked by a shift from Keynesian welfarism towards a political agenda favouring the relatively unfettered operation of markets.” Barnett (2005) accounts that this conceptualization of neoliberalism is aligned with the analytical claim that neoliberalism is a “hegemonic” project. From this perspective, neoliberalism is defined as a “new variant of a class-driven project of state restructuring in the interests of free-markets and expanded accumulation” referring to a “programme of policies and governance arrangements that favour privatization, the liberalization of markets, and more competition” and so, it is presented as “coherent ideological project with clear and unambiguous origins, whose spread is sustained and circulated by an identifiable set of institutions." (Barnett, 2005).

Henceforth, the concept of neoliberalism continued to evolve and transform, as market disciplinary regulations were adopted and materialized in various context of the world economy. The concept was no longer confined to its initial function but rather started encompassing a wide range of analytical and empirical functions. With the wide array of forms that the market-led regulatory restructuring took across the varying contours of world systems and places, the concept of neoliberalism now lies at the foundation of the analyses and characterization of these forms and their accompanying processes and impacts (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010) (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005).

Notwithstanding the various patterns and local manifestations of contemporary regulatory transformations, neoliberalization processes remain structurally oriented, albeit heavily contextualized. In its most general sense, neoliberalization represents a politically led amplification of marketization and commodification. Due to their "*simultaneously* patterned, interconnected, locally specific, contested and unstable" nature, Brenner, Peck and Theodore (2010) use the term "variegated' to describe the character of neoliberalization processes. While unevenly developed institutional landscapes have been the precondition for the operationalization of neoliberalism, neoliberalization processes have intensified the uneven development across various scales and territories (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). One prominent arena to investigate the variegated character of neoliberalization processes and their uneven development is the urban. The socio-spatial manifestation of the contemporary regulatory transformations has produced a distinct urban neoliberal condition over the past few decades that has prompted many scholars to investigate it. As neoliberal regulatory policies set the ideological and rational ground for globalization and "contemporary state reform", global markets were opened for transnational capital, and cities found themselves competing for their place on the global scale to attract global investment. While cities and urbanization have long been places of capital accumulation, neoliberalization processes exacerbated this condition and subsequently gave rise to new geographies of capital accumulation resulting in city re-ordering, particularly characterized by increased inequality and exclusion.

The other side of the coin is state "reform", disseminated during the 1990s within the operational framework of neoliberalism as the "Washington consensus." This set of policies and far-reaching programs was employed by Washington-based agencies as a *one size fits all* approach to solving the economic crises in the "developing" countries of the global south. Inspiring and, in most cases, imposing agendas of "state restructuring and rescaling across a wide range of national and local contexts" as a condition of eligibility to the loans of Washington lending agencies (Peck & Tickell , 2002). In the operational framework of neoliberalism, state rescaling can be synonymous with downsizing, in the sense that in order to make room for competitive market forces, the state must abandon the functions of the welfare state, apply austerity measures and proceed to "reform" its programs of public services provision. Interestingly, while antistatist in theory, neoliberal actors are most adept at utilizing state power in pursuing neoliberal goals. Yet another one in the long list of contradictions of the neoliberal doctrine (Peck & Tickell , 2002). In the majority of cases, particularly in the countries of the global south, the state takes up the role of a facilitator of transnational private investments, particularly in the lucrative real estate development, while it gradually abandons its responsibilities in fragile costly sectors like education, healthcare, social housing and social security (Daher, 2013). This downsizing of the state reduces functions of state bodies formerly responsible for protecting public interest to mere coordinators of public private partnerships, working to create the right milieu to attract private capital by providing indirect subsidies to international corporates at the expense of public interest. When such policies are operationalized in networks of already uneven development they will result in increased inequality and the creation and intensification of geographies of segregation.

These processes of restructuring did not take place all at once; rather, their cumulative impact has been the result of successive waves of neoliberalization altering the inherited geoinstitutional character of a place (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). Neoliberalism is the "gift" that keeps on giving. Continuously taking up new forms as it engages with different contexts, changing and being changed by them. Devouring local assemblages and dynamics and reinventing them in a manner in which it has become a “commonsense of the times,” so layered and subtle in its manifestations that it requires deliberate efforts to unpack and analyze the ways in which it is characterized, imposed and reproduced and how it is currently conceived across the various landscapes (Peck & Tickell , 2002).

A combination of the aforementioned policies and processes of restructuring have deeply affected the institutional as well as the spatial configuration of many territories and states and on various scales. When the state withdrawals from its conventional functions, the field is cleared for private actors to take up the hanging responsibilities. However, in the neoliberal and globalization climate, private actors are ones with global agencies and no spatial or territorial confines to their involvement, and responsibilities are now assumed with profit, power and influence as their main goals rather than public interest.

To further build the theoretical framework of this thesis, it is important to point to the distinction between Western-European and Northern American analyses of neoliberalism, or “its heartland”, and those of its “zones of extension” (Peck & Tickell , 2002). This distinction is essential because neoliberalization processes “often combine, parasitically, with ostensibly alien institutions and policy regimes to create ‘hybrid’ institutional landscapes” (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). This extension of neoliberalization is seldom a replication of Anglo-American models and its forms mostly “actually entail ‘parasitic’, ‘hybrid’ and ‘eclectic’ layerings of inherited regulatory landscapes with emergent market-driven regulatory projects.” (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). Therefore, the analysis of the local “hybridized” forms of neoliberalization processes requires an added set of theoretical and analytical tools, historical overviews and context sensitivity to encompass the level of restructuring that actually took place in these local contexts. In this thesis, I will investigate the “local” neoliberal models that developed in Arab cities through an analysis of the case study of Amman, Jordan. Moreover, it will explore how the neoliberalization processes have engaged in the political life and altered the socio-spatial systems of such cities through their urban restructuring projects.

What makes the Arab urban condition an interesting, and even optimal, case of local neoliberalism and its hybridized landscapes is how the neoliberal “extralocal” project was undertaken and articulated into the glamorous and preposterous urban forms of Gulf cities that subsequently became a model of development for the rest of the Arab world (ElSheshtawy , 2008). The urban and socio-spatial aspect of the neoliberal restructuring processes in the Arab world is an essential component of the neoliberal analysis in order to avoid misdiagnosis of what is actually happening in the “existing political life as it is” (Debruyne, 2014). Debruyne (2014) argues that the rather generalized theoretical views of the Middle Eastern political science literature with its mainstream focus on “the regime”, lack of democratization and various patterns of authoritarian rule, risks overlooking “the Arab realities on the ground”, and that a socio-spatial framework of analysis that engages with those realities and builds up from them is essential. He continues to claim that “the lack of integration of socio-spatial conceptualization and ‘agencement’ in the study of the political life in the Arab world- especially in Jordan- generates selective blindness to the agencies and politics that are unfolding ‘beyond’ the regime”. As this happens in contexts were roles and agencies are not always clearly defined, and where the lines between the state and what lies beyond it are blurred. The socio-spatial sensitive analysis or “social assemblages” work toward filling the gap in the Western-European and North-American theoretical themes as articulated in structuralist political economy literature when it comes to analyzing the everyday themes experienced in relation to neoliberal urban development processes (Debruyne, 2014).

The neoliberalization of the urban has been analyzed and theorized through two main distinct approaches: a structuralist, neo-Marxist approach where neoliberalism is essentially viewed as a hegemonic force that works to solidify class power, reduce democracy and increase capital power. One that produces geographies of inequality and exclusion through the spatial restructuring of the city (e.g., Harvey, 2005; Swyngedouw et al., 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). The second approach is poststructuralist in nature, employing the concept of “governmentality” as developed by Foucault and its related concept of governance (e.g., Larner, 2003; Peck, 2004; Addie, 2008; Collier, 2009; Barthel, 2010; and Mayer and Kunkel, 2012). In the poststructuralist analysis, neoliberalism is conceived not as a hegemonic concept but rather as a set of processes and practices that produce “subjects, spaces and new forms of knowledge” (Daher, 2013). This dualism in extant analyses of neoliberalism is unhelpful and should be transcended by developing approaches that are attentive to the “variegated” character of neoliberalization processes (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). According to Barnett (2005), there is an inclination to reconcile the “Marxist understanding of the hegemony with poststructuralist ideas of discourse and governmentality derived from Foucault.” Where the concept of “governmentality” will help to explain the manner in which “broad macro-structural shifts from state regulation to market regulation are modulated with the micro-contexts of everyday routines” (Barnett, 2005). Both theoretical approaches have a lot to contribute to the discourse (Larner, 2000). The investigation of processes and practices that produce spaces, states, and subjects will also be included if a poststructuralist perspective is used in the analyses of the neoliberal urban (Daher, 2013). Mayer and Künkel (2012) view both perspectives as complementary in terms of understanding how the neoliberal project is constantly reproduced and contested in various areas of life. However, both approaches, structuralist and poststructuralist are methodologically distinct, and on both sides of the analyses, there are scholars who view such approximation of the two as fundamentally incompatible. How, then, if possible at all, can these two approaches be reconciled and how can this reconciliation be employed in the context of neoliberal urban restructuring analysis?

2.2 Structural and Post-Structural Analyses of Neoliberalism: Antagonism and Reconciliation

In the beginning of the 20th century, neoliberalism seemed to be everywhere and in everything (Peck & Tickell , 2002, p. 380). Hence, there were numerous attempts by geographers to conceptualize neoliberalism (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003; Barnett, 2005). In that period, majority of theoretical analyses of neoliberalism or ‘Neoliberal globalization' continued to view neoliberalization as a 'monolithic' or 'hegemonic' project originating from its Anglo-American 'ideological heartlands' (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003; Barnett, 2005). However, unlike globalization, neoliberalism as Larner (2003) notes, "operates at multiple scales. Not only is it a supranational project (neoliberal globalization), it involves nation-state and local (particularly urban) political projects." She continues to point that these manifestations of neoliberalism at the local and urban scale require further 'nuancing' (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003, p. 510). Scholars of neoliberalism as a 'global' disciplinary regime (see Gill, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2004) present neoliberalism as a 'comprehensive geohistorical formation' rather than simply an ideology or a policy. On this level of analysis, globalization is seen to be "firmly anchored within a worldwide infrastructure of neoliberalized institutional forms," wherein "globally constituted forces and interests, institutionalized in the form of various multilateral apparatuses, impose strict market discipline on national states, regardless of their structural position in the world order." (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010) Institutional forms of neoliberalism include the IMF, the World Bank, and the structural adjustment programs SAP that they impose on national states. The limitation of the global model according to Brenner et al. (2010) is its "relative neglect of nationally and subnationally scaled processes of regulatory restructuring" that in effect produce "constitutively and systemically uneven" worldwide landscapes of neoliberalization. Therefore, extensions of neoliberalizing regulatory experiments "deserve systematic, contextually sensitive investigation." (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010, p. 198).

Conceptualizations of neoliberalism as a set of policies or political ideology (structural analysis) highlights the similarities rather than the differences between the varieties of neoliberalism and the forms it takes in different places, resulting in a difficulty to think about different versions of neoliberalism or how they 'articulate' with other political, and/or national, projects (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003). What these analyses additionally lack is an attention to the 'techniques of neoliberalism' or the "mundane practices through which neoliberal spaces, states, and subjects are being constituted in particular forms' which include but are not limited to best practice, audit, contracts, performance indicators, and benchmarks (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003). A lack of attention to these techniques allows neoliberalism to be commonly understood and theorized as a top-down disciplinary discourse, leaving out explanations regarding the creation of 'acting subjects' i.e. 'people acting as neoliberal subjects' (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003). These various limitations of structural analyses have prompted scholars to attempt to amend such limitation by incorporating poststructuralist analytical tools or the governmentality theorizations of neoliberalism.

Poststructuralist theorization of neoliberalism, specifically the governmentality approach to neoliberalization, in its most pure form sits at 'varying degrees of tension' with the aforementioned structural and systemic accounts (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010). In its vast contras to structural political economy, governmentality theorizations avoid presuming the readily existence of institutionalized neoliberal forms or the 'hegemonic' imposition of liberalization. Instead remain grounded or 'low flying', being 'close to discursive and nondiscursive practices' to map the manifestation of neoliberal governmentality across multiple contexts in a bottom-up approach (Ong, 2007, p. 3; 2006, p.13; Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010, p. 199). Rejecting the notion of a 'uniform global condition', neoliberalism is articulated within contextually specific 'assemblages' that transfer 'from site to site' through 'promiscuous entanglements of global and local logics' (Ong, 2006, p. 14; 2007, p. 5). Ong positions her analyses of neoliberalization outside of its 'normalized' locations within the Anglo-American world to trace its 'contingent spatializations' in territories of Asia that were shaped by "the legacies of colonialism, authoritarianism and state socialism, and where, she argues, 'neoliberalism itself is not the general characteristic of technologies of governing." (Ong, 2006, p. 3; Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010, p. 200).

Through the notion of 'spaces of exception', Ong argues that 'emerging countries' of Asia "can not be subsumed under the generalizing, typologizing models used to analyze neoliberalization processes in the developed capitalist world." (Ong, 2006, p. 8, 76; Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010, p. 200). Within this model of analysis, neoliberalization does not target entire national economies but rather its "technologies of governance are selectively deployed in newly constructed special administrative regions, export processing zones, free trade zones, tax free zones" and other specialized spaces

(Ong, 2006: Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010, p. 200). While critical of the governmentality approachs for their “simplified critiques” and their “caricature” of structuralist approaches against which they compete, which in their view compromise the integrity of their approaches, Brenner et al. (2010, p. 201) concur that “governmentality analytic usefully draws attention to the contextually embedded character of market-oriented forms of regulatory restructuring.” Moreover, despites their limitations that stem from an “exaggerated antagonism to more structuralist, macropolitical perspective” it is noted that governmentality approaches provide “insights [that] can be productively extended through a more systematic interrogation of the sources and implications of regulatory uneven development under conditions of progressively deepening neoliberalization.” (Brenner, Peck, & Theodore , 2010, pp. 201, 206)

According to Larner (2003), ‘Neo-Foucauldian’ governmentality theorizations of neoliberalism emphasize its “processes that produce spaces, states, and subjects in complex and multiple forms” which is otherwise ‘downplayed’ in structural analyses. Additionally, by building on both theoretical approaches, through the employment of a nuanced understanding of the social production of space, “unpacking the complexity and contradictions of the processes associated with contemporary forms of rule” would be possible (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003, p. 511). Reconciliation of governmentality literature can extend analyses of neoliberalism to new domains including “bodies, households, families, sexualities and communities” (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003, p. 512). This reconciliation between the two approaches would “overcome the fear and hopelessness generated by monolithic accounts of the ‘neoliberal project” as it would entail rigorous experimentation “rather than the rolling out of a coherent programme” (Larner, Neoliberalism?, 2003, p. 512).

Accordingly, the early 2000s witnessed an increasing inclination in the literature towards achieving a reconciliation of the structuralist analysis of “neoliberalism” with a poststructuralist analysis of “advanced liberalism.” (Barnett, 2005, p: 3). According to Larner (2000) this reconciliation of poststructuralists accounts that employ Foucault’s notions of governmentality can complement the limitations of the prevalent structural Marxist analysis of neoliberalism and neoliberalization. “Neoliberalism is both a political discourse about the nature of rule and a set of practices that facilitate the governing of individuals from a distance," in this sense, characterizing neoliberalism as a mere policy response to global economy or the policy agenda of conservatives risks of "under-estimating the significance of contemporary transformations in governance." (Larner, 2000, p:6)

Urban geographers investigating neoliberal urban restructuring in Arab cities have employed a version of this proposed reconciliation of the two theoretical approaches. Daher (2013), a prominent academic and researcher of neoliberal urbanism in Arab cities, undertook this mission in his comparative analysis of neoliberal urban restructuring in some Arab cities with a focus on Amman. He justified the reconciliation that relied on neo-Marxist theories while incorporating a post-structural approach as well, to "understand the role and involvement of newly created subjects such as the transnational capitalist class or the urban entrepreneurial investor," in addition to investigating the "emerging links and liaisons between state agencies and global agents and actors." He elaborates that there is a need for a "third type of literature/research on urban neoliberalization that is more empirical in nature and that addresses the different issues and processes of urban restructuring." Daher (2013) in his attempt at reconciling the two approaches produced a 'discursive framework' to analyze neoliberal urban restructuring that he believes would be useful in future attempts by other researchers of urban neoliberalism in Arab cities. The framework included seven indicators against which neoliberal urban projects were analyzed, these indicators are urban lifestyle, emancipation rhetoric of neoliberal tropes, claims to social sustainability, socio-spatial politics and dynamics, governance and place management, the changing role of the state, and the circulation of neoliberal practices (Daher, 2013, p. 102-103). This thesis in the following chapters will benefit from this framework in analyzing neoliberal urban spaces in the case study of Amman.

The need observed by Daher for a reconciliation of the two approaches in the analysis of neoliberal urban restructuring in Arab cities is also noted in the work of Najib B. Hourani, an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Global Urban Studies at Michigan State University . Hourani in his analysis of neoliberal Amman, employs a historical analysis of urban processes and the networked production of space in the city to demonstrate how the study of an Arab city could aid us to “rethink dominant approaches to neoliberal urbanism” and “contribute to a broader understanding of contemporary experiences of neoliberalism” (Hourani, 2016, p. 4). on the concept of assemblages, he stresses that “the tracing of external relations must be complemented by recognition of internal relations as well.” He argues that various local practices and logics contribute to the emergence of “analytical objects” that are, over time, reinforced and supported as they are taken up within “new, larger or more powerful assemblages.” (Hourani, 2016, p. 8) Several Middle Eastern scholars investigating the neoliberal Arab condition have utilized this merge of theoretical standpoints. As these transformations have not and do not always follow a clear or defined path of formation as they would otherwise do in alternate contexts where political and social roles are clearly defined, and established institutions are in place to monitor and mediate the interaction of the several components of the urban sphere.

It is my proposed opinion on this issue that the necessity of a combination of both approaches in analyzing the neoliberal urban restructuring in Amman, as well as other Arab cities, stems from the vital role that the elites have played and still play in the neoliberalization process of the city, and more broadly, in modern state formation in Jordan. The structural approach views the state within the capital mode of production as taking a specifically capitalist form, not because particular individuals are in powerful positions, but because the state reproduces the logic of capitalist structure in its economic, legal, and political institutions. Therefore, it functions in the long-term interests of capital and capitalism, rather than in the short-term interests of members of the capitalist class. The modern states in the Middle East were highly influenced by and constructed after the Western (Anglo-American) model of the state, however, this model was imposed upon already existing local powers that were taken up within the new modern states (Bacik, 2008). In this manner, it can be argued that the elites in Jordan and Amman and their historical socio-political affiliations that precede the creation of the modern day Jordan, had a vital role in the creation of the modern state in Jordan and continue to be an integral analytical object in analyzing the current neoliberal restructuring of the state.

This thesis adopts a theoretical framework that combines these two approaches in the analysis of neoliberalization processes in Arab cities. This framework will be applied to the case study of Amman to investigate the spatial planning apparatus in the city; the laws, the institutions, the discourse and the underlying processes and mechanisms that along the past three decades consolidated the perceived dualism of the city and its uneven development. This objective will be approached through a historical analysis of the spatial development of the city and three urban projects that were developed under the neoliberal rule of the city. The principle question that this thesis poses is whether the adoption of neoliberal policies in the development of Amman has resulted in what amounts to be a parallel planning system that surpasses the planning system and institutions in place?

2.3 The Arab City: Definition and Positionality

In order to position my analysis, it is important to set Amman against the backdrop of its regional context. To avoid any overgeneralization and stereotypes of the region, and they are many, the use of 'Arab cities' refers to cities of the Arab World (**Figure 1**) spreading across Asia and Africa and that are, in territorial and political terms, part of the Arab League[1]. Other terms are also used to refer to the region, not the least problematic of which being the 'Middle East' that despite its common and widespread use remains a British colonial term, referring to the region by its location in relation to Britain and India (**Figure 2**). Therefore, the use of 'Arab cities' is considered to be more accurate and inclusionary than 'Middle Eastern cities', which "excludes cities of North Africa" (ElSheshtawy , 2008, p. 28).

The Arab World refers to people who share a common history, language, ethnicity and most importantly the historical aspiration for freedom and national liberation from Ottoman rule before falling within the endeavors of European colonial expansion in the beginning of the 20th century. The First World War was a pivotal historical moment in the transformation of the modern Arab World (Roger, 2007).

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[1] Established in Cairo in 22 March 1945, the regional organization has 22 member state, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_League

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, British and French leaders divided the 'Middle East' and imposed arbitrary boundaries on the territory through the Sykes-Picot Agreement, this advancement of imperial interest had the blessing of the League of Nations and the United States (Mir, 2019; Bacik, 2008). Other parts of the Arab World were already under similar European colonization processes by that time.[2] The imposition of these arbitrary borders that gave rise to the modern day nation-states in the region resulted in the setting off of a series of long-term transformations and conflicts that the region still contends with until this day.

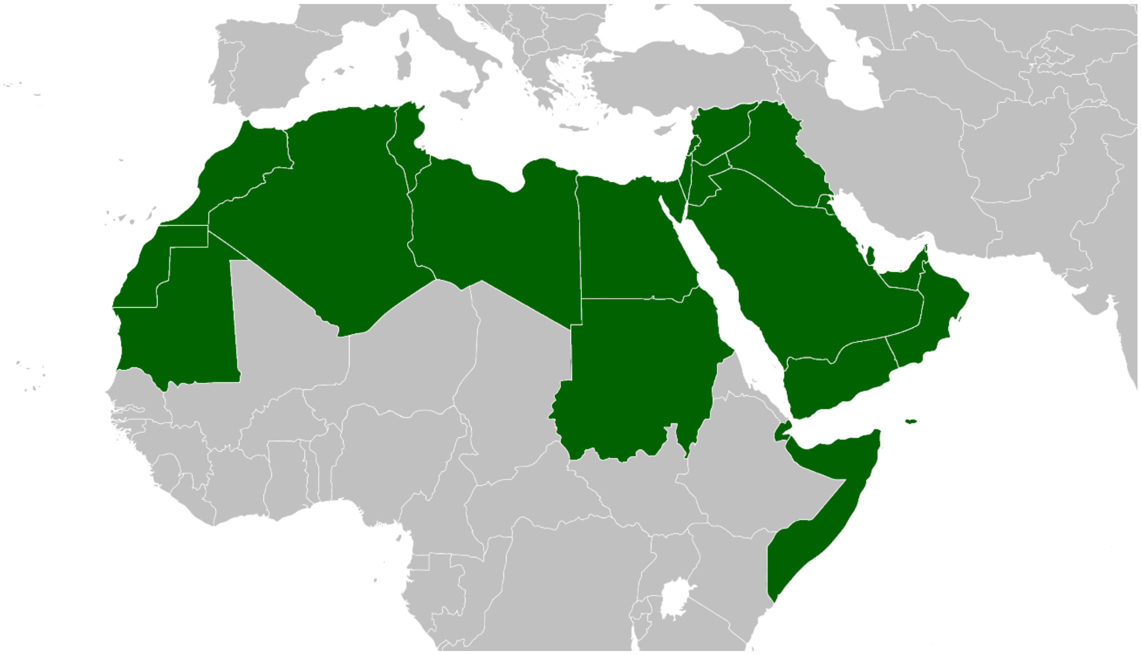

Figure 1: The Arab World

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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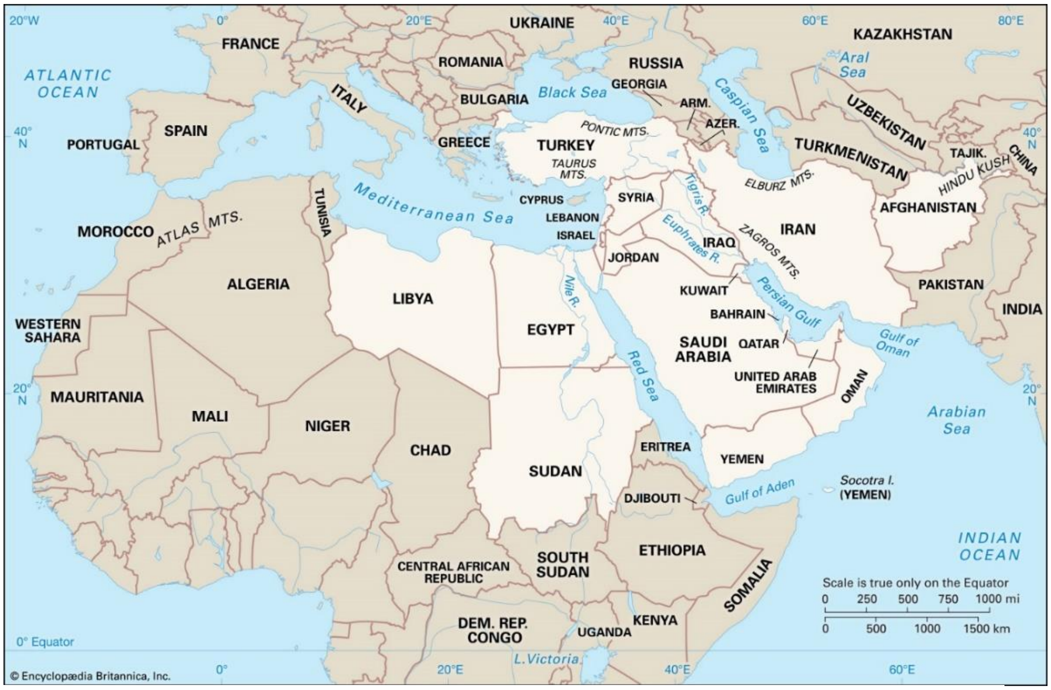
[2] Britain in Egypt since 1882; Italy in Libya in 1911; France had occupied Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco in 1830, 1881 and 1912, respectively. Britain in 1820 established Bahrain as a protectorate, as well as the small emirates in the region. American companies digging for oil in Saudi Arabia began in the 1930s (See Mir, 2019, p. 35).

This shared history of Ottoman rule followed by European colonialism in the Arab World, in both cases introducing, or more accurately imposing, some form of ‘reform’ or ‘modernization’ process on the existing local ‘traditional’ organization of society, has resulted in what Bacik (2008) called the ‘Hybrid Sovereignty’ of Arab states[3]. According to Bacik (2008, p. 22-23), not only was the ‘Western Model’ imposed by ‘colonial administrators’ but “indigenous actors also facilitated the institutionalization of the Western model in the name of modernization." This dynamic where local, and tribal, powers act as facilitators of Western and global interest in the region is reproduced and consolidated once again in each moment of ‘reform’ or ‘modernization’ that has followed in modern Arab nation-states. The last of which is the process of neoliberalization that witnessed the taking up and further consolidation of these local powers within local and ‘regional’ oligarchic networks that enjoy great politico-economic influences, as will be discussed in following chapters of this thesis (Hourani, 2016).



20°W
0°
20°E
40°E
60°E
80°E
40° N
20° N
0° Equator
ATLANTIC OCEAN
FRANCE
UKRAINE
KAZAKHSTAN
ROMANIA
RUSSIA
Aral Sea
Black Sea
GEORGIA
BULGARIA
ITALY
ARM.
AZER.
Caspian Sea
UZBEKISTAN
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
PONTIC MTS.
GREECE
TURKEY
TURKMENISTAN
TAJIK.
CHINA
TAURUS MTS.
HINDU KUSH
ELBURZ MTS.
Mediterranean Sea
CYPRUS
SYRIA
AFGHANISTAN
TUNISIA
Tigris R.
MOROCCO
ATLAS MTS.
LEBANON
ISRAEL
Euphrates R.
IRAQ
IRAN
JORDAN
ZAGROS MTS.
ALGERIA
LIBYA
KUWAIT
Persian Gulf
PAKISTAN
Nile R.
BAHRAIN
INDIA
WESTERN SAHARA
EGYPT
SAUDI ARABIA
QATAR
Gulf of Oman
Red Sea
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
OMAN
MAURITANIA
MALI
NIGER
Arabian Sea
CHAD
ERITREA
YEMEN
SUDAN
DJIBOUTI
Gulf of Aden
Socotra I. (YEMEN)
INDIAN OCEAN
ETHIOPIA
SOUTH SUDAN
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
SOMALIA
Scale is true only on the Equator
0 250 500 750 1000 mi
0 500 1000 1500 km
DEM. REP. CONGO
UGANDA
KENYA
L.Victoria
© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Figure 2: The Middle East map

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

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[3] Bacik (2008), “Hybrid Sovereignty describes the political condition in which traditional practices survive in the colonially introduced Western-state format.” P. 211

Both the Ottomans and the European colonial powers introduced spatial policies to optimize their governance of the territories under their control, these polices, as in their other security, socio-political or economic policies, were put in place to advance colonial interests (Bacik, 2008; Hourani, 2016). From the *Tanzimat* (regulations) reforms by the Ottomans that divided the region to provinces to install centralized administrative control and increase tax revenue, to the infrastructural projects carried by colonizing powers to facilitate exploitation of resources, maximize the efficiency of trade routes and consolidate territorial control, in addition to the newly drawn territorial borders, all these spatial interventions have played into the reconfiguration of the traditional spatial organization of Arab lands. Much of these laws and regulations were subsequently taken up within the newly founded nation-states. In Jordan, for example, a great part of the laws governing spatial practices still reminiscent of Ottoman and colonial past.

All the concepts discussed above, play an integral part in any comprehensive analysis of the contemporary transformations of modern Arab cities. Analyses that do not consider the tumultuous and complex history of the region and its nation-states' formations, risks a reductionist, oversimplified and stereotypical version of the situation as it stands today, as these processes rarely have a clean cut end and eventually combine and evolve to produce new realities. The shared past discussed above is in no way meant to categorize or confine Arab cities into a single trajectory of where they are today or what might become of them in the future. On the contrary, these insights are presented to draw attention to the intricacies and complexity of the modern processes that have shaped and still transform the realities of Arab cities. In the next chapter of this thesis, I will go deeper into these processes in the analysis of the contemporary neoliberal urban transformations in the city of Amman.

As complex as their composition and contextual history is, modern Arab cities, are vastly underrepresented in scholarly literature vis-à-vis the impacts of globalization and the neoliberal urban restructuring processes that gave rise to a distinct urban condition in the Arab World (Elsheshtawy, 2008; Malkawi, 2008; Daher, 2013). The period since the late 19th century until the present day has considerably transformed the morphology of Arab cities. Amman grew from a city of no more than three thousand inhabitants in the

1920s to a staggering number of over four million inhabitants today. Cities of the Gulf displayed unprecedented levels of urbanization since the 1960s and Beirut, a leading city in terms of urbanism in the 1960s to a city struggling with basic urban management issues today. While these transformations are not exclusive to the Arab city, the argument is that these cities have been considerably excluded from the 'global city' discourse (ElSheshtawy , 2008, pp. 31-33). Some of the influential works on the Arab or Middle Eastern cities and their contemporary transformations include Elsheshtawy (2004, 2008), Ahmad Kanna (2008) on Dubai, Daher (2008, 2011, 2013) on Amman, Summer (2005) with her comparative work on Amman and Beirut, Barthel and Planel work (2010) on Tanger, Krijnen and Fawaz (2010) on Beirut, Adham (2004) on Cairo, Hourani (2015, 2016) on Beirut and Amman respectively, Molotch and Ponzini (2019) on some Gulf cities. Nevertheless, the drastic transformations in the contemporary urban condition of Arab cities invites deeper analyses into the mechanisms and underlying processes of these transformation, as these would in turn contribute to a great extinct to international scholarly on globalization and neoliberal urban restructuring processes discourse.

