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CONSTRUCTING GLOBAL AMMAN:
PETRODOLLARS, IDENTITY, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

BY

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DISSETRATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the influences of capital flows, particularly petrodollars from the Gulf states, to Amman in the early twenty-first century on the city’s urban built environment. The study is carried out through an in-depth analysis of three case studies of contemporary megaprojects in Amman: the Abdali New Downtown, Sanaya Amman, and Jordan Gate. The research methods include reviewing relevant theoretical work and historical and contemporary resources on Amman and its built environment, analyzing advertising discourse on the study cases, conducting site visits, and interviewing stakeholders. The study concludes that capital flows to Amman led to the introduction of new urban forms and functions to the city, significantly transforming the city’s built environment and influencing the city residents’ identity in ways that mostly served the interest of capital. Capital flows produced several upscale mixed-use megaprojects, large-scale developments including high-end office, residential, shopping, and entertainment spaces, as modern, spectacular, upscale commodified spaces for display and consumption. Amman’s megaprojects showed commonalities in shape and function with megaprojects in other cities, particularly in the Gulf. However, the processes that produced Amman’s megaprojects were different than the processes that produced megaprojects in other cities. As a globally recognizable type of development serving functions and creating images similar to those of megaprojects in cities of high global standing, the city’s megaprojects served as a means to construct global Amman. These megaprojects and the advertising discourse surrounding them represented the city residents as modern, primarily as consumers and technologically advanced similar to their counterparts in modern cities, enhancing the modern city image and advancing the construction of global Amman.
IN MEMORY OF MOM

AND FOR DAD, MAHA, GHASSAN, MAY, AND BASSAM
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Problem and Explanation of the Dissertation Structure

Research Overview

Globalization is a set of processes relating to different kinds of flows including capital, goods, people, technology, and information. It has much to do with the “widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life” (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999, p. 2).¹ Globalization processes have been increasingly transforming cities and countries over the past few decades in ways unprecedented in intensity or extensity. As a result, today we are witnessing the production of a growing body of knowledge on the influences of globalization on the built environment² of globalizing cities.³ Studies in this vein investigate, among other things, how global forces such as transnational capital and investment, mass migration, and the transfer of goods and ideas shape spatial patterns and building forms in globalizing cities. The focus of such studies is mostly on cities of the so

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¹ Many definitions have been assigned to the term “globalization” and disagreements exist on these definitions. I review some of these in the next chapter.
² I use the term “the built environment” for lack of a better term to indicate buildings, urban forms, and other man-made structures. Harvey (1996) finds that the “distinction between [the natural] environment and the built environment is artificial [italics in original]” (p. 226). He argues that “the urban and everything that goes into it is as much a part of the solution as it is a contributing factor to ecological difficulties” (p. 226). However, the term “the built environment” has been long used by scholars writing on architecture, urbanity, and other relevant topics. See “On Architects, Bees, and Possible Urban Worlds,” by D. Harvey, 1996, in Anywise, edited by C. Davidson, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 216-227.
³ Cities undergoing transformations as a result of globalization processes have been referred to as global, globalized, and globalizing. I use the term “globalizing” here as, unlike the other terms, it does not imply the existence of a certain scale against which the degree of “globalness” is measured or a fixed pattern that determines that a city has become global. I also take issue with the term “global city,” which has its origins in theories that understand the globalness of the city in terms of global competitiveness primarily based on the city’s global economic integration and international producer-services, and promote the global city as the best place for corporate businesses and upscale entertainment and living. Describing a city as “globalizing” better expresses the ongoing economic, socio-cultural, and political transformations of that city under contemporary globalization processes. For more on these different terms, see “Conclusion: A Changed Spatial Order,” by P. Marcuse and R. van Kempen, 2000, in Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order?, edited by P. Marcuse and R. van Kempen, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 249-275.
called “developed world,” such as New York, London, and Tokyo. Some prominent cities in the “developing world,” such as Shanghai, Beijing, Mumbai, and São Paulo, have received attention in publications on globalization. However, scholarly work on the influences of globalization processes on “Arab Middle Eastern” cities lags behind, although many of these cities have long been key global sites deeply involved in and influenced by globalization’s flows.

