

# Rethinking Halted Investments Exploring the Potential of Interim Use in Amman

A Thesis submitted in the Partial Fulfillment  
for the Requirement of the Degree of Master of Science  
in Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design

Supervised by

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July 2016



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# Disclaimer

This dissertation is submitted to Ain Shams University (ASU) and University of Stuttgart - Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning (USTUTT) for the degree of Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design (IUSD), in accordance to IUSD-ASU regulations.

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July 2016

Mohammad Aljabi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke followed by a loop and a small flourish.



## Acknowledgment

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interim

/ˈɪnt(ə)rɪm/

Adjective [before noun]

- 1- In or for the intervening period; provisional.
- 2- Temporary and intended to be used or accepted until something permanent exists.

## Abstract:

With the continuing effort to globalize Amman, the city adopted a neoliberal agenda as a mean of economic development. The effects of these policies became prevalent after the 2007 financial crisis, most notably its physical manifestations; colossal buildings erected in key locations around the city and set abandoned in a limbo state.

The aim of the thesis is to investigate these projects and explore the potential of interim use. The first part will examine neoliberal investment strategies adopted by the government, and the shift towards attracting foreign investments through an economical and theoretical framework. The second part will analyze the socio-economic effects of specific, neoliberal projects by opening paths for sociological methodologies specifically the ways in which space inevitably affects our daily existence. It is structured on frameworks of mapping, qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

The third part will explore the potential of interim use as an ephemeral solution to those buildings, this will include a comparative analysis to best practice cases.

## **Keywords:**

Halted investments, Interim use strategy, Neoliberalism, Society.

# Introduction:

The objective of this thesis is to discuss the possibility of interim use strategies in halted neoliberal mega investments in Amman. And to reach that this thesis will research the neoliberal economy and mega projects specifically within the Ammani context and cross reference the characteristics of such practice with the transnational-funded projects in Amman starting 1999 when king Abdullah II ascended the throne bringing with him a major shift in the National agenda towards liberalizing the mark and the effects of the international financial crisis.

While those halted investments are described as eyesores, interim use strategies **are set to “expedite the remediation of blighted sites”** (Hawke 2009) as other options such as large scale demolitions or site acquisitions seems to be out of fiscal reach for a city such as Amman that can barely manage the cost of basic services. Moreover, with the recent political turbulences, any long term planning strategy is labeled as an unnecessary and out of fiscal reach; interim use strategy is proven to be a perfect pertinent solution to tackle this issue.

# 1 Chapter 1: Neoliberal Amman

## 1.1.1 Neoliberal Definition

Hervey defined Neoliberalism as political economic practice adopted by governments to liberate the Market as he mentioned in his definition below.

*Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (Harvey 2005)*

Hervey further elaborated that the state interventions must be kept to a bare minimum as the theory **indicates that it's beyond the stat's capability to presses information enough to** "second guess the market. Furthermore, he mentioned that neoliberal states shows "**Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision**" (Harvey 2005) which in terms will further explain the haphazard eruption of foreign investment projects around Amman.

The diagram below explains the obligations of the state towards these projects that might include securing those projects with legal structure and with force if **needed. Moreover, the state might need to create the market if it didn't exist** by providing lands or water fronts. And that could be extended to the education, health, social security and environmental fields (Harvey 2005).

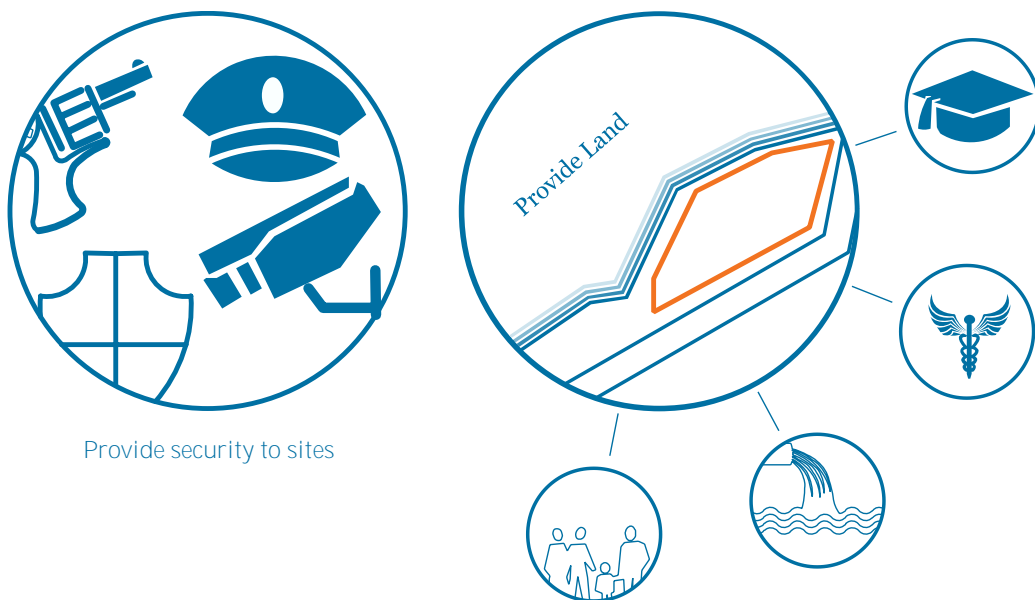


Figure 1 Diagram showing the state's obligations towards neoliberal projects, based on Harvey's explanation.

Barthel in his Arab Mega cities questions the importance of the King and that **his role is particularly strong while the participation of the public or the “city-dwellers remains very timid”** (Barthel 2010). Furthermore, in Robert **Beauregard’s research about the planning of Amman; he pointed out several occasions where there have been direct interferences or orders from the court redirecting the plans towards facilitating neoliberal projects and investments** (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010).

While the role of the state is facilitating the projects; Barthel also emphasized the significance of the socio-spatial outcomes and the fact that they are controlled more or less by the authorities and the developers. Some of those facts include the targeted social groups and the relocation of the undesired existing populations. And that is extended to the selection of the economic activities and the specific management of the collective spaces.

According to (Shenk, Brown 2015) in their interview, neoliberalism **“is a loose and shifting signifier”**, it is treated as a governing rationality were everything is **“economized”**. **Brown further elaborates that everything is considered a market** and humans are nothing but market actors. All entities, being governmental or private are governed as a firm.

### 1.1.2 Spectacularism and suddenness

The scale of the neoliberal project is almost always discussed in all related literature defining the hugeness or bigness as a major characteristic in such projects. Abu Dayyeh referred to it as **“Spectacularism”** he further elaborated that those projects are correlated with two factors; scale and suddenness (ABU-DAYYEH 2007). Elsheshtawy listed the projects that reflect neoliberal playscapes and the large scale is a common factor between all those projects as **the list includes malls. Leisure parks, ‘edutainment’ places, gated communities and mixed-use towers** (Elsheshtawy 2008).

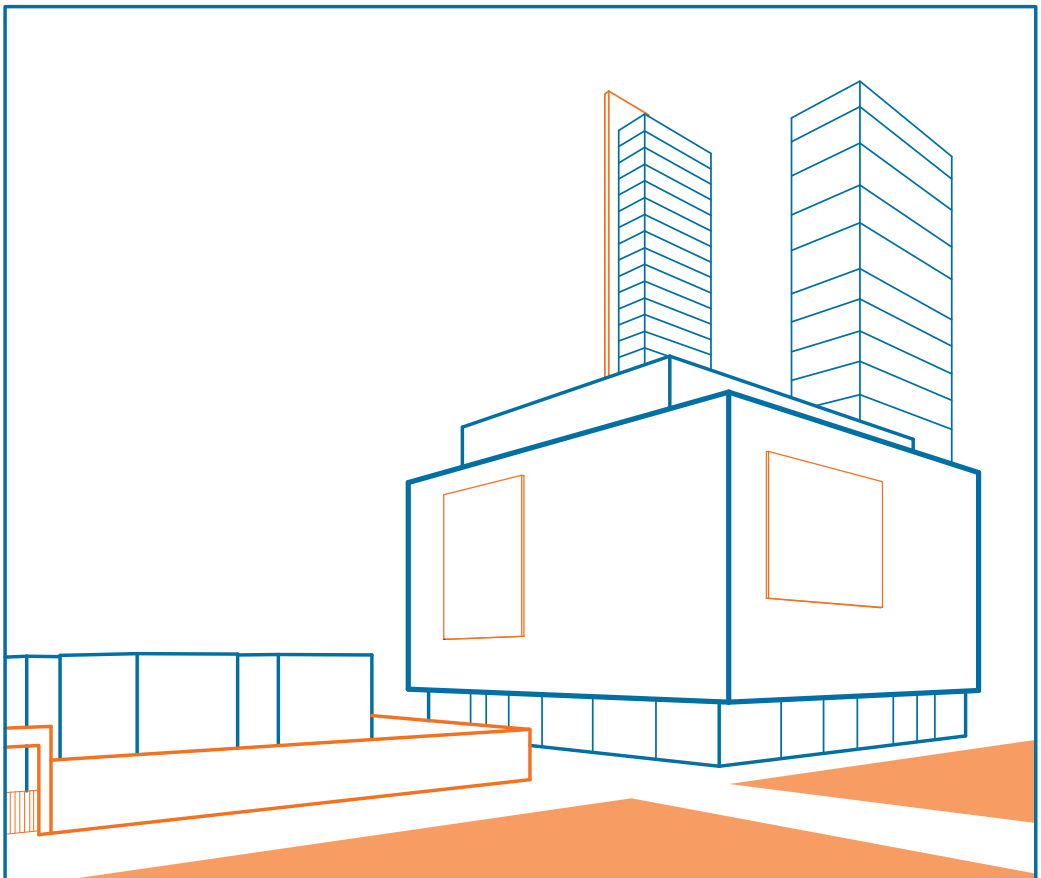


Figure 2 Neoliberal investments building types

Daher indicated that most of the projects in the context of Amman were mixed use towers. Namely, Emaar towers<sup>1</sup>, Limitless<sup>2</sup>, Rotana hotel, Jordan gate and Amman Living Wall<sup>3</sup> further explaining that the geographic locations of those towers within the city is also carefully calculated by the actors and agents of these projects (Daher 2013).

As for the suddenness; Barthel explained that there is a desire to create a quick and iconic products rather than taking time to build a common vision for the future (Barthel 2010). Moreover, in describing neoliberal projects; Harvey stated that the greater the geographical range the shorter the term of the market contract the better (Harvey 2005). Which translate to the literal and physical size of the project and the space it occupies and the short amount of time for developing and building the project.