2.4 The Neoliberalisation of Arab Cities

According to (Khalil, 2015) the process of neoliberal economic restructuring of the Arab world started in Egypt during the presidency of Anwar Sadat, when he adopted the neoliberal economic restructuring in exchange for an alliance with the United States. The Sadat initiative meant a drastic pivot in the foreign policy of the leading Arab state at the time, Egypt. Arab countries followed Egypt in the adoption of neoliberal policies and opened their market to the flow of global and international capital. A major gate of accesses to studying and analyzing neoliberalism in the Arab world has been the urban sphere, as Arab cities have undergone severe and rampant neoliberal urban restructuring processes over the past few decades, which have been described as a processes of alienation by local scholars (See Elsheshtawy, 2008).

Alsheshtawy (2008) describes the modern condition of the Arab cities as "places of contradictions and paradoxes," he elaborates that Arab cities are places "where one can observe the tensions of modernity and tradition; religiosity and secularism;

exhibitionism and veiling.” Indeed, this divide can be observed not only within the cities themselves, but also bewteen the traditional centers of the Arab World; Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad etc. and the emerging urban phenomena of Gulf cities like Dubai and Doha. The urban phenomena of Gulf cities have formed a new image of what an Arab city looks like, juxtaposed to the traditional image of the narrow alleys of Damascus, the mashrabiya cladded streets of Baghdad or the minarets of Cairo’s skyline. These emerging images play on the string of modernization and advancement, a promise of a life beyond the struggles and conflicts that plighted the cities of the region for most of the modern history. Herein lies the appeal of these images, to the point of forming a ‘gulfication’ or ‘dubaization effect in which “these new centers are influencing and shaping the urban form of ‘traditional’ cities.

The modern urban condition of Arab cities, is not least represented by the constellations of ‘Arab mega-projects’ that manifested in the urban centers and capital cities of the Arab World as a result of the contemporary neoliberal restructuring processes, and since then became symbols of modern Arab cities. The term ‘Arab mega-projects’ was coined by Barthel (2010, p. 5) in reference to the scale of the new real estate ventures and the characteristic role they play in contemporary town planning in Arab cities. The Arab city is the showcase of the rampant transformations and struggles that the modern Arab World has faced for more than a century now. The neoliberal urban transformation discussed in this thesis, with its focus on Amman, is but the latest of these transformations.

Arab cities began facing issues of increased urbanization in the mid of the 20th century. Cities no longer confined to their traditional borders and issues of urban sprawl, congestion, urban poverty and governance became of concern for city managers and planners in the region (Malkawi, 2008). Transformations in the Arab cities in response to these issues and more started to take various directions in different cities. In his chapter in the book ‘The evolving Arab city’ (2008), Fouad Malkawi argues that while the globalization discourse has left behind the Arab city, this trend’s effects on them cannot be denied, and so it must be studied and assessed. In his analysis, Malkawi (2008), views these attempts of cities to cope with the change imposed by globalization as a process of ‘metropolisation’. The concept implies a “process of change in polity, space, communication, division of labor, economy, etc.

Building on the previously mentioned work of local and international scholars, my work in this thesis draws special attention to spatial planning practices in Amman and how they have been impacted, altered, or straight on disregarded in the production of aneoliberal urban reality. The choice of Amman to be the case study of this thesis is attributed to the many reasons for which the city is considered to present a special condition of the Arab city that is arguably distinct from other Arab urban centers, or at the very least, the stereotypical image of an Arab city (see Daher, 2008)

2.5 Methodology

The main objective of this thesis is to investigate the neoliberal urban transformation of the capital city of Jordan, Amman. This investigation focuses on aspects of urban spatial reordering of the city as represented by the myriad of projects the mushroomed around the city following the rolling out of neoliberal policy at the beginning of the 20th century. The thesis proposes the hypothesis that the neoliberal urban spatial reordering, or reconfiguration, of the city's urban fabric amounts to the creation of a parallel planning system that surpasses and functions outside of the spatial planning system, or more accurately the spatial planning practices, that dictate the development in the rest of the city, and the country at large.

This analysis will be carried against a background framework of neoliberal urban transformations in Arab cities. This is due to the fact that, given the nature of neoliberalization processes, the networked production of space that is taking place in Amman is part of a regional, as well as global, network of neoliberal urban transformations spreading across Arab cities. These transformations are facilitated by and reflect the circulation of global capital (mainly oil surplus capital from the Gulf), planning models, city imaging (largely inspired by Gulf cities), urban management expertise that are all evident in the network of transnational capitalist class and 'neoliberal developers' standing behind these transformations. Despite these structural similarities between these projects, they remain heavily contextualized within the respective contexts of their cities, if not in term of image, then in term of the context-specific and social processes and practices enabling them on the local level.

To achieve this objective, I carried out a two dimensional research approach. First beginning with a historical analysis of the city's development, to highlight the leading processes, practices and subjects behind its expansion leading up to the moment of rolling out of neoliberalization policies and how these were articulated into the evolving structure of spatial planning. To do this, I conducted desk research of previous studies covering the historical development of Amman. Hourani's (2016) work on this aspect was particularly illuminating. In addition to desk research, I also conducted interviews with retired personnel from Greater Amman Municipality GAM, who worked in the city in the second half of the 20th century and were acquainted with its developmental practices and tendencies. These interviews helped me in crystallizing my approach and clarifying some details with their firsthand accounts of details that would have been otherwise unobtainable.

Second, analyzing the spatial manifestations of neoliberalization processes in the city. To achieve this, three 'neoliberal' projects were chosen, each one offering a distinct insight into the process through which these projects have come to fruition despite all legal, regulatory and social obstacles that hinder their implementation. In addition to these projects, the Amman Plan, the main document that is supposed to be guiding the spatial development of the city in the period of 2008-2025, is also analyzed. This part of research was driven by years of personal, I would call 'wonderment', regarding the seeming complete lack of spatial and urban planning policy guiding development in Jordanian cities, including Amman, according to the needs of its citizens and the general public interest. Contrasted with a plethora of high-end developments that seemed to be installed and imposed over the city by an alien logic, catering to the needs of a very exclusive level of society, while eventually remaining largely vacant.

For the second dimension of the research, I conducted a set of interviews with planners and officials in GAM, both in person and through phone calls. During these interviews, different aspects of planning practices were discussed, concerning the 'Amman Plan' and the three projects analyzed in this thesis; Jordan Gate Towers, Al Abdali Development project and the upcoming Royal Village. Other aspects concerning development regulations and the institutional organization of GAM were also part of the discussion. An important take-away of these interviews was the great level of secrecy or ambiguity surrounding certain aspects of project development process, there is no clear structure as to how such big projects come to being within a strategy of development, rather, capital interest seems to be the main factor to guide development despite all regulations. Data collected from interviews that were incorporated into this research come from the interviews I carried for the purpose of developing tis thesis over the course of three months, in addition to informal interviews and several conversations I had with planners and architects in Jordan over the past few years that formulated my knowledge on the issues discussed hereafter. A couple of interviews were also conducted with an army official who is part of the strategic planning unit, which is responsible for preparing strategic plans for different aspects including water and food safety as well as infrastructure in the country. The interviewee confirmed to me that there is no strategic plans regarding city and urban planning in Jordan.

Research also included content analysis of documents I was provided with during my visits to GAM concerning the planning of the projects under my investigation, these documents were the ones disclosed to the public. Content analysis also included publications and newspapers regarding these projects and planning in Amman, as well as advertising material by developers. This part of analysis in addition to participant observation on the projects' grounds, helped me in developing an understanding of social perception and interaction with this kind of development in Amman.

The analysis, both historical and of contemporary plans and projects, will be presented in the following chapters in order to highlight the struggles that face formal planning in Jordan, and show some insights regarding the dichotomy of development policy in Amman. This dichotomy, I argue, have resulted in the formation of a parallel planning apparatus that operates free of all constraints, overruling and at times, undoing the work achieved by formal planning. This issue, I believe, requires further identifying and mapping of this parallel planning system, its components, actors, socio-political agencies and process.

3. THE JORDANIAN CAPITAL, AMMAN: MODERN HISTORY AND NEOLIBERALIZATION

The research done in this thesis builds on the body of work available on neoliberal urban transformation in the Arab cities, with a concentration on Amman. While most of the research done on neoliberal Amman, draws on the conclusions of the resulting geographies of inequality from neoliberal projects, the profit driven logic behind their conception facilitated by an oligarchic network, and the lacking of planning regulations in place that allows for their unabated execution (see Daher, 2011, 2013; Abu Hamdi, 2016; Horani, 2016, Khirfan 2018). This thesis will attempt to dissect and dig deeper into the processes and mechanisms that made these projects possible, as opposed to an otherwise non-functional planning system in the country.

In the following subsections, I will first provide an introduction to Jordan and Amman, including the main features and challenges, particularly demographic and urban ones, I will subsequently discuss how neoliberalism first arrived in the country as an economic reform process and what this process entailed. Followed by a historical account of the spatial development of Amman before and after the country's independence in 1946.

3.1 Amman, Jordan, an Overview

Jordan lies in the center of the Middle East, sharing its borders with Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, occupied Palestine and Israel. Jordan's only seaport is the port of Aqaba, it is otherwise landlocked. After expelling the British in 1946, Jordan officially became The Hashemite Kingdome of Jordan. As a constitutional monarchy, the parliament is the constitutional legislature body; however, the king holds wide executive and legislative powers. Jordan has an area of around 90,000 sq. km and the capital Amman is the country's most populous city as well as the country's economic, political and cultural center **(Figure 3)**. The demographic changes in Jordan are an essential gateway into understanding the dynamics of the country.

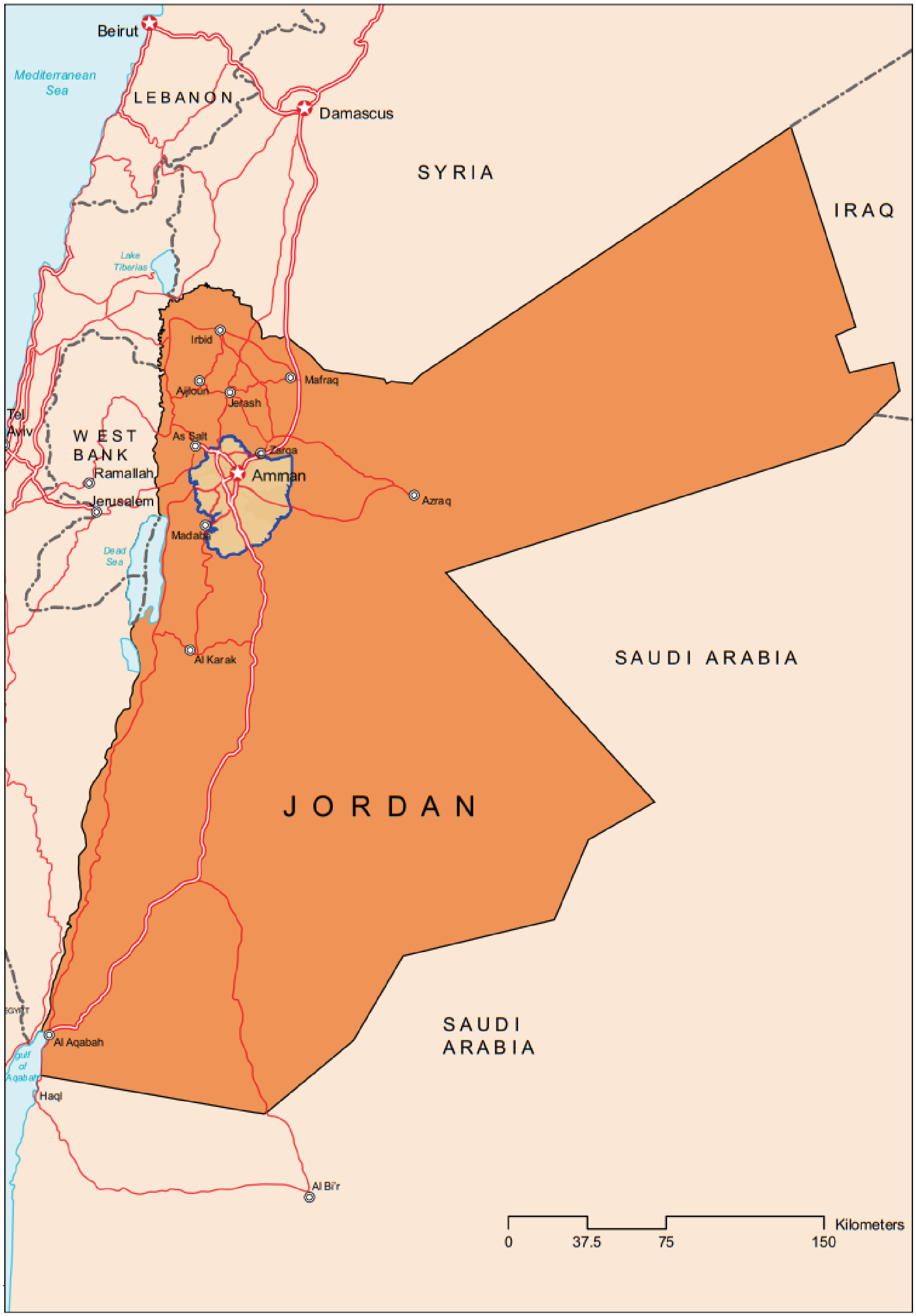

Beirut
Mediterranean Sea
LEBANON
Damascus
SYRIA
IRAQ
Lake Tiberias
Irbid
Mafraq
Ajloun
Jerash
Tel Aviv
WEST BANK
As Salt
Zarqa
Amman
Ramallah
Jerusalem
Azraq
Madaba
Dead Sea
Al Karak
SAUDI ARABIA
JORDAN
EGYPT
Al Aqabah
Gulf of Aqabah
SAUDI ARABIA
Haql
Al Bi'r
Kilometers
0
37.5
75
150

Figure 3 National and Regional Context

Source: Metropolitan Growth Plan Report, 2008

In 1946, the population of Jordan was about 400,000; in 1997, it reached 4.6 million, a figure twice that of 1981(DoS, 2015). After the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel, the Lebanese war in the '70s and the Gulf War in 1990, there were sudden and massive influxes of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers. In 2003 following the American invasion of Iraq, Jordan received another influx of Iraqi refugees. Another instant of drastic demographic change was after the events of the Arab Spring in 2011 and the civil war in Syria, when Jordan received a huge influx of Syrian refugees, the total number of which was never truly known. All these sudden changes in demographics placed high pressure on Jordan's economy as well as urban structure, the country has very limited resources that were further strained by the successive waves of refugees. Currently Jordan has a population of over 10 million people. Over 6 million of the 10 million population live in two governorates, Amman and Irbid, 12.96% out of which live in the urban development (cities) of these governorates. 90.3% of the overall population live in urban setting (DoS, 2015). According to the most recent data from the DoS, the rapid growth in population in Jordan has exceeded all estimations. This has placed high pressure on the already congested urban centers. Despite such a staggering number of urban population, the planning system in Jordan is far from being proactive; it can best be described as reactionary in the face of the aforementioned shocks and transformations that the country has been facing since its inception. The expansion of urban centers and development accompanying the drastic increases in population in Jordan has occurred outside of strategic growth plans. As the population of the city of Amman has more than doubled in less than a decade, this has stressed the urban fabric of a city that was not prepared to accommodate such rapid growth of the population. This resulted in various uncontrolled transformations that contributed in making the city what it is today.

The consecutive political crises have placed great economic pressure on a country that is already poor in resources; Jordan is described as a rentier state, with most of its budget coming from international aid. These constant economic crises have in many occasions forced Jordan and its ruling apparatus into the hands of international monetary institutions with their extreme measures and one size fits all policies. The first one of which was in 1989, when Jordan witnessed its first phase of neoliberalization.

3.2 From Statism to More Statism?

In the late 1980s, the public debt crisis and the economic collapse of 1988-1989 forced the Jordanian capital to undergo a rigorous financial regulation program under the supervision of the International Monetary Fund IMF the World Bank, which took place at a great social expense (Hattar, 2010). The following decade of strict implementation of this program witnessed social unrest and several protests - considered among the most prominent in the country's history- over the sever austerity measures that were affecting the vast majority of the country's population. The program, which was imposed as a condition for receiving assistance from Washington based money-lending agencies after the country failed to meet its foreign financial obligations, included a vicious austerity budget, the privatization of state-owned assets, a 48% devaluation of the Dinar, and the removal of regulations deemed unfavorable to the self-regulating market (World Band, 1994; Maciejewski and Mansur, 1996; Daves, 1997; Pfeifer, 1999; Alissa, 2007). However, this liberalization process and economic reform envisioned in the Washington consensus did not stop at that and eventually was accompanied by a process of political liberalization in Jordan.

Although economic liberalization and political liberalization are vastly regarded in literature as interlinked processes, many regard the political liberalization in Jordan in the 1989 as a necessary step at the time for regime survival in a moment where the Jordanian economy was shattered. This strategy of political compromise by the regime in times of economic crises is not an isolated incidence in the contemporary history of Jordan's neoliberalization. In fact, in the past three decades, this has been a recurrent strategy facilitated by the regime to ease the population into the austere and continuous process of economic reform. As this has not been the case in other Middle Eastern countries like Syria and Iraq, where economic reform was not accompanied by political liberalization, Harik (1992) attributes this differentiation to the state's ability to manage economic reform. When met with severe economic crisis, a country with scarce resources to maintain the economic reform will resort to political reform as well. On the other hand, a country with enough resources to maintain economic reform while at the same time withering the storm of the political side effects, will avoid pursuing political reform (Harik, 1992). This process of political compromise as means for economic reform has left Jordan in a transitioning state of "democratization" to this day, with both the neoliberal and globalization rhetoric playing a huge role in maintaining the basis for this reality.

What happened in Jordan in the late 1980s is by no means an unfamiliar story to scholars of development and globalization, quite the contrary. The programs and policies imposed by the IMF and the World Bank where the answer to the alleged "problematic" of statism perceived by those institutions in countries like Jordan, for which the unquestioned solution is the restructuring and the rescaling (downsizing) of the state in favor of market friendly regulation. In the same manner, the liberalization of the market was the unquestioned solution to Jordan's problematic statism among the state's elites as much as the international financial institutions that champion it (Hourani, 2016). This state to market frenzy, however, obscures most the picture, as it exists in reality and as observed today. First, there is a considerable body of theory, which argues that neoliberalism has shifted from its "roll-back neoliberalism" phase dominant through the 1980s to a phase of active state building and regulatory reform – a moment of "roll-out neoliberalism", in the following decade. The agenda of neoliberalization processes gradually shifted from being concerned with the "destruction and discreditation" of the welfare state and social institutions to the persistent "construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations." (Peck & Tickell , 2002) This has effectively led to the roll-out and expansion of the state rather than its roll-back. Second, the proposed solution disregarded and failed to consider the particular local processes and practices that constitute state power and power relations in Jordan, and instead of cutting back on state authority, ended up entrenching it further deeper in the country's economic, political and social scenes in a typical manner of what Holston (1989) calls "Negation of the Negation." The moment at which a project of reform begins to rely on and reinforce elements which it was designed to eliminate. In order to understand the neoliberal urban restructuring and its variation in the Arab world, it is helpful to trace the reproduction of this process in following moments of transformation (Hourani, 2016).

In this part of the research, I will try to briefly outline how Jordan and perhaps most of the Arab countries if the same logic is extended, are examples of the expansion and the emergence of new authoritarian state forms. An observer of the current political climate in Jordan (or if you ask anyone in the streets of the country) can easily see that the state is anything but absent, even in the most basic aspects of everyday life, and even if the traditional concept of "state" is not involved, its towering shadow still stands tall. Debruyne (2014) in his account of a fieldwork trip in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone in the South of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan -a classic example of neoliberal urban restructuring- a zone that does not conventionally fall within state authority, accounts that "Even though 'the state' was absent, the state's agency was all around." I argue that this reality of increased state agency is a form of state expansion. In the neoliberal mode of governance in Jordan, the creation of new governance institutions parallel to ministries, which was labelled the "good governance" discourse, and the recruitment of international consultants and expertise through external contracts outside of the civil service system for governmental positions, were all necessary measures to achieve the goal of neoliberalization. This circular logic of self-actualization of neoliberalization is an inherit character of this process, although in Jordan it has been taken to ironic extents that have been a rich source of ridicule over the past decade among political critiques of the state. As the state expands, it does less to the collective good of its population and nothing ends up being achieved except for a new drain of public spending.

This expansion of the state takes place on two different levels. The first being the external influence of the "the global" relations, rationalities and agencies that give the state a global dimension apparent in the transnational capital influence and real estate ventures that mushroomed in different places of the country, particularly in the capital Amman and Aqaba (ASEZ, Al Abdali Urban Development Project, Jordan Gate Towers and more). Through these newly established neoliberal assemblages, the governance structure and mentality are altered, as well as the socio-political reality in which they manifest. Within these geographies of entwined agencies, the sate seems rather "abstract on the one hand and too concrete on the other hand" (Debruyne, 2014) calling for a socio-spatial analytical approach to dissect the underlying network of agencies and mechanisms. The second is an internal one, where the state transforms and expands through new assemblages of power constructed with local actors that subsequently expand state power and authority to new dimensions of political and social life while simultaneously consolidating their own internal power relations through state patronage. While the first level may be more or less limited to globalization and neoliberalization rationale, the second can be traced back in the historical perspective to the very inception of the state. In this perspective, globalization and neoliberalization processes are external logics that engage with and take up extant internal assemblages of power, transform and consolidate them and produces new assemblages in the process, together with their new accompanying set of interrelations and interconnections. However, these internal analytical objects long precede the arrival of globalization and neoliberalization processes (Hourani, 2016). What does this transformation of the state look like in tangible terms, prior to and after the arrival of neoliberalization processes?

3.3 A Brief Historical Perspective: Land, Spatial Practices and the State-Effect

The transformation of the state, as described above, was not a onetime event nor can it be attributed to a simple logic of cause and effect, as the liberalization rhetoric of Washington based agencies of the 1980s would suggest. It is in fact a tale of complex historical relations and transformations that gave rise to, and consolidated Jordan's current network of powerful elites. These internal power relations first emerged from projects and practices introduced by the Ottoman Empire that controlled the territory of the modern-day Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the late 1800s. This project, known as *Tanzimat,* was put in place to increase imperial control over its provinces through a set of administrative and legal reforms. These centralized reforms in essence were means to exploit these territories to enrich the treasury through increased production and subsequently increased revenue. This was achieved through a set of laws that would "bring direct government down to the village level and to the outlying districts, neither of which had previously experienced such government," and produce "a body politic of equal citizens and territorial units ultimately controlled by the Porte.” (Abu-Manneh, 1992).

These processes effectively led to the emergence of what (Mitchell , 1991) calls the “state-effect,” which is created when several logics, practices, and routines come together as an assemblage producing the effect of a state that is detached from the spheres under its control, like society and economy (Hourani, 2016). The introduction of the laws of the Tanzimat reforms, notably the Land Code of 1858 and the Law of the Provinces, meant the disruption of already existing, diverse and somewhat organic property practices that were in place. These local practices, from a poststructuralist perspective, not only constituted the relation between people but also between human and non-human entities. The distribution and management of land and cultivation practices in those areas, for example, were influenced by contextual elements like terrain, rainfall, seasonal requirements of agriculture, available technologies and more. The assemblage of relations of the local context helps us understand how the introduction of external logics and practices (in this instance the Tanzimat reforms) contributed to the rise of politico-economic powers that crossed the perceived “boundaries” between the state and what exists outside of it (See Hourani, 2016, pp. 11-18). Land relations prior to reforms in the area were complex, as the intricacies of any context would suggest. The Ottoman Land Code of 1858 and the Tanzimat reforms in general, aimed to simplify these property forms and relations and make them more readily visible and manageable from the center of the empire through the introduction of legal and administrative practices.

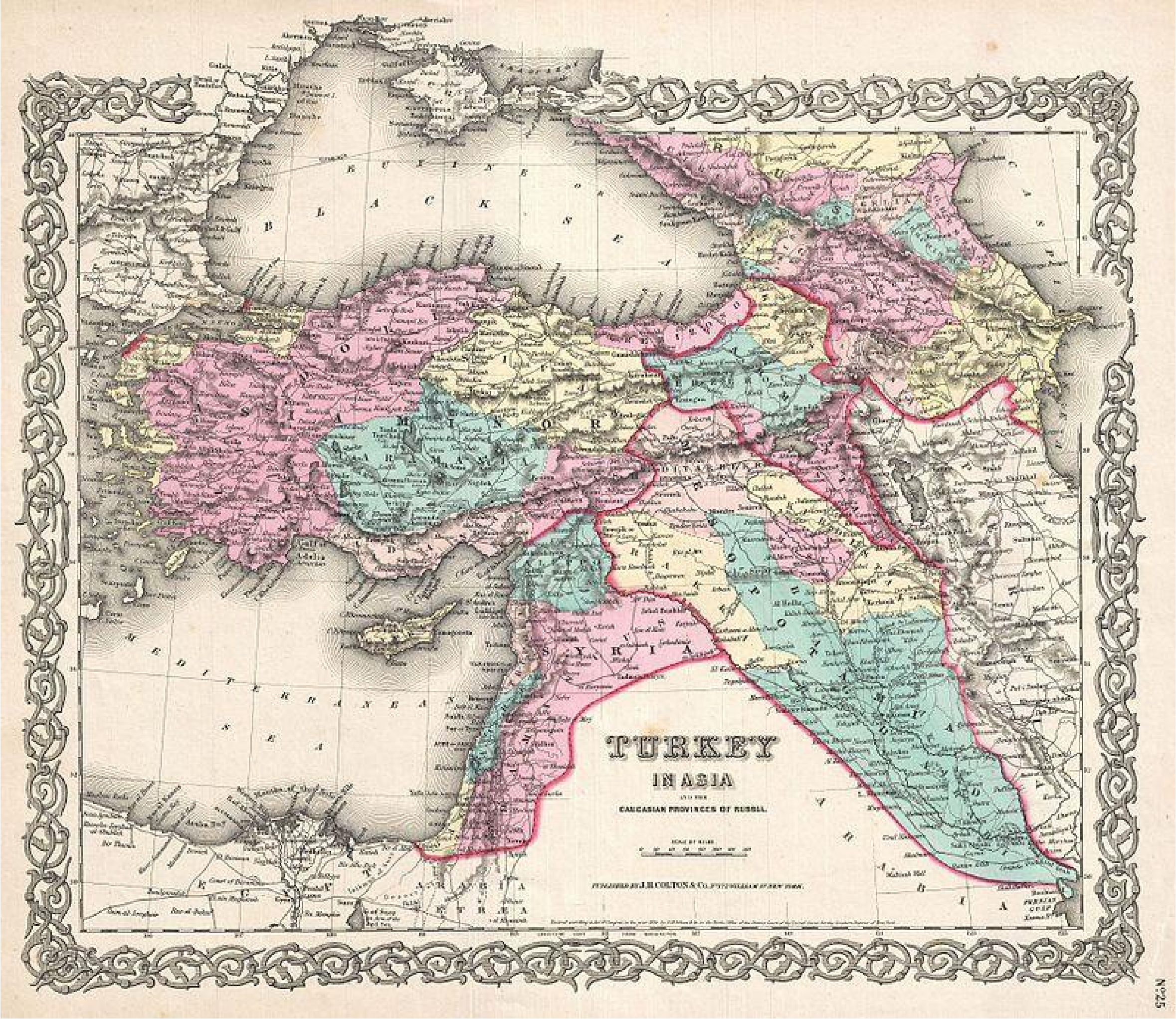

TURKEY
IN ASIA
AND THE
CAUCASIAN PROVINCES OF RUSSIA
PUBLISHED BY J.H. COLTON & Co. No 172 WILLIAM St NEW YORK.
BLACK SEA
EUXINE SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ASIA MINOR
SYRIA
ARABIA
N°25

Figure 4: Map showing Ottoman Provinces, by Colton, 1855

Source: Wikimedia Commons

The Land Code of 1858, intended to a) increase production on lands already cultivated, b) bring new lands under cultivation, and c) regularize and render more rigorous tax collection (Fischbach 2000; Mundy 1994; Mundy and Smith 2007; Rogan 2002). The Department of Land Cadastre was created in the same year to organize and archive the technical aspects of these laws, with local offices in each of the Empire's provinces that produced documentation of all information related to land. According to (Messik, 1993) the codification of place meanings and practices into laws meant the removal of the juidicirary knowledge from the particularities of place and time and the interpretive, organic presence to the form of centralized bureaucratic knowledge, which contributes to the effect of a state that is rather separate from which it governs. With the introduction of the Land Code of 1858 and the Law of Provinces, the diverse peoples, places and practices of power were drawn and fixed into a meticulously heirarchial and centralized adminstrative entity, within which individuals and things were incorporated as state simplifications (Scott, 1998).

The historical territory of Jordan was a nodal point of politico-economic ties in the region that extended in all directions. The imposition of the new Ottoman administrative project was not an easy endeavor, as it came to challenge long-standing politico-economic patterns and dynamics. Although the Ottoman Empire did not spare any efforts to display imperial force in the region, its violent and ruthless actions were not enough to get the job done. In order to extend its new set of laws, the empire resorted to and depended on influential local actors for collaboration. In this moment of what (Holston, 1989) calls "negation of the negation", the administrative reform project, devised as an extralocal entity, produced internal forms of power relations as necessary means for its implementation.

With the expansion of the new Ottoman order in the late 19th century, the effect of the state as an administrative body existing outside of and over society and economy became apparent. The reform effort, however, depended on existing notables and tribal sheikhs, as well as existing systems of power and authority that the reforms were supposed to eliminate. The notables and tribe leaders constituted an emerging internal network of politico-economic power relations that operated between society and the centralizing state. The newly founded oligarchic network was once again taken up and reinforced within yet another legal and administrative formation, that of the British colonial mandate. In its efforts to establish colonial rule, the British mandate relied on the same power networks to secure cooperation and in the same manner as the Ottoman Empire, conveyed more power and authority to the oligarchy. Both colonial powers employed land and property as a way to both increase revenue and secure alliances with local powers.