Recently, a number of scholarly studies have addressed architecture and urbanity in Arab Middle Eastern cities during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries with emphasis on the influences of global forces on these cities’ urban built environment. The Jordanian capital, Amman, has not received much attention in those studies, despite the fact that since the mid-twentieth century and particularly in the early twenty-first century Amman has been undergoing significant economic, political, social, and cultural changes and dramatic physical transformations at the architectural and urban scales, which are very closely related to global forces.

Today, a “global” Amman is in the making: mixed-use megaprojects, high-end high-rise buildings, gated communities, and large-scale designer shopping malls have become the dominant forms of architecture and urbanity in the city. These dramatic transformations in

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5 I use the rather problematic term “Arab Middle East” for lack of a better term. The term “Middle East” is a modern British construction that lumps together a number of states in an extensive area encompassing a diversity of ecological, economic, political, social, and cultural components. Like the term “Far East,” it constructs the Other as a monolithic entity and in relation to the Self, that is, the West. I use the term “Arab Middle East” to designate Middle Eastern states that have a majority of Arabic-speaking native population. These states are the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank.

6 I use the term global with quotes since, as I show in Chapter 4, Amman has always been subject to global forces, which makes it a globalizing city since its foundation. Furthermore, as I have noted earlier, I understand cities under contemporary globalization processes, including Amman, as globalizing cities, not global cities with the economistic implication this term implies. I review literature on the theorization of the “global city” in Chapter 2.
Amman's urban built environment are influenced by interrelated global, regional, national, and local economic, political, social, and cultural forces. The most significant force of transformation in the built environment of Amman in the early twenty-first century is capital flows and capital investment in the city’s built environment. High oil prices during most of the 2000s resulted in the flow of petrodollars (a petrodollar is a dollar’s worth of exchange obtained by foreign sales of petroleum) from the oil-exporting Arab Gulf states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) to Middle Eastern and North African states, including the non-oil-producing Jordan. Gulf states during this period had surpluses of current accounts, which they exported as capital to be invested in the region in industries, banking, telecom and real estate, among others. In addition, the 2003 Iraqi War resulted in tremendous capital pouring into Amman. Capital flows led to a vigorous construction boom in Amman and other Jordanian cities during most of the 2000s. As a result, the 2000s were a great period for a generation of Jordanian engineers and architects who, until then, had faced unemployment, low income, or having to take jobs far from home in the Gulf. That construction boom came to an end in the late 2000s as the effects of the 2008 global economic crisis began to affect Jordan.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the influences of capital flows to Amman on the city’s urban built environment and its megaprojects during the early twenty-first century. By capital flows, I mainly refer to the flow of petrodollars from the Arab Gulf states for the purpose of investment. By the influences of capital flows on the urban built environment, I mean

I define the term “megaproject” as I use it in this dissertation under the Problem Statement section below. As for “gated communities,” they are groups of upscale houses and supporting amenities surrounded by walls with controlled entrances, which restrict access to people living in these houses and their guests.
the impact of foreign investment in the production and consumption of the city’s urban built environment: how this investment transforms the shape of the city’s built environment and produces it as a commodity. Megaprojects are defined here as major mixed-use large-scale developments costing between a few hundred million and several billion dollars and having major impact on the city’s urban fabric, as well as local communities and city residents.

Research Questions

The overarching question of this research is: How did capital flows to Amman influence the construction, production, and consumption of the city’s built environment in the early twenty-first century? Three interrelated sets of subquestions can help answer this central question.

First, how did capital flows to Amman in the early twenty-first century influence the city image, that is, the shape of the city’s built environment and the city residents’ perception and understanding of this environment as well as the mental construction of the city? How did Amman’s early-twenty-first-century urban built environment relate to the question of homogeneity, heterogeneity, and hybridity of the built environment under globalization’s flows? How did the transformation of Amman’s urban built environment and the city residents’ interaction with this environment fit into the capitalist economy and its modes of production?

Second, how did Amman’s early-twenty-first-century built environment and the city image produced and constructed through capital flows relate to the question of the city residents’ identity? What identity or identities did the city’s built environment and its image under capital

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7 The image of the city is subjective since it is in part how people perceive the city. Furthermore, it is likely that a city will have many images depending on who perceives this city. What concerns us most here is the image of Amman as we can understand from the views of subjects I interviewed with regard to the form of the city’s built environment and its qualities, and from my observation of the city’s built environment and the analysis of relevant visual and textual material.
flows express or construct? How did the city’s built environment and the image of the city express or construct this identity?