Abu Hamdi in her research about neoliberal development in Amman argues that the aspiration of building vertically such large and modern projects represents altered dichotomy that was preserved as first world versus third world (Abu-Hamdi 2016). The argument later shifted to be Amman or different regional cities versus Dubai or developed neighboring gulf cities. She further explained **that phrases such as ‘the Dubai model’ and ‘Dubaization’ entered the discourse of planning in the Middle East and became more relevant in urban planning Abu-Hindi citing (Elsheshtawy 2010).** She further explains that clearly Dubai is becoming a role model since it is considered a model of success, **labeling it as ‘the regional representation of consumerism and economic prosperity’.**

## **1.2 Role of the state and the national agenda**

When king Abdullah II of Jordan ascended the throne in 1999, there was a major shifting in the national economic agenda in comparison to the agenda that is of his late father King Hussain<sup>4</sup>. Dr. Daher (Daher 2013) argued that the

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<sup>1</sup> Three offices towers of 12, 17 and 12 floors

<sup>2</sup> Limitless was set to be the tallest building in Amman. The project was halted after the financial crises.

<sup>3</sup> Both projects will be discussed in depth in the second part of the thesis.

<sup>4</sup> Abu Dayyeh indicated that Gerald King and Max Lock, authors of the earliest plan made for Amman, 1955 (during the reign of Late Hussein of Jordan) recognized the importance of linking these urban design and architectural proposals to the overall social and economic context of the plan (ABU-DAYYEH 2007)

rule of the state visibly changed through shifting the state involvement shown by the state subsidies allocated for neoliberal projects. Those subsidies "benefits selective urban business elites" (Daher 2013) in Jordan.

Over the past century almost all countries have moved from modernity to post modernity and finally to globalization. That change came under the rational of economic liberalization and privatization of state enterprises and investments gearing the world towards a neoliberal moment according to Daher believes (Daher 2008).

Innab further explained in her exhibition titled *Traces of Socialism in Amman* that while Amman was building its modern identity independently from the Arab Nationalist states (Syria and Egypt), a trace of a social space can be found around the city (Innab, 2015). These housing projects were built by the state **between the 50's and 70's and had a unique architectural style with social spaces in between.**

Privatization stepped up in the late 1990s, it started with telecommunication, water and electricity and even reached the Royal Jordanian which is the national airline (Baylouny 2008). It is also evident that by Jordan moving towards neoliberal agendas of privatization it is moving away from social agendas such as agriculture, health and education and also regional politics (Daher 2008).

Studying the timeline of the city, The state transformation from rentierism to neoliberalism (Daher 2013) is much visible and clearly reflected on the urban fabric and the erected projects. This timeline will be discussed in lengthily details **in Amman's timeline chapter.**

According to Bank and schlumberger (Perthes 2004) these changing benefiting **the elite s "emerged under King Abdullah as bearing the distinct imprint of the new king" as those business elites gained more influence under Abdulla's role.** And through studying the time line of the projects<sup>5</sup> later in this thesis; it can be clearly concluded the times when projects erupted based on the developers decision with facilitations provided by the state<sup>6</sup>.

The state subsidies allocated for the neoliberal projects include assigning public lands for private investments. This was the case for the Abdali project in Amman, the state created Mawared to tackle the weak planning and maintain

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<sup>5</sup> This will be further discussed in the timeline of the projects. Check chapter 2

<sup>6</sup> Such as the Abdali Project and the Le Royal hotel

the flow of foreign investments to Amman (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010). Mawared was a financially independent investment and development corporation. However, the state assigned former military bases one in Amman known now as Abdali<sup>7</sup> area; a posh neighborhood representing the pecan of neoliberalism in Amman. For those investments, the reality is that the State is subsidizing large-scale real-estate investments, enabling the business elite and transnational corporations to develop mega-projects far from the formal rhetoric which promotes the idea that there is no State involvement in such privately-funded urban restructuring (Daher 2008).

### 1.2.1 “Jordan First”



Figure 3 Jordan First official campaign Logo showing the hands of Jordanians with different backgrounds all holding the flag

**The state used the “Jordan First” campaign to pave the way to neoliberal projects.** According to (Abu-Hamdi 2012), the goal was to make the projects **appeal to the masses as if it’s a civic duty, promoting a sense of pride in the government and an ambition in signature development projects:**

*The campaign promoted state-led initiatives by implying these would be in the best interest not only of the state, but of all Amman residents*

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<sup>7</sup> “Abdali is the largest neoliberal real estate development project currently taking place in Amman. The project is promoted as “the new downtown” for Amman and is anticipated to include high-end office and residential spaces in addition to retail, commercial and other tourism activities. The remodeled area, previously the site of the General Jordan Armed Forces Headquarters, spans over 350,000 m<sup>2</sup> in the heart of Amman and will contain a built-up area of approximately 1,000,000 m<sup>2</sup>.” Daher 2013

The campaign rendered any opposition of such projects as unpatriotic and changed the climate of the public opinion regarding these projects and that the **citizens should place “Jordan’s interest” above all** (Abu-Hamdi 2012).

King Abdullah Stated that in the recent decades, Jordan focused on foreign policy more than its own. And that Jordanian got the right to focus on their own **which where the slogan “Jordan First” came from** (Ryan 2006).

## 2 Chapter 2: TimeLine of neoliberal projects after the change in the national agenda

This section will shed light on the urban planning timeline of Amman from the **late 90's** as it marks the beginning of foreign investments in Amman. According to (Daher 2008) the Gulf Corporation Council declared in 2002 the availability of 80 billion USD liquidity awaiting investments. This circulating global capital was searching for places to invest in real-estate projects, which resulted in cities competing for international businesses and tourism and mostly consumer-oriented services. Abdali Project that started in 2006 and the Jordan gate which began in 2005 created that milieu to be eligible for that fund (Abu-Hamdi 2016).

As did Daher predicted this had a considerable consequences on the nature of the urban environment (Daher 2008), creating mega projects that are ill studied and narrow in the fields and services that they provide.

### **2.1 Transnational Capital and Gulf investments in tourism sector**

One of the first neoliberal projects that appeared in Amman carrying all the characteristics of this new era of socio-economics was the Le Royal hotel in 1996. According to (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010):

*As Gulf money flowed into commercial developments such as malls, international-standard hotels, luxury apartments, and office buildings,*

*the central government and the municipality began to imagine Amman as a regional capital of finance and business services. It would soon become apparent.*

Moreover, they described in their article Amman municipality's development regulations as relatively developer-friendly. But the approval of Le Royal Hotel came with a price; the drastic change of the low-rise notable character of the city (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010).

Furthermore, the article described the reaction of the municipality after the project<sup>8</sup> realization as “discontent” (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010), however, **through studying the timeline of the state's priorities of neoliberal agenda** verses a comprehensive plan of Amman they would always favor the later.

Following the Le Royal hotel and keeping up with the mega touristic projects, in the year 2000 commenced the construction of the Sheraton hotel and the Four Seasons. The huge construction site reshaped the 5<sup>th</sup> circle of Amman. The Sheraton Hotel was an investment from the Emirates and Four Seasons hotel owned by the Saudi prince Alwaleed Bin Talal (Ghawi 2015; ITP 3003).

These two projects where subtle in terms of scale and intervention **and didn't** cause much of a public resentment even though they promoted exclusivity, created more lost spaces in the city and exercised a selective policy couples with high-level security systems (Abu Khalil 2009).

## **2.2 Go big or go home (Abdali Project)**

Soon after the completion of Le Royal project, the central state created the state-owned but financially-independent National Resources Investment and Development Corporation, widely known as Mawared<sup>9</sup>. **The corporation's main** objective was to redevelop a former military base in the middle of Amman (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010). According to Parker, this project highlighted a neoliberal paradox, that even though international laws are implemented, the

---

<sup>8</sup> “Le Royal, a five-star hotel in the luxurious Zahran district.<sup>27</sup> With approximately 118,000 square meters of hotel space, retail, recreational facilities, and parking, the Le Royal became the tallest building in the city at 33 floors with a 45 meter tall podium and the overall building height of 101 meters. This was well above the more common 30-50 meter height of most commercial buildings in the city.” Beauregard, Marpillero 2010

<sup>9</sup>Mawared's website lists the members of the corporation as Secretary Generals from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Public Sector Development and a Financial Manager, Jordan Armed Forces (Mawared 2010).

site and the context are very local (in this case, the former military site). And renders the state as commodity produced at the global level (Parker 2008).



Figure 4 Boulevard project and Rotana Tower, Abdali project (Nabulsi, Amad 2015)

The Abdali project has begun in 2004 as a partnership between Mawared and Oger Jordan (a Jordan subsidiary of a Saudi real estate firm). The project is yet **the biggest development project in Amman's history, bringing to Amman a** wholly different urban form and set of architectural styles (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010).

In an article by (Rajjal 2007) Abu-Hamdi pointed out that the Abali preliminary design included civic plazas that would connect the neighboring Houses of Parliament, King Abdullah Mosque and Palace of Justice. All these public features were omitted in favor of the private investors, removing any public feature in the project (Abu-Hamdi 2016).



Figure 5 Map showing the three projects together (Google Maps 2016)



Figure 6 Jordan Gate towers (Aljabi 2016)

## 2.3 Jordan Gate

### 2.3.1 Eminent Domain

The towers show the manipulation typical to neoliberal development. The first one is the inversion of the process of eminent domain<sup>10</sup> (Abu-Hamdi 2012). That was particularly handy for the state in the case of the land that the towers were built on. According to (Abu-Hamdi 2012):

*Eminent domain is intended to enable government actors to expropriate private property for public use. Alternatively, however, it may become a vehicle for appropriating public property for private profit*

The second part is changing the common economic practices essential to the success of projects in regimes suborned by neoliberal capital flow (Abu-Hamdi 2012) this would include the shifting in the national agenda towards liberating **the market and the “Jordan First” campaign.**

The very first case of the inversion of eminent domain took place during the Abdali project in the Abu Ghazaleh case against GAM. The headquarters of the Abu Ghazaleh investment group were located in a site near the Abdali project. GAM encouraged the group to sell their property to MAWARED, however, upon **the group’s refusal to sell; GAM appropriated** the land eventually after a battle that took 4 years in courts claiming that the land is necessary to pave ways for public streets (Abu-Hamdi 2016).

In the cases, GAM expropriated a private land for the favor of a private investor which according to (Abu-Hamdi 2016) shows the contradictory nature of GAM policy, intentionally inverting eminent domain.

As for the Jordan the appropriation of the land happened through several stages. According to an interview conducted by (Abu-Hamdi 2016) in GAM, in 1959 GAM acquired a large plot where both the towers and the Crown Plaza hotel are now located to construct a water reservoir to serve the area accompanied by a public park. In 1978 a portion of that plot was allocated by **GAM for ‘tourism-related construction’ and indeed, in 1984 Amra hotel<sup>11</sup>** was

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<sup>10</sup> the right of the government to take property from a private owner for public use by virtue of the superior dominion of its sovereignty over all lands within its jurisdiction (Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary 2016)

<sup>11</sup> now known as Crown Plaza hotel

constructed while the other half of the plot remained as a public park which is a rare commodity in Amman.