In the Ottoman reforms, the newly constituted districts within the Law of Provinces were given jurisdiction over tribal territories, and tribal sheikhs were frequently appointed as government officials in these territories. Sheikhs generated enormous wealth, as well as greater power and status, in exchange for collecting taxes and maintaining order in their districts. These reforms also urged tribes to register their land under the names of their leaders and start cultivating it to avoid losing it to the state. This practice resulted in increased power in the hands of these leaders who would subsequently distribute parts of the land to consolidate allegiances and develop new agricultural ventures with their relatives or town-based merchants (Hourani, 2016). These practices transformed power dynamics on various levels, between tribal leaders and the ottoman institutions and between tribal leaders and their kin. The nature of their power also changed as these leaders now enjoy the backing of bureaucratic institutions, their resources and power, which they employed to pursue their personal interests.

It is from this moment that diverse logics and practices, both external and internal, and carrying the formal administrative character of a state entity started coming together to generate the basis of socio-spatial contestation as a space of struggle, inequality and power grab that still exists in Jordan today. This dynamic has been continuously produced and reproduced with the introduction of new external logics (i.e. neoliberalism and globalization), the transformation and creation of new internal power dynamics and the interaction of these diverse logics. The central arena where these power relations clash and materialize is the spatial realm within which they manifest and solidify. Their latest manifestation is the neoliberal urban restructuring of cities like Aqaba and Amman, but within this historical perspective of land laws and power assemblages, it is becoming clearer that spatial decisions in the country were always used as means to reinforce and secure power in the hands of the elites at the expense of the wider public.

The British spatial policy in mandate Transjordan was the implementation of the Torrens system, in it the unit of registration became the unit of land rather than people and claims, as was the case in the ottoman practice. The new policy was put into effect with the fiscal survey of 1927 and was carried on by the newly established Department of Land and Survey in 1929. This system sought to first defining the lands belonging to individual towns and villages; second, further division of the land of each village into numbered blocks of 250,000 sqm, and having it all recorded on cadastral maps. Musha' land - loosely defined as non-privately held agricultural land that was periodically redistributed by village elders to families depending on their needs as well as other non-human factors - that still existed despite Ottoman efforts to incorporate all agricultural land into its system, was also divided into individual plots and made object of ownership. Both the Ottoman and the British sought to dismantle the Musha' land tenure system to establish a more individualized system that would enable an individually based agricultural tax system. (Razzaz, 1993). The transformation of Musha' land became a source of arising legal contestation over land later on. Urban land, which was already privately held land, was rigorously mapped; Peri-urban land or "miri" was subdivided into smaller plots to accommodate rapid expansion (Hourani, 2016:22). Each plot of land demarcated on earth and numbered on the cadastral map was recorded in a centralized registry. The state now has full access to information it did not have before thanks to the Torrens System that mapped all the land plots. As the main aim of this system was agricultural land for taxing purposes, the 1929 campaign to register Musha' land placed the rest of uncultivated land (Pastoral, semi-desert and desert land), accounting for extended areas of land, under "state domain." As these areas were far from urban centers at the time and required registration fees and legal proceedings to claim them by their tribal owners, this issue remained dormant until the 1970s when the urbanization boom rendered these lands invaluable, and conflict ensued due to the duality of tenure of lands (Razzaz, 1993).

The intersection of the new property regime with other factors led to the rise and further enrichment of the oligarchy and the impoverishment of the many (Hourani, 2016). From the start, the average plot sizes, according to the new property regime, were too small to support the average family. According to studies (Fischbach, 2000:137), the plot size required to support the average family would have ranged between 500 to 200 dunums depending on the type of land, however, the average size plot created by the British system was just 85 dunums (Hourani, 2016, 24). The issue of the small plot sizes was exacerbated by the interaction with logics of inheritance, which led to more division and fragmentation of agricultural land between heirs and heirs of heirs, when the original plot size was too small to begin with **(Figure 5)**. The new system was rigid and in stark contrast with the previous flexible system, where the Musha' land was not divided into small plots and shares of the produce were annually distributed in line with the changing needs of families. Plot size shrinkage and further fragmentation was extremely rapid, the first registered plot sizes decreasing by 50% between 1934 and 1954 (Hourani, 2016:25).

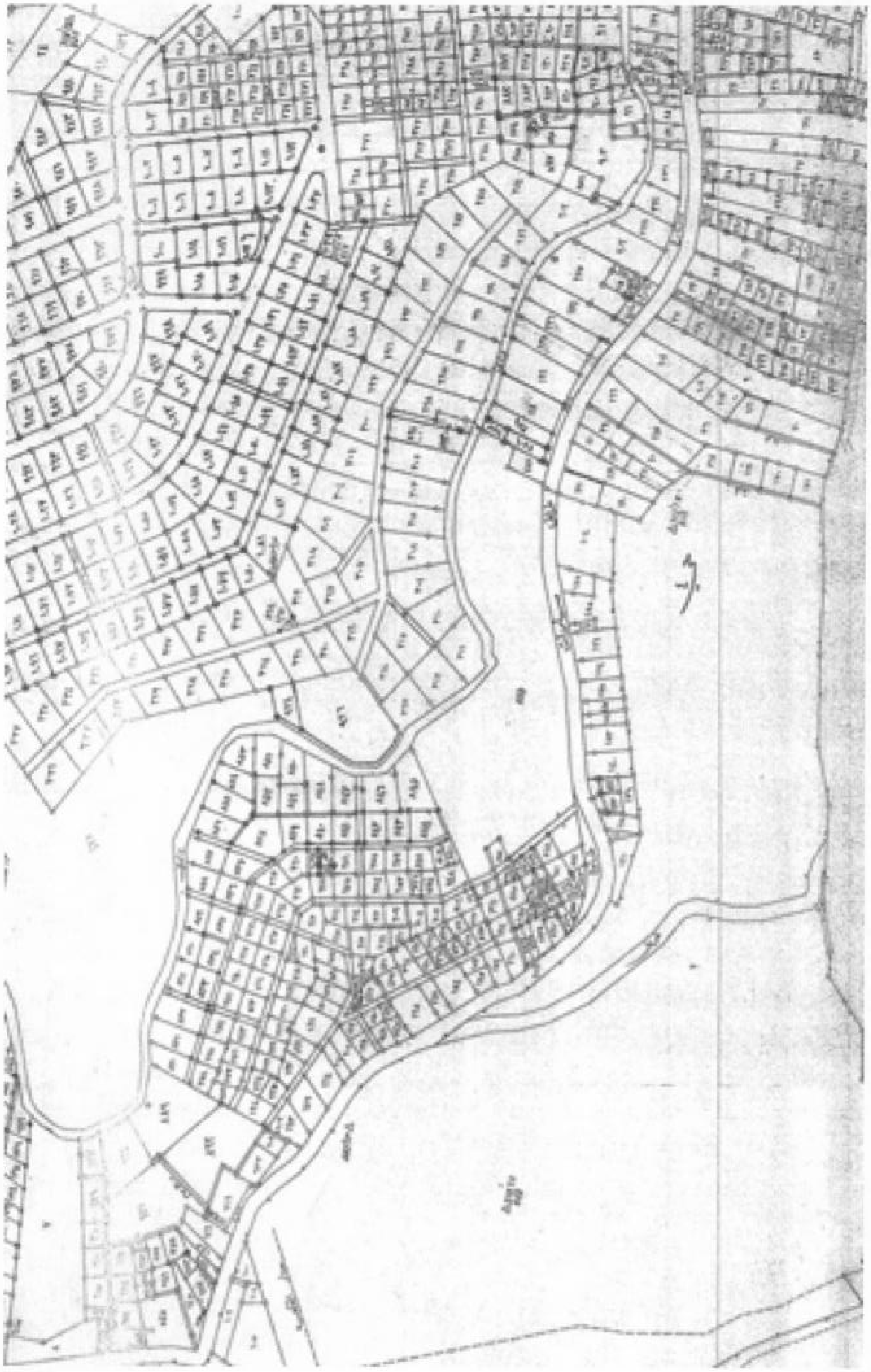


Figure 5: Cadastral Map, Amman Citadel Hill

Source: Hourani, 2016, p. 23

Shrinking land holdings forced owners to either rent or sell their plots to larger landholders, for whom they subsequently worked, if they did not migrate to nearby towns. Non-human forces, according to Hourani, further complicated matters. Previously communally maintained protections of the land, like tree lines and walls, were dismantled or collapsed after the division of land to small holdings, which contributed to topsoil erosion. Shrinking plot sizes, soil erosion and drought each contributed to put financial strains on peasants who resorted to debt (Hourani, 2016: 25). While land continued to be concentrated in the hands of the few, so did power and authority. The introduced colonial systems, directed at colonial state formation and completely removed from local practices and the interests of the general population, helped to create and entrench great disparities and inequalities along the socio-economic fabric of the territory. The different factors led to the accumulation of landholdings in the hands of a small percentage of the population (Razzaz, 1991). By 1950, 25% of the land was held by 1.4% of the population in large estates of over 500 dunums, while 85% of landowner held 36% of land in small plots of 100 dunums or fewer (Hourani, 2016:26). This consolidation of the oligarchic network within the colonial order was crucial to the state, much like it was to the Ottoman order, notwithstanding the utter negation of the colonizer's economic liberation rhetoric of the peasants.

Another central mission of the British mandate was regime consolidation and pacification. Once again, this processes of state formation depended on the powerful networks, and involved trading land as a currency of the ascending monarchy's favors. The mandate government that was established in 1921 under the Hashemite Prince Abdullah conceived the new "State Lands" that were subsequently granted to members of the oligarchy network that has emerged through the previously mentioned colonial orders. The oligarchy class constituted, according to Hourani (2016), of the tribal elites and holders of late 19th century agricultural estates that emerged from the Ottoman regime, in addition to the wealthy merchants and money-lenders who were already established merchants in as-Salt and who accumulated large landholdings under the British system and subsequently moved to Amman, the new seat of power under the mandate government, where they were joined by other merchants who hailed from French-controlled Syria.

The monarchy and the elites had a relationship of mutual support. The most prominent of these elites went on to play vital roles in the newly formed state, both economic and political, particularly through the newly established Amman Chamber of Commerce. The mutually beneficial and exclusive arrangement that the elite had with the Hashemite prince Abdullah, who later became King when the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan became independent in 1946, granted them special treatments in matters such as state domain lands acquisition and obtaining infrastructure contracts and concessions, in return of their considerable political and financial support to the prince. By the time the Hashemite Kingdom gained independence, and in a period of widespread poverty in Transjordan due to wartime hardships, this group of networked elites "which consisted of no more than 31 individuals in the 1940s, over time consolidated positions and relations through business partnerships, marriage ties, and member ships in social clubs. They expressed their interests through dyadic relations with the monarchy, institutions such as the Amman Chamber of Commerce, and control of government offices. From positions within and alongside the colonial state, they increased their wealth and power in ways previously unimaginable, and shaped the future of the fledgling Hashemite Kingdom." (Hourani, 2016).

The interaction of these diverse logics is an integral part to understanding the spatial formation and transformation of Jordanian cities in general but most particularly the capital city of Amman. Previously a small town with a small number of inhabitants, the city played an uninfluential role up until the British mandate designated it the center of expansion and consolidation of the post-independence oligarchic network of Jordan. In this context, we can observe that spatial practices and decisions, since the very early formation of the state, were not a product of a well-thought and long-term vision and strategy to the well benefit of the population. Rather, they were the tools, mechanisms and the coming together of practices meant to cement and consolidate existing power structures that emerged with the first introduction of an administrative entity in the territory. This places the current condition of Amman in perspective as it is still the reality of the city to this day, a remnant of laws and policies crafted by colonial powers, detached from the city's fast changing needs and rapidly growing population, and catering instead to the profit and power of the few. These insights into the emerging network of elites in Jordan and Amman during the late Ottoman rule and their consolidation during the British mandate are essential in understanding the contemporary spatial transformations in Amman. As this network was once again taken up through the logic of 'negation of negation' within the newly introduced neoliberal reforms, but this time not only to take part of neoliberal transformations of Amman, but, due to the transnational character on neoliberalization, as part of a regional network that produces space on a regional scale across Arab cities.

3.4 Post-Independence Development of Amman: The Emergence of Spatial Practices

Spatial practices in Amman in the second half of the 20th century have invited diverse analyses from local and international scholars with various accounts. The growth of Amman in this period was phenomenal (Potter et al., 2009). With a current population of over 4 million inhabitants, the city has witnessed rapid development since its humble beginning as a small town of no more than three thousand inhabitants in the 1920s, extending long a valley floor and sustained by the local agricultural production of wheat, lintels figs and pomegranates (Malkawi H. , 2002). Since the 1930s, the city began to expand rapidly, according to Hourani (2016); this rapid development of Amman was enabled by the oligarchic network's (introduced above) ability to "combine public resources and their wartime windfall profits to drive Amman's rapid development." As they purchased and developed large areas of peri-urban land the city started growing and climbing the surrounding hills (Malkawi H. , 2002, pp. 123-125).

The rapid growth of the city was spurred by the several waves of refugees, mostly Palestinians, who settled in Amman between the '50s and '80s. Following the first influx of Palestinian refugees after the creation of Israel in 1948, the city population reached

250,000 in the 1950s. This increase in population was reflected in the expansion of the city's territory from 31 square kilometers in 1946 when its population was 60,000, to occupy 50 square kilometers in 1959 (Abu Al Haija & Potter, 2013). The second influx in 1967 following the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank drove the population of the city up to nearly half a million. By the 1970s, Amman was home to nearly third of the Jordanian population when a new wave of refugees and asylum seekers arrived in the country after the Lebanese civil war. As the myriad of human catastrophes in the surrounding countries drove up the city's population at drastic rates, its boundary continued to expand and the city developed in an increasingly divided manner between a wealthier western side and an impoverished eastern districts and refugee camps (Potter et al., 2009).

In 1987, the Greater Amman Municipality GAM came into being through the development of the Great Amman Comprehensive Development Plan GACDP in 1986. The priorities of the plans are to establish a single municipal authority with a unified planning vision and to direct growth to minimize and avoid urban sprawl that had become a great issue at the time where rapid development had affected and damaged large areas of fertile agricultural land **(Figure 6)**. The strategy of the plan was the reliance on a radial road network, an emphasis on strong public transportation, and the use of development centers and corridors to prevent further urban sprawl. The GACDP, as its successor the Amman Plan did in 2008, disregarded private land ownership, especially in territories that were designated to the future roadmap of development, or the 'development corridors', most of which surrounding lands were and still are occupied by squatters, resulting in wide campaigns of land acquisition in both plans.

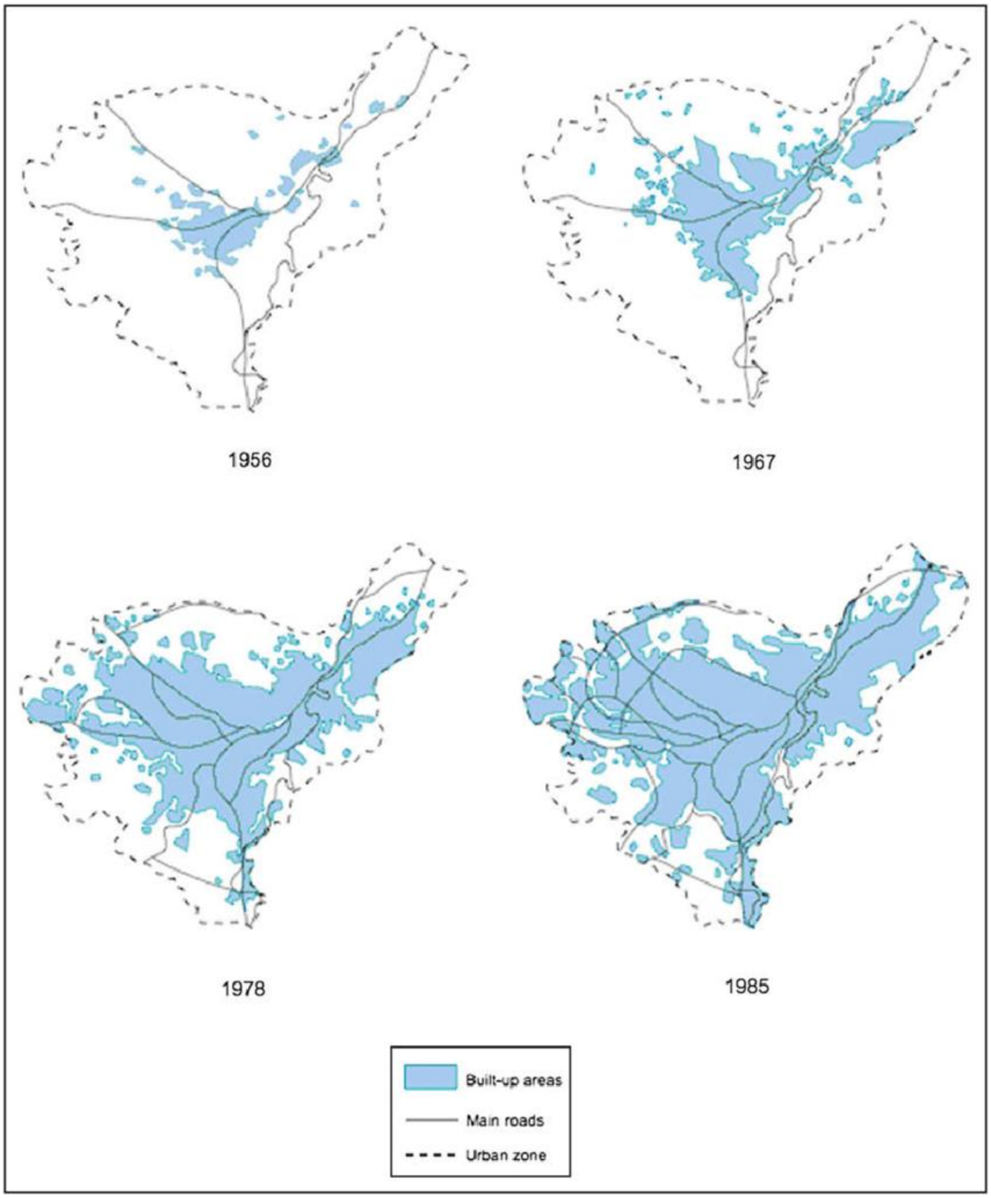


Figure 6: The physical expansion of Amman 1956-1985

Source: Potter et al., 2009

The period between 1950s and 1980s witnessed vast development in Amman that was characteristically distinct from the development practices that ensued in the late '80s with the implementation of the economic liberalization policies and contemporary market regulation. The development planning of this period was characterized by a state-led mixed market economy or "mixed free enterprise" (Kingston, 2001). The newly founded state, in an attempt to shake off the remnants of its colonial past, initiated several state-led developmental plans between the ‘50s and 80s of the 20th century. These plans, ranging between three to five to seven years, included expanding infrastructure projects and the national economy sectors; they involved several actors and the newly created planning platforms like the Jordan Development Board (JDB) and later the Royal Scientific Society (RSS). This model of state-led development, however, heavily relied on the relations between state agencies, donor agencies and private capital (Debruyne, 2014). In a time when the state was trying to build a strong national economy through state-led development planning, these plans were frequently interrupted and influenced by a regional as well as internal set of political and economic events.

In the 1960s, under the leftist-nationalist government of Wasfi Al Tell, the development plans that included national and regional plans, urban plans for the cities of Jordan and industrialization plans of the economy, were developed with the goal of enhancing the “institutional-economic foundations for the development of a ‘national economy’ on the basis of development planning ideas and practices of modernist long-term planning concepts popular at that time.” The goal of the leftist government and their state-led development model was a future economy free from the control of foreign aid with a focus on the spread of social services, the improvement of infrastructure and spatial development plans. This model resulted in the 1962-1967 5-year-plan, the first official long term national development plan, and was followed by a range of regional, urban and national development plans (Debruyne, 2014). The institutional platform responsible for regional, urban, and national development planning was the ‘planning division” set up within the JDB by the Tell government in an effort to unify the previously fragmented planning efforts that were at play. The planning division was supported by the USAID (then Point Four), the British Overseas Development Agency ODA and the JDB.

The planning division subsequently recommended the development of a new city and country planning regulation which was adopted through law 79, the Law of Planning of Cities, Villages and Buildings, and following Building and Zoning By-Law for Amman City. The implementation of this development plan, however, was erupted by the 1967 six days war with Israel. The refugees’ influx of this war overflowed the two existent camps (AL Wihdat and Al Hussein camps) which were formed following the 1948 Nakba, and the UNRWA created nine new camps in the urban peripheries of the city (Debruyne, 2014). During this period, the city's bourgeoisie started expanding towards the west and north of the city away from the city center (Potter et al., 2009). Potter et al. (2009) continue to express that as wealthy groups started moving towards the north-west of the city, land prices started going up in those areas and subsequently these "high-income districts" of Amman were formed. This grew to become a common conception of Amman, the great spatial divide between the rich and the urban poor.

The polarized character of the city invited different analyses. Abu Hamdi (2016) accounts that even when the state was at its most prosperous times, the allocation of welfare funds and programs was disproportionate towards areas that were predominantly constituted of Jordanian citizen rather that Jordanians of Palestinian origin, and that Palestinian citizens living in largely Palestinian territories felt "underserved by the state." The argument, that was proposed by other scholars as well, is that the west-east socio-economic and spatial divide of Amman is essentially founded in the demographic composition of the city. However, is this empirically correct?

A predominant myth, as Khirfan (2018) describes it, is that the divide between East and West Amman is attributed to the assumption that East Amman is almost exclusively composed of Palestinian refugees and Palestinian-Jordanians and because of that, it "was ignored by formal planning." Khirfan (2018) dispels this myth as fundamentally flawed, using census data throughout the years that "indicate that Jordanian citizens (both Transjordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians) are actually a minority throughout East and West Amman" and "most of the inner suburbs in East and South Amman…are home to predominantly Transjordanian tribes". Thus, according to empirical data, Transjordanians are a majority in East Amman as opposed to general claims. Khirfan continues to argue that, according to data, municipal planners of the 20th century "sought to bridge Amman's East-West disparities and address its rapid expansion" which was done through the development of four plans for Amman in 1955, 1968, 1978 and 1988. The implementation of these plans, however, was vastly affected by a variety of contexts and objectives, particularly the economic context of the period they were conceived (Abu-Dayyeh , 2004). According to Abu-Dayyeh, the image of Amman as a city struggling to accommodate and cater for its rapidly growing local and migrant population, is not due to the city's lack of substantial work in physical planning, but rather to the sudden and substantial increases in population that regularly led to "severe shortages in the provision of land, housing and infrastructure." (Abu-Dayyeh , 2004).

Another important account of the city's attempts at reducing the disparities between its west and east divide, is the Urban Development Department UDD within GAM that through the '80s and '90s placed considerable efforts on improving the conditions of informal settlements and underprivileged areas in east Amman. The UDD applied the new concepts advocated by the World Bank for urban renewal including housing upgrades, infrastructure provision and home ownership, in 1991, the UDD and the Housing Corporation were merged to great the Housing and Urban Development Corporation which expanded the upgrading projects to all of Jordan. By 1993, all ten of UNRWA camps and the three from the Department of Palestinian Affair DPA, were included in the work of HUDC (Ababsa, 2010). Ababsa concludes, however, that despite urban renewal efforts over nearly thirty years, the socio-economic divide of east-west Amman still persists, and the following development policies (under neoliberalism) only focus on limited parts of the city (as this research will later demonstrate) while it leaving extended overpopulated areas "under-equipped, lacking in social housing and centers of employment." (Ababsa, 2010). (**Figure 7)**

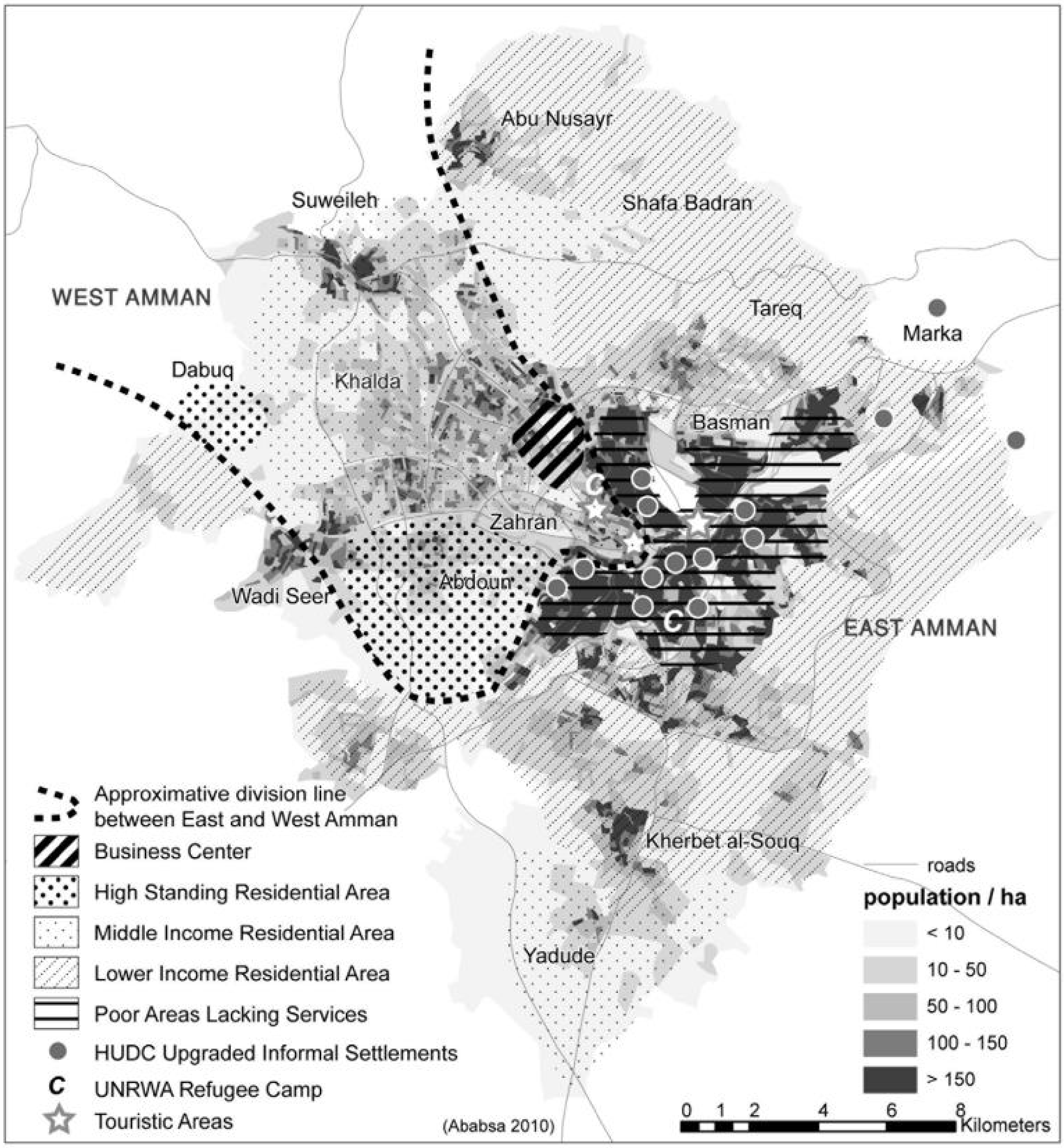

Abu Nusayr
Suweileh
Shafa Badran
WEST AMMAN
Tareq
Marka
Dabuq
Khalda
Basman
Zahran
Abdoun
Wadi Seer
EAST AMMAN
Kherbet al-Souq
Yadude
Approximative division line between East and West Amman
Business Center
High Standing Residential Area
Middle Income Residential Area
Lower Income Residential Area
Poor Areas Lacking Services
HUDC Upgraded Informal Settlements
UNRWA Refugee Camp
Touristic Areas
(Ababsa 2010)
roads
population / ha
< 10
10 - 50
50 - 100
100 - 150
> 150
0 1 2 4 6 8 Kilometers

Figure 7: Amman Urban Morphology and Approximate Division Line

Source: Ababsa, 2011

Within this context of state-led development, massive foreign aid, rapid urbanization, and large infrastructure projects, the oligarchic network of Amman was strategically positioned to benefit and expand their wealth during this vital period of state building. This profit was not limited to land and property sales and rentals, from which thousands of Jordanians also benefitted, but rather through their networked monopolization of "infrastructure projects and concessions in and around Amman" which were very lucrative to the well-connected (Hourani, 2016). Amman's share of the new state's infrastructure budget capped at 60% at the time (Hanania, 2010). During this period the state became major shareholder in the economic ventures of the oligarchs, who subsequently "became directors and beneficiaries of significant public subsidies," additionally "they and their heirs continued their import monopolies, often as exclusive agents for Western-based corporations, and branched out into construction, insurance, energy, industry, and most importantly, banking." (Hourani, 2016).

Anthother major part of the story begins with the oil boom of the 1970s. Oil money tranfrormed the Jordanian political-economic landscape on many level. From the increased influx of remittances (money sent home from workers in the Gulf) which by 1984 accounted to 25% of Jordan GDP (Brynen , 1992, p. 79), to substantial urbanization of the cities (Piro , 1998, p. 66). Private capital was invested in land and housing stock (Dejong, 1996). People with tribe lands around Amman became rich in this process. In that period, the oil economy had a great impact at driving Jordan's GDP up, as a result the early 1980s witnessed an economic boom of unprecedented proportions and massive urban expantion in Amman; "The repercussions of the economic boom on urban expansion and real estate prices were nothing less than phenomenal. Between 1972 and 1982, the surface area of the city grew from 21 to 54 square kilometers. The Amman municipality estimated that between 1970 and 1976, land prices rose 500 percent on average. Between 1975 and 1985, land prices rose again by 500 percent. Government revenues from land registration increased from 551,000 dinars in 1971 to 24,479,000 in 1981, an increase of more than 4,000 percent. During the same period, however, the salary of an average civil servant increased by only 50 percent." (Razzaz, 1993).

The familiar east-west divide of Amman was once again being further entrenched, as the gap continued to grow between the economic abilities of low-income groups and the rocketing land and housing prices, which led to further spatial segregation of the city (Razzaz, 1993). This dynamic of an overcrowded east side and a rising standard of living, led middle and low income groups to seek affordable and accessible land, eventually settling in Yajouz, an area at the outskirts of Amman along the Amman-Rusayfa-Zarqa corridor.

The “informal” settlements that formed in those areas bring us back to the previously mentioned duality of tenure of Musha’ land and the “state domain,” that up until that moment caused no serious conflict. The land that falls within the historical Musha’ land belonging to the Bani Hasan tribe and that now “legally” belongs to the state within the “state domain” category, was being subdivided and sold by Bani Hasan tribe members to to new settlers seeking affordable land and housing. This practice eventually evolved from individual transactions into an “unregulated land market” that was highly influenced by Gulf economy of the period. This instance presented a classic clash between the nation-state, or the state-effect, and the socio-economic context on which it was imposed. As Razzaz (1993) puts it: the existing system is not an incarnation of the “archaic” system of musha‘ land tenure. It is rather a “modern” response to a “modern” phenomenon: the nation-state that possesses the legal power to bestow legitimacy over some social claims and deny it to others.” A heated-up conflict between the state, Bani Hasan and the settlers ensued in the following years, involving demolitions, restrictions on construction and other tools employed by the state like imprisonment of involved members, and the counter measures taken by settlers and Bani Hasan to assert their claims over their land. These claims were only legally recognized, however, after the political liberalization and democratization process in 1989 (Razzaz, 1993). Some cases were still in court until the 2010s, in addition to other similar incidents of land claims in Amman.