Third, how did advertising discourse that accompanied the early-twenty-first-century developments in the city play a role in creating the image of Amman? How did this discourse communicate the city residents’ identity?

Study Scope

There are four delimitations on the scope of the study. First, although I address the relation between the processes of globalization and the urban built environment in Amman, I focus on the influence of capital flows specifically. I address other flows of globalization only as they relate to capital flows and expand the arguments in this study. This is because I find capital flows the most significant flows of globalization for the transformation of the urban built environment in Amman in the early twenty-first century.

The second delimitation of this study is the selection of megaprojects as the study cases. Although transformations in Amman’s urban built environment were not limited to the increasing production of megaprojects, petrodollar flows to the city during the early twenty-first century were invested extensively in large-scale developments. The impact of such developments on the transformation of the urban built environment of Amman and the image of the city during the early twenty-first century was stronger than that of small-scale developments. Such large-scale developments were responsible for establishing new architectural vocabulary and building scale, changing the city’s skyline and landscape. Moreover, megaprojects had a significant influence on changing the relation between Amman’s residents and the city’s urban built environment. Large-scale developments increasingly changed the way people interacted with
their built environment and people’s consumption patterns, and they helped construct new collective identities. Furthermore, the large advertising discourse accompanying the early-twenty-first-century megaprojects in Amman played an important role in the construction of the city’s image and the identity of its residents. The fact that the state was a major player in several large-scale developments in the city, partly through public-private partnerships, adds to the significance of these developments for the construction of the image of Amman and the identity of its residents.

The third delimitation relates to the time period of this study. I focus on the early twenty-first century because there were dramatic transformations in the urban built environment in Amman, which were inseparable from capital flows and global and regional integration of Jordan’s economy. This was also a significant period in Jordan’s history since after forty-six years of the former king’s rule, there was a new head of state. Under the new king, King Abdullah II (r. 1999-present), Jordan’s economic integration was strongly reinforced. Furthermore, the early twenty-first century was a period in which new capital poured into Amman, causing a construction boom that was followed by severe cuts as the 2008 global economic crisis hit the city, which in turn caused a slump in construction. This rise and fall makes the early twenty-first century an exemplary period for the purpose of analyzing the influences of capital flows on the city’s urban built environment.

The fourth delimitation of this study is that I do not focus on how transformations in Amman’s urban built environment influenced local communities and social justice, though I briefly touch upon these issues as appropriate. The social impact of recent urban transformations in the city is a significant topic that deserves a separate study in its own right.
Why This Study?

The study contributes to the understanding of the urban built environment of globalizing Arab Middle Eastern cities. The following discussion on scholarly work on the urban built environment of these cities will help identify the contribution and significance of this study. A survey of scholarly studies on architecture and urbanity of Arab Middle Eastern cities reveals several categories under which these studies fall including the Islamic city, the colonial city, individual buildings and developments in the postcolonial city, and the city under contemporary globalization processes.\(^8\) The earliest and most extensive is the category concerned with the study of the Islamic city. Earlier work under this category appeared in the 1920s in the publications of French Orientalists who studied Arab cities as the model for the Islamic city (Abu Lughod, 1987; Raymond, 1994).\(^9\) In the following three decades, scholars published many volumes on the Islamic city according to the narrow Arab city paradigm (ibid). Writings on the Islamic city that follow this paradigm have diminished since the 1960s (Raymond, 1994).\(^10\) However, some scholars continue to study the built environment of Arab Middle Eastern cities as particularly Islamic. Recent examples include Stefano Bianca’s *Urban Form in the Arab World* (2000) and Hisham Mortada’s *Traditional Islamic Principles of Built Environment* (2003).

Michael Bonine (2005) examines some writings on the Islamic city as well as other trends of studying Middle Eastern cities in his book chapter “Islamic Urbanism, Urbanites, and the Middle

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\(^8\) This is not an inclusive categorization. For instance, I do not include here works on building technology as these are technical studies, which divert from the focus of this study.

\(^9\) According to Abu Lughod, one of the earliest works under this category is the article “L’Islamisme et la Vie Urbaine,” by William Marçais, January-March 1928, L’Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus, Paris, pp. 86-100.