In 2004 GAM received a request to construct a mega development project in the remaining portion of the plot where the public park was located. To which the application was met with approval and on May 2005 the project was inaugurated by King Abdullah of Jordan (Abu-Hamdi 2016).

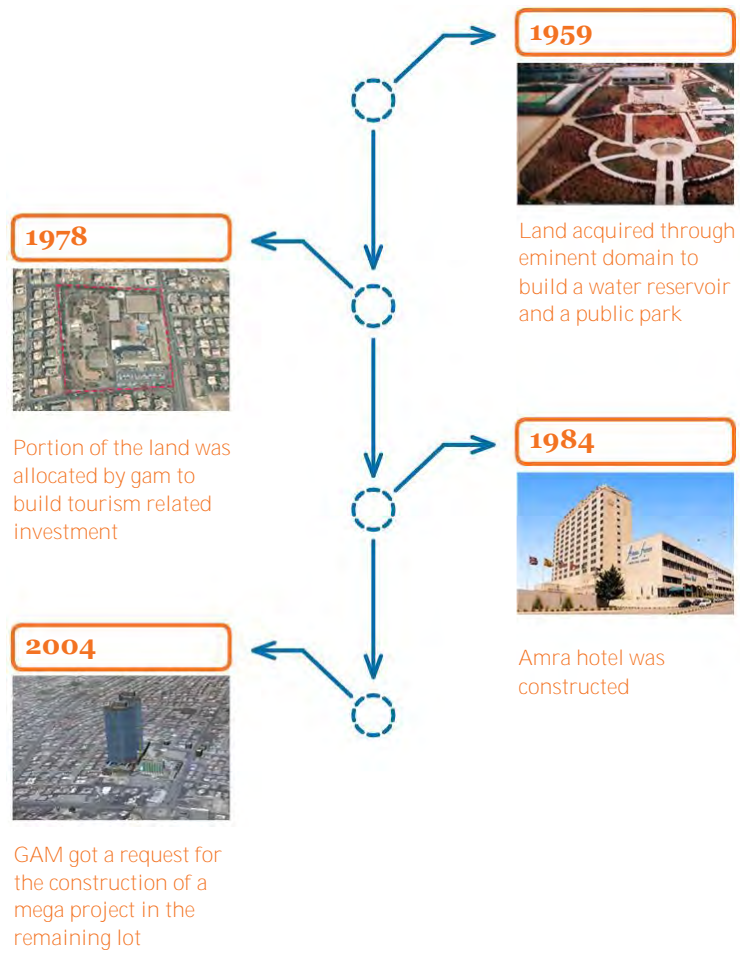


Figure 7 Eminent domain timeline for the Jordan Gate project

### 2.3.2 Investors and Partners

The project was implemented by the Bahrain-based Gulf Finance House in 2005, it is a strategic partnership between Kuwait Investment, Finance Company ‘Al Bayan Holding’ and GAM. GAM’s contributions were limited to providing the 28,500 sqm plot, however in 2006 the municipality sold its 10% share to the Kuwait investor withdrawing from the project and leaving the

Kuwaiti company Al Bayan as the owner of the project and Al Hmad Construction and development were assigned as the contractors of the project (Namrouqa 2016; Keimat 2006). The decision of the withdrawal came from Maani, the mayor of Amman stating that there is a conflict of interest as GAM is both the regulator and investor in such commercial real-estate development project (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010).



Figure 8 Map Showing the Jordan Gate next to other Gulf financed investments

### 2.3.3 Project vision and inauguration

The 205 million dollars investment was inaugurated in 2005, According to (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010) the selection of the plot came as a haphazard decision by the then-mayor, Nidhal Al-Hadid with no attention to the persistent traffic and the low-rise nature of the area. However, according to an interview that (Abu-Hamdi 2016) did in GAM, she mentions that it was a conscious decision and the site was specifically chosen for its high elevation. The source in GAM mentioned that the project was meant to serve as a gate to

the city as it's located primarily near the airport road and overlooking the city and the project once elected will be an 'emblem of development and modernity' in Amman.

### 2.3.4 Project description and marketing

The looming towers overlooking the city as comic-like sapphires were set to have 44 levels for both towers and a podium that connects both of them. Furthermore, they were planned to host a 5 stars hotel operated by the Hilton chain, executive offices, conference rooms and retail shops (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010) which is a textbook case of neoliberal investment projects.

The project was accompanied by a flood of 3D rendered images of the outcome, for both the interior spaces and the exterior look and feel. The images portrayed the glamorous and luxurious life style enclosed within this exclusive colossal.

**Campaigns included such as 'Share the vision, embrace the future' and 'energizing Jordan and beyond'** (Daher 2008) suggesting that the project is for the common people interest when in fact it was promoting an exclusive isolated lifestyle, pushing terms such as 'Lofty Views, Open Terraces, and Deluxe Living in the City Centre'; 'Luxury Life Style Providers'; 'A Comprehensive Security System' that promotes nothing but shutting off everyone that can't afford that lifestyle.



Figure 9 Warnout billboards advertising for the project (Aljabi 2016)

### **2.3.5 Safety issues and accusations of official arrogance**

The construction of the towers started full force until August 2006 when the first of many construction mishaps started to occur. On that date a fire broke on the northern tower on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Luckily no injuries were reported that day, however, a month later in September, three stories collapsed in the same tower killing 4 workers and injuring 16. Later in 2009 one of the cranes which became a static nonfunctional part of the building collapsed and crashed into the building causing much damage before hitting the street below. After the incident the neighboring houses and offices were evacuated to nearby hotels until the situation was contained (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010; Abu-Hamdi 2016).

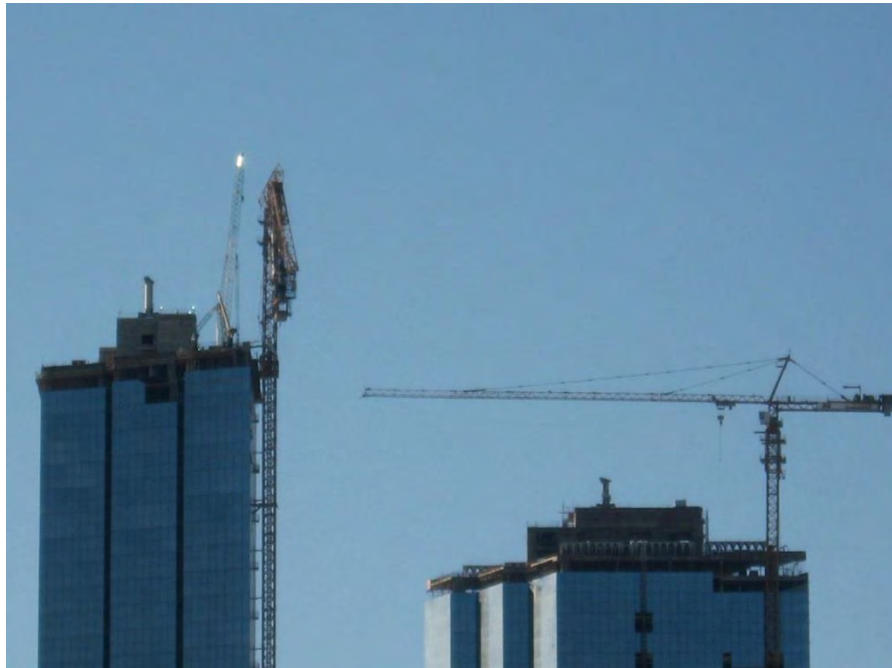


Figure 10 Collapsed crane (Wikipedia commons 2009)

Several reports were filed accompanied by videos that the cranes were moving, rotating and making eerie noises that made the neighboring residents uncomfortable and feeling at risk. And while the cranes were flailing around in Amman the cranes collapsing in Mecca added to the pressure to send an investigating committee to make sure that the rusted cranes are not posing any threats (Da'na 2015). Furthermore, the committee received up to a 100 formal complaints from the residents regarding the noises from the cranes and the late working hours at the construction site (Muhsen 2015).

### 2.3.6 Project visibility



Figure 11 Project visibility from different locations around Amman

### **2.3.7 Pulling the plug**

The project eventually came to a halt for more than one reason the project was riddled with an imponderable amount of issues.

According to (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010) the project was halted in 2009 in result to all the technical difficulties, however, the project has slowed down long before that due to constant disagreements between the owner and the contractor. One of the issues as that the budget of the project doubled from 200 million US dollars to 400 million dollars.

Furthermore, one most acknowledge the ill planning and the haphazard **decision that didn't consider the planning regulations of the area,** transportation and the infrastructure and what would a project in the magnitude effect all the previous mentioned factors (Abu-Hamdi 2016) as it was reported that the infrastructure **of the area wouldn't be able to handle and** process all the waste from such project. Also not to mention the parking issue such project would cause.

Mayor Maani during his mayoral term described the project as the worst decision the municipality ever had, halting the project in 2009 after conducting an evaluation that would include the location of the tower, viability of the project and the general program and how appropriate it is to the following surrounding. The evaluation concluded that the project is in fact inappropriate and was halted accordingly (Abu-Hamdi 2016).

After the issue of this evaluation, GAM decided to its best interest to disengage from the project and to acquit itself from it by selling its shares to the Kuwaiti developer for 30 million dollars in 2009. Shortly after in the summer of 2010 the project resumed and the construction site was supposed to end in 2011 even without the support of GAM, however, there were too many issues between the owner and the contractor which resulted that the contractor was given 35% (or **30 million US dollars' worth of shares) of the south tower** (Abu-Hamdi 2016). This settlement delayed the project for several months.

**In 2013 the project came to a complete stop as the owners couldn't endure** further disputes and settlements with the contractor so the site was once again, but for the longest period, completely deserted and vacant (Abu-Hamdi 2016). Since then the project stands transfixed in both time and space in a limbo state as constant reminder of GAM deregulations, the complete disregard of the public welfare in the ultimate top down decision.



Figure 12 Amman Living Wall project (Aljabi 2016)

## 2.4 Amman living wall

### 2.4.1 Project description

The project was the ultimate definition of Spectacularism and flashiness, designed by renowned architecture firm; Fosters + partners<sup>12</sup>, in collaboration with the local firm Maisam owned by Maysa Batynah; wife of then mayor of Amman Omar Maani. The project was strategically located in Wadi Saqra; a central main street in West Amman as this is a low elevation corridor, therefore, the towers will be sunken within the valley in accordance to the corridor development plan.

According to the press release by Foster and Partners (Harris 2007), the project is in carved-out rock shelf and the architectural language is inspired by the geology and history of the site, hence, the geometric lines and carvings in the towers and podium. The project begins with a rough-hewn podium that is composed of lines that mimics the nature of the rocks in the site. On top of the podium, six interconnected sculptured towers are built. Those towers are covered with a double skin of louvers and glass, the horizontal lines of the

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<sup>12</sup> The project is currently deleted from their site.

louvers are inspired by rock strata and it was meant to supposedly help with air flow and the shading.