The 1970s and early 1980s were by multiple accounts a prosperous period for Jordan and its capital Amman following the devastating war of 1967. Oil profits in the Gulf increased financial aid from Gulf countries to Jordan. The aid money was invested in large infrastructure upgrading projects as well as expanding the public sector and services like education and health (Brynen , 1992; Shteiwi, 1996). After the Lebanese war broke, refugees from Lebanon including rich families brought more money to Amman (Shteiwi, 1996), the banking district of Shmeisani was developed and new commercial districts were formed (Debruyne, 2014). New developmental plans were prepared with the support of donors like the USAID and the Arab Fund with that took up from previous, halted, plans. These plans incorporated spatial development as well, as (Debruyne, 2014) accounts from an interview with Dr. Tariq Tell: “The spatial development planning in the ‘70s and ‘80s were different than the ‘50s and ‘60s planning paradigms. New types of planners came in… Also in these years, there was a lot of money circulating, so this also led to comprehensive planning with the inclusion of megaprojects without any accountability.” The oligarchic network appears once again in this dynamic, monopolizing large-scale infrastructure projects that were being financed by the government and aid money, and in the process taking place within the wider regional oligarchic network of the Gulf states and competing to capture the influx of petrodollars (Hourani, 2016). Hourani elaborates: “The flood of petrodollars and the logic of speculation combined with the oligarchs' weight within urban processes profoundly shaped the Jordanian political economy and the capital city at its heart. At the same time, the expansion of the capital city profoundly enriched the oligarchs.”

The urban development practices between 1975 and 1985 in Amman, constituted of the “networked production of space” eastward of the city driven by the wealthy in the form of low-density luxury suburbs. The government and the municipality spent millions of public funds to sustain this expansion through infrastructure provision at the expense of the underprivileged parts of Amman and other Jordanian cities at large (Potter et al., 2009; Hourani, 2016). Major regional disparities and geographies of uneven development within Amman itself, and between Amman and other cities started becoming more explicit. As Amman petrodollar infused development led to land prices skyrocketing, there was a persistent shortage of housing in Amman. Meanwhile, by 1985 “fully 90% of residential plots in Amman fell within the western districts of the city and were zoned for luxury villas and developments (Zones A and B). In contrast, Zone C, for middle-income developments, accounted only for 8%. Zone D and the "Popular Zone," affordable to the average Jordanian, accounted for a mere 2% of the capital.” (Hourani, 2016; Razzaz, 1993).

With the backdrop of increasing uneven development, the 1980s witnessed two dynamics. First the preparation of regional development plans to curb these developmental disparities, their goals were very progressive and socially just, but remained on paper due to the economic crisis that began evolving mid ‘80s. On the other hand, however, the powerful networked production of space continued business as usual within the same economically restrained context; pushing “Amman's luxury neighborhoods westward, to privatize profits and socialize the costs of their production.” (Hourani, 2016). Their approach was to subdivide and sell peri-urban land, forcing the government for luxury zoning. In addition, as developers blocked attempts to introduce a valorization tax, which was designed to cover the costs of infrastructure provision, infrastructure continued relentlessly. Effectively bearing the subsidized land speculators’ profit on the average Jordanian in a time when the government was increasingly in debt and the country’s municipalities became bankrupt (Maciejewski & Mansur, 1996; Hourani, 2016).

The following period after 1989 ushered in a new distinct reality for development in Amman. As the state-led development sought the overall improvement of national sectors and provision of social and public services within the welfare state model, and despite the various obstacles and delays in implementation, this was at least the developmental rhetoric at the time: the overall welfare of the citizens. What came next was a completely different story. Although the official speech still centered the interest, well-being and overall improvement of citizens’ livelihood in the heart of the economic reforms, what unfolded in the 1990s under King Hussein, and to a vaster extent under the reign of King Abdullah II in the 2000s demonstrates a different reality on the ground.

It is, thus, becoming more clear that while developmental plans aimed at the overall improvement of living conditions of the public and the long-term security and progress of national sectors, were almost always aborted, cut short or simply remained on paper due to external and internal factors (that were and remain frequent in the region) or for no other reason than going against the interest of the powerful elites. These oligarchs, championing a variety of economic ventures, continued with their own power and profit driven plans unabated, accumulating enormous wealth and affording the costs of which on the average Jordanian. This duality of dynamics was exacerbated and rendered more physically clear through the urban restructuring of the territory under the neoliberal market regulatory model that ushered in the 1990s, following the economic and debt crisis that the country faced due in part to this same oligarchic network.

Another equally, if not more important, part of the 20th century development is the local identity that was being formed. Wars, migration, and social unrest in the streets of Jordanian cities characterized this period of state building. While the new state was trying to take shape, its self-realizing attempts were continuously interrupted and forced to recourse by regional and global events. It is my proposition, in this regard, that any serious attempts during that period at forming and consolidating a solid local identity of the emergent Jordanian state were never fully materialized. By the time the alienating policies and programs of neoliberalism and globalization arrived, they were able to roll back any progress that has been achieved in that period and therefore, contributed to the current prevailing perception of loss of identity that the Jordanian citizens live and feel.

4. SPATIAL PLANNING IN JORDAN

Jordan represents an interesting case in territorial governance and spatial planning as it is so in many other aspects. Located in a region of recurring turmoil, it is surrounded by conflict in all its neighboring countries. For years, Jordan has been considered the safe haven of the region, not only for refugees fleeing the horrors of war but also for international investments trying to operate in the region. Being a country with very limited resources, it is interesting to see how such country is managing the aforementioned complex situation and how it reflects on the country's territorial governance and spatial planning policies. Recently, spatial planning in Jordan began to gain more attention due to many reasons including, but not limited to, the rapid increase in population especially following the Arab Spring events in 2011. However, it still has a very long way to go. To this day, there is no clear mechanism or policy that controls development in Jordan according to a defined strategy or goal on the national and regional levels. The planning tools in place are stagnant and rendered obsolete due to the inconsistent policies and laws and the various actors, making it difficult to pinpoint who has the responsibility for what. Development is therefore still governed by a collection of bylaws, despite recurring efforts to produce national, regional and local spatial plans.

The different political events discussed in previous chapters and the fact that various actors influenced existing laws; the Ottoman and the English influence, have resulted in an inconsistent and incoherent set of policies and laws regarding spatial planning in Jordan. Spatial planning in Jordan is far from an established practice. There has never been a serious effort to create a strategic vision for or to govern the spatial growth of Jordanian cities on the national level, at least not one that has been fully materialized or formally adopted. Between 1960 and 1990, more than 56 physical plans were made for Jordan at various scales, national, regional, metropolitan and local, four of which were made for the city of Amman between the period 1955-1988 (Metropolitan Growth Plan Report, 2008). The implementation of these plans was always subject to the economic context, the only body that had the budged to pursue parts of these plans was the Greater Amman Municipality, and even that implementation was minimal (Abu-

Dayyeh , 2004). Outside of Amman, however, the situation is much worse, with near complete absence of spatial planning and regulation (Abu-Dayyeh , 2004).

The spatial planning in Jordan is at best a collage of remnant of laws and regulations from colonial regimes, the following updates and edits made of those laws, in addition to some plans and laws that were added along the way in most cases as a response or a reaction to regional or local events. Arguably, the only body in the country that has the capacity to undertake spatial planning responsibilities in the real sense of the word would be Greater Amman Municipality, and even GAM compromised a lot of these responsibilities with the rolling out of the of the neoliberal restructuring policies. GAMs role was reduced to a facilitator of transnational investment, a coordinator of private-public partnerships PPPs and a provider of services to private development initiatives (Daher, 2013; Abu-Hamdi, 2016).

4.1 Tradition and Essential Features of Territorial Governance

Jordan's institutional setup was organized in accordance with a centralist view of the State. Territorial governance operates on two levels: the national level (state), and the local governance level. Local governance operates on two complementary administrative levels in Jordan: governorates under the Ministry of Interior (MoI), and Municipalities under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (Ministry of Local Administration in 2019). Up until 2015, the organizational structure of the State was extremely centralized, with some competence given to municipalities. Governorates were mainly focusing on security issues under the MoI, with little to no experience in socio-economic planning and development and had no elected officials. In 2005, decentralization policies were driven by a speech by King Abdullah II, which asserted that public policies should be developed through a "bottom-up" process rather than imposed from the top down (Ababsa, 2013). It is common knowledge at this point that regular Cabinet reshuffles, which is the case in Jordan, make continuity, coordination and high-level policy development in portfolios difficult. Executive Government was not well placed in developing strategies, which manifests through poor intergovernmental relationships between ministries, agencies and departments in regards to determining whom would have responsibility and what the proper roles and responsibilities of each would be. This also manifests through inconsistent strategies and laws across horizontal and vertical levels of government. In a 2010 speech, the King promised to parliament a draft law on decentralization. From then on, the layer of government to be activated through decentralization was the Governorate. In 2015, the Decentralization Law was approved by the parliament, as well as the Municipal Law of 2015. In 2017, Jordan held local elections for three levels of government for the first time: mayoralties, municipal and local councils, and governorate councils. However, the newly activated level of governance has no competencies in spatial planning.

4.2 Administrative structure and legislative framework

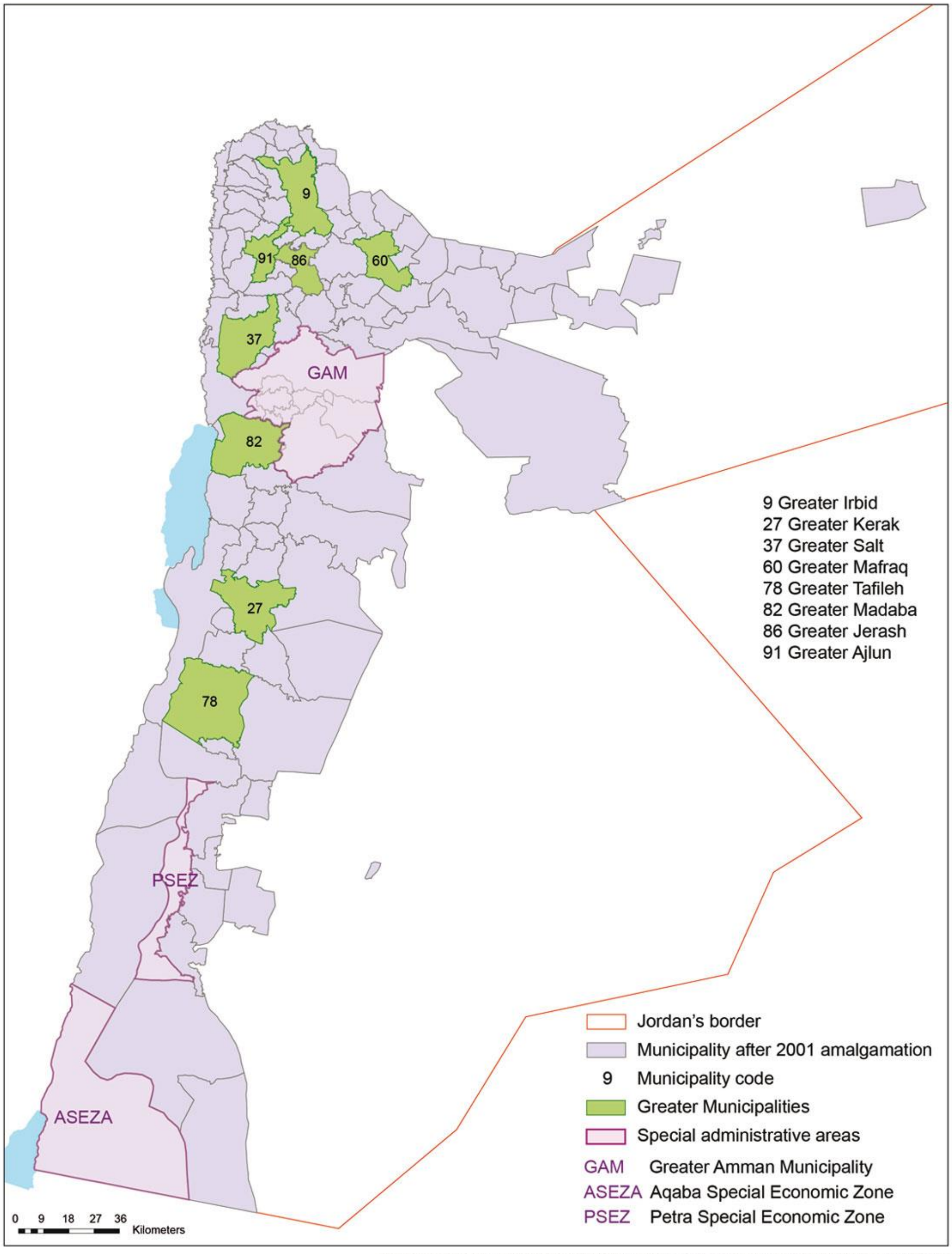
Local government bodies (local councils) appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the time of Ottoman administrative reforms. Local administration/governance was adopted by Transjordan in its first years to provide public services and local urban development, first Municipal Law and elections were in 1925. Three years after the adoption of the Constitution in 1952, and the independence in 1946, municipalities were established by law in 1955 in the Jordanian State. The number of municipalities rose from 15 in 1950 to 328 in 1994 and the number of village councils rose to 382 in 1994. The 2002 amalgamation process reduced the number of municipalities from 328 to 99, not counting Amman. The municipal system only covers the inhabited zones of Jordan, and excludes the Badiya **(Figure 8)**. The Municipal Law of 1955 stayed active until 2011. Arab Spring 2011 protests calling for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and an end to corruption were accompanied by demands for the municipal reform. The 1955 Municipalities Act was amended in September 2011, it raised municipalities' share of taxes along other reforms. However, it remained mostly the same law of 1955.

Jordan has 12 Governorates, divided into smaller administrative divisions. There are over fifty districts within these governorates. There are four categories of municipalities in Jordan: a) governorate centers (eleven plus the GAM), b) district centers (with a population of over 15,000), c) Sub-district centers (with a population of between 5,000 and 15,000), d) A fourth category for all other municipalities.

After the first influx of Palestinian refugees following the 1948 war, the Municipality of Amman expanded to cover some immediate peripheries. Then the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) came into being in 1987 with the approval of the Jordanian Parliament. In the same process, the Greater Amman Comprehensive Development Plan (GACDP) was produced. The GACDP **(**Error! Reference source not found.**)** was one of four plans prepared for Amman in the period between 1955-1988. A common feature in those four plans was the proposed construction of a ring and radial road network which "is the only part that has since been implemented, albeit partially" (Metropolitan Growth Plan, 2008, p. 46).

While the GACDP was in fact comprehensive after four year of detailed and comprehensive research into its preparation, the plan was never formally adopted due to the lack of attention gives to its 'political acceptance' and 'enactment' (Metropolitan Growth Plan, 2008, p. 46). Up until the preparation of the Amman Plan in 2008, planning in Amman was practically governed by the "City's outdated zoning bylaws, overlaid on its emerging ring and radial road networks." (Metropolitan Growth Report, 2008, p. 46). Interestingly, interviews with planners in GAM have confirmed that these bylaws remain in fact the guiding principal for 'formal planning' in the city until today, fourteen years after the introduction of the Amman Plan. GAM, was the result of the amalgamation of fourteen municipalities, fourteen village councils, and several rural areas previously under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs. After the amalgamation process in 2001, eight major municipalities of Irbid, Ajlun, Jerash, Salt, Madaba, Mafraq, Kerak and Tafila were created. In 2007, further amalgamation took place in Amman and GAM expanded its territory considerably, the Amman Plan was prepared in 2008 to account for this expansion in addition to other factors relating to the neoliberalization process of the city, as will be discussed in the following chapter of this thesis.

In addition to GAM, other independent regions came into being, that are directly administered by the Prime Minister's Office, and these are the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ); Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA); and the Jordan Rift Valley (JRV). **Figure 8**Error! Reference source not found. below shows these regions in addition to the rest of municipalities. The white area is the Badiya (desert terrain), it is unpopulated and therefore not covered in the municipal system. These areas belong largely to the state treasury or are tribal lands.


9
91
86
60
37
GAM
82
27
78
PSEZ
ASEZA
9 Greater Irbid
27 Greater Kerak
37 Greater Salt
60 Greater Mafraq
78 Greater Tafileh
82 Greater Madaba
86 Greater Jerash
91 Greater Ajlun
Jordan's border
Municipality after 2001 amalgamation
9 Municipality code
Greater Municipalities
Special administrative areas
GAM Greater Amman Municipality
ASEZA Aqaba Special Economic Zone
PSEZ Petra Special Economic Zone
0 9 18 27 36
Kilometers

(Source Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2008. Conception and design Ababsa 2012)

Figure 8: Administrative regions in Jordan

Source: Ababsa, 2012

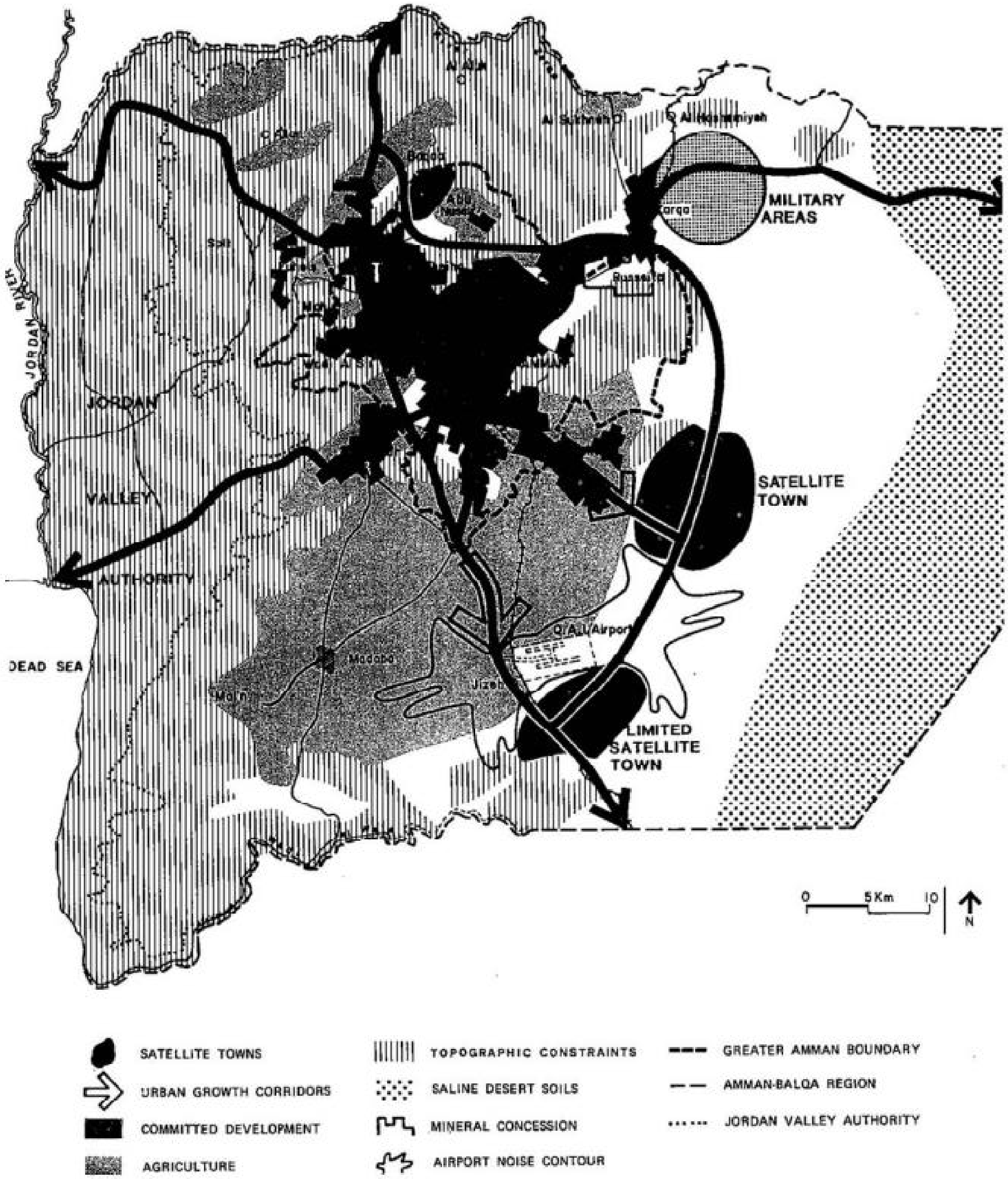

JORDAN RIVER
JORDAN
VALLEY
AUTHORITY
DEAD SEA
Salt
Al Sukhneh
Baqa
Abu Nseir
MILITARY
AREAS
Russeifa
AMMAN
SATELLITE
TOWN
Q.A.I. Airport
Madaba
Ma'in
Jizeh
LIMITED
SATELLITE
TOWN
0
5Km
10
N
SATELLITE TOWNS
URBAN GROWTH CORRIDORS
COMMITTED DEVELOPMENT
AGRICULTURE
TOPOGRAPHIC CONSTRAINTS
SALINE DESERT SOILS
MINERAL CONCESSION
AIRPORT NOISE CONTOUR
GREATER AMMAN BOUNDARY
AMMAN-BALQA REGION
JORDAN VALLEY AUTHORITY

Figure 9: The GACDP (1988), long-term regional pattern

Source: Metropolitan Growth Plan Report, 2008, p. 66)

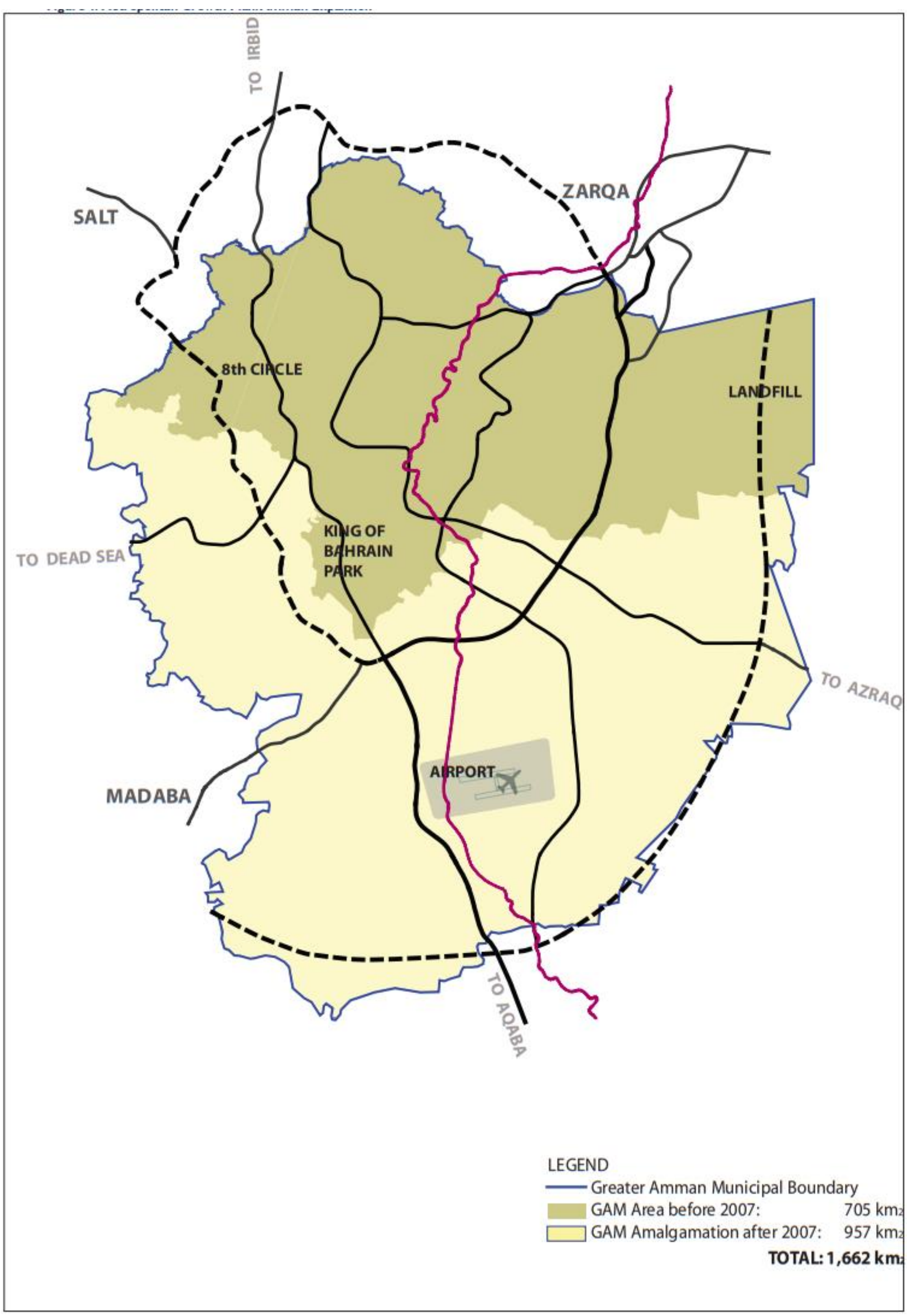

TO IRBID
SALT
ZARQA
8th CIRCLE
LANDFILL
TO DEAD SEA
KING OF BAHRAIN PARK
TO AZRAQ
AIRPORT
MADABA
TO AQABA
LEGEND
Greater Amman Municipal Boundary
GAM Area before 2007: 705 km²
GAM Amalgamation after 2007: 957 km²
TOTAL: 1,662 km²

Figure 10: Greater Amman Expansion in 2007

Source: Metropolitan Growth Plan Report, 2008

Article (121) of the Jordanian Constitution states that “Municipal and local council affairs shall be administered by municipal or local councils in accordance with special laws.” Jordan had recognized the municipal role and it was translated into promulgation of the municipal affairs regulatory law in March 1925. In 1927, new administrative formations were announced and the territories of Transjordan were categorized under specific land tenures. This formation kept a great part of and was influenced by the Ottoman's Land Code. In 1933, another legal framework was issued providing the practical mechanism for spatial planning in Jordan, or the City Planning Law of 1933. The law directly addressed the following: Any geographic area of land lying within the zoning boundary is by law designated as a legal zoning area and the establishment of an urban planning subcommittee in each region to be declared as a "zoning area." (Tewfik & Amr, 2014). The law of 1933 was valid until the Law No 29 of 1955 whereby the municipal council was considered as the local administration unit in Jordan and given juristic personality or identity of financial and administrative independence. The concept of master plans was introduced for the first time in the Law of 1955.

At the beginning of the 1960s, a need to establish a specialized institution for urban planning arose, following the beginning of the Palestinian refugees' influx and to accommodate the growing population's various needs. The Town and Country Planning Unit proposed the 1964-1970 Five-Year Plan for Social and Economic Development. However, the Ministry of Interior Municipal and Rural Affairs which replaced the "Town and Country Planning Unit" became responsible for the issuance of the new Town Village and Buildings Law of 1966. The Higher Planning Council was established within the ministry by Article 5 of the same law.

The new Municipal Law of 2011 introduced the Comprehensive Planning & Development Department within the ministry. It was established as the technical branch of the MMA, and was the first official body concerned with Urban and Regional Planning on the national level and it consists of a Natural and Cultural Heritage Department, Infrastructure and Studies Department and the GIS department. The Municipal Law of

2015 came in light of the Decentralization Law of the same year, which activated a new level of governance: the Governorates.

On the national level Council of Construction was established in 1952. It focused on improving some of the basic developmental projects such as the Agricultural Research Station, constructing the desert road, forestry projects and constructing grain silos…etc. Most of the funding in this domain came from British loans and grants. In 1954, Office of Consolidated Services (OCS) was established to manage economic and technical projects funded by the Americans. In 1957, Council of Construction was re-established with the Prime Minister as its President. The Council's mandate included setting and planning the economic growth policy in Jordan as well as producing a comprehensive economic program (MoPIC, 2019)..

The Planning Law of 1971 established the National Planning Council. It had many objectives including: "Preparation of national long-term plans for the development and evolution of the Jordanian society, economically, socially, demographically and culturally." In 1984, Ministry of Planning replaced the National Council for Planning, and in 2003, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation MoPIC replaced the Ministry of Planning; it implements its tasks and operates according to its law; the Planning law of 1971. In addition to the aforementioned bodies, other actors and laws play a role in the spatial planning policy in Jordan, including the Villages Administration Law No. 5 of 1954, The City of Amman Planning Law, its organization and amendments No. 60 of 1965, the Administrative Land Sub-division Law of 2001 and the Land Use Planning Bylaws of 2007.

This collection of state bodies and laws, mostly outdated and a result of colonial powers, represent the guiding principles for physical development in Jordan. This wide array of conflicting, inconsistent and at time contradicting laws have resulted in a formal planning scene that is best described as absent. There is no guiding vision for the development of Jordanian cities that continued to sprawl and invade agricultural lands in the absence of effective regulation. The only cities that have witnessed real attempts at spatial planning were Amman and Aqaba. These plans however, were roadmaps to neoliberal urban restructuring. In the following chapters of the research, a close investigation of neoliberal influenced planning or “re-ordering” of the city of Amman will be undertaken.