\(^10\) During the second half of the twentieth century some writings critical of the Islamic city model appeared. Perhaps the most influential and most cited among these is the work of Abu Lughod (1987). In addition to examining and criticizing basic works on the Islamic city model by scholars from the Western Orientalist tradition, Abu Lughod discusses the relevance of the notion of the Islamic city in the late twentieth century.
Easter City.” Studies within this category address Arab Middle Eastern cities and interpret their spatial patterns from the socio-religious perspective. Following a historical approach, these studies emphasize what they believe are peculiarly Islamic features of the old city (madina), such as the arrangement of the main components of the city including mosques, bazaars, and hammams (public baths). These studies also emphasize the role of shari’a (Islamic law) in regulating spatial organization and urban qualities, such as street width, building height, and window arrangement. A Scholar such as Mortada argues that the urban built environment for Muslim communities should continue to be based on Islamic law and integrate “Islamic spiritual and moral teachings and practical elements of life” (p. 135). And Bianca argues that the spiritual forces that helped shape Islamic cities in the past can help shape Muslims’ contemporary urban built environments.\footnote{Key studies on the Islamic city include 

The second category under which Arab Middle Eastern cities are studied is that dealing with colonialism and its influences on architecture and urban forms of these cities. Zeynep Çelik’s Displaying the Orient (1992) and Nezar AlSayyad, Irene Bierman, and Nasser Rabbat’s edited volume Making Cairo Medieval (2005), which address colonial interaction in the nineteenth century, belong to this category. Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi’s edited volume Modernism and the Middle East (2008b) is another example that addresses Arab Middle Eastern cities from the colonial approach, focusing on the late colonial and the early nation-state building
periods in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{12} Some works under this category, particularly those addressing the early colonial period, follow or fall in the trap of the dual approach to the Middle Eastern city: the “traditional” or “old” versus the “Westernized” or “modern” city. This is the case with Timothy Mitchell’s \textit{Colonising Egypt} (1988). In this context, Sami Zubaida (1990, p. 369) argues that in \textit{Colonising Egypt}, Mitchell unintentionally assumes “a position of reverse Orientalism,” depicting “Utopian pictures of what was not West.”

The third category is that including studies on contemporary architecture and urbanity in postcolonial Middle Eastern cities that depart from the Islamic and colonial approaches to these cities. Studies in this category constantly focus on individual buildings, often high-end or award-winning architecture, and on the works of Arab star architects like Rasem Badran and Jafar Tukan.\textsuperscript{13} Although some of these studies are analytical and touch upon different forces that have a bearing on the production of the buildings in question, such as many publications of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, many studies simply describe the aesthetic characteristics of the built environment.\textsuperscript{14} Few studies have successfully identified and engaged contemporary economic, social, cultural, and political forces that influence the production of buildings and spatial patterns in these cities. It is not uncommon for publications on the contemporary urban built environment in the Arab Middle East, particularly those published in Arabic, to have thin...
theoretical foundations, weak frameworks, if any at all, and inadequate analytical or critical content. Many are simply catalogs of visually pleasing architecture.

The fourth is the emergent category that includes recent studies on architecture and urbanity in Arab Middle Eastern cities during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, addressing processes such as the flow of capital, people, and information, which operate at global, regional, and national levels and strongly influence the urban built environment. Yasser Elsheshtawy’s edited volumes *The Evolving Arab City* (2008) and *Planning Middle Eastern Cities* (2004) belong to this category. Studies in this category mainly address oil-rich cities where record-breaking developments in terms of scale and cost are taking place, such as Ahmed Kanna’s *Dubai: The City as Corporation* (2011), Kanna’s edited volume *The Superlative City: Dubai and the Urban Condition in the Early Twenty-First Century* (2008), and Elsheshtawy’s *Dubai: Behind an urban spectacle* (2010). This category also includes studies on cities that are in the center of events because of their suffering from political instabilities and war conflicts, such as Peter Rowe and Hashim Sarkis’s edited volume *Projecting Beirut* (1998). Megalopolises that have always been the topic of study under the category of Islamic and colonial cities also are the focus of studies under this category. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar’s edited volume *Cairo Cosmopolitan* (2006) is an example on this.