Figure 13 Project map (Google Maps 2016)

### 2.4.2 Developers and program

The project was the brainchild of Mawared (Speetjens 2012); a state-owned developer and assigned by the Development & Investment Projects Fund (DIP). According to (Alhattab 2007) **the DIP's objective** was to enable the army to develop its investments locations. The DIP was listed in the international stock market in London and was able to fund the project with 145 million USD. Furthermore, Mawared bought multiple pieces of land worth 30 million JOD<sup>13</sup> to add to the land they already owned to build this project.

<sup>13</sup> Around 41 million USD

The project was set to host a hotel and a boutique hotel in two of the six towers, three towers for offices and two towers for residential units, while the podium is dedicated to shopping outlets, restaurants, food outlets and parking spaces.

The bridges or the interconnections were set to have sheltered public spaces giving a sense of a closed community spirit within the project. And the roofs of the towers were supposed to host different bars and restaurants with a view on the city.

### **2.4.3 Hype, awards and advertisements**

The project is almost a textbook model of neoliberal projects when it comes to creating a general hype and advertising. Even before the project start and only on the proposed renders program the project received a long list of regional awards since its name was connected to an esteemed company such as Fosters + Partners.

The awards included *Design and Architecture Award for the Living Wall in Wadi Saqra, Amman* at Cityscape Dubai 2006 and *Best Interior Design for the first Boutique Hotel / Living Wall project in Amman* at the CNBC Arabian Property Award ceremony 2008.

Mawared also spanned large billboards with 3d rendered images all over neighboring building, and the land was fenced with large billboards containing 3D renders and captions containing neoliberal catch phrases that promote luxury and exclusivity.



Figure 14 Billboards promoting the project (Daher 2010)



Figure 15 Billboards are now removed after halting the project (Aljabi 2016)

The project received a lot of attention in local and foreign media outlets as it was designed by a renowned architectural firm and also it was featured on multiple development news platforms in Jordan and in the Gulf region.

The developer also marketed the project with the fact that they applied for the Buddha Bar franchise license in the towers.



Figure 16 Day and night 3D renders for the project (Foster + Partners 2006)

#### **2.4.4 Scandals, crisis and halting**

The project was tainted by a series of corruption scandals that was difficult to recover from. Ending by detaining the former CEO Akram Abu hamdan for allegedly pocketing millions of dollars (Speetjens 2012).

According to an official statement by the Jordan Anti-Corruption Committee (JACC 2011), The project was referred by the JACC<sup>14</sup> to the public prosecution court along with two other projects of the DIP<sup>15</sup>.

For the Living Wall case the report mentions that the DIP contracted a number of consultants and contracting companies to build a number of towers in Wadi Saqra, bought a set of lands worth 30 Million JOD and acquired the rights to open the trademarked Buddha Bar. The report further elaborates that the project stopped after building the raft foundations and parts of the podium, however since it **didn't comply with the general rules of the DIP** tendering and commissioning as they would invite companies and assign them the projects immediately.

The report also mentions the aforementioned CEO Akram Abu Hamdan stating that he treated the company as if it was his own rather than a general property by not complying with DIP rules for tendering. Furthermore, they found a lot of overpricing and exaggeration in the commissioned services in all the projects which created a pattern that placed him under suspicion.

Abu Hamdan was jailed later in 2011 for pocketing money from the DIP and abusing his status and powers for 3 years (Alsawt 2011). Then he settled the case financially in 2013 and was acquitted (Mirsad 2013) from the 6 cases of MAWARED and Disi project.

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<sup>14</sup> Jordan Anti-Corruption Committee

<sup>15</sup> An affiliate of Mawared



Figure 17 Mega Mall project from Um Teeneh neighborhood

## 2.5 Mega Mall

Currently lays as ghostly hollow shell with enormous proportions; the Mega Mall lays as a ruin in the eastern part of Amman as a reminder of what so many calls a legal heist.

### 2.5.1 Context and owners

The project is constructed over an old quarry and a landfill in an industrial area in East Amman called Wadi Alrimam. The site is in the valley, however, next to it but on a much higher level is the low-income residential area of Um-Teineh and Jabal Altaj. The Area is characterized by low rise buildings that are built with a much more modest architectural language compared to the stone buildings found in west Amman.

Furthermore, across the **street there's the historical** ten arches bridge which was **constructed by the Ottoman's in 1908** (Sameh 2009) for the Hijaz railroad to pass over it. Traces of the railroad can be seen from across the site as well.



Figure 18 Site plan (Google Eath 2016)

### **2.5.2 Polarized Amman and subsequent advertising elements**

In the paper of Ever-growing Amman, (Potter et al. 2009) described the polarization of the city of Amman. Going in details over how visible the differences are between east and west Amman in almost all socio-economics aspects. **They included also that not only it's clearly vivid that the west is generally richer but also more liberal, rendering the east as more conservative "and more Islamic in its sympathies"**. And since the project was marketed as the first and largest investment ever made in East Amman, the marketing tactics and keywords differs as well from projects in West Amman.

The project is owned by Baitona Bait Almal<sup>16</sup> which has the objectives of catering to the needs of the residents of that particular area and also appointing them as partners in the projects which will allegedly enhance their living accordingly (Alrai 2007).

**According to an interview that was made with the CE, Mo'awia Thabian after the inauguration of the project in 2007, he said that the project will create a new center that have all the facilities and needs for the areas as well as creating job opportunities during and after the construction phase. He further illustrated on that point that Baitona created investment portfolios to fund the project and clear the path for junior investors claiming that they canceled the idea that the investor needs to enormous amount of money, elaborating that a person investing as little as 100 JOD<sup>17</sup> and be an investor and owner. This will increase the base of investors and partners in awning the project and "the country's accomplishments"**.

In the last sentence in particular one can notice how the project is trying to make use the Jordan First<sup>18</sup> movement by making the project appeal as a patriotic duty that is serving the country directly. The second point that would make the project appealing in the eastern Amman context is religion and this point will manifest in the program.

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<sup>16</sup> Translated to "Our House the House of Money"

<sup>17</sup> Around 140 USD

<sup>18</sup> Please refer to the Jordan first section in chapter 1

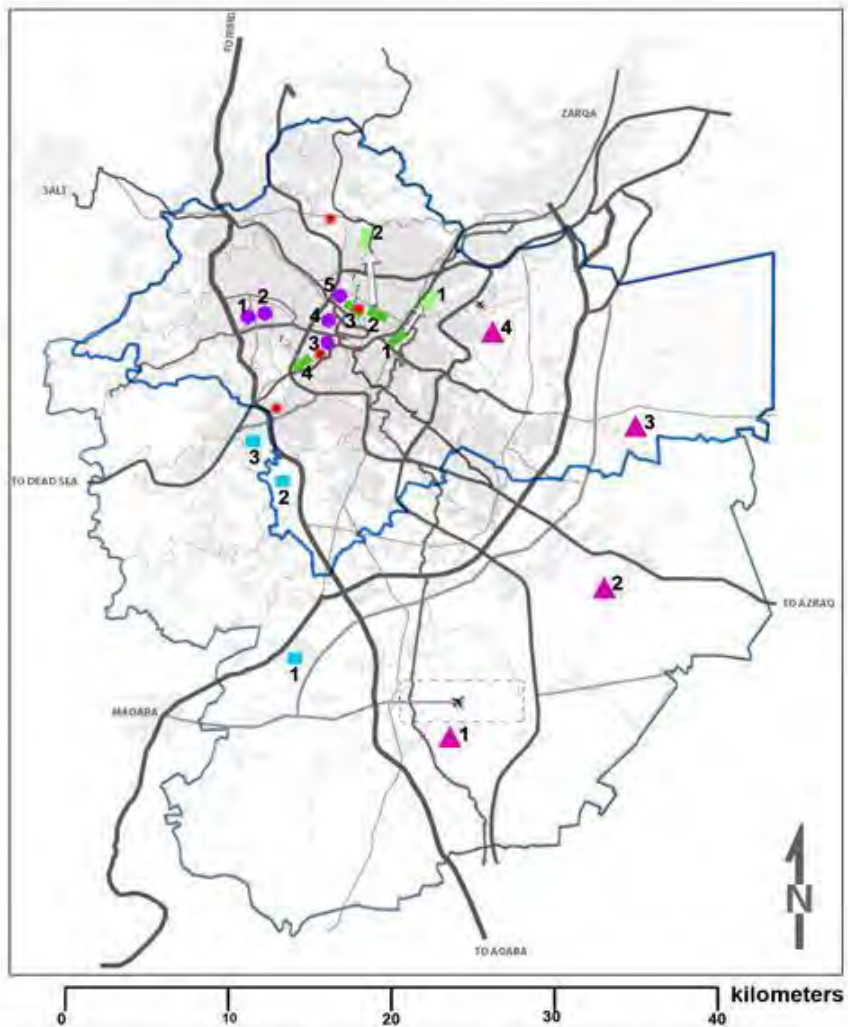


Figure 19 "Discursive Mapping of Landscapes of Neoliberalism in Amman" The map shows the concentration of the towers to the West and the low income housing projects in the East (Daher 2013)

### 2.5.3 Project program

In an interview with the general manager of Baitona with (Alrai 2007) he stated **that the development projects shouldn't be exclusive to west Amman and that** the gains of these projects should include all areas of Amman stressing again on the point that this is the first development project of its scale in east Amman.

He further explained that the project will include retail shops, restaurants, cafes, a theater, cinemas, cultural saloons, collages, medical centers, hotels and most importantly a large central mosque. He elaborated that the Mega Mall is part of a series of towers that will reach 40 stories and an area of 110 thousand sqm. And the area of the mall is 60,000 sqm and will cost more than 1.5 billion USD<sup>19</sup>.

Furthermore, he stated that the mall will have a unique architectural style and will serve as a new landmark in the center of the Baitona development project. Also some gimmicks are to be found in the program that they thought would be appealing to the area as he said that there **will be a "suspended river" that is** 75m high that will create a recreational opportunity and will span over 5000 sqm with rowing boats for people to row around in the river. And the river will be surrounded with trees, planters, cafes and restaurant.

The original scale of the proposed development project showed something insane and completely inhumane. Even if people considered the Mega Mall to be of monumental scale, it is in fact a podium for 3 towers that are connected to other podiums with huge bridges and suspended rivers.

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<sup>19</sup> Later it was falsely appraised to 75 million JOD



Figure 20 The suspended river with raft boats (Aljabi 2016)

The podium at the current status is accompanied with alleyways that would mimic European shopping street and decorated with black steel wire lamps all part of the gimmicks that the developer thought would reflect a wealthy architectural style that is lacked in the area.