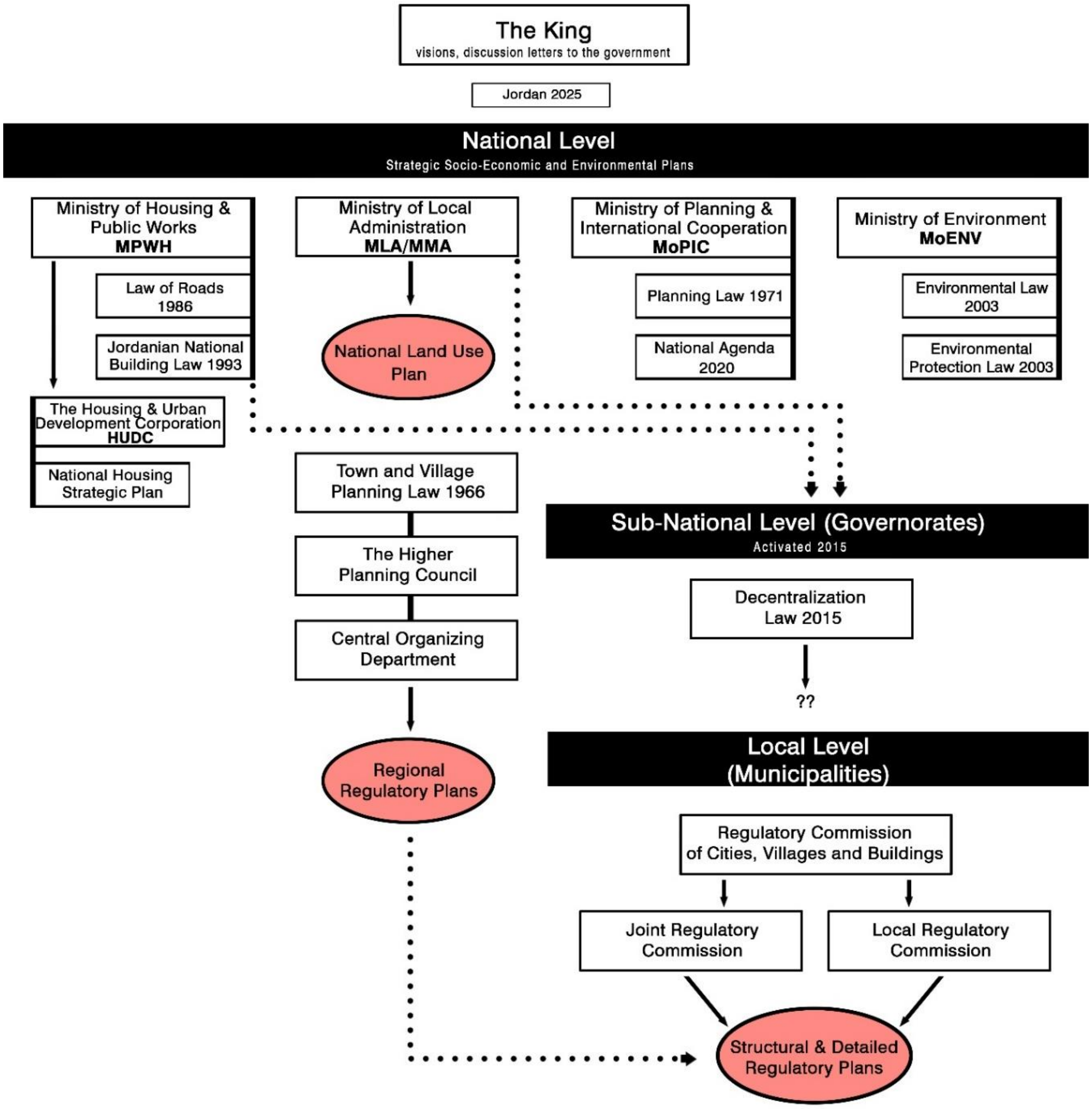
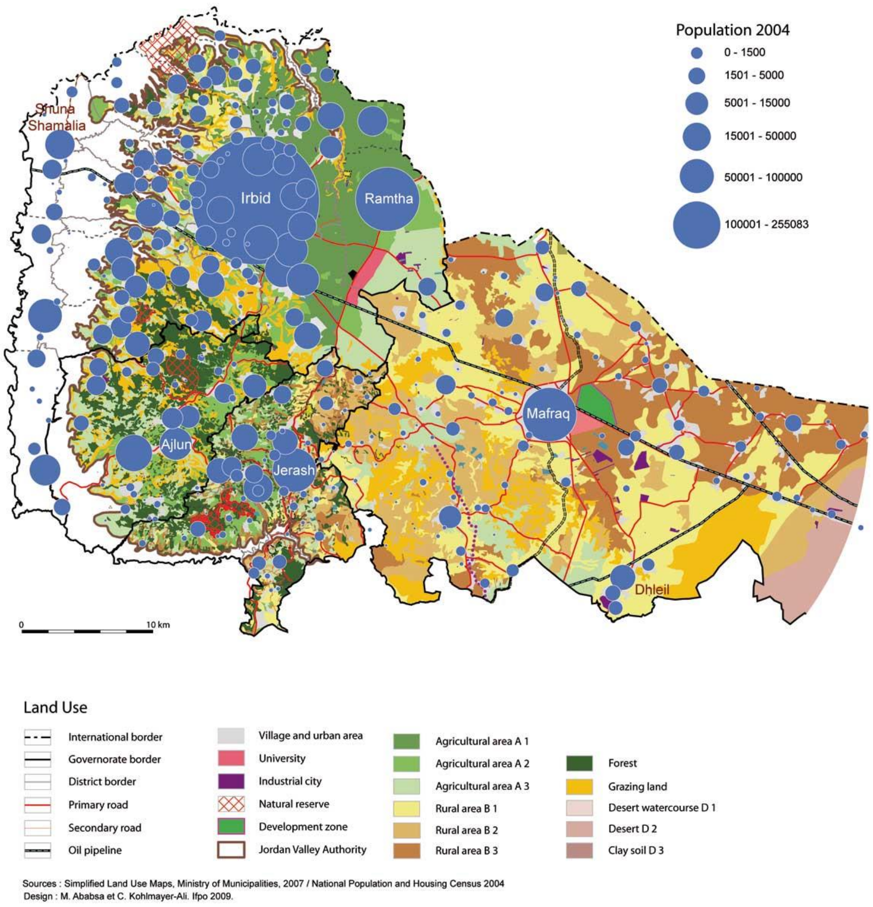

The King
visions, discussion letters to the government
Jordan 2025
National Level
Strategic Socio-Economic and Environmental Plans
Ministry of Housing & Public Works MPWH
Law of Roads 1986
Jordanian National Building Law 1993
The Housing & Urban Development Corporation HUDC
National Housing Strategic Plan
Ministry of Local Administration MLA/MMA
National Land Use Plan
Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation MoPIC
Planning Law 1971
National Agenda 2020
Ministry of Environment MoENV
Environmental Law 2003
Environmental Protection Law 2003
Town and Village Planning Law 1966
The Higher Planning Council
Central Organizing Department
Regional Regulatory Plans
Sub-National Level (Governorates)
Activated 2015
Decentralization Law 2015
??
Local Level (Municipalities)
Regulatory Commission of Cities, Villages and Buildings
Joint Regulatory Commission
Local Regulatory Commission
Structural & Detailed Regulatory Plans

Figure 11: Administrative Structure and Legislative Framework diagram.

Source: By author, 2020

4.3 Planning tools on the National Level

On state level, The King is usually responsible for initiating National Plans by addressing the government in speeches and discussion letters. Jordan 2025 was a government response to a letter from the king, it represents a long-term national vision and strategy rather than a detailed government action plan. On government level, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation MoPIC is responsible for strategic comprehensive development planning that covers all levels of development, but its policies are mainly economy oriented. The ministry currently works to achieve The National Agenda 2020. It is mainly strategic, with a monitoring role over governmental and non-governmental institutions for implementing various projects. As part of its


Shuna Shamalia
Irbid
Ramtha
Mafraq
Ajlun
Jerash
Dhleil
0
10 km
Population 2004
0 - 1500
1501 - 5000
5001 - 15000
15001 - 50000
50001 - 100000
100001 - 255083
Land Use
International border
Governorate border
District border
Primary road
Secondary road
Oil pipeline
Village and urban area
University
Industrial city
Natural reserve
Development zone
Jordan Valley Authority
Agricultural area A 1
Agricultural area A 2
Agricultural area A 3
Rural area B 1
Rural area B 2
Rural area B 3
Forest
Grazing land
Desert watercourse D 1
Desert D 2
Clay soil D 3

Sources : Simplified Land Use Maps, Ministry of Municipalities, 2007 / National Population and Housing Census 2004
Design : M. Ababsa et C. Kohlmayer-Ali. Ifpo 2009.

Figure 12: Northern Region Land Use

Source: Ababsa and Kohlmayer-Ali. Ifpo, 2009 national role, the MoPIC is working on the application of decentralization to achieve development balance between governorates; to activate the regional level of governance. One of the international bodies that the MoPIC coordinates with is The World Bank; it plays a role in steering the national planning in Jordan, its Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) is currently under implementation in collaboration with the MoPIC.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs MMA (Ministry of Local Administration 2019) on the national level produces The National Land Use Plan 2007 MMA, which is a comprehensive plan designating the land use throughout the Kingdom. The Comprehensive development Planning Department established 2011 within MMA introduced its Future Executive Plan of 2015. This plan attempts to take the role of spatial planning on the national level by producing a new National Land Use Plan to achieve sustainable development in all regions and preparing structural regulatory plans for all lands within municipal boundaries.

In addition to the aforementioned actors, the Ministry of Housing and Public Works also influences national plans with its Law of Roads 1986; active outside municipal boundaries, and the Jordanian National Building Law 1993. As well as The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) which is responsible for the National Housing Strategic Plan, that is updated every few years has an influence on national spatial planning. The Ministry of Environment also has an influence with the Jordanian Environmental Law 2003 and Environmental protection Law 2006.

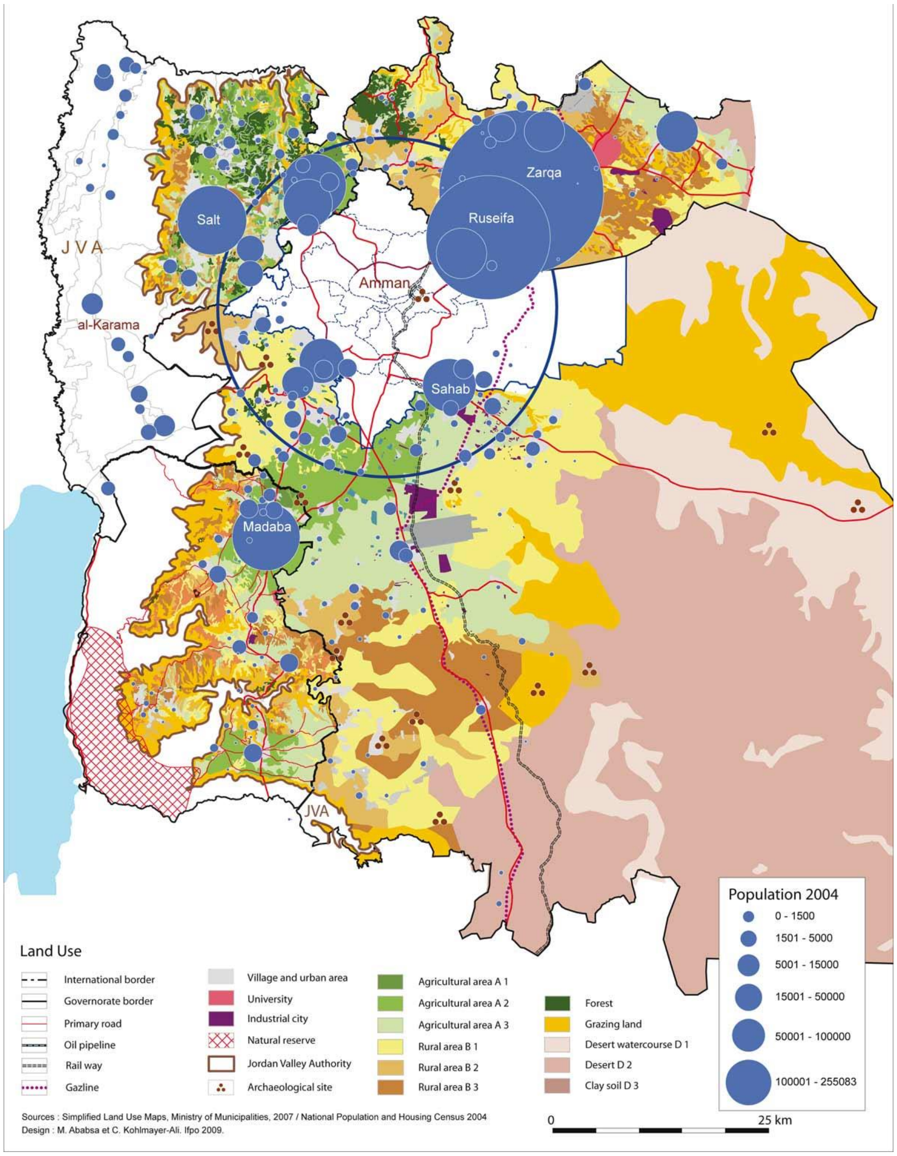

Zarqa
Ruseifa
Salt
J V A
Amman
al-Karama
Sahab
Madaba
JVA
Population 2004
0 - 1500
1501 - 5000
5001 - 15000
15001 - 50000
50001 - 100000
100001 - 255083
Land Use
International border
Governorate border
Primary road
Oil pipeline
Rail way
Gazline
Village and urban area
University
Industrial city
Natural reserve
Jordan Valley Authority
Archaeological site
Agricultural area A 1
Agricultural area A 2
Agricultural area A 3
Rural area B 1
Rural area B 2
Rural area B 3
Forest
Grazing land
Desert watercourse D 1
Desert D 2
Clay soil D 3
Sources : Simplified Land Use Maps, Ministry of Municipalities, 2007 / National Population and Housing Census 2004
Design : M. Ababsa et C. Kohlmayer-Ali. Ifpo 2009.
0
25 km

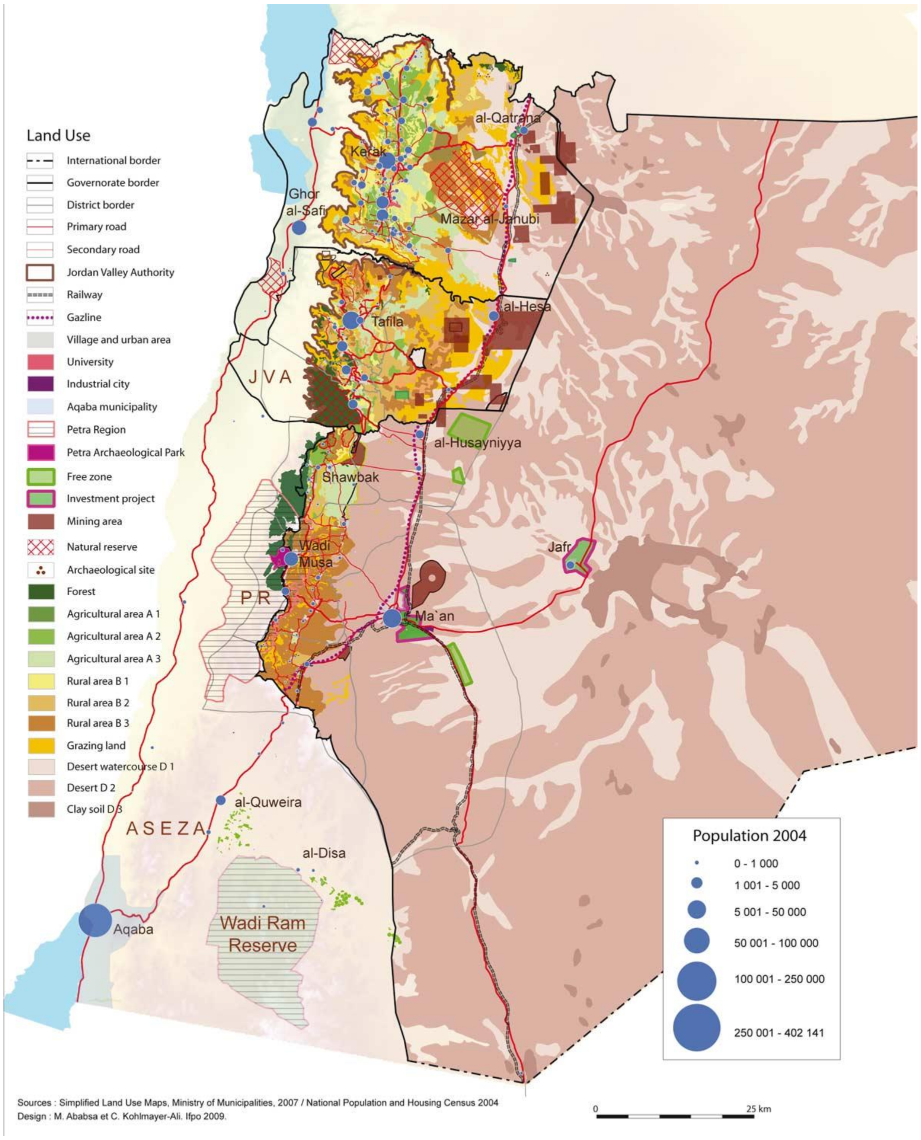
Figure 13: Central Region Land Use

Source: Ababsa and Kohlmayer-Ali. Ifpo, 2009

4.4 Planning tools on the Sub-National Level

Despite the existence of a provincial administrative level (Governorates) since the establishment of the state, this level had no role in spatial planning. The Town and Village Planning law 1966, assigned the responsibility of preparing Regional Regulatory Plans for all regions to the Central Organizing Department of Cities and Villages within the

Ministry Municipal and Rural Affairs. These regions had to first be announced as “Zoning Areas” by the Higher Planning Council, according to the same law, in order for the regional plan to be prepared. These plans are subject to objections and modifications by local regulatory commissions and other stakeholders. However, The Higher Planning Council has the authority to approve these plans with or without the proposed modifications. Although the Decentralization Law of 2015 activated a new level of governance, no spatial plans have been prepared by the governorates yet.


Land Use
International border
Governorate border
District border
Primary road
Secondary road
Jordan Valley Authority
Railway
Gazline
Village and urban area
University
Industrial city
Aqaba municipality
Petra Region
Petra Archaeological Park
Free zone
Investment project
Mining area
Natural reserve
Archaeological site
Forest
Agricultural area A 1
Agricultural area A 2
Agricultural area A 3
Rural area B 1
Rural area B 2
Rural area B 3
Grazing land
Desert watercourse D 1
Desert D 2
Clay soil D 3
al-Qatrana
Kerak
Ghor al-Safi
Mazar al-Janubi
al-Hesa
Tafila
J V A
al-Husayniyya
Shawbak
Wadi Musa
Jafr
P R
Ma`an
al-Quweira
A S E Z A
al-Disa
Wadi Ram Reserve
Aqaba
Population 2004
0 - 1 000
1 001 - 5 000
5 001 - 50 000
50 001 - 100 000
100 001 - 250 000
250 001 - 402 141
0
25 km

Sources : Simplified Land Use Maps, Ministry of Municipalities, 2007 / National Population and Housing Census 2004
Design : M. Ababsa et C. Kohlmayer-Ali. Ifpo 2009.

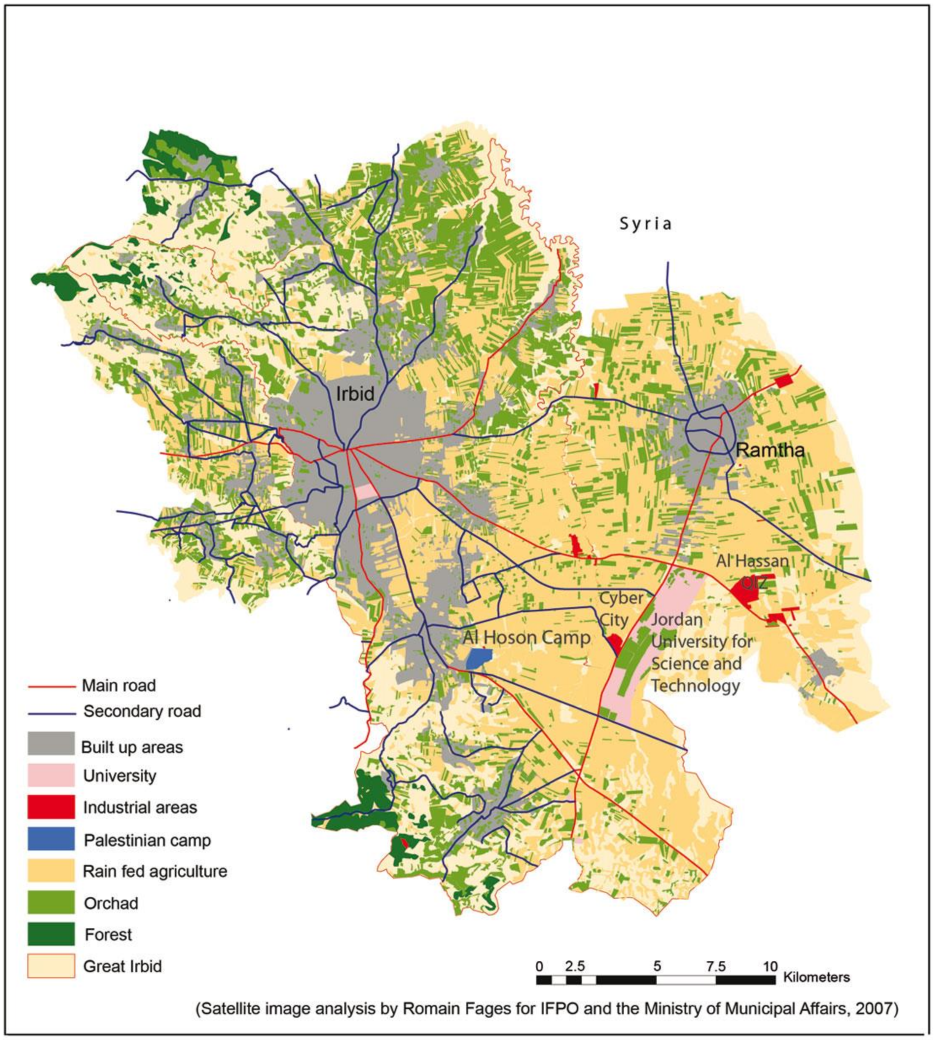
Figure 14: Southern Region Land Use

Source: Ababsa and Kohlmayer-Ali. Ifpo, 2009

4.5 Planning tools on the Local Level

According to the Town and Village Planning law 1966, the administrative framework in charge of urban planning on local level consists of, first, the central organizing department of cities and villages within the Ministry Municipal and Rural Affairs, which prepares Survey Plans and Regional Regulatory Plans, that then have to approved by the higher planning council. Secondly, the Local regulatory Commission (sub-district level), it is usually the Municipal Council or Village Council unless stated otherwise by the higher council, and is responsible for preparing Structural Plans, these must be approved by the council. They also prepare Detailed Regulatory Plans for the zoning area within their boundaries, not mandatory but legally binding when prepared. Thirdly, the Regulatory Commission of Cities, Villages and Buildings (District level), it is usually the Municipal Council and it reviews and approves the Structural Plans done by Local Commissions within its district.

Lastly, The Joint Regulatory Commission for zoning areas that fall within two or more localities or districts. In addition, there is The Administrative Land Sub-division Law of 200 and the MoPIC's Regional and Local Development Project (RLDP) and Cities Development Strategies (CDS), which are among the ministries on-going projects, carried out with state and non-state actors on the local level.


Syria
Irbid
Ramtha
Al Hassan
QIZ
Cyber
City
Jordan
University for
Science and
Technology
Al Hoson Camp
Main road
Secondary road
Built up areas
University
Industrial areas
Palestinian camp
Rain fed agriculture
Orchad
Forest
Great Irbid
0
2.5
5
7.5
10
Kilometers

(Satellite image analysis by Romain Fages for IFPO and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2007)

Figure 15: Irbid City Land Use

Source: Romain Fages, 2007

5. THE DICHOTOMY IN SPATIAL POLICY: THE SHIFT TO NEOLIBERAL URBAN RESTRUCTURING

Analyses and studies of Amman development and urban restructuring may vary, but what remains constant across these various studies is the existent of two distinctive realities in the city. The reality that manifests in the urban restructuring of the city led by a class of oligarchs and their attempts, as well as those of the ruling class, to appeal to transnational capital (Hourani, 2016). The other reality is that of the normal people, the majority of citizens across all other cities in Jordan and most of Amman itself. The reality of the people living in urban neglect and a near complete lack of spatial planning strategies outside of the islands of accumulation that mushroomed in Amman in the past two decades. While the reality of these people seem to be set in stone, with a lack of a national agenda for spatial planning and development to this day, the other reality is continuously witnessing movement and changes. It is reinvented and reborn in light of local, regional and global forces. The political, socio-spatial and urban scenes seem to be unable to shake off or move past the "parasitic" and "hybrid" forms of neoliberalization that has infused itself within the social, institutional, urban and governing fabric of Amman and Jordan. Even when its urban manifestations stand at "Jordan[s] Gate" as a testament to the failure of this model in Amman's landscape.[4]

The events and unrest of 1989 in Jordan declared without doubt the arrival of neoliberalism to Amman. The trajectory of development shifted from state-led mixed economy to market-led development that increased space for "private sector, privatization, deregulation and liberalization as neoliberal developmental recipes." (Debruyne, 2014). Neoliberalization processes were introduced in two phases, the first under King Hussein and the second began with the ascension of King Abdullah II to the throne in 1999 (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). The first phase, under King Hussein, was forced in light of the economic and debt crisis resulting from an assemblage of factors in the 1980's, and involved the implementation of the basic premises of the Washington Consensus included in the IMF and the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Plans SAPS. The neoliberal guidelines of the Washington Consensus aimed at restructuring state intervention policies; dismantling the welfare programs and implementation of austerity measures. Although, the first phase witnessed some spatial manifestations that continued under King Abdullah II in the form of loan-funded physical infrastructure projects (Khirfan, 2018). The second phase under King Abdullah accelerated economic reforms and was entirely built on an urban restructuring project that completely reconfigured not only the urban fabric of the city, but also its institutional landscape. Daher (2008), a prominent professor of architecture and planning from Amman and a scholar of neoliberal restructuring in Arab cities and Amman, declared in his chapter: "It is evident that Amman is embarking on a new era of urban/spatial restructuring which is also affecting Middle Eastern cities at large."

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[4] The construction of the Jordan Gate Towers project began in 2006, but the towers remain incomplete to this day due to poor planning.

This reconfiguration has consolidated the dualism of the city, and created a parallel level on which neoliberal spatial restructuring takes place, both spatially and governmentally. The consequences of economic reforms under the second phase of neoliberalism in Jordan is the product of a political project and vision that has led the national state to delegate its governmental responsibility to specialized governance agencies, corporate actors, and national and international investment banks. These agencies are now in charge of planning, managing, and financing the areas in which they operate, resulting in a governance network that is not accountable to the general public, but rather to a group of national and international stockholders whose primary goals are profit (Parker, 2009; Daher, 2008, 2013). Despite the rhetoric that these projects do not involve the state in the privately financed urban restructuring, in reality the state is subsidizing large-scale real estate projects, enabling the oligarchs and transnational corporations to develop mega-projects (Daher, 2008).

The first phase of liberalization was accompanied by political liberalization as well, elections were resumed in Jordan in 1989 after they have been cancelled since 1957. Political reform in this instant, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, was means to absorb the street's anger resulting from the implementation of austerity measures and cuts in subsidies. This strategy of political compromise by the regime as well as appealing to the sense of loyalty of citizens through national campaigns like the “Jordan First” campaign in the 2000s, continued to be employed by the regime to counter and disarm the increasing social dissatisfaction with economic reform policies.

When we look at the work of Hourani (2016) and Khirfan (2018) we find a clear distinction in regards to formal planning practices in Amman in the 20th century up until the 1990s when neoliberal policies were introduced. According to Hourani (2016) the oligarchic network in Amman that existed since the late 1800s have long been responsible for the uneven development in Amman and the deepening of its East-West divide. The introduction of the neoliberal project of the 1990s only consolidated the power and authority of this oligarchic network through their networked production of space. Khirfan’s account on the other hand, argues that GAM, the leading body of spatial planning in Amman, have worked throughout the 20th century to bridge the gap of the East-West divide, and have achieved efficient results through four different plans; 1955, 1968, 1978 and 1988. These efforts however, were disrupted and set backwards by the introduction of neoliberal policies in the 1990s and the accompanying political events in that period.

Khirfan (2018) describes the neoliberal tendencies that have swept Amman since the 1990 as a form of “unplanning” the city. A process in which formal planning was regressed in favor of market forces. These regression processes, according to Khirfan, are a combination of “failed outcomes and/or processes; unjustified deviation from and/or reversal of successful formal (and even informal) planning processes and/or outcomes; unlearning from or altogether rejecting the cumulative knowledge of formal (and often informal) past and current planning experiences; and wavering planning policies, initiatives, and/or processes that are discontinued, paused, halted, or even rescinded.”

The dichotomy of spatial planning in Jordan represents two realities, one aimed at image-building and branding of the city to attract transnational capital and create the right milieu for capital accumulation that benefits the elites. The other reality represent the disregard to human well-being and public needs, especially outside of Amman. This commodification of the city was always accompanied by nationalistic campaigns urging citizens to be “loyal” to and put the collective good of the country first (Abu-Hamdi, 2016).

The Plan for Economic Transformation, established by King Abdullah after his accession in 1999, was a plan to direct income generated from privatization initiatives and foreign aid to enhance the economy, alleviate poverty and address unemployment (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). The young King was insistent on providing economic relief for his people through setting the state on roadmap of neoliberal reform that could improve the economy while simultaneously building a modern global image for Amman. This was achieved through the initiation of several private-led developmental plans coupled with royal initiative and decrees. Within these plans were the Royal Metropolis Plan and the Gulf Finance House Metropolis plan, both directed at urban development projects through appealing to both domestic and transnational private capital (Abu-Hamdi, 2016).

In the following part of the research, three examples of neoliberal spatial restructuring in Amman will be analyzed in order to dissect the underlying processes and governance mechanisms that enabled their planning and implementation, the agencies involved, the emergent institutions and practices and their impact on the spatial planning discourse in Amman. The analysis of these cases will be in comparison to the stagnant formal planning that represents the general urban reality of the city and the majority of its population outside of these island of capital accumulation and geographies of consumption.

5.1 Urban Manifestations of the Parallel Planning System

Amman was spatially and institutionally reconfigured to accommodate and facilitate the neoliberal global markets. GAM is considered to be the most powerful ‘planning’ authority in Jordan, yet, a close look at its policy in the past 20 years shows that even the biggest municipal body in the country has been reduced to nothing but a technical role, providing services and infrastructure to private capital development (Daher, 2013). A close examination of development in Amman and GAM regulatory role under neoliberalism shows a clear rift between the "intention of development, and subsequently the execution of the various projects under discussion." (Abu-Hamdi, 2016) A public body almost exclusively responsible for the facilitation of private interest and capital power. To examine this proposition, this research will analyze three projects in Amman, the Jordan Gate Towers, The Abdali Development Project and the Royal Village proposal.

In 2004, Amman started witnessing the beginning of a massive project, the Abdali downtown development. The project came with a huge budget planned and soon after, the project began receiving a lot of criticism, valid ones judging by the state of the development now. These criticisms included lack of proper planning with regard to infrastructure, transportation and services, in addition to the social impact. However, the project went on despite all criticisms, and in its path, it reconfigured and transformed the city's fabric. The Abdali development project was not the only one albeit being maybe the largest, these projects have been fairly discussed, but what is little mentioned is the mechanisms and the processes that gave rise and allowed these projects to take place in a context that severely lacks strategic spatial planning and long-term visions. So how did these projects come to exist despite all the obstacles that still to this day stand in the face of any meaningful, public development from taking place?