My study of Amman fits into this fourth category of studying Arab Middle Eastern cities. The significance of a study such as this arises from the fact that Amman has not received commensurate attention in recent studies on globalizing Arab Middle Eastern cities, although for the past six decades Amman has been undergoing significant spatial transformations, which are closely related to globalization’s flows. The lack of scholarly work on globalizing Amman may be attributed to a number of factors. Among these is the small economy of Jordan: many of
Amman’s urban developments are simply overshadowed by developments taking place in oil-rich Arab states. Despite the fact that Jordan during the 2000s received over ten percent of the petrodollar flows from the Gulf states to the Middle East and North Africa (Pfeifer, 2010) and that investors from these states find Amman a good place for real-estate investment, scholars have largely ignored the influence of such a condition on Amman’s built environment. Another factor is the size of Amman. With a population between 2.5 and 3 million inhabitants, Amman is not a large city by world standards. The city’s significant and sudden growth due to reasons beyond Jordan’s geographic boundaries, such as the 2003 Iraqi War and the subsequent fleeing of Iraqis to Amman, and the diversity of the city’s population are conditions that scholarly writings on Amman’s built environment have not addressed adequately. A third factor that may account for Amman’s absence in recent studies on globalizing Arab Middle Eastern cities is that the city is not in the center of contentious political events. Jordan is politically stable, though it sits in a turbulent region with conflicts in the West Bank and Israel to the west and in Iraq to the east, not to mention the unstable political situation in nearby Lebanon and, most recently, in Egypt and Syria.

Some recent writings on Amman’s architecture and urbanity contribute to the category of work on globalizing Middle Eastern cities and are worth mentioning here. Mohammad al-Asad is an authority on the built environment of today’s Amman and one of the most prolific writers on the city’s contemporary architecture and urbanity. In his articles published in The Jordan Times, one of Jordan’s leading English-language newspapers, al-Asad sheds light on architecture and urban planning in Amman today and addresses current physical transformations of the city.15 Although these articles are thoughtful, informative, and analytical, they are relatively short and

15 These articles can be accessed from the website for the Amman-based Center for the Study of the Built Environment at http://www.csbe.org/urban_crossroads/introduction.htm (accessed February 2011).
basically address that segment of the public audiences in Jordan that is interested in the topic and reads English-language newspapers. Accordingly, these articles avoid the kind of theorizing found in al-Asad’s academic writings. In the latter, al-Asad addresses Amman’s architecture during the past decade, writing for professional and academic audiences. Here he engages theories of architecture and urbanism and tackles regional and global influences on recent transformations in the urban built environment of Amman.

Rami Daher (2007, 2008a), a leading scholar in the fields of preservation and conservation in Jordan, has written on globalization as it relates to the built environment in Amman; however, he mainly approaches globalization from the heritage preservation and tourism perspective. The work of Abu-Ghazalah (2006, 2007) focuses on the formal aspects of the built environment, particularly building heights and the city’s skyline, and the ways they relate to municipal building regulations. However, Abu-Ghazalah rarely, if ever, engages global forces or literature on globalization in his studies. Doris Summer (2006) discusses in a short essay the production of new downtowns in Beirut, Lebanon, and Amman under contemporary globalization processes and neoliberal ideologies of global competitiveness integral to globalization. Christopher Parker (2009) investigates the role of neoliberal government in Jordan in transforming Amman’s cityscape under contemporary globalization, touching upon some of the developments discussed in this dissertation. Parker’s focus is on the city’s road network, which he argues presents Amman to investors as a global city with “speed, efficiency, and connectivity” (p. 110) integral to global cities.

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16 More recently, a small number of these articles has been translated into Arabic and published in newly created blogs addressing the built environment in Jordan and beyond.
17 For example, see the essays under the Exploring the Edge section of the CSBE website at http://www.csbe.org/exploring_the_edge.htm (accessed February 2011). Al-Asad has a forthcoming essay on globalization as it relates to the built environment in Amman and other cities in the Middle East.
Notwithstanding the work on Amman’s built environment mentioned above, there are no recent lengthy studies on the influences of globalization’s flows on the urban built environment of early-twenty-first-century Amman, nor studies on the influences of petrodollar flows. Furthermore, there are no recent studies that address the relation between identity, discourse, capital flows, and the built environment in Amman. The research of this dissertation, therefore, fills gaps in scholarly studies on the built environment of Amman, as well as the general built environment of globalizing Arab Middle Eastern cities.