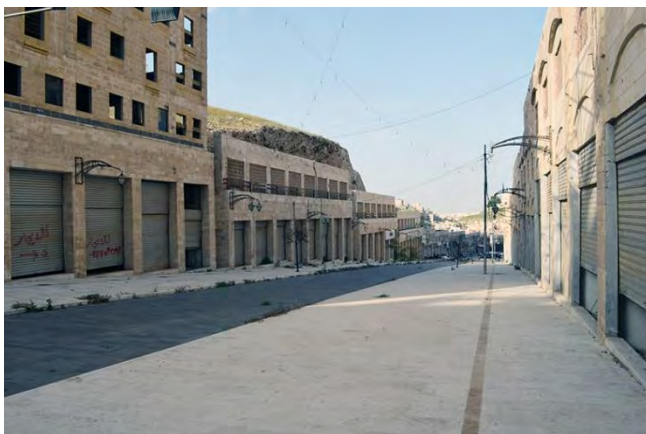


Figure 21 The allyways with shops and steel lamps (aljabi2016)

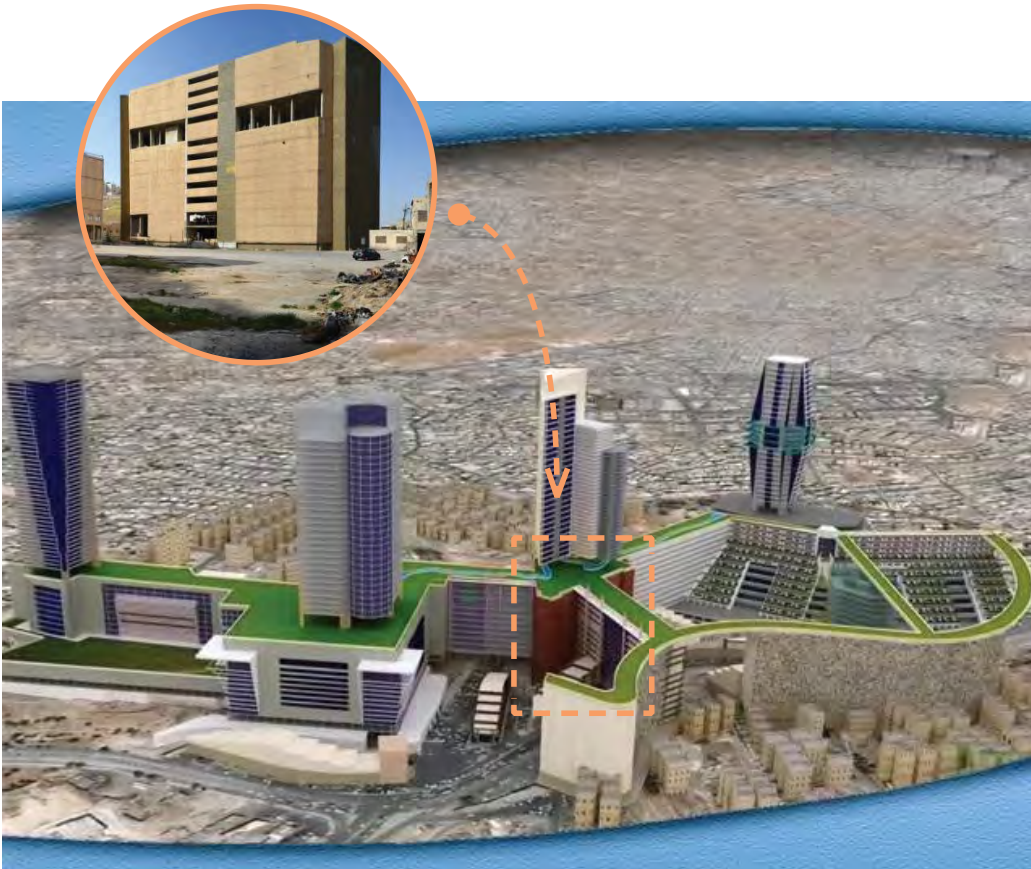


Figure 22 3D render showing the project's final outcome with the 72 meter high Mega mall comprising only a small portion of it (3d, Baytona 2011. Picture, Aljabi 2016)

#### **2.5.4 Headlining and the Anti-Corruption Commission**

The project started getting more media attention towards 2009 when the building of the mall commenced. Baitona handed over the management of the **Mega Mall to people from Baitona's upper** management and started transferring the stocks from the Mega Mall to Baitona (Saraya 2009). Furthermore, they started transferring the money into public stock making it a public joint stock company rather than a private company (Stocksexperts 2012). According to (Jordan Zad 2009) transferring the money to stocks was illegal since they need to get the signature of 75% of the shareholders .

Once that change took place, according to (Saraya 2009) Mage Mall got a falsely appraisal of 75 Million JOD with an implicit bank so that Baitona would later transfer the stocks of Mega Mall back to them.

All the events that took place lead to the stakeholders to issue an open letter questioning the value of the land and the original owners (Saraya 2009). After the speculations and headlining in almost all local news venues the case of Mega Mall finally went through the anti-corruption commission.

The form of interference came on the shape of a report the concluded seizing all assets of the CEO (Stocksexperts 2012). However, most news outlets indicated that the case was lost in the anti-corruption committee and the rights of all the 7000 shareholders are subsequently lost as well because of an implication of several government **officials on the company's board** (Alnsour 2012; Amadina 2011; Amman1 2012; Saraya 2009) and indicated that the Jordanian investment law facilitated such projects.

### 2.5.5 Halting the project

Two incidents where recorded after brick walls started collapsing off of the building the first one happened in April 2011 and the second one collapsed 9 months later on January 2012. The walls fell off the 10th floor endangering the people using the storage spaces below the mall. Thankfully there were no injuries and the residents issued a letter requesting the protection of the area inhabitants as there are a lot of car repair shops that get very busy during the day (Rumonline 2012).

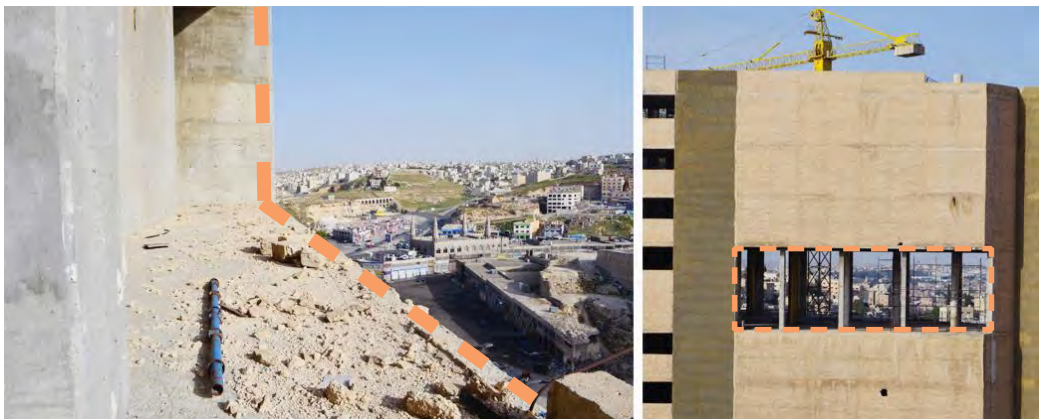


Figure 23 One of the many walls that collapsed in the 10th floor (Aljabi 2016)

Following all these incidents, the project lies still frozen in time and hidden in the eastern side of Amman. It is only visible to people passing by the main street in Wadi Alrimam and from the surrounding neighborhoods as constant reminder for the 7000 investors that were swindled out of their money and the slow intervention of the anti-corruption committee.

A recent site visit shows the current status of the site. The outer shell of the mall is completed and missing the walls of the 10<sup>th</sup> floor that collapsed in 2011 and 2012. Moreover, the store fronts and the storages filled with construction rubbles and most of the steel ornamented lighting has been looted from the site. The outdoor auditorium looking steps are also built and rarely used by the residents who want to climb to the neighborhood of Um Teeneh.

The mall from the inside is completely vacant, some mockup store fronts could be found, however, most of the lighting that was visible in older promotional videos is gone with the elevators as well. The elements that are already built seems to be hastened as the balustrade is blown out of proportions and too high for humans and the ceiling are 10 meters high in some of the floors. The suspended river is also built however it has already decayed and the wood flooring around is weathered and chipped.

# 3 Chapter 3: interim use strategy

## 3.1 Introduction

Financial downturns and modern economy, adding the aforementioned failed mega projects calls for temporary use strategies to take place in those vacant properties and revive the cultural and creative scene in the city.

(Lehtovuori, Ruoppila 2012) mentioned that current social and cultural trends would support such initiatives to utilize interim use strategies in vacant properties. They further explained that financial crisis and delaying mega **projects along with “changes in cities economic base” are motives for culture-led initiatives** and socio-cultural dynamics to promote the lacking bottom-up approaches.

While the abandoned buildings in Amman varies in scale and function, the ones especially resulted from neoliberal economy provides the dramatic architectural decadence the creative layer is looking for, therefore, this section will explore the potential of interim use in Amman by comparing academic literature and case studies provided by best practice methods from Germany and the United States and its applicability, and potential in Jordan.

## 3.2 Definition

*‘Interim Use’ is the temporary activation of vacant land or buildings with no foreseeable development demand. (Blumner 2006)*

Most of the literature reviewed that interim use is an intricate strategy used to temporary solve blighted urban scares and vacant eyesores describing it as a

**strategy to use vacant plots and buildings with “no immediate development demand”** (Hawke 2009; Lehtovuori, Ruoppila 2012)

Blumner mentioned in her research that the term is diverse in form however it does have similar characteristics that includes temporary use of a site by an agreement with the owner. She also emphasizes that the agreement could be **from weeks to years depending on the contract and that this function shouldn't** change the long term zoning or land use for the used property. Moreover, (Lehtovuori, Ruoppila 2012) also emphasize on the fact that any actions or uses should be different from the properties common use. While (Lehtovuori, Ruoppila 2012) mentions that those projects have an experimental character in development. That in turn leaves a margin or room for experimentations and trials depending on the scale of the project. While (Hawke 2009) described it as a complicated redevelopment strategy due to the involvement of several important actors. Blumner explained that **the city government doesn't have** adequate tools to utilize interim use strategies as the city is generally oriented towards future planning strategies. That includes zoning, creating master plans and land use plans. She indicates that those tools are inflexible instruments to regulate the future and are considered unhelpful in situations where property owners are disengaged and the investors are scarce.

### **3.3 History**

While the concept of a systematic interim use strategy is relatively new, there were some cases that date back to the end of World War II. (Blumner 2006) listed few examples of temporary use as a means to utilize urban space, such as the Tiergarten in Berlin, the public garden was turned into a crop plantation during the hungry years after the war. Moreover, it is notable in Europe when merchants or food vendors take over particular spots around river banks during the summer turning them into temporary restaurants and kiosks. However, Blumner also mentioned that this idea was **present in the early 1990's where** clubs were established in East Berlin.