Each of the projects discussed in the following subsections, represents a distinct element of the neoliberal landscape of Amman **(Figure 16)**. However, they all come to show a reduced public body on the one hand (GAM) and a flagrant and powerful private and capital interest dynamic. The development mode taking place in Amman makes it inherently difficult to reconcile public interest with a capital-driven mode of development, as it comprises of neoliberal logic, transnational capital and public private partnerships (Abu Hamdi, 2016). The Abdali Development project is a prime example of these three pillars of development in the Jordanian capital. The project has undergone several setbacks since its inception and more than 15 years later, the project has more than nuanced differences from its original plans. From cut down public spaces that would have been open to the general public, low occupancy rates, to sky-high construction rates that still hold back major stages of the project, it is still considered a success in comparison to the Jordan Gate Towers that stand as an unwavering example of the relentless neoliberal agenda that has swept the city.

The Jordan gate towers project set the scene for the emergence of a separate mentality and dynamic of planning in the city. The Abdali project demonstrates the emerging governing practices and mechanism that facilitate this new dynamic and alters the social fabric in the process. The last case, the Royal Village, first proposed in 2005, and only recently approved by GAM shows the continuity of such practices where after 15 years of economic and political crises, public opposition and social unrest, nearly nothing is learned from previous projects except for further consolidation of the neoliberal, power and capital driven development in Amman. The approved proposal for the Royal Village facilitates no participation planning, shows no connection to the public landscape of the city and demonstrates a clear direction of city development towards profit and private interest to this day.

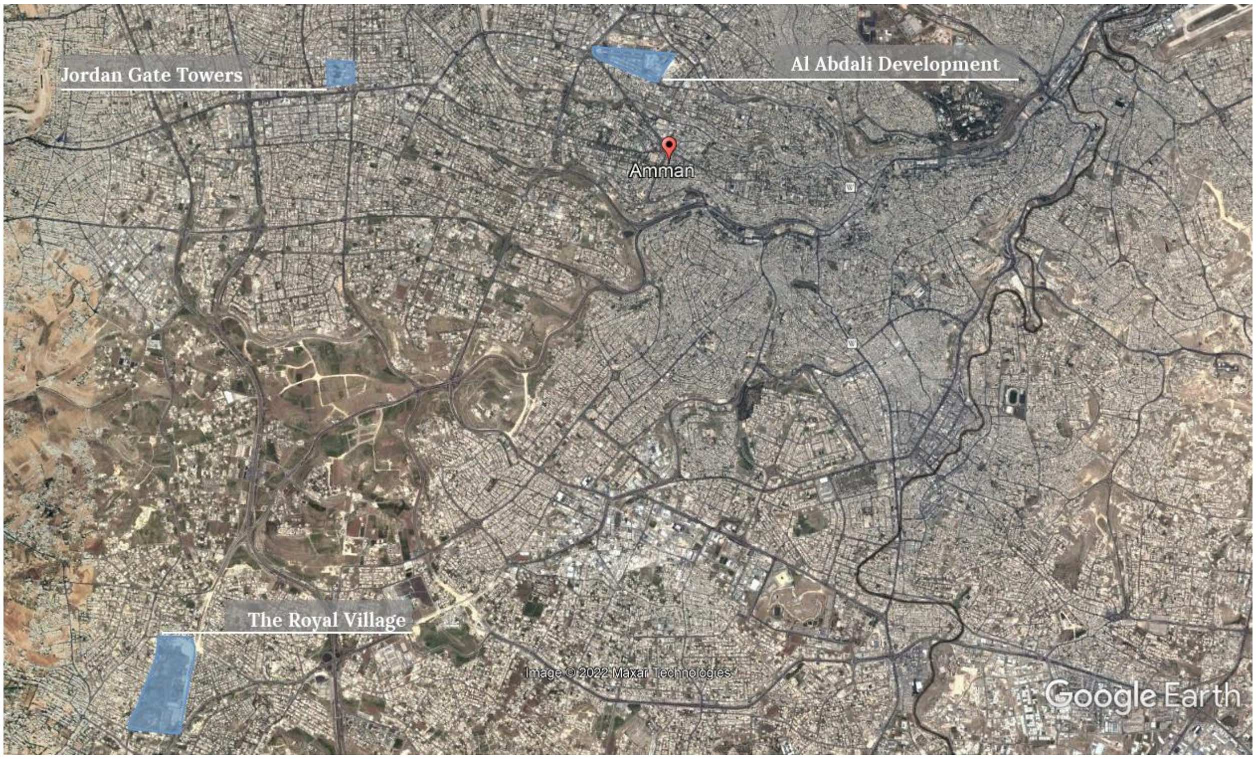

Figure 16: The relative locations of the three projects in Amman

Source: by author

5.2 Al Abdali Development Project

Al Abdali Development Project, or the 'New Abdali', was planned to create a new downtown in place of the old one or the 'old Abdali'. According to the project website[5], Al Abdali was planned with the aim to be "Amman's new downtown that provides the Jordanian capital with the central business, social and residential destination it needs as a regional business and tourism hub.' After displacing and removing many of the functions of the old downtown, work began on this development project in 2005 to attract transnational capital and turn Amman into a global city.

Al Abdali Private Shareholding Company PSC was formed in 2004 as a partnership between the government-owned real estate developer National Resources and Development Corporation (MAWARED) and Horizon International for Development, an international construction conglomerate specialized in investment and development of large-scale real estate and construction projects. This joint venture was further enlarged when the United Real Estate Company - Jordan, under the group of Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO), joined as partner “thus bringing a wealth of proven experience to the mega urban regeneration project.”[6]

The project, valued at over US $5 billion, is intended to create a new visible center for the capital Amman by acting as a major business district for the globally emerging city. According to their statement, the new downtown that the Abdali PSC is creating will “cater to the needs of thousands of Jordanians and foreigners who choose Jordan as their living and investment destination.” The development consists of hotels, apartments, offices, commercial outlets and entertainment to be developed on 384,000 square metres of land, intending to create a total built-up area of over 2,000,000 square metres. The first phase of the project is nearly complete with the second phase still on hold (**Figure 17).**

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[5] Al Abdali Project website http://www.abdali.jo/index.php?r=site/page&id=4

[6] www.abdali.jo

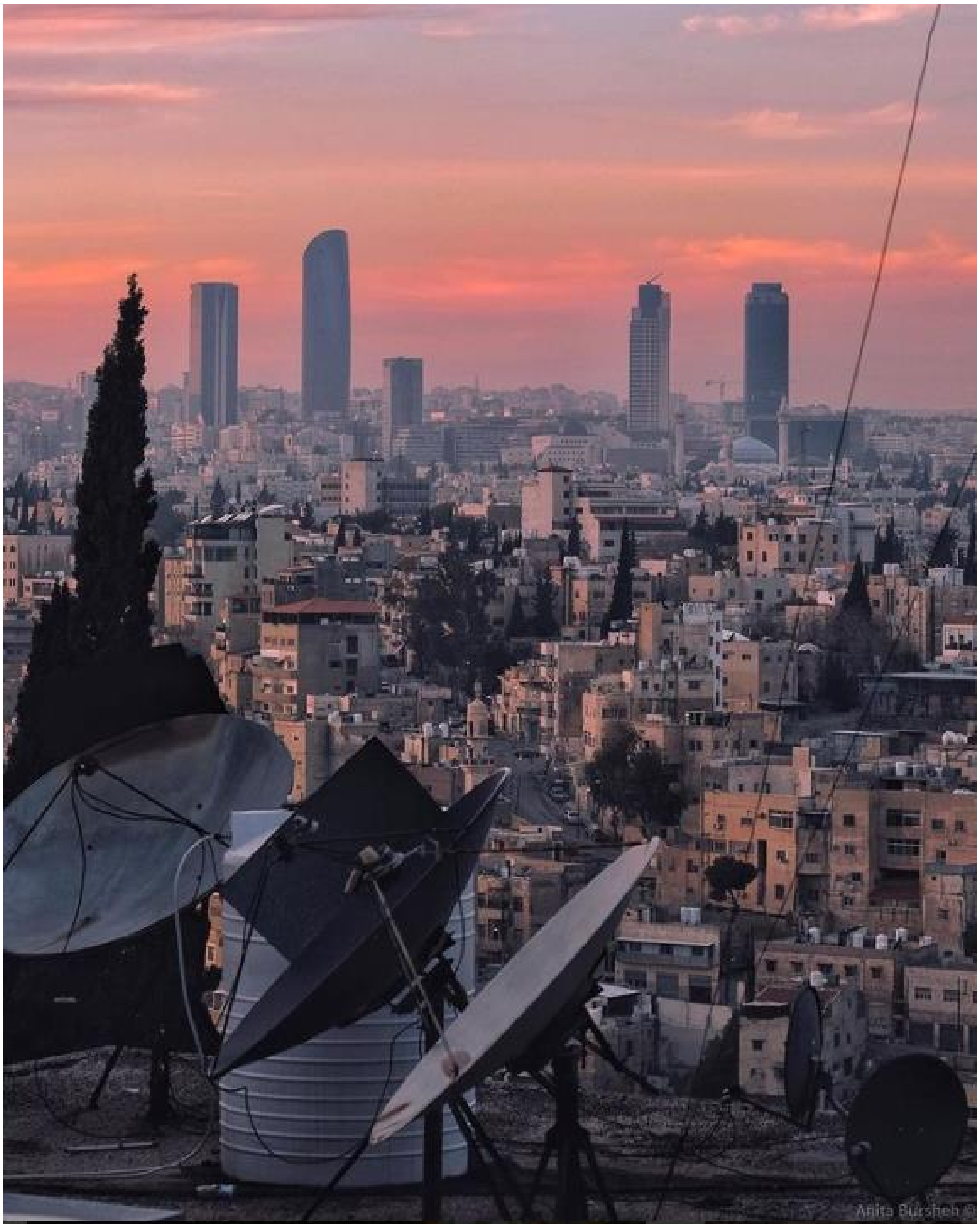
Anita Bursheh ©

Figure 17: Al Abdali Development Project in Amman's context

Source: Photo by Anita Bursheh, 2020

The Abdali Urban Regeneration Project was promoted as a spatial symbol of modernity under globalization: "The Abdali Urban Regeneration Project is a unique endeavor in smart urban planning where business, living and leisure smoothly intertwine to create a model of modernization in the Kingdom and the region."[7] Surrounded by several heritage sites across the city, mainly in neighborhoods as Jabal Lweibdeh and Jabal Amman the vision of an 'authenticated' past intermingled with a commoditized future (Parker & Debruyne, 2011), Al Abdali project was set to establish a new images for Amman similar to that of the glamourous developments of the Gulf cities. This image building and city rebranding that took place in the 2000s through Al Abdali Development Project and other neoliberal urban projects were meant to place Amman on the regional and global map, as a modern city open to the new world of transnational capital developments.

In his chapter on Abu Dhabi, Al Sheshtawy (2008) makes the point that the unprecedented construction drive in Abu Dhabi that has embarked since 2004 was aided by the "lack of any significant historical center that would constrain these developments". Here, Amman and Abu Dhabi seem to share a factor, as Al Abdali project in Amman was aimed at creating a new downtown because, according to international planners, the city lacked an attractive one, so was the Central Market in Abu Dhabi planned as a replacement for a Souq built in 1970. (ElSheshtawy , 2008, p. 51). Rami Daher (2008) contests the notion of Amman lacking the historical character of a "stereotypical Islamic city" compared to other cities in the Levant. According to Daher, Amman does not need to conform to the stereotypical perceptions of what the "Islamic" or Arab city should look like, as Amman has a unique character and identity as a city of "inclusivity", and enforcing the discourse of a stereotypical style on Amman degrades "the multiplicity and distinctiveness of the city's urban experience". He goes on to argue: "the distinctiveness of Amman and its cultural heritage need to be revealed and reactivated" (See Daher, 2008, p 101-107).

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[7] www.abdali.jo

The development of Al Abdali, demonstrates a 'formal shift' required to facilitate such neoliberal urban spaces in Amman. This shift was achieved through the new regulatory bodies that emerged from partnerships between multinational corporations and the State. In this instant, MAWARED, the state-owned National Resources Investment and Development Cooperation established in 2000. MAWARED was created by King Abdulla II when the state and the investors reached the conclusion that it is not possible to bring Al Abdali to reality with the existing governmental bodies alone, and a new body has to be established. The creation of MAWARED, and other similar organizations in the Arab world, demostrates a trend in neoliberal urban management that delegates planning to the private sector (Daher, 2013). Originally, MAWARED was created to redevelop several inner-city plots that had belonged to the military, and transfrom them into mixed-use income-generating sites, the goal was also to relocate the military out of urban areas. The location of Al-Abdali Urban Regeneration project was the state grounds of an old army terrain where the Mukhabarat (the Jordanian intelligence agency) old office was located (Summer, 2005; Parker, 2009; Daher, 2008, 2013).

Al Abdali PSC, created in 2004, is responsible for the daily management of the project. The private shareholder company is largely composed from the main investors of MAWARED and Saudi Oger, the Saad Rafiq Hariri-owned international developer company from Saudi Arabia. Debruyne (2014) accounts an interview with Ahmad Awad (Director of Phoenix Centre) in 2010: "Also the Royal Family has shares in a range of projects, as in MAWARED for example and other Hariri projects, but also under hidden names. The Royal family coordinates many of these projects. Sometimes they claim army lands and afterwards they sell it, like Abdali and the Development Zone in Dabouq". (Debruyne, 2014) MAWARED is also behind the implementation of urban development project on army sites in other cities such as the 'Saraya Al Aqaba' development in Aqaba city, and 'King Abdulla Bin Abdul Aziz City' (originally 'Madinat Al Sharq') in Zarqa (Daher, 2013; Debruyne, 2014). A similar body to MAWARED in Jordan is the ASEZA (Aqaba Special Economic Zone Agency) which operates in Aqaba, has implemented, and managed the Aqaba Special Economic Zone ASEZ. MAWARED went on to become Jordan leading real-estate development and urban regeneration organization in Jordan, composed by a network of powerful politico-economic local elites with direct ties to the monarchy, and with regional and global connections with regional and global oligarchic networks (Hourani, 2016; Debruyne, 2014).

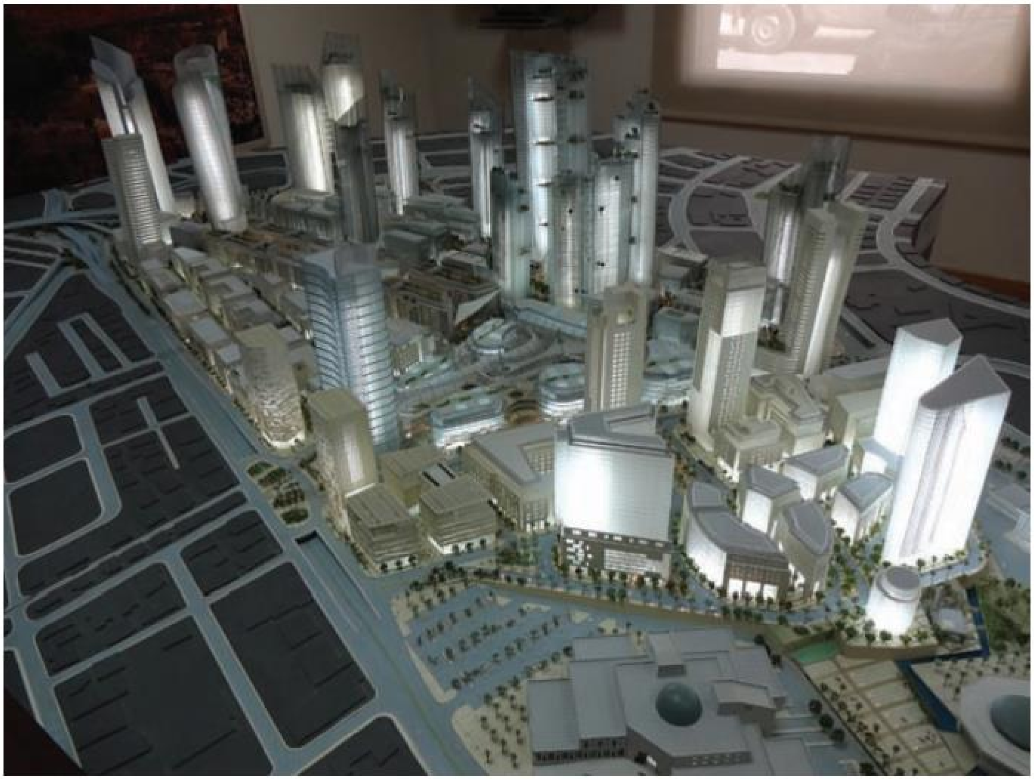

Figure 18: Site model for the Abdali Project on display at the offices of the project.

Source: Abu-Hamdi, 2016

Initially the managing bodies of Al Abdali project, Al Abdali PSC and MAWARED promised 20% of the project land surface for public spaces, the site was promoted to include a campus of the American University of Jordan, for commercial centers in IT, medical facilities and the King Hussein Memorial Library in addition to open green spaces. These promises, however, never materialized, the project as it stands now is a different project than how it was first advertised to the public, social reach components, like a major civic plaza included in the initial plan, were omitted in the implementation. “First the planners promised a park, but the new liberals were in search of money. A park brings no benefits. It is all about the money, “Investment” and magnifying the density. The HDMU location "A" was forced politically," (Murad Kalaldeh, in: Debruyne, 2014, p. 247). Al Abdali project is one based on "purely economic criteria," that does not account for citizens' opinions whether in the decision-making or the implementation phase of the development. Eventually, "the projects appear to result in the creation of privatized exclusive urban landscapes that increase social and spatial segregation in the city." (Summer, 2006) (**Figure 19).**

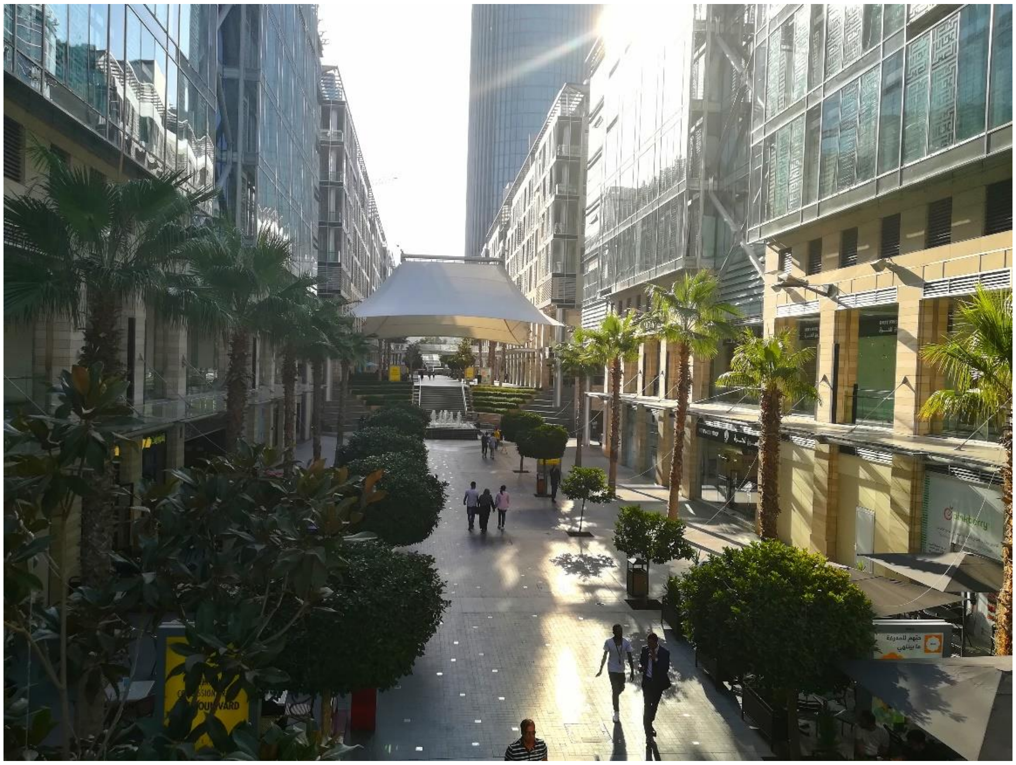

Figure 19: Al Abdali Boulevard, the main shopping promenade

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Analysis of Al Abdali project are mostly drawn in comparison to its Beirut counter, the 'Solidere'. The project plans were first developed by the American consultants Booz Allen Hamilton, called the "Gem of Amman," in addition to plans developed by the local architects Jafar Tukan and Partners, in a joint endeavor with the Canada office of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum (HOK) (Summer, 2006). In 2002, MAWARED's choice was to go into partnership with OGER Jordan, a subsidiary of the international construction conglomerate Saudi OGER and controlled by the Lebanese

Hariri family. Saudi OGER had developed the ‘Solidere’ in Beirut, and they brought in the same planner who had worked on the development, ‘Usama Kabbani’ who would create a near replica of the Beirut development in Al Abdali regeneration project (Summer, 2006; Debruyne, 2014). In 2010, due to a family dispute Saad Hariri (and his company Saudi-Jordan Oger and Saraya Holdings) sold his shares, to his brother Baha Hariri who founded the company “Horizon Development” that became the main shareholder in the Al-Abdali Urban Regeneration Project (Debruyne, 2014).

Al Abdali development project is a rich example of compromising public interest for the sake of profiting the elites networks. For its implementation the project required dislocating a vital bus station from its strategic location in the center of Amman -which had served a great proportion of the city’s population as well as people who commuted to the city for work each day- to the outskirts of the city, which disrupted the lives of many people whose daily lives had to be altered due to this decision. The major incident of prioritizing private interest over public interest in Al Abdali Project, which became a heated public topic at the time, involved the Abu Ghazaleh International TAGI, an investment group who had their headquarters in vicinity to Al Abdali development. In 2007, the group announced on their website: “GAM has been acting on behalf of the Abdali Investment and Development Company, a private shareholding company that owns a real estate development project adjacent to TAGI’s offices, where it intends to build towers and malls. The municipality acted as a mediator to convince us to sell the land to that company.”[8] The conflict, representing a symbol for the public fight against GAM and MAWARED's authoritarian governing style, became extremely politicized. GAM informed the group of the necessity of its property to the implementation of the project, as the land would be used to develop a new street contributing to solve the traffic flow issues in the area. The TAGI refused to sell its property as it had began a construction of offices expansion (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). “The group eventually took the case to court. TAG has raised a lawsuit against GAM because the law says that GAM can only expropriate for the good of the public not for the sake of private gain. At the same time, TAG is a huge international business company, and is considered business elite. I think hadn't it been them nobody can stand long against what GAM wants.” (Joud Khasawneh, in: Debruyne, 2014). Additionally, Despite the fact that Al Abdali PSC is a private body, it carries in its shareholder committee ranks ‘state’ agencies such as GAM Mayor and the king himself, who also resides as the head of board of directors of MAWARED, the independent state owned corporation owned by the army (Debruyne, 2014).

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[8] Jordan Times, July, 25, 2007

The different agencies at play here, their conflicts and interactions, at various stages of the project development, make Al Abdali Development Project a valuable case in the analysis of emerging governing techniques under neoliberal urban restructuring in Amman. In addition to emerging bodies, like MAWARED and Al Abdali PSC, the role of existing public bodies like GAM is transformed into one that utilizes all its regulatory tools and power reach to facilitate private and elite interest at the expense of the general public interest that it is supposed to protect. The development and the myriad of new bodies and their interconnections, is a perfect example of roll-out neoliberalism mode that reconfigured and expanded state agencies in Jordan since the early 2000s.

5.3 Jordan Gate Towers

In 2002, King Abdullah II announced the start of the first phase of The Royal Metropolis Plan at World Economic Forum at the Dead Sea. The one billion US dollar project was the first Public Private Partnership PPP project between GAM, the Bahrain based Gulf Finance House, one of the most prominent Islamic banks in the region and the Kuwait Investment and Finance Company. Construction of the project began in 2005, on a site that was chosen, according to planners, specifically for its elevation to ensure that the towers would be the highest feature of the area (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). As the name of the project suggest, the two towers were supposed to symbolize a gateway to Jordan, an ode to the modern image of Amman, greeting new arrivals to the country through the Queen Alia Airport in Amman (**Figure 20).**

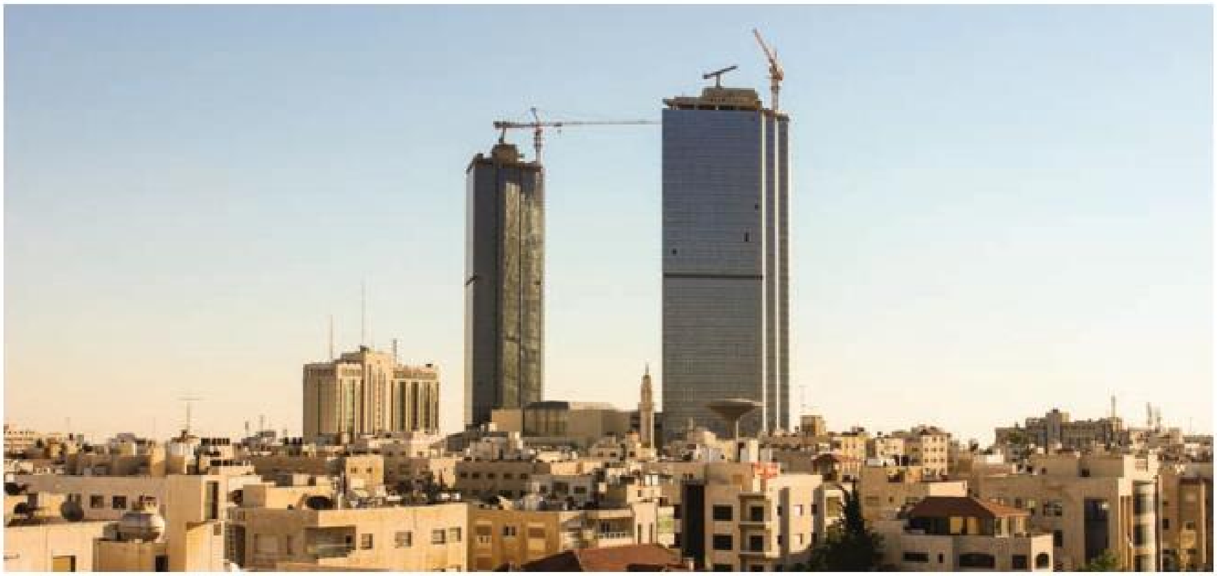


Figure 20: The Jordan Gate Towers in context

Source: Photo by Saad Khrais

The project, however, ended up being a sore example of the failure of the neoliberal mode of urban development in the city. Sixteen years later the two towers still stand unfinished, abandoned, their big shimmering glass windows, previously a glistering example of modernism, falling down due to lack of maintenance and private capital money. Short after the project started, in August 2006, a fire broke in one of the building’s floors but resulted in no casualties. A month later, four construction workers died and sixteen were injured after three floors collapsed. The accident stirred a heated political debate in the city and eventually led to the removal of then Mayor Nidal Al Hadid who was declared corrupt, and King Abdullah II appointed Omar Ma’ani as the new mayor. Debruyne (2014) offers an alternative narrative of the incident by account of an interview with architect Ammar Khammash, where the tensions between mayor Nidal Hadid and the royal court had long preceded the towers accident and were boiling over concerns about the development and future of Amman (Debruyne, 2014, p. 237). The new mayor Omar Ma’ani, started the development of the Amman Plan, the plan was intended to regulate the tower building fever that swept the city in that period and set the roadmap for the city’s neoliberal transformation for the next 25 years. The Jordan Gate Towers project marked the beginning of what was then perceived as an unstoppable and unavoidable process of urban development in the form of high-rise dense neighborhoods imitating the development of Gulf cities and particularly Dubai. As architect and planner Fouad Malkawi put it in an interview in 2007: “Amman is faced with this pressure from "private interests" (to quote myself from my dissertation) for development. It cannot be stopped. Cities compete for such development, so time is crucial.” (Debruyne, 2014)

The land that was provided by GAM was located in a residential neighborhood, and it was host to a public park serving the surrounding residential community, in a city the severely lack open public and green spaces. The land, however, was an essential requirement to enable the development of the project, GAM argued (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). In order to make the development possible, GAM utilized an “inversion of the planning practice of eminent domain” to transfer the public land for private use. The same plot of land was acquired through the process of eminent domain in 1959 to create a water tank as well as a public park to service the neighborhood. Abu-Hamdi (2016) elaborates: “In 1978, a portion of the parcel of land was allocated by GAM as land suitable for tourism-related construction. In 1984, the Amra Hotel was constructed on a portion of the plot. In 2004, GAM received a request for the construction of a mega-project on the remaining plot of land, and later that same year the request was approved. The process of eminent domain that once allowed for the expropriation of private land for public use was to be reversed. Now public land was claimed for private use.” This issue was recently brought back into public debate when a news outlet reported that the original owner of the land had conceded it to the municipality to develop a public park and are now considering taking legal measures after the site was used instead turned to private use. What happened in the process of developing the towers falls perfectly into the process of what Khirfan (2018) called “unplanning” Amman, by undoing the public interest oriented practices of the 20th century and rewriting the land to the sake of profit. Abu-Hamdi, however, argues that it represents the problematic of planning in Amman in general, that is: “a lack of formal planning mechanisms and, further, a compromise of public interest in the pursuit of private profit.”

This research, however, makes the proposition that what is happening in the planning practices in Amman accounts to more than unplanning or a general lack of formal planning. Rather, it shows a ‘planning’ practice that was formed and exists completely outside of the “formal” planning policies. A parallel level of spatial rewriting that takes place regardless of all perceivable constraints, imposes and layers itself over whatever the context dictates, as this mode of development is packed by power and capital. Moreover, in the process it produces the necessary agencies and governing techniques to self-actualize, reinforce its existence as a separate entity and enable its reproduction in other instances.