The significance of this study goes beyond filling gaps in scholarly work on architecture and urbanity. It takes an approach that diverges from the limited understanding of the city’s built environment in terms of the colonial past or with reference to Islam and Arabs. Like any other Muslim or non-Muslim, Arab or non-Arab, or Middle Eastern or Western city, Amman is shaped by diverse and ever-changing economic, political, and socio-cultural forces. By investigating how economic forces, particularly capital flows, influenced the city in the early twenty-first century, this dissertation moves beyond the story of the lost Islamic city and the subaltern Other to understand the city as it evolved under the current condition of global interconnectedness. Modern Amman has always been shaped by economic, political, and socio-cultural forces outside its geographic boundaries, even outside the state’s boundaries. During the past six decades, Amman underwent significant economic transformations, as well as political and demographic changes, which transformed the urban built environment of the city dramatically. Furthermore, Amman’s continuing attraction of capital, particularly petrodollars, during most of the 2000s and the impact of the 2008 global economic crisis on the city make it an interesting case for the study of the influences of capital flows. Considering that during the early twenty-

18 Historical sources use the term “Modern Amman” to refer to the city since the late nineteenth century.
first century Amman’s built environment underwent dramatic transformations at both the architectural and urban scales, which seen from the narrow perspective of local and national forces do not make much sense in light of the economic conditions of the city’s population, the study of Amman’s built environment as it relates to global economic processes becomes significant for understanding urban transformations in the city.

**Research Structure**

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical context of my research through a review of important literature on the themes of globalization, capital, identity, and discourse, paying close attention to the ways this literature relates to the urban built environment under contemporary globalization processes. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework of this research and my research methodology. In addition, it describes the research methods, including data collection, the criteria for selecting the sample of interviewees, the design and conduct of interviews, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the research context, placing transformations in Amman’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century in the historical context of the city. The chapter discusses the social and demographic makeup of Amman, the city’s economy, and the identity of the city residents. It also gives an overview of Amman’s urban built environment and introduces the study cases: The Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman. Chapters 5 through 7 address three principal themes: the construction of global Amman through the built environment, identity as expressed in and created through the built environment, and the making of global Amman and the communication of its residents’ identity through advertising discourse. Chapter 8 presents the key findings of the study as they relate to the research questions and discusses the implications of these findings for major theoretical concepts and
understandings reviewed in this study. In addition, the chapter discusses the limitations of the study and recommends future research relating to the study topic.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature that sets out the theoretical context for the dissertation and helps establish the theoretical framework for the subsequent discussions and demonstrate the research paradigm. The reviewed works cover four interrelated topics: globalization, capital, identity, and discourse.

Globalization

It is not within the scope of this dissertation to provide an extensive review of globalization theory and literature. However since this dissertation is about a globalizing Amman, or about transformations in the city’s built environment under global influences, a brief discussion of globalization and its relation to the urban built environment is due.

Scholarly Positions on Globalization

Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) speak of three broad groups of theorists holding different conceptualizations of globalization, its causes, and consequences. These are the hyperglobalizers, skeptics, and transformationalists. According to Held et al., both hyperglobalizers and skeptics see globalization as caused by economic factors. Hyperglobalizers believe that globalization is a “new epoch” in history, which is evident in the emergence of a single global market as well as the decline of the state’s authority, and that it will lead to a global civilization.¹ Skeptics believe that globalization is exaggerated. For them, the interdependence of economy is not historically unprecedented and the regulatory power of the state remains most

important for internationalization. Transformationalists see globalization as an open-ended, historically unprecedented process that is caused by multiple forces. For them, globalization is responsible for reshaping modern societies through the rapid changes it brings to social, political, and economic aspects. Transformationalists believe the state no longer has sole control over the activities that take place in its territory. Unlike skeptics and hyperglobalizers who rely on quantitative evidence to theorize globalization, transformationalists are interested in qualitative changes. Notwithstanding the limitations of the above categorizations, which make a sharp cut between the various views and do not allow for the intersection between views, my perspective on globalization is closer to that of the transformationalists.

**Theorization of Globalization**

There are many different definitions of globalization. Defining globalization from the economic point of view was the earliest way that globalization was approached and remained for a long time the most common. Scholars in this vein tend to equate globalization with “financial globalization” or “economic globalization,” understanding it in terms of the global opening up of national banking, insurance, securities