Another example are the Ruin Bars in Budapest where a number of abandoned buildings in the Jewish area are transformed to a touristic destination, hosting a number of bars that are made of reclaimed materials and furniture pieces (Baker 2011).

(Rall, Haase 2011) had a similar list of historical appearances of interim use in the US and Germany including the 1st community gardens of Los Angeles. However, interim use was used as a formal city development tool in the **1990's**

in Germany in cities such as Berlin and Leipzig. Furthermore, they cited (Heck, Will 2007)<sup>20</sup> that it was used as a cost effective way to fight urban blight. And while the reasons might differ between Amman and Leipzig the strategies and methods implemented in Leipzig could be retrofitted in the Jordanian context as both of the cities reached the dreadful conclusion that the properties are vacant and they are becoming a damaging sight in the urban fabric of the city.

Typically government sought solutions such as large-scale demolition programs **or land acquisitions; however, those solutions are “out of fiscal reach”** for governments with strand budget and barely able to afford basic necessity for public services. These circumstances led the governments to seek affordable solutions. This includes interim use of vacant plots and buildings. Therefore, local government in the United states and in Germany started embracing **interim use as an “effective response for the problem”** (Blumner 2006).

The reasons for the vacant neoliberal buildings in Amman are mentioned in the first section of this thesis. The failed projects deteriorated rapidly in a span of nine or eight years. While the challenges in Germany begun a while ago with the reunification of the country.

They further explained that those vacant lots are not pleasant to most of people and that 80% of the vacant properties belonged to private owners. And while it would have been very expensive to acquire those properties, improving those **sites requires a certain “authorization for property use”** as the municipal budget is already strained.

### **3.4 Uses, actors and locations:**

There are many functions that can be introduced temporarily to a site, for instance, the Tiergarten in Berlin falls under the category of parks and gardens, which also includes the conversion of brownfields in Leipzig to public parks. The lower Manhattan **‘Wheatfield: a confrontation’ is an art piece where an** artist planted a full cycle of wheat crop in an unutilized plot this type of use is considered art and culture. Furthermore, the Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin is a good example for the sport and recreational use while Berlin clubs and JARA Market in Amman are considered an entrepreneurial program. More uses include parking, storage and alternative living situations (Blumner 2006).

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<sup>20</sup> Both articles did an extensive research about the interim use strategies implemented in the brownfields in Leipzig, Germany.

(Heck, Will 2007) **also included “Interlinking Open Spaces” which falls under parks and gardens, however, they went through describing the integration of private properties into open space development healing the lack of interaction between the private and public. They also included the “Improvement of the Residential Environment”. And while the first one is about public spaces itself, the second is about the immediate improvement of the residents of the area and upgrading existing houses and structures. This point is particularly relevant since the media showed great discontent in eyes of the public surrounding the halted investments in Amman.**

**As for the actors, there’s a strong correlation between the main three actors, the potential user, the property owner and finally the local governments and agencies (Blumner 2006). In a recent case of what is considered Interim Use in Amman JARA<sup>21</sup> which is a civic society organization and they use a street in Jabal Amman that is underutilized during summer as it’s a dead end street with only a school in it. There for the potential user could be either an individual or a civic society organization.**

As for locations, the general theme is vacant and underutilized properties, so Blumner included:

- Infill sites
- Former industrial sites
- Former housing settlements
- Vacant infrastructure
- Empty buildings
- Shops and offices

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<sup>21</sup> Jabal Amman Residents Associations

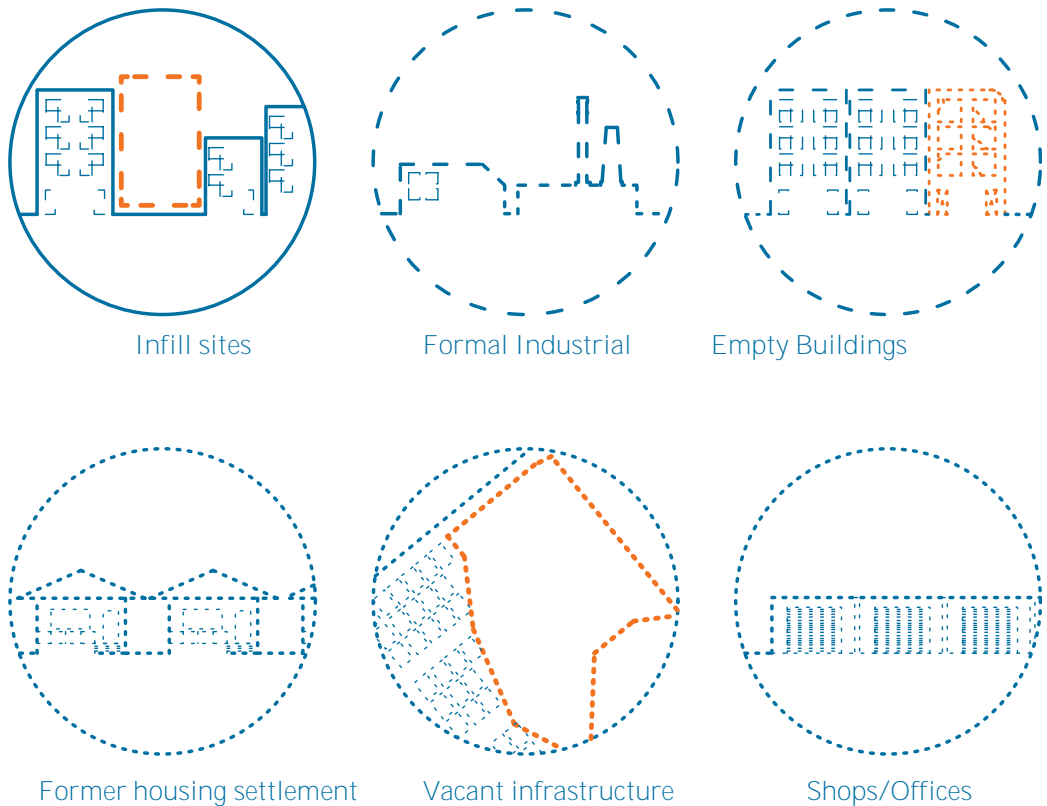


Figure 24 Locations suitable for interim use

### 3.5 Case study: Interim use strategy for the brownfields in the city of Leipzig, Germany

#### 3.5.1 Introduction:

The city of Leipzig, suffered from urban blight and neighborhood decay. The local government dealt with issue by introducing interim use as a tool to transfer the vacant brownfields and upgrade the neighborhoods accordingly.

(Rall, Haase 2011) listed the reasons behind the vacant properties in the Leipzig as and the urban shrinkage in the area as the following:

- One third of the population moved and relocated in search for better jobs opportunities.
- The low birth rates
- Aging population, which is a problem in Germany in general
- Labor migration

This strategy promoted the potential of improving the aesthetics and perception of decayed areas, the increase of public spaces and diversifying the area by introducing creative play and performance. Furthermore, it was set to improve the environmental condition of vacant lots (Rall, Haase 2011).

### **3.5.2 Overviewing the literature**

There are four researches regarding the interim use approach in Leipzig, each one got a different contribution. (Heck, Will 2007) introduced the topic in 2007 and explained the process and actors. While (Hawke 2009) tries to compare the city of Leipzig to the model used in the United States. (Blumner 2006) goes over the case **to define ‘interim use’ in general. And finally** (Heck, Will 2007) implements a triangular integrated evaluation to scientifically study the success of the interim use strategies in Leipzig.

### **3.5.3 Process and approach**

As aforementioned, Heck and Will explained in extensively the policy of interim use in Leipzig. The local government took control over the situation of vacant plots by waiving property taxes in return for an assurance of regular site maintenance.

#### ***3.5.3.1 The Authorization Agreement***

**According to Heck and Will’s paper, the city of Leipzig developed an informal tool in 1999 called “The Authorization Agreement” that is meant to regulate the temporary use of vacant private properties without effecting the ownership or shifting the long term function of the properties.**

The agreements were between the municipality and the private owners with the objective of fighting bleak emptiness of the selected sites.

#### ***3.5.3.2 Selection criteria***

The selected sites go through a certain criteria to further insure the regulation of this tool. The criteria include:

- The importance of the **site’s urban development and its impact on the environment.**
- **The “cooperative will of the owner as in this case the owner is a main actor.**

The owner would have to make their property available in an archive for such development projects. And accordingly, the municipality contributes to the project by planning the development and funds parts of the construction fees.

Furthermore, the municipality coordinates the realization of these measures while site cleaning and clearance is paid for by grants.

### **3.5.3.3 Testing the case of Leipzig**

The objectives of (Rall, Haase 2011) dedicated their research *Creative intervention in a dynamic city: A sustainability assessment of an interim use strategy for brownfields in Leipzig, Germany* to test and assess the success of the interim use strategy in the city of Leipzig.

According to them, the strategy have been implemented for aver 10 years now **yet there's no scientific method that was applied to test its success. For that the used a "triangular integrated evaluation" method to "combining indicator-integrated surveys and questionnaires with expert interviews" to compare the sites with the Interim use strategy has been implemented with the sites where a large scale demolition process went through.**

They conducted an intricate survey that included environmental, social and economic layers to test the content of the users and residents of such sites. And **from there they concluded "potential socio-environmental benefits of the low-cost greening of brownfields through interim use."**

### **3.5.3.4 Advantages for the city and for the owners**

Based on the study conducted at the site the researchers<sup>22</sup> concluded advantages for the both the city and the owners. For the city the advantages include:

- Creating and activating ne green spaces and parks around the city
- Ensuring site maintenance as per the signed agreement
- Improve the living quality in the city and achieving a level of attractiveness in the neighborhoods, thus decreasing urban blight.

As for the property owner, the advantages are the following:

- Land clearing and cleaning is subsidized, that include development as well.
- Property tax exemption that would span for the entire duration of the contract<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> (Rall, Haase 2011)

<sup>23</sup> The Saxon Urban Development Regulation mandated a 10 years as the minimum period of the interim use contracts (Rall, Haase 2011)

- Reduction of some running cost that would occur such as cleaning and removing vandalism

### **3.5.3.5 Conclusion for the case study**

The effects of such development plan and the interim use strategy is clear and is manifesting as the following:

- Large area of the city are becoming a remarkable residential locations
- **It's also evident that the population is increasing**

According to the SWOT analysis Rall and Haase created, the strength included, improving the public perception about the project, activating the site, and **seeking more residents' participation. Some weaknesses were deducted, such as, poor site maintenance.** Partnering with private entities was listed as an opportunity along with the possibility of this strategy to become a tool for social integration and scoring higher environmental scores.