An example of this alien process of planning, is the multiple construction accidents that took place since the hastily construction of the project first began. In addition to the aforementioned incidents, in 2009, one of the construction cranes collapsed onto the adjacent street, resident in neighboring buildings were evacuated for multiple days as a precaution until the situation was secured (**Figure 21)**. These incidents naturally raise the questions regarding the validity and nature of planning decisions that facilitated the project in such site and context. Another major issue that contributed to the still on-going delay in finalizing the project is the infrastructure and services provision in the site. Placed in a residential neighborhood, the area is not remotely prepared to service such large-scale project that was initially designed at a 44-stories height before being

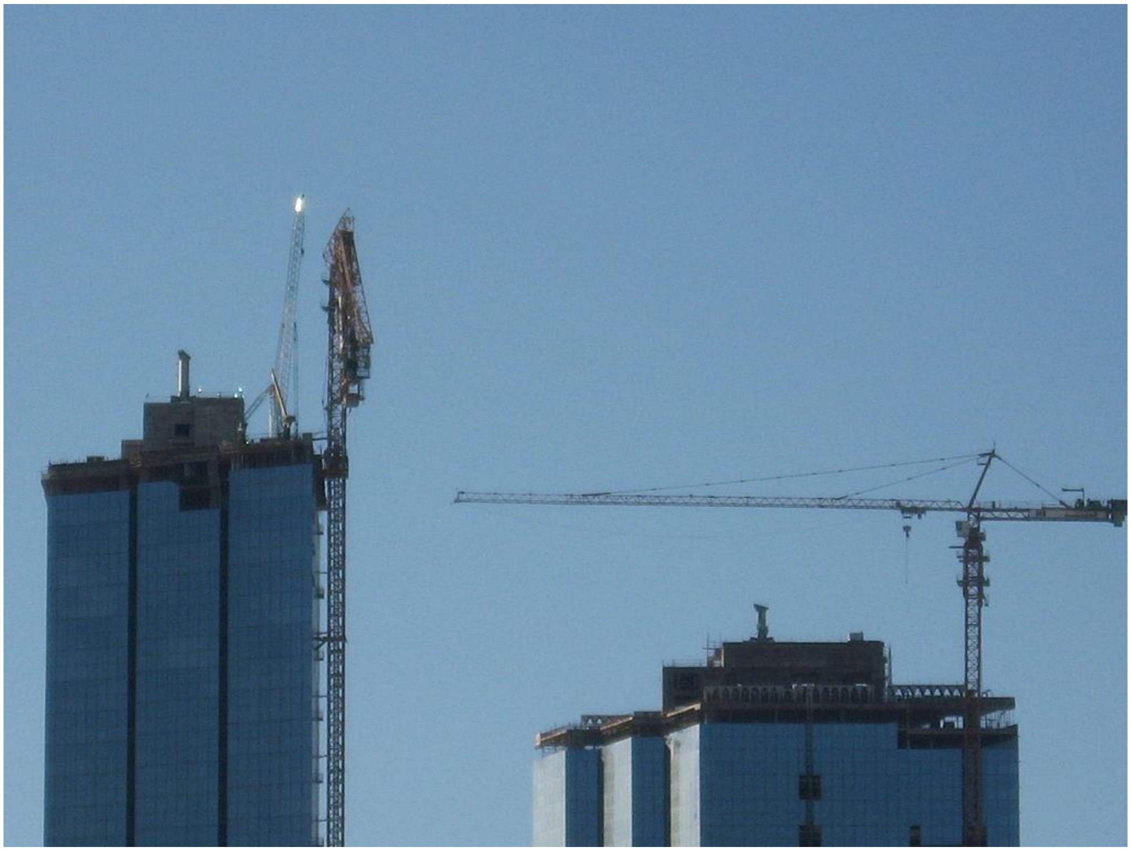


Figure 21: The collapsed construction crane

Source: Wikipedia Commons

reduced to 35 after the 2006 incident (Debruyne, 2014). What evidently has happened is that the project site was chosen, based on no other criteria apparently than its elevated position on top of a hill that would endow the project with a status of exclusivity and superiority over the rest of the city. The neoliberal proliferation of the urban fabric in Amman with malls, gated communities and luxurious towers is described as a form of "living above the city." (Daher, 2008) Other essential matters like services provision, managing the congestion and accessibility issues and urban context impacts will have to simply be solved subsequently, or not at all. This dynamic shows more than disregard to zoning regulation and land use issues, this is a dynamic of unquestioned self-actualization and capital accumulation with no regard to any other details, no matter how consequential. A dynamic in which planning reacts to neoliberal development, as opposed to planning for development.

This power and profit driven development is contrasted by a formal planning system that, despite its attempts, is sidelined in face of neoliberal restructuring projects. In a recent interview (2021) with a planner at GAM, they claimed that the crisis of the formal planning in Amman is not likely to be solved or amended in the near future. The planner explained that there is no efforts or real attempts among GAM officials to pursue real planning responsibilities, due to flaws in the structural organization of the institution. There is no clear dynamic of how planning should be approached, merely a collection of departments with contradicting responsibilities and deep lack of coordination on matters that are inseparable in any city-planning endeavor. The planner continued with frustration: "studies and plans are prepared, on a high level of proficiency, but they are simply thrown in the desk drawers. No one knows what happens to them, no one seems to know how things get done…the only projects that can get through are the ones that pay huge amounts of money through the Special Projects Unit to surpass all regulatory and zoning related obstacles, nothing else gets done." The planner spoke of the Amman Plan, the last plan prepared by GAM that was comprehensive and thorough and laid a clear vision for the city, despite the issues raised around its preparation. The plan, that took huge and international efforts, never saw the day of light.

After his appointment as the new mayor of Amman, Ma'ani conducted an evaluation of development in Amman in 2006, in his evaluation the Jordan Gate projet was labelled as a mechanism of alienation. "Through its mere presence, Jordan Gate symbolized insensitivity to Amman's cultural heritage." (Beauregard, 2009). In his term, Ma'ani suspended the Jordan Gate project as well as other similar developments that had already been approved and initiated by the king. He believed that the project did no acquire the necessary licensing prior to its construction. The evaluation of the project was carried concerning its location, feasibility and general appropriateness of design and programmatic goals. Eventually, Ma'ani's administration concluded that the project was inappropriate and proceeded to terminate GAM's involvement in the project by selling its 10% share of the development to the Kuwaiti Holding Company. Even though the project resumed construction after GAM's ceased its support in 2007, the project was not near facing its last problem. Due to financial disputes between stakeholders the project halted construction for three years in 2010 before the total suspension of construction in 2013, (**Figure 22)**. The project still stands to this day as an ode to poor planning and decision making in Amman, a deserted site with cranes that appear to be suspended in time. The towers' condition is continuously degrading and have stirred multiple debates and concerns among citizens, as well as various proposals as to how their troubling situation could be resolved.

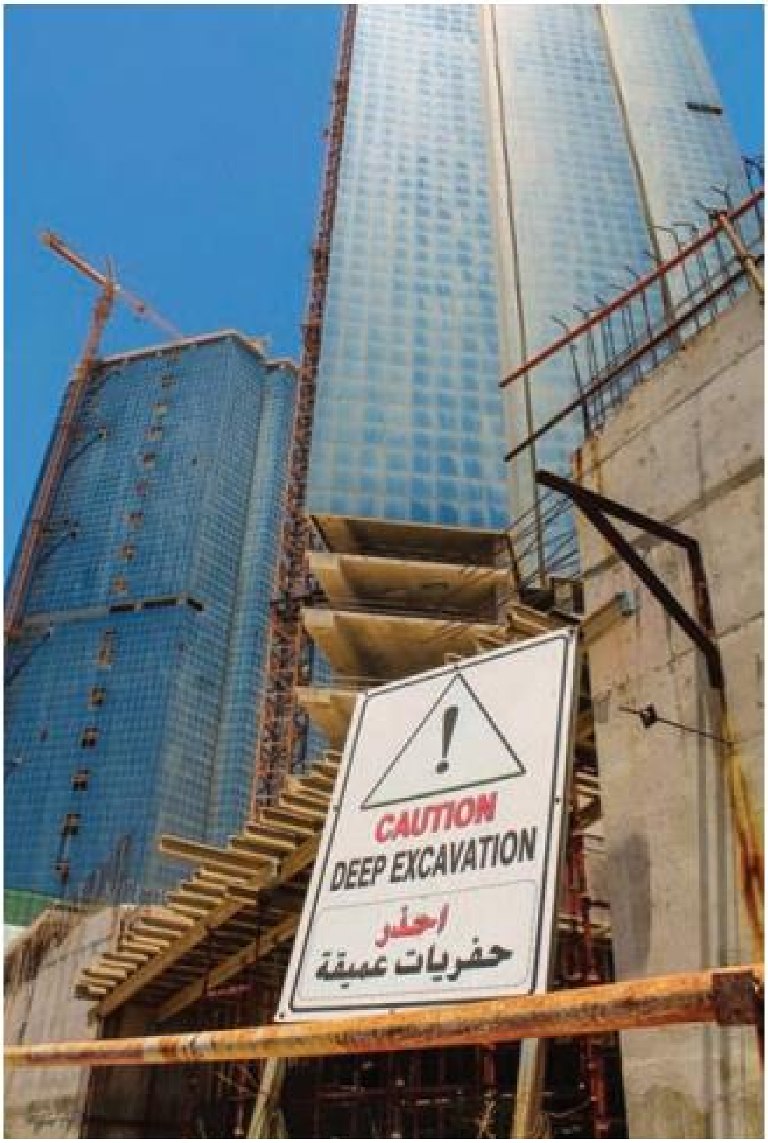


Figure 22: The Abandoned project site

Source: photo by Saad Khrais

The Jordan Gate Towers, with all its failings and mishaps, marked the beginning of new era of development in Amman, one that is insensitive to the urban or social culture of the city. Since the beginning, the project received public opposition due to its insensitivity to public interest and community needs (Beauregard, 2009). Furthermore, adding to its alienating presence in the middle of a typical low-rise mixed-use Ammani neighborhood, the project exposed and laid bare the problems that exist at the core of the regulation policies, planning and management of private development projects by GAM. The Jordan Gate project represents a “developmental norm” in Amman, a norm of imposed political limitations on formal planning decisions, deregulation of planning practice, land commodification and the production of urban islands of consumption (Daher, 2013; Abu-Hamdi, 2016). While the project may have been the first but it was not the last of the new model of neoliberal development in Amman (**Figure 23)**. Although not on the same level of its catastrophic yet shortly lived construction, other projects from that period have faced a very similar fate. In a tower building frenzy, nearly 350 proposals for towers developments were submitted to GAM by 2006, many project shared a similar fate to Jordan Gate, like the Limitless Towers development that after its revolutionary inauguration ceremony in 2008, never progressed beyond the excavation stage and stopped at their “crater” level of being (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). Another example is the Royal Village project; the second phase of the Royal Metropolitan Plan after the Jordan Gate Towers, which remains an empty plot of land in the heart of the city to this day, despite laying the project’s cornerstone back in 2005.

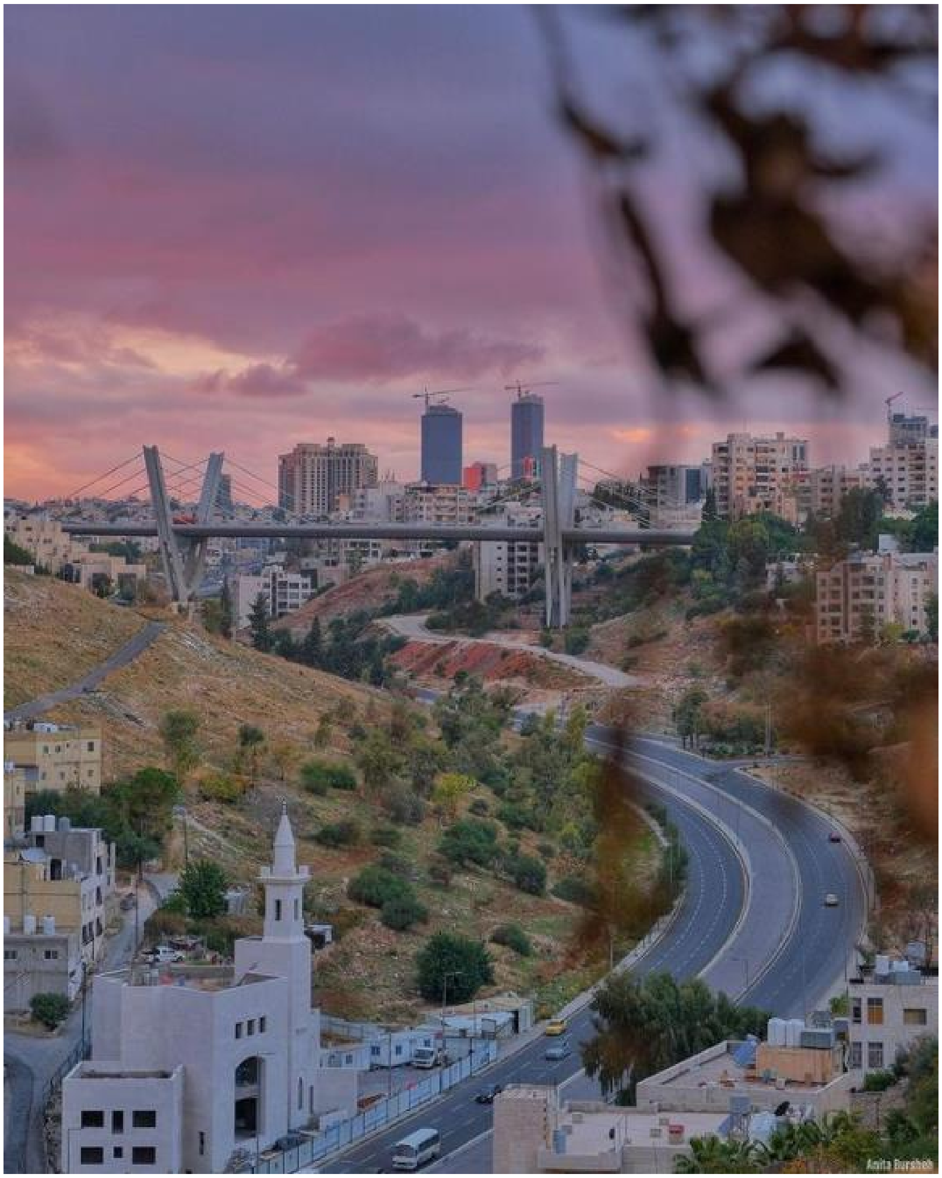


Figure 23 Jordan Gate Towers in Amman Skyline

Source: Photo by Anita Bursheh, 2020

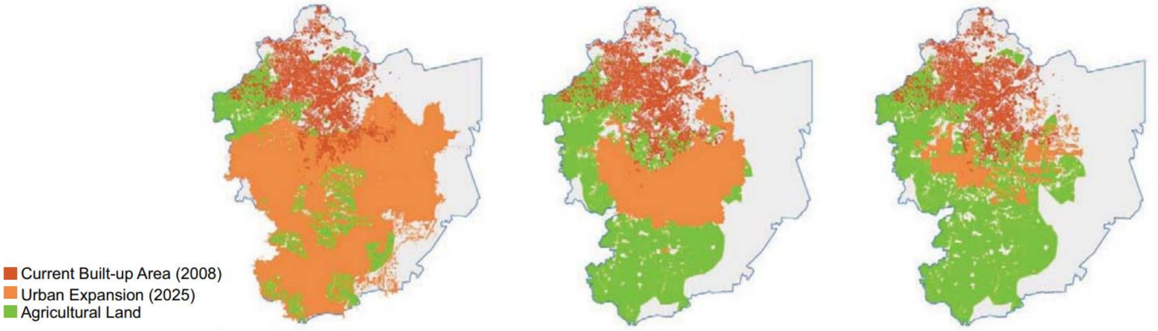
5.3.1 The Amman Plan

The Amman plan is an example of how formal planning is influenced and forced to align with neoliberal development agendas. Instead of producing a plan for the public, GAM was once again forced to sideline its responsibility as a public body to cater and vouch for public interest, and instead accommodate and facilitate private capital interests.

The plan came into being due to the enormous number of tower building proposals that GAM received following the initiation of the Royal Metropolis Plan and the Jordan Gate Tower project (Debruyne, 2014; Abu-Hamdi, 2016). Mayor Omar Ma'ani in the Metropolitan Growth Plan MGP report in (2008) proclaimed 'We are committed to preparing this Amman Plan based on community input so that it reflects the aspirations of our citizens. Such aspirations begin with a vision of what we want our city to be, rather than reacting to our current problems'. This 'visionary' plan was an attempt to deal with the city's uncontrolled growth, involve community in the decision-making process, and blend urban cultural heritage and modern development.

The most stressed point in the document was emphasizing the need for public participation in the planning process. In the MGP, it was stated that the failure of the previous plan prepared for Amman in 1988 (GACDP), was due to the lack of attention given to its 'political acceptance and enactment' despite its comprehensiveness in 'research, analysis and production'. The Amman Plan was largely influenced by the GACDP and was set to overcome the shortcomings of the previous plans, all of which never came to fruition and were never formally adopted (Metropolitan Growth Report, 2008). While the plan was prepared as a structural guiding policy in order to control and direct the growth of the city projecting the possible scenarios for Amman's unabated growth for 2008-2025 **(Figure 24)**, the implementation of this policy mounted to nothing more than fragmented local areas developments, facing a similar fate of the previous plans. The plan proposed the growth of Amman along a network of 'Metropolitan Corridors and Growth Centers'. These were already part of the historical development and character of the city, as well as proposed by the 1988 comprehensive plan. The 2008 plan introduced the 'Amman Development Corridor ADC'. This network of corridors and growth centers was aimed at connecting the city's residents to all parts of GAM, other regions of the country, as well as to Jordan's borders and to contain development along these corridors **(Figure 25)**. The plan also aimed to control and concentrate the dispersive industrial urban development on two main urban corridors: the Sahab - Mowaqer in the south-east and the Amman - Zarqa in the north-east (Tewfik & Amr, 2014). However, the

Sahab – Mowaqer area remains untouched until this day and no plans were prepared for its development.



	Scenario 1: **Status Quo**	**Scenario 2:** **Intensification + Expansion**	**Scenario 3:** **Intensification + Densification + Expansion**
Density (people/donum)	5	10	15
Urban Envelope (sq.km)	840	340	170
Prime Agricultural Land Impacted (sq. km)	474	225	96
Cost of New Road Infrastructure (Billion JD)	3.5	1.5	1.0

Figure 24: Metropolitan Growth Scenarios

Source: Metropolitan Growth Plan Summary Report, 2008

The recently appointed mayor, Ma'ani, reconfigured the structural organization of GAM to achieve the preparation and implementation of the Amman Plan. Three new departments were created within GAM that formed the institutional pillars of the strategic Plan: a) The Special Projects Department, b) the Spatial Project Department and c) the Zoning Department. Although these were created to uphold the implementation of the Amman Plan, a recent interview with a GAM urban planner showed that despite the practical halt of the plan, these departments preserved with a full staff of architects and planners with no real mission. In order to overcome this, these departments were assigned different missions that usually interfere with the responsibilities of other departments causing confusion and blunder. The Zoning Department for example was assigned the preparation of plot-scale zoning plans that in some instances contradict with larger-scale zoning plans produced by another department causing great confusion to land owners who usually come to GAM with complaints. The Special Projects Department on the other hand, initially responsible for special case projects requiring land use changes or rezoning according to justifiable and well-studied requests and in areas prescribed in the original plan, now affords such changes in exchange for sizable compensations and fees paid to GAM and with no constraints on locations. Yet another example of regulatory incentives for private capital development.

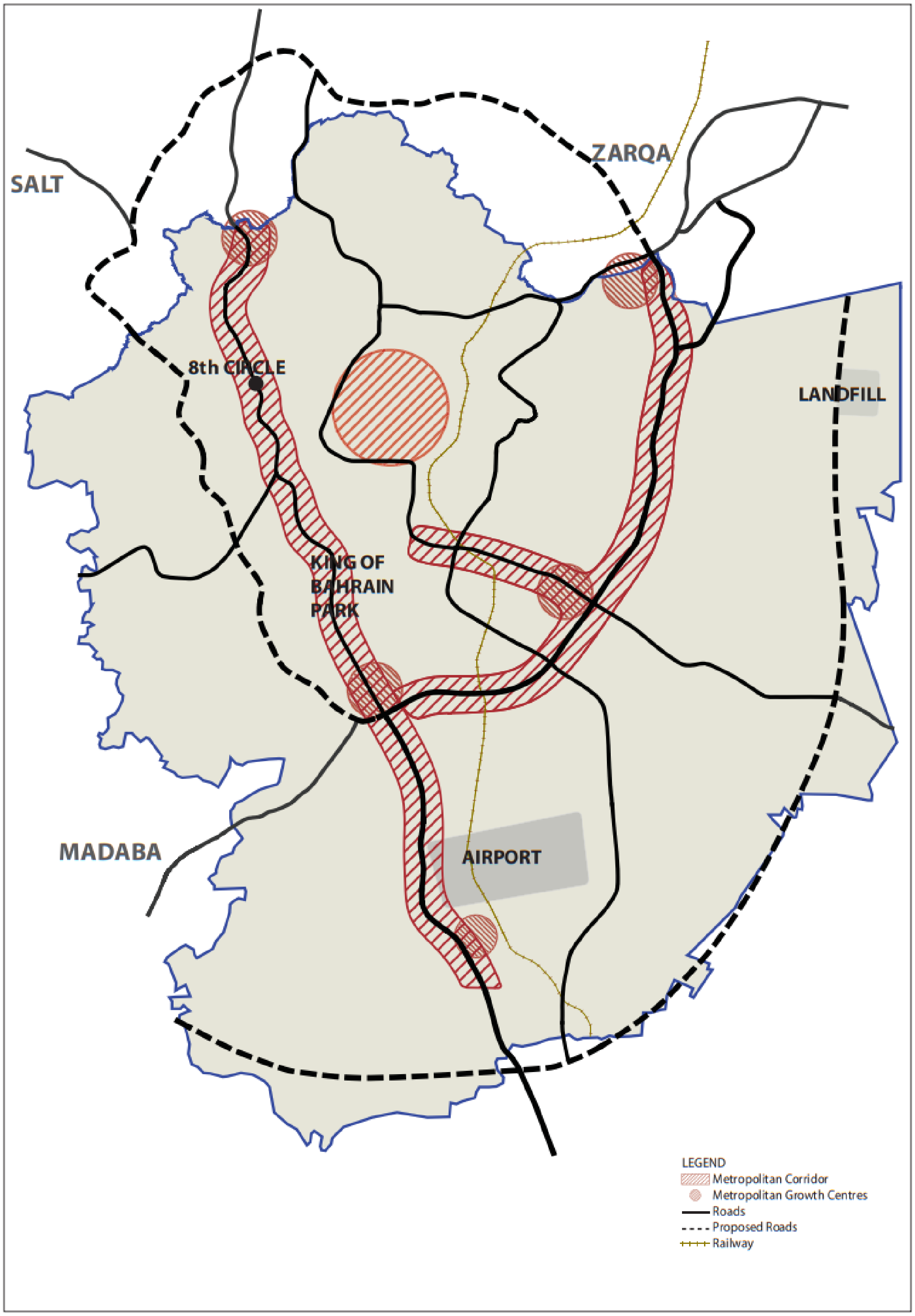

ZARQA
SALT
8th CIRCLE
LANDFILL
KING OF
BAHRAIN
PARK
MADABA
AIRPORT
LEGEND
▨ Metropolitan Corridor
● Metropolitan Growth Centres
Roads
Proposed Roads
Railway

Figure 25: Metropolitan Corridors and Growth Centres Plan

Source: Metropolitan Growth Report, 2008, p. 133

The first phase of the plan foresaw the planning of four High Density Mixed Usage plans for four high-rise development areas, including the Abdali Development Projects which by various accounts had its location already fixed (Debruyne, 2014; Abu-Hamdi, 2016). The plan was prepared in collaboration with international planning consultancies like the American 'Bearing Point Group' and the Canadian 'Planning Alliance', later the Amman Institute was established by a number of planners with the main objective of managing the flow of capital coming from Gulf states for urban development in Amman (Khirfan, 2011). However, it was not only the Abdali project; other developments already set for construction were granted approval by the court system and the planners of Amman Institute Ai, were diverted to accommodate the various high-rise projects. What set out as an endeavor for creating a new hope for Amman's development with the citizens' interest at its heart, was soon after turned once again to a reactive rather than a proactive effort at planning aimed to accommodate the private developments proposed at the time (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). In a recent interview with a GAM planner, the planner informed me that implementation of the plan does not exceed producing updated area plans in very limited areas along the two development corridors accommodating the developments that take place in the city.

The first phase of the plan, the HDMU developments, was a step towards transforming Amman from a traditionally low-rise city to the "Amman of towers and open spaces". The four areas of developments including the Jordan Gate Towers, the Al-Abdali Urban Regeneration Project, the Investment Corridor along the road to the Airport and the luxurious 'gated communities' Royal Village and Andalucia would represent new "minarets of capitalism" (Parker, 2009; Debruyne, 2014). The HDMU and their constellation of towers were essential to transforming Amman to a 'Destination City' able to compete with other cities in the region like Dubai. GAM produced an HDMU document that stated: "Towers are an essential component of thriving, modern cities. They encourage intensification of growth rather than sprawl and represent smart growth. Towers address real and emerging market demands and meet the interest of investors," Mayor Ma'ani in the announcement of the project called it a "win-win situation for the City and investors." Private domestic and transnational capital was circulating the city and the power dynamics of the elites, packed by the courts ruling, prevailed, and the networked production of space ensued (Hourani, 2016; Debruyne, 2014). After the HDMU plan, the master plan progressed through following phases such as 'Corridor Intensification Strategy' to limit urban sprawl along defined corridors; the third phase was the Interim Industrial Land Policy (ILP) targeting the development of impoverished areas around Amman. The World Bank supported the "Amman Development Corridor" through a loan of 71 million dollars for the development of the south east of Amman, the pricy development is attributed to land acquisition challenges due to different reasons but mainly to land ownership disputes. The fourth phase included the Interim Rural Regulation policy and the development plan for the Airport road. The final phase was the Metropolitan Growth Plan, which included neighborhood studies and plot-scale regulations and a new zoning law was introduced (Debruyne, 2014).

Although the plan was revolutionary – receiving in 2007 'the World Leadership City of the Year Award for Asia and the Near Middle East- and had brought hope for a development of Amman that centers citizens' interests, the plan was not entirely new. In its history Amman has been the subject of a number of evolutionary plans that understood the nature, needs and dynamics of the city and sought to manage its rapid and multi-contextual growth accordingly. As the Amman plan adapted many features of these old plans, its fate was not very different, its implementation once again responding to the needs and whims of private capital, and disregarded the matters that addressed public interest. According to a planner in GAM, the implementation of the plan, initially introduced for the period 2008-2025, has been merely a sit of adjustments to some of its component plans, which were produced for small-scale areas. Since the MGP report of 2008 that introduced the Amman Plan, no additional reports were produced regarding its progress or implementation. The planner continued, "The only updates on the plan's progress take the shape of presentations that are prepared by some personnel for stakeholders meetings like the World Bank for example, with the mayor present, and these are just for the purpose of the meetings and are not official documents published by GAM for the public."[9]

5.4 The Royal Village

"GAM will be committed to citizen participation in key civic government decisions. For example, major changes to the Amman Plan will be subject to public hearings, as will the preparation of detailed plans within the districts." (Metropolitan Growth Report, 2008, p. 36)

This last project was chosen as a recap of the previously discussed issues regarding neoliberal restructuring in Amman. The huge vacant plot of land where the project is planned to take place, previously expected to be developed as an international exhibition, is a valuable piece of urban land located at the center of a residential neighborhood along the highway connecting Amman and the Dead Sea. It is also very close to the main corridor traversing Amman towards the airport and onward to the south of Jordan. The area, therefore, has many critical aspects regarding planning. The most important of which is traffic. Like in both previous cases, the Jordan Gate Towers and Al Abdali Project, a major development in such a residential neighborhood would exacerbate traffic issues; pose considerable pressure on the infrastructure as well as other urban concerns for the residents surrounding it.

During my research I came across this project, the last announcements and publications regarding the project dated back to 2005 and 2006. The development seemed to fall off the face of the earth after its first announcement as the second phase of the Royal Metropolis Plan that was initiated in 2005 by King Abdullah II. However, the designated plot of land was still empty until today. During my interviews with a planner at GAM I posed the question: Whatever happened to the Royal Village Project? "Nobody seems to know the deal with this project," he answered, continuing, "GAM has received many design proposals for the development since 2006 but the process is very ambiguous, it runs directly through the Mayor and a couple of personnel in the Special Projects Unit".[10] In a later interview, I was informed that the project seems to be finally approved based on a design proposal by the consultant firm Alnasser and Partners, and I received the conceptual master plan document prepared by the firm.

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[9] Anonymous interview with a GAM official by the author, July 2021.

The Royal Village project was launched in 2005 as the second phase of the US$1.25 billion Royal Metropolis Plan, the first being the Jordan Gate Towers. Another project within the plan was the Royal Spa and Resort. The Royal Metropolis Plan was entirely directed at and promoted to an exclusive class of clientele, regional and international ones, rather than a plan aimed at adressing local urban issues in Amman. The 2005 inauguration of the project was highlighted by King Abdullah II laying the cornerstone for the project among a magnificent ceremony attended by high-ranking government officials, VIPs, and representative of Bayan Holding, the developer of the project (Albawaba, 2006). The Royal Village is promoted by Bayan Holding, a joint venture between the Bahrain-based Gulf Finance House (GFH), and the Kuwait Finance and Investment Company (KFIC).[11] Bayan Holding is a UAE based company which is "the mother company of three subsidiaries specialized in real estate, roads constructions, infrastructure and transport".[12] The launching ceremony in 2005 included a display of a completed master plan prepared for the Royal Village residential community **(Figure 26)**. The CEO of the GFH and Chairman of Bayan Holding, Esam Janahi, described the project as "unique development that has stirred up considerable enthusiasm among the local, regional and international buyers." Jehani was very explicit in the target audience for such development, which was designed to secure a "strong response for this project from high net worth individuals, especially Jordanians living overseas who are keen to invest in their home country." In addition to "GCC Nationals and residents [who] will have the opportunity to own a second home in Jordan," the Jahani added (Albawaba, 2006). The project was supposed to have been underway and a sales office was to be set up on site to promote the sales of the development. The 468,500 square metres development was designed and promoted as the epitome of neoliberal planning, at a time when Amman was witnessing an economic boom and was being promoted as the ideal investment destination for international and Gulf private capital and its accompanying network of elites.[13]

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[10] Anonymous interview with a planner in GAM by author. September 2021.