They concluded from their study the success of the strategy using site serves and scientific methods, they further explained that minor discontent were observed by the lack of benches in some sites as well as there is a general lack of knowledge about the interim use strategy and its implementation. Those two can easily be resolved by increasing the amount of public benches as well as spreading the knowledge of such strategy and marking the sites where it was implemented. Eventually, 134 public interim use agreements have been signed, while waning the city funds is a real threat or to both sources.

## **3.6 Proposed tools**

Based on the case Leipzig case studies, the proposed tools for the chance of implementing an interim use strategy in Amman could be the following.

### **3.6.1 Mapping**

Mapping the projects that are both allegeable and willing to participate in a temporary use strategy is a key factor to create and archive for such projects. This tool will make allegeable sites searchable and accessible to any potential user. This tool could be available at the municipality or publicly shared online for public (Blumner 2006).

### **3.6.2 Model documents**

According to Blumner, such document would simplify the process for unexperienced potential users, containing info about design templates and budget estimates.

### 3.6.3 Financial support

While cities are struggling with funds, interim use projects have shown great potential in attracting funds from grants (either personal or corporate) or other international aid organizations from the United States or Europe, as those projects mostly falls under the development category.

### 3.6.4 Dedicated staff

As little as one person, dedicated employees working on facilitating permits could be of a huge benefit to interim use projects. They could be either city’s official employees or working for private entity or office “These people are the ‘door-openers’ who get the process started, although they may not necessarily help with all the steps required to getting the interim use approved” (Blumner 2006).

### 3.6.5 Legislation and law making

While there’s no specific law for building for a limited time or using a property of a limited time in Jordan, having such laws in Germany helped the cause of interim use tremendously. In Germany, this law is called right to build for a limited time and it is meant to “reduce the relative inflexibility of German planning law with reference to time-limited development projects”. This tool is particularly important and would facilitate the much complicated procedures, especially in the situation of halted investments as it is clearly visible the level of complication that is involved in those projects.



Figure 25 Proposed tools for interim use strategy

### 3.7 Temporary activities in Amman and Jordan

While previous temporary experiences in Amman are considered small in scale, **it's worth listing** an event in Amman that happens every summer and another one from the village of Shatan, near the city of Irbid that was proven to be successful.

The first one is local market Called JARA. Conducted by Jabal Amman Residents Association (JARA), the market is held in a dead-end street where a public school is the only function on that street. Since the street is usually vacant and underutilized during the summer break, this civil society organization got a special permit to hold a temporary Friday market where local merchants are there to sell their products (Planet 2016).



Figure 26 JARA market in Jabal Amman (Out of Hadhramout 2011)

The market received a lot of attention and foot traffic as hundreds of locals and tourists visits the street market every Friday to enjoy the local products, food and music.

The second initiative was ‘Shatana International Artist Workshop’ in a village near the city of Irbid. Hosted in a historical deserted village 70 kilometers away from Amman, the residency program was held 3 times starting in 2007 and ending in 2009. Makan, which is a local art organization, invited artists from around the world for a 2 weeks residency where they would have to make use of the stone buildings and exhibit their work in there (Nafas 2007).

The experiment had a creative nature, and even though it was discontinued. The experiment received positive reviews and attracted local and international media attention while showcasing the forgotten historical village of Shatana (Humaid 2007).



Figure 27 Art installation during Shatana residency (Humaid 2007)

### 3.8 SWOT Analysis

This diagram is based on the research of (Rall, Haase 2011) and cross-referenced with the Jordanian context to clarify the realistic potentials and threats of such projects once implemented in Amman.

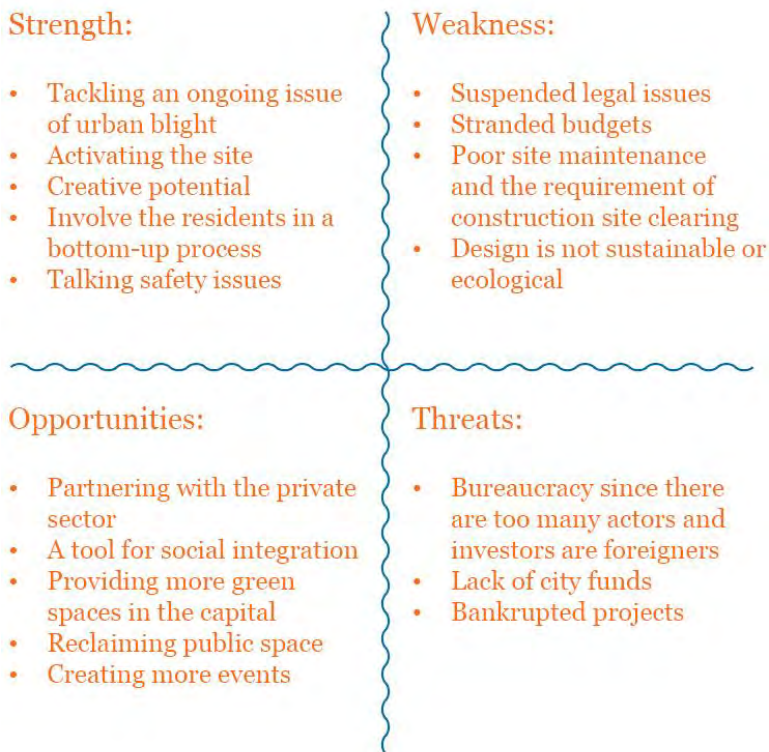


Figure 28 SWOT Analysis

### 3.9 Stakeholders' diagram

Based on the previous global and local cases and according to the data compiled in the second chapter, below are the potential stakeholders for interim use projects in large scale halted investments.



ISTD: Income and Sales Taxes Department  
 DLS: Department of Lands and Surveys  
 DIP: Development Investment Projects Fund  
 USAID: United States Agency for International Development  
 JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency

Figure 29 Stakeholder analysis

## 3.10 Reflections on halted investments

In this section I will attempt to reflect upon the aforementioned projects with regards to its potential to develop an interim use strategy.

The level of complicity involved in the projects from Amman is highly notable. The projects were halted for more than one reason usually; such as the financial crisis, construction issues, legal disputes and corrupted management. However, stripped down to its location and structure, each project has the different potential to serve a new and exciting function that could benefit the residents and the creative community.

### 3.10.1 Jordan Gate

The theme that falls in place perfectly in this case is reclaiming the public space. The project was built on a public park robbing the area of what was once a green outlet for the community to benefit from.

While the scale of the project is big and the upper floors could be inaccessible for security and safety reasons, the podium is large enough to host a farmer's market or even cultivate some crop. And benefiting from the case studies in Berlin, this business model is affordable and lucrative.

Another case would be to romanticize the building and host events inside it. This solution is usually criticized since some researchers claim that people will start fetishizing the building which will in return hinder the project's future development (please refer to the annex, the Ruin photography section)

Thirdly, the most notable aspect of this building is its visibility; it can be seen vividly from most parts of the city. Hence, it would be logical to employ its facades as advertising spaces.



Figure 30 Indoor farmers market (Jeff Hinckley 2012)



Figure 31 Advertising on skyscrapers

### 3.10.2 Amman Living Wall

The project offers large well-lit spaces that are sheltered from the sun. It is simple, clean and uninterrupted and can host multiple functions and events.

Another positive point for the site is accessibility, the site is located in the heart of the capital yet it is subtle and unnoticeable. It can shelter users metaphorically and literally, as a refugee shelter could be a perfect fit for this structure.

The project is contained naturally since it was carved from the mountain, with all the outdoor areas covered with concrete. This building with the plaza in front of it could serve as a comprehensive community center, hosting people and their businesses.

### 3.10.3 Mega Mall

The project is reminiscent to large deserted brutalist buildings that were left as a reminder of socialist era. And of all the aforementioned projects, the Mega Mall is the most surreal when it comes to scale and proportions.

(Pierre 2010) in his novel *Lights Out in Wonderland*, describes the decadence of Berlin and all the mystery that happens around Tempelhof terminal in the pursuit of hosting a decadent banquet. The Mega Mall has the same scale and atmosphere since it is located in the eastern side of Amman with some industrial activities happening around it. Furthermore, the fact the site used to be a quarry gives the project a different kind of demented esthetics.

The venue got the potential to be a cultural and artistic hub offering large indoor and outdoor spaces.

## 4 Conclusion

(Lefebvre 1991) mentioned in his book the Production of Space 'the physical space has no reality without the energy that is deployed within it', thus, the buildings investigated in this thesis becoming hollow shells rather than functioning structure. Interim use strategies have proven to be a sufficient tool to benefit from such structures without hindering the ownership of the property or causing financial damages to the local government as opposed to land acquisitions and large-scale demolitions.

The hurdles that this strategy would face, however, would be on a regulatory and decision making level. Accordingly, policies should be revised to facilitate for such strategies. In hindsight, such strategies would unlock new socio-economic opportunities for Amman, as they are considered developmental, thus eligible for international grants and funds. Interim use projects are also a chance for the civil society and the community to reclaim their role in a bottom-up planning process, as neoliberalism and capitalism tends to shun the public from the planning and decision making process.(Lefebvre 1991; Rall, Haase 2011).

Conclusively, interim use is activation rather than a regulating tool that creates a new approach to urban development, one that tackles urban decay; creating opportunities for more exciting, creative and diverse functions in the city.

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# 5 Annex

## 5.1 Ruin porn

While deserted buildings are considered an ugly scar in the urban fabric, there has been an increase in the interest or infatuation for architects and photographers found in these buildings. This created a whole subgenre of photography usually referred to as *ruin photography* or *ruin porn* with several dedicated blogs that cater to this cult followers such as Ruin Porn, Abandoned America and Architecture of Doom (De Silva 2014). De Silva further explains that while some may consider this obsession as fetishizing dilapidated buildings “and hinder their redevelopment” she argues that it is a subject of debate since those photographs promote architectural tourism for a dedicated educated layer. She further explains:

*Our fascination with Ruin Porn is far too complex a phenomenon to be dismissed as being a morbid obsession with decay and desolation. The didactic display of where our society has failed in the last century is embodied in ruin porn, and is perhaps one further source of uneasiness for architects.*

She further compares those failed buildings with prehistoric monuments that are built to withstand time and civilizations writing that those are the results of failed socio-economics and that a creative intervention such as the Tate museum and The High Lane, their history is what made them more appealing (De Silva 2014).

## 5.2 Photo Essay

Pictures from site visits

### 5.2.1 Jordan Gate



Figure 32 Main entrance (Aljabi 2016)



Figure 33 Tower podium (Aljabi 2016)

## 5.2.2 Amman Living Wall



Figure 34 Panorama of the building from the upper level (Aljabi 2016)



Figure 35 The project from Arar St. (Aljabi 2016)

### 5.2.3 Mega Mall

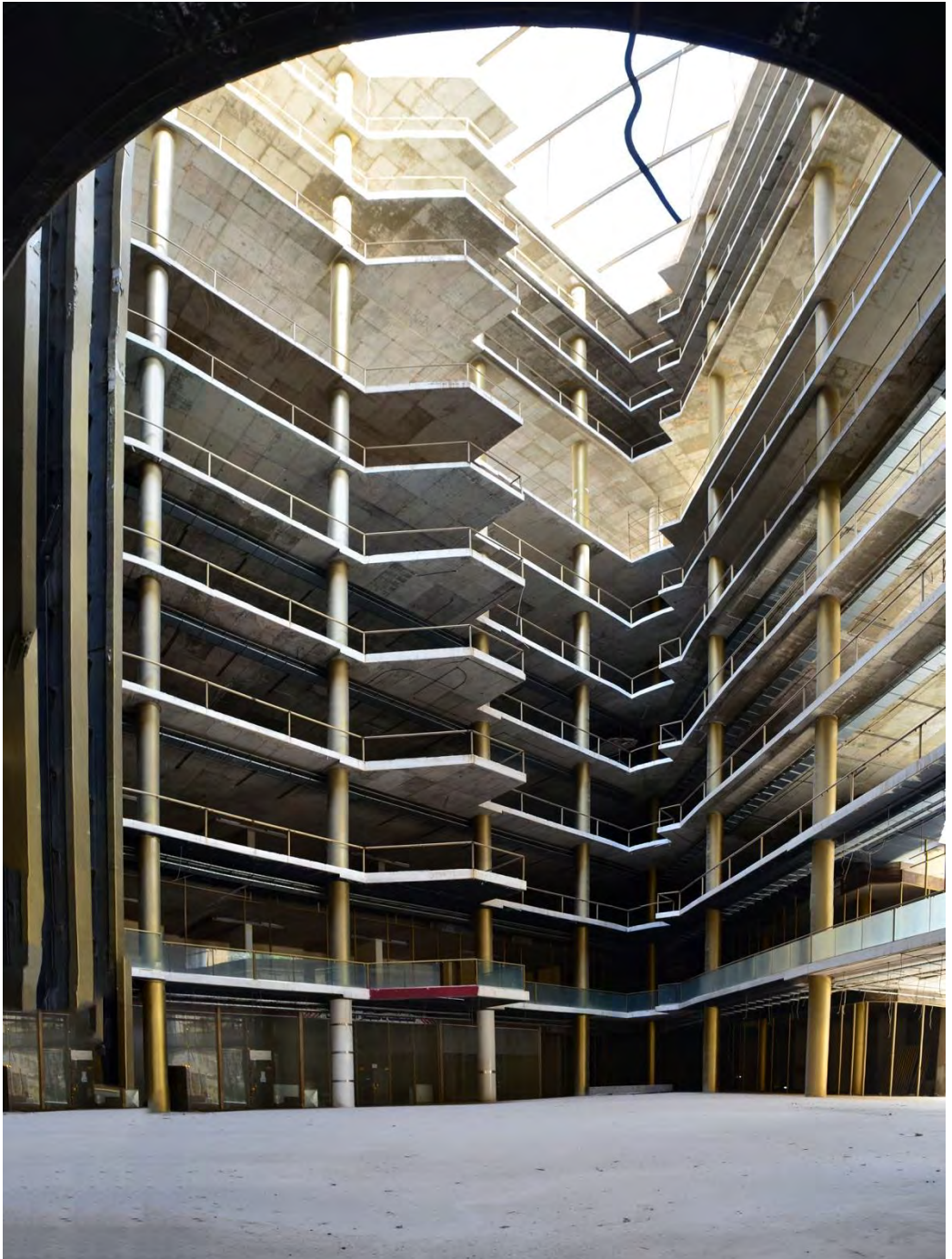


Figure 36 Atrium (Aljabi 2016)



Figure 37 Interior of the mall (Aljabi 2016)



Figure 38 Outdoor Auditorium (aljabi 2016)



Figure 39 Outdoor shopping area (aljabi 2016)



Figure 40 Main entrance (Aljabi 2016)



Figure 41 The Mall from Um Teeneh neighborhood (Aljabi 2016)



Figure 42 Historical Hijaz Railroad (Aljabi 2016)



# إعادة التفكير في الإستثمارات الموقوفة

## إسد تكشف إمكانيّة الإستخدام المرحلي في عمان

مع الجهود المستمرة في ادخال مدينة عمّان ضمن العولمة الحديثة، فقد تبنّت المدينة أجندة اقتصاد الليبرالية الجديدة كوسيلة للوصول الى التطور الاقتصادي.

اثار هذه الجهود بدت سائدة في المشهد العمراني، والتي اتّخذت شكلا ماديا بالأبنية العملاقة، بارزة في مواقع حيوية حول المدينة. بعد الأزمة الاقتصادية التي بدأت سنة 2007، تلك الأبنية العملاقة توقف عن اكمالها البنّاون ليتم تركها عالقة مهجورة.

هدف الرّسالة هو التّحقيق في تلك المشاريع المتوقّفة واستكشاف احتمالات و امكانات الاستفادة من المباني وهي في تلك المرحلة.

الجزء الأوّل من الرّسالة يتضمّن فحص الاستراتيجية الاستثمارية التي تبنّتها الحكومة ضمن اقتصاديات الليبرالية الجديدة، و النّقلة باتجاه طرق جذب الاستثمارات الأجنبية.

الجزء الثاني من الرّسالة عبارة عن تحليل للتأثير الاجتماعي الاقتصادي الذي أدى الى اقامة المشاريع في فترة الليبرالية الجديدة، تحليلا يفتح ممرّات الدخول الى المنهجيات الاجتماعية، و حتمية الوصول الى أنّ الفضاءات والأمكنة تتحكّم يوميا في وجودنا على الأرض.

إنّ الدّراسة مبنية على هيكل من رسم الخرائط و من المنهجيات التي تعتمد الدّراسات في الكم والكيف.

الجزء الثالث من الرّسالة سوف يكتشف في تلك الأبنية احتمالات للاتعمال المرحلي و حلّالا للاستخدام الانبي، وسوف يؤدي الى كتابة التّحليلات و الملاحظات وذلك للوصول الى الاستعمال الأمثل.

كلمات البحث:

إستثمارات موقوفة، إستراتيجية الإستخدام المرحلي، الليبرالية الجديدة. المجتمع

## إقرار

هذه الرسالة مقدمة في جامعة عين شمس وجامعة شوتجارت للحصول على درجة العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام. إن العمل الذي تحويه هذه الرسالة قد تم إنجازه بمعرفة الباحث سنة...

هذا ويقر الباحث أن العمل المقدم هو خلاصة بحثه الشخصي وأنه قد اتبع الإسلوب العلمي السليم في الإشارة إلى المواد المؤخوذه من المراجع العلمية كل في مكانه في مختلف أجزاء الرسالة..

وهذا إقرار مني بذلك،،،

التوقيع:



الباحث: محمد الجابي

التاريخ: يوليو 2016



# إعادة التفكير في الإستثمارات الموقوفة إسد تكشف إمكانيات الإستخدام المرحلي في عمان

مقدمة للحصول على درجة الماجستير في العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام

إعداد: محمد الجابي

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المتكامل  
جامعة عين شمس

التوقيع



تاريخ المناقشة: .....

أجيزت الرسالة بتاريخ: .....

موافقة مجلس الجامعة .../.../...

لجنة الحكم  
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أستاذ.....  
جامعة .....

الدراسات العليا

ختم الإلإة

للإلإة مجلس الكلية .../.../...



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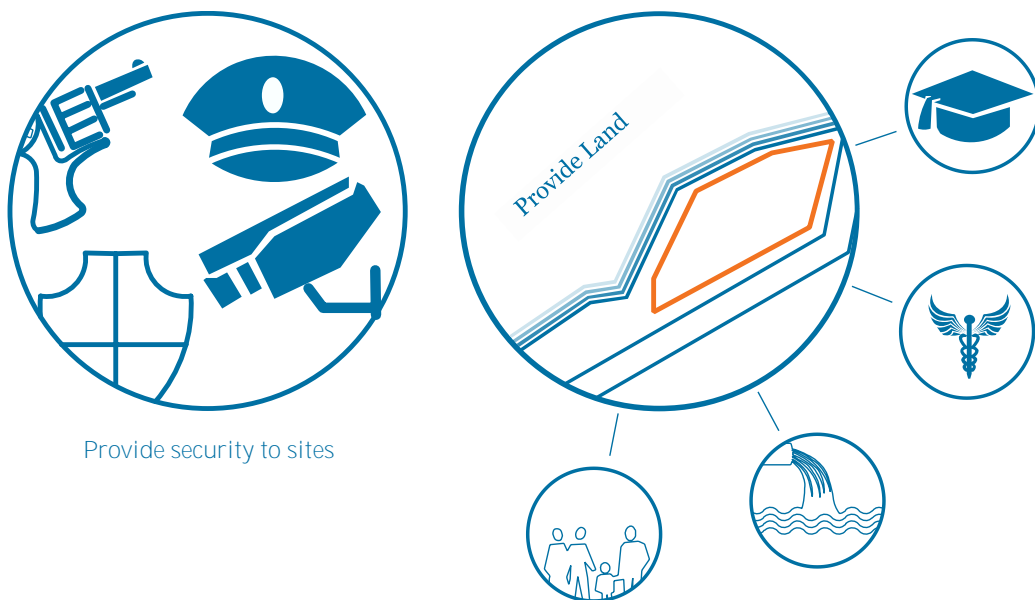


Figure 1 Diagram showing the state's obligations towards neoliberal projects, based on Harvey's explanation.

Barthel in his Arab Mega cities questions the importance of the King and that **his role is particularly strong while the participation of the public or the “city-dwellers remains very timid”** (Barthel 2010). Furthermore, in Robert **Beauregard’s research about the planning of Amman; he pointed out several occasions where there have been direct interferences or orders from the court redirecting the plans towards facilitating neoliberal projects and investments** (Beauregard, Marpillero 2010).

While the role of the state is facilitating the projects; Barthel also emphasized the significance of the socio-spatial outcomes and the fact that they are controlled more or less by the authorities and the developers. Some of those facts include the targeted social groups and the relocation of the undesired existing populations. And that is extended to the selection of the economic activities and the specific management of the collective spaces.

According to (Shenk, Brown 2015) in their interview, neoliberalism **“is a loose and shifting signifier”**, it is treated as a governing rationality were everything is **“economized”**. **Brown further elaborates that everything is considered a market** and humans are nothing but market actors. All entities, being governmental or private are governed as a firm.

# إعادة التفكير في الإستثمارات الموقوفة إسد تكشف إمكانيات الإستخدام المرحلي في عمان

مقدمة للحصول على درجة الماجستير في العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام

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