[11] https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/king-lays-foundation-stone-royal-village

[12] The company's website http://www.bayanholding.com/about.html

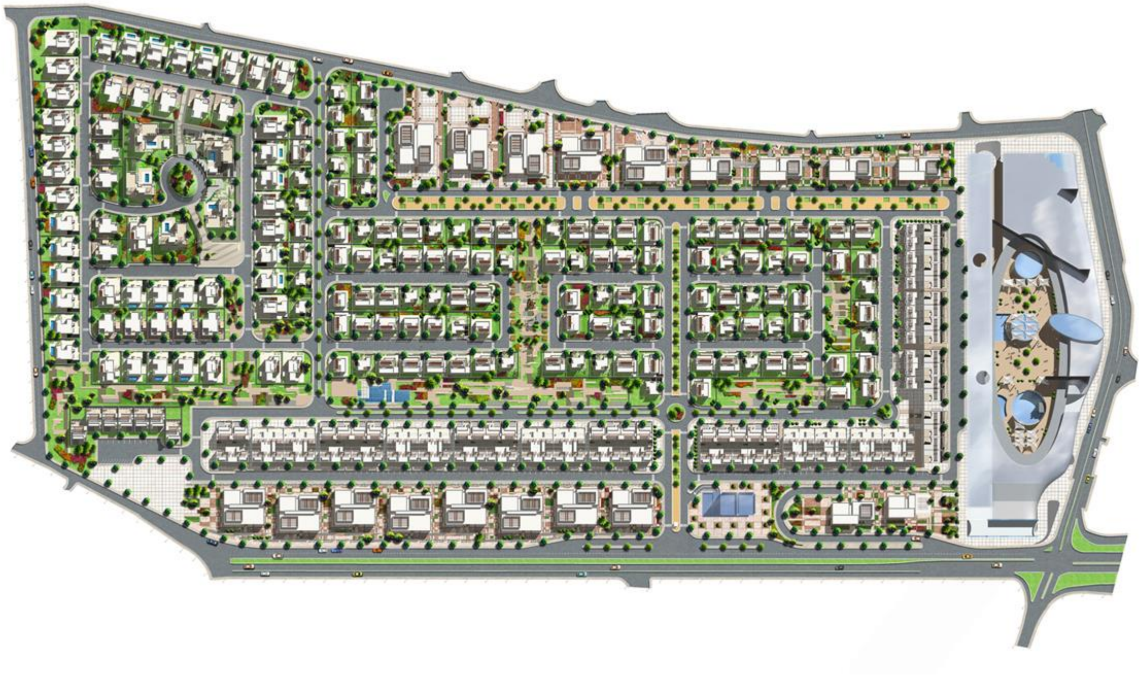

Figure 26: The Royal Village master plan, 2005

Source: Consolidated Cosultants CC Group

The language and tools used to promote the Royal Village in 2005 are a clear demonstration of the prevailing logic at the time, which is the utilization of urban development as means to place Amman on an international platform of investment and show that the city is open and ready for the regional and global flow of capital. The CEO of the KFIC and a board member of Bayan Holding commented of the fast paced progress of the project, saying that the “Royal Village is a unique development that will complement the efforts of the Kingdom of Jordan, under the capable leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II and with the support of His Excellency Dr. Marouf Al Bakhit, [then] Prime Minister, to optimally leverage the country’s strengths and positively contribute to accelerating its economic growth.” He continued, “the Royal Village will enhance Jordan’s image as an investor-friendly destination and will further expand business by encouraging joint ventures and alliances.” (Albawaba, 2006) According to the Consolidated Cosultants Group who prepared the master plan in 2005, the development was “responding to the affluent Jordanians, expatriates and foreign investors' need for a fully-serviced community.”[14] These are prime examples of the neoliberal urban restructuring processes where the urban fabric of the city is reconfigured to answer for the demands of international private capital. A process in which vital pieces of urban land, like the piece assigned for the Royal Village, are operationalized by a transnational capitalist class and snatched from the citizens of the city who have no say in matters of planning their own city and environment. After all, the technologically advanced and energy friendly gated community, according to Jahani, is “a well designed, secure and luxurious environment which will appeal to individuals seeking to identify with an exclusive and fashionable lifestyle.” (Albawaba, 2006) **Figure 27.**

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[13] https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/king-lays-foundation-stone-royal-village

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[14] Consolidated Cosultants Group CC http://45.76.80.26/en/content/royal-village

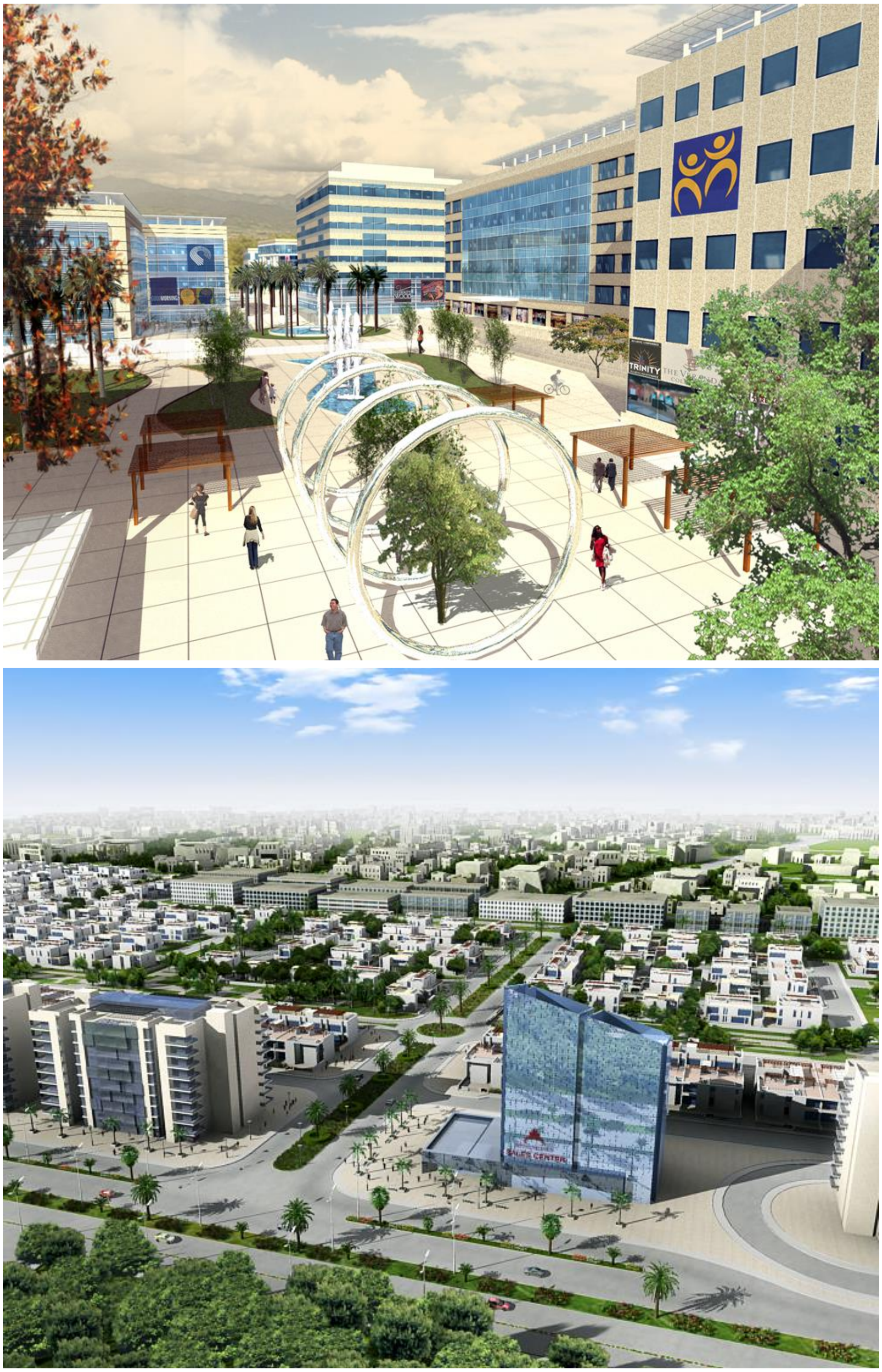
TRINITY
SALES CENTER

Figure 27: Renders of the 2005 master plan of the Royal Village.

Source: Consolidated Cosultants CC Group

After all the above-mentioned fuss and the spectacular promotion of the project, the development never took place, and no explanation or clarifications were provided or communicated to the public. The project remained dormant until 2017 when Bayan Holding commissioned Alnasser and Partner consultants to develop a new 'market study' in order to be able to update the area's land use, which needs to be approved by GAM (Alnasser and Partners, 2018). The study and proposal prepared by the consultants group utilized data collection and site analysis, case studies, market study and conceptual design tools. However, public participation or residents involvement were not included anywhere in the design process, although the proposal is meant to change the land use of a major urban land. The produced master plan is not very different form that prepared by the CC group in 2005. The plan conserves the same elements of the previous and the same tools were employed in its preparation. With construction not yet commenced, there is really no way to tell whether the new proposal, for any mysterious reasons, would face the same fate as that of the 2005 plan. However, the process is very telling of the situation as it remain today in planning Amman.

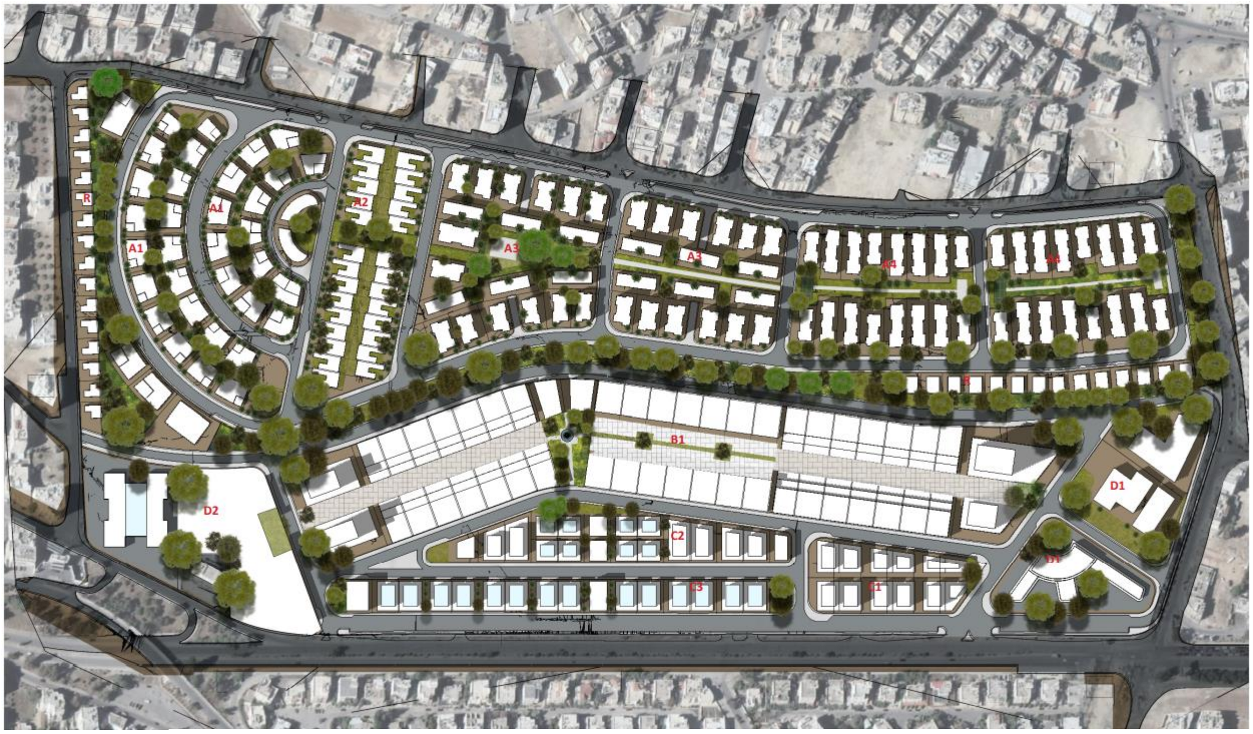

Figure 28: Conceptual master plan for the Royal Village

Source: Alnasser and Partners' proposal report, 2018

Thirteen years after its initiation in 2005 and after the development of the Amman Plan, which stressed the importance of public participation in planning, the Royal Village is a testament to the business as usual spatial practices at GAM. Another instance where the city government acts as an entrepreneur whose first task is to facilitate private-sector investment (Harvey, 1989). A situation where instead of planning how the city should be developed, GAM planners “are probing the field of real estate development to find out what is possible”, where city government is one of many stakeholders that operate in the field of development in the city, and no longer the authority that development has to refer to. (Beauregard and Marpillero-Colomina, 2010, p. 69). The Royal Village project, as the old proposal have done before, facilitated no participation planning in its development, shows no connection to the public landscape of the city despite the market and site studies that the consultants have prepared, and thus demonstrates the clear direction of city development towards profit and private interest to this day. Although the promotion language has been slightly modified and a general public benefit is conveyed with the included open spaces in the design, the design still reflects an exclusionary environment symbolic of neoliberal urban restructuring, catering to the consumer needs of a limited class and producing urban enclaves within the city’s fabric.

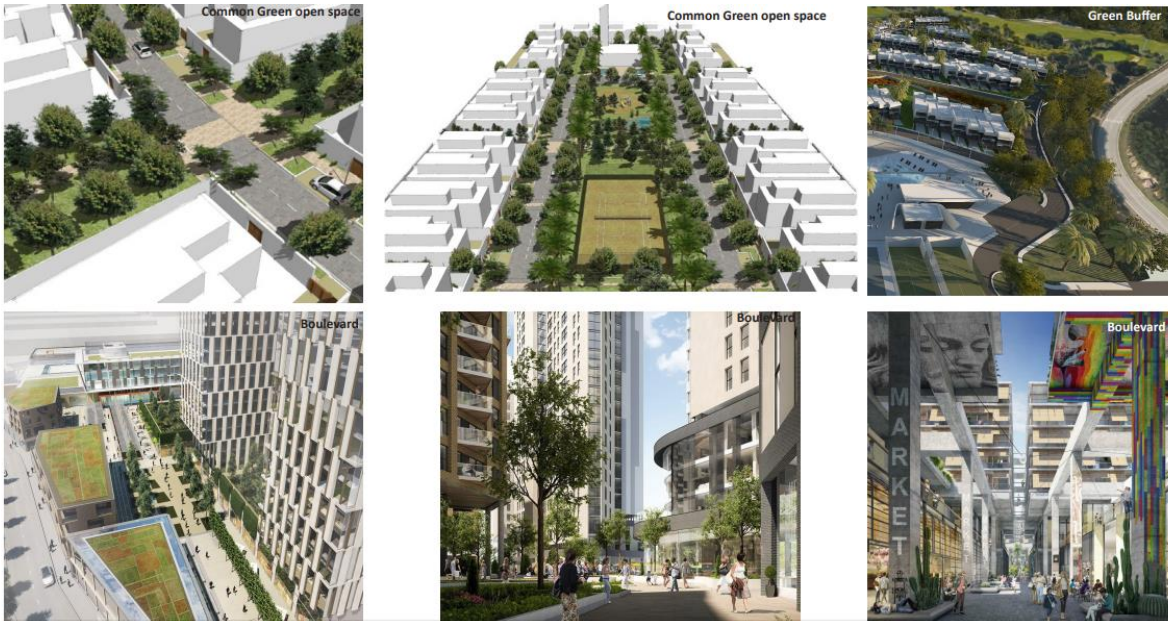

Figure 29: Renders of the proposed development for the Royal Village

Source: Alnasser and Partners’ proposal report, 2018

6. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

With a complex modern history of colonization and modern nation-state formation and their distinctive contemporary urban condition, the Arab city represents an interesting case in analyzing neoliberalization processes and their urban restructuring of space. The increasing attention towards analyzing the contemporary Arab urban condition stems for a belief in their ability, given their complex processes and practices, to advance scholarship of neoliberalism and neoliberalization processes. Despite their structural similarities, the neoliberal urban restructuring projects or the 'Arab Mega-projects', have many local distinctive features based on the various contexts of the cities and urban centers in which they are located. In order to understand the differences between neoliberal urban transformations in Arab cities and their context-specific manifestations, an in depth analysis of the political, economic and socio-spatial preconditions as they have evolved through a historical perspective of these cities is essential in order to avoid reductionist or simplistic accounts of these transformations.

In this thesis, I chose the case study of Amman to analyze the neoliberal urban transformation in the city. Between the emerging urban model of Gulf cities, and the conflicts in the traditional urban centers of the Arab region, Amman poses an interesting case for stability in face of recurring shocks and turmoil. Despite the perceived image of Amman as a safe haven in a region condemned to instability, the city has undergone several transformational moments in its modern history that made the city what it is today. The last of these transformations was the neoliberalization processes that infiltrated the city's fabric. An historical analysis of the city's spatial development showed the emergence of a network of elites that began during the Ottoman control of the territory and continued to evolve and become more powerful as the state evolved. This oligarchic network has always functioned across the border between state and society (Hourani, 2016). Through their political and economic privileges, this network has influenced the spatial development in the city to increase their wealth. This networked production of space continued under the neoliberal mode of development in Amman, where this network was incorporated within a larger regional network of international private capital that facilitated the networked production of space on a regional level through neoliberal urban restructuring projects. The understanding of this local and regional dynamic is essential in understanding the contemporary urban transformation in Amman as well as in other Arab cities.

The investigation of the neoliberal model of development in Amman was carried with a main hypothesis in mind, which is whether the neoliberal urban spatial reordering, or reconfiguration, of the city's urban fabric amounts to the creation of a parallel planning system that surpasses and functions outside of the formal spatial planning practices. To explore this hypothesis I provided an overview of the stagnant spatial laws and regulations governing development in Jordan and Amman, contrasted with the analysis of three neoliberal urban projects that took place in the city after the roll out of neoliberal policies. Fawaz and Krinjen (2010) claim that neoliberal development has become a condition that dictates the "changing pattern of regulations organizing the production of space in the city". In this sense, analyzing neoliberal urban development in Amman enables the exploration and mapping of changes in regulations that facilitate the neoliberal restructuring of space, the mechanisms in which these changes occur and how they contribute to create a neoliberal planning entity parallel to the formal one governing spatial development in the city and the country at large. Each one of the urban projects analyzed in this thesis has contributed to understanding a distinct character of the neoliberalization processes in Amman and how each of these characters adds up into defining the features and elements of the emerging parallel planning entity. What has been constant in all cases, however, is the transformed and reduced role of a planning public body on the one hand (GAM) and the expanding network of agencies that is insatiable in its pursue of private transnational capital interest.

6.1 Amman, A Parallel Reality?

The socio-spatial and political-economic analysis of the projects under investigation has shown precedents of the neoliberal urban restructuring processes that have facilitated them. These precedents have consequently set off to create an entirely new parallel reality of city building in Amman. It is plausible to deduce, however, that this has been made more possible in the void of a clear spatial planning strategy, policy and regulations that preceded the neoliberal transformations; nevertheless, they have and still are preventing any serious strategic and publicly oriented planning from developing. A process which Khirfan (2018) called “unplanning” Amman. The recurrent attempts by GAM in the second half of 20th century to produce a comprehensive spatial strategy for the development of Amman were never formally adopted and never amounted to creating a solid foundation for the spatial development of Amman. The Amman Plan of 2008 was another optimistic attempt by GAM at achieving this goal by stressing the importance of the public participation component to produce a publicly proclaimed planning vision for the city. However, the Amman Plan heavily incorporated an inclination towards engaging with the private interest of stakeholders and developers, primarily transnational, early on in planning what the city should become which steered the plan away from its initial goals according to planners who worked on the document (Abu-Hamdi, 2016). These two objectives came to be at odds, public participation remains a distant goal for planning in Amman, while the private capital interest continues to run the urban development scene in the city.

The first project discussed in the thesis, Al Abdali Development Project, is the largest so far in the restructuring process. The development is now considered a success and an example for future development; the Royal Village proposal by Alnasser and Partners (2018) mimics the ‘Boulevard’ of Al-Abdali. Al-Abdali development itself was a recreation of the ‘Solidere’ development in Beirut and the two projects share the same investor; this neoliberal urban model can also be seen in other Arab capitals (see Daher, 2008, 2013). The analysis of Al-Abdali shows the emerging agencies and governing bodies that the neoliberal mode of development demands. The creation of MAWARED in Al-Abdali case, the state-owned National Resources Investment and Development Cooperation established in 2000, is a typical example of partnership between multinational corporation and the state, which was deemed necessary to bring Al-Abdali to reality. Other similar organizations in the Arab world demostrate a trend in neoliberal urban management that delegates planning to the private sector (Daher, 2013). In the neoliberal mode of development, existing governmental bodies alone are not enough to facilitate such projects. According to Hattar (2010), the establishment of such bodies in Jordan and Amman, that subsidize private development, was financed through the privatization of state assets, a move that is largely contested by the Jordanian people. In addition to emerging bodies, like MAWARED and Al Abdali PSC, the role of existing public bodies like GAM is transformed into one that utilizes all its regulatory tools and power reach to facilitate private and elite interest at the expense of the general public interest. Al-Abdali and the myriad of new bodies that emerged and their interconnections, is a perfect example of roll-out neoliberalism mode that reconfigured and expanded state agencies in Jordan since the early 2000s. All these new agencies are a characteristic component of the emerging neoliberal parallel planning entity.

The second project under investigation, the Jordan Gate Towers, is the first phase of the $1.25 billion Royal Metropolis Plan initiated in 2004 by King Abdullah; the plan also included two more phases, the Royal Village development and the Royal Spa and Resort. While many proposals were developed for the Royal Village yet with no implementation, the Royal spa and Resort never passed the talking stage. The Royal Metropolis Plan in its entirety was conceived as an exclusive development, targeting an exclusive audience both for its development and for its consumers. The plan had a regional aim of providing investment opportunity for Gulf capital that was pouring in the region during that period. The main concern was creating the right milieu for transnational investment in Amman. Analysis of the Jordan Gate Towers clearly shows those tendencies. The project employed a wide range of regulatory transgressions to allow for the unabated execution of the towers. The site of the development, located in a typical residential neighborhood in Amman was controversial from the beginning. The location received wide criticism yet the project continued by court rule. To enable its implementation, GAM used a reversed law of eminent domain where the public land, originally designated for a public park, was transformed to private use. The project ensued even though the infrastructure services, including traffic, in the residential area were not prepared to service such large development. This forced GAM to try to provide services for the project but the process was too complicated and expensive. In addition to other financial issues between investors, the infrastructural issues eventually brought the project to a halt in the early 2010s. The Jordan Gate Towers is a clear example of the existence of a parallel logic, prepared to override and surpass formal regulations for the sake of private domestic and transnational capital.

The Royal Village development, the second phase of the Royal Metropolitan Plan and the third project analyzed in this thesis shows the continuity and endurance of the neoliberal logic. The mixed-use development, projected to take place in a huge piece of urban land in a vital part of the city, was first inaugurated in 2005 when King Abdullah II laid the cornerstone of the project. Nearly seventeen years later the land remains empty. The owner of the land, a transnational joint venture company, recently submitted a new proposal for GAM for the Royal Village development. According to interviews with planners in late 2021, GAM has recently approved the proposed master plan and construction is supposed to be underway, however, it is still possible that the development faces yet further delay. Despite the considerable size of the development and its critical location, and the fact that the new proposal suggests a change in land use and an adjustment of regulation in the area, the proposal did not employ any public participation in the process. A point that was stressed in the Amman Plan of 2008, which is supposed to be governing current spatial development in Amman. The new proposal demonstrates the clear direction of city development towards profit and private interest to this day. It reflects an exclusionary environment symbolic of neoliberal urban restructuring, catering to the consumer needs of a limited class and producing urban enclaves within the city’s fabric.

The three projects demonstrate tendencies and practices that do not conform to the existing formal planning system that otherwise applies to the rest of development in Amman and Jordanian cities at large. While the formal planning system is at best a set of outdated and inconsistent laws and bylaws, the new neoliberal driven mode of development is in no way improving or enhancing the existing system to compose an efficient spatial planning apparatus. What is happening instead is the creation of new agencies, bodies, practices and logics able to produce ‘utopian’ enclaves and consumer islands at the expense of the public interest and citizens’ needs and demands. This parallel planning system is drives by private domestic and transnational capital interest and orchestrated by a network of powerful elites who control the city's development.

The neoliberal project adopted in Jordan in two phases has unsettled the existing relationships and practices that characterized the political organization of the state (Debruyne, 2014). It is of utmost importance to continue to map out these processes and track their evolution and, although sometimes perhaps subtle, reconfiguration of the various institutions that constitute the urban realm in the city. When we talk about the urban realm, we are here talking about all the components of the urban: political, socio-economic and environmental. It is my opinion that while these processes were initiated and are sustained by political economy powers, they have restructured the social component in various moments through the infiltration of the everyday life spaces and practices of the citizens of the city. Some of these processes were incremental and sometimes occurred as ruptures in the city's fabric (See Bargach, 2008; Daher, 2013). For example the 2011 and the 2018 protests, that took place against the neoliberal policies and austerity measures of the IMF and the oligarchic network facilitating it (Hourani, 2016). The next projected process of production and reproduction of neoliberalization processes in Amman is the environmental policy of the urban. GAM is currently releasing various environmental plans in the same manner in which it facilitated the aforementioned projects: exclusion (especially in the development phase) and deepening inequality. This again, goes back to the fact that GAM surrendered its planning authority in favor of being a facilitator of private interest and transnational capital in the city and a mere provider of services and infrastructure.

6.2 Social Insights

In the case of Amman, we can see an example of a city that has chased the dream of having a place in the new global reality, and while not achieving this dream it has alienated itself from the rest of the country. Amman is now suspended somewhere in the middle, a distorted version of a dream that was too far to achieve and too alien to the majority of its resident and the people to whom it is the capital of their country and so should reflect their identity and cater to their needs. Not to the whims and greed of its oligarchs with their vast mansions that are empty most of the year. The city has always had this rift, this divide in its being on various levels that became evident in its urban fabric. Despite the city's attempts to bridge this divide along the years, it is still very much there, and made even more visible with the COVID pandemic that has brought all the city's regulatory shortcomings to the surface. The duality of Amman has been the subject of many studies, various plans and initiatives were set to target and treat the divide, interestingly enough, the part of the plans that do get implemented seem to further enrich the rich and make the impoverished poorer.

Across all contexts where Neoliberalization processes have been mobilized, they "facilitated marketization and commodification while simultaneously intensifying the uneven development of regulatory forms across places, territories and scales." (Brenner, Peck and Theodore, 2010). In Amman, like other Arab cities, socio-economic disparities continue to amplify under neoliberal restructuring. While the elites benefit from market regulations to increase their profits and political gains, local communities suffer the downside of neoliberal policies (Khirfan, 2018). The inequalities and disparities that neoliberalization has exacerbated in Arab cities have led to social unrest throughout the years that finally culminated in the Arab Spring uprisings. Neoliberal urbanism and struggles over space were major catalysts for the protests the swept the Arab cities in 2011 (Hourani, 2016).

In Jordan, protests broke out against years of worsening economic conditions and austerity measures imposed by the IMF that introduced further price hikes and a proposed an income tax. The protests in Amman as well as in other Arab cities had an urban and spatial dimension to it that in the following years, urban politics started to gain more attention among the civil society. However, these efforts never materialized, at least not in the real sense of the word. There are many factors that play a role in the inefficiency of the civil society involvement in policies in general and particularly urban politics. Urban politics simply do not fall within the daily concerns of the people of Jordan, although they live with the consequences of lack of planning on a daily basis. Urban Planning culture is so absent in Jordan that it is not even discussed or brought up when dealing with urban issues that clearly stem from lack of planning; it continues to function haphazardly with no real attempts at strategizing any plans to solve these issues. Nevertheless, there has been social engagement on occasion with some urban issue in Amman, but it seem to be driven by private interest rather than for the collective good (Khirfan, 2018).

According to Khirfan (2018), civil society's reaction and engagement with urban policies in Amman fall under four categorizations: forced apathy, revolt, subversion and innovative negotiation. Urban scholars in the Arab region take three stances when it comes to the apathy of the civil society towards urban politics, from "altogether discounting political awareness among civil society", to "completely overlooking civil society's role in urban governance," to attributing the civil society's apathy to political priorities (Khirfan, 2018). However, in Jordan, Khirfan argues that "coerced" apathy is the result of the state's soft authoritarianism that has "carefully designed restrictive legislation and laws to suppress political association of the civil society actors in Amman." Due to this coerced apathy, questionable planning initiatives, and they are many in Amman, proceeded with "sporadic, if altogether nonexistent, objection from civil society actors." (Khirfan, 2018)

7. CONCLUSION

The neoliberal model of development in Amman is facilitated by an assemblage of bodies, processes and mechanism that operates outside of the regulatory confines of formal planning. This assemblage has resulted from the interaction and engagement of global and extralocal concepts like neoliberalism and globalization with internal politico-economic assemblages, in the case of Amman it was the oligarchic network of elites of the city. The assemblages similarly have been the result of a series of similar moments of historical transformation, where they were entrenched in the structure of the state by a set of reforms and modernization projects that had intended to eliminate them but ended up further consolidating them. In the same manner, neoliberalization processes in their rhetoric of state rescaling and downsizing, have resulted in a process of neoliberal state building, where instead of rolling back the state, the state expanded and transformed to encompass new agencies and practices that proliferate all spheres of everyday life, political, socio-spatial and economic. This expansion of the state is very much clear in the urban restructuring of space and is demonstrated in the underlying mechanisms and processes and the agencies that has enabled the neoliberal urban restructuring of Amman. This process of urban restructuring, facilitated by state agencies is always in pursuit of more capital accumulation and increased power that in its path sidelines and undermines public interest.

The state and elites' sponsored neoliberal model of urban development have thus managed to create a parallel system of institutions, agencies, practices and subtle understandings that operates outside, surpasses and mostly overrules the formal spatial planning practices guiding the development in the city of Amman. This parallel system is evident in the parallel spatial reality of neoliberal urban restructuring projects, these islands of capitalist consumerism, which were imposed over the urban fabric of the city and in many instances, disrupted the flow of urban life in favor of ensuring private capital interests. This powerful and forceful network and their networked production of space have compromised any serious attempts at producing a public oriented form of spatial planning form developing in Amman and thus compromising the realities and futures of millions of citizens.

In order to overcome this dichotomy of planning logics, it is essential to continue to map out and characterize this parallel planning system, as its dangers lie in its ambiguity. Defining these subtle mechanism and processes may eventually lead to meaningful attempts to reclaim the city back to its citizens through a strongly defined formal spatial planning system that works for the well being of the general public and is accountable to the city's population.

Undertaking such endeavor for the purpose of this thesis has proven challenging in the case of Amman due to many reasons. Perhaps the most essential of which is connections to the monarchy and the ruling class, who play a vital role in the restructuring processes, as such topics represent a red line in the kingdom and can be incriminating according to the status quo of laws, described by Khirfan (2018) as the soft authoritarianism of Jordan. Another main challenge is the difficulty of accessing public records, documents, maps and other data from GAM. There is a great level of ambiguity surrounding neoliberal development and projects in Amman, in addition to the sensitive nature of such information; their inaccessibility is attributed in great part to the incompetence of GAM in documenting and disseminating the data in a sufficient manner. It may be important to point out in this regard that GAM has been under investigation of corruption several times in the past few years by the Jordanian Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission JIACC, the latest of which was their 2019 report, which ranked GAM ahead of the list for corruption claims. Unlike the rest of the country's municipalities where the mayor and members are elected, the prime minister and his government reserve the right to appoint the mayor of GAM and a third of its council members, as per the latest decision by the Jordanian parliament in 2021 after long debates (Alghad, 2021). In addition to the aforementioned challenges, there is limited studies that investigate the processes and mechanisms of neoliberal urban restructuring in Amman. Existing work focuses mainly on projects and their technical and architectural aspects, leaving out their regulatory and planning transgressions.

The analysis carried out in this thesis provides evident examples of the emergence of a neoliberal parallel planning logic in Amman during the past two decades that overrides and surpasses the existing formal planning system. The components of this parallel logic require further investigation and the relations governing its formation require further mapping in order to be able to define this elusive entity. To overcome planning challenges in Amman, and Jordan, it is important to first clearly define the existing practices and powers that control the spatial development scene both formal and ‘neoliberal’. Perhaps then, it will be possible to target the many urban issues that the city faces and reach a point where the divide in the city, the gap that is clearly evident in its morphology and urban fabric, could be finally bridged and overcome.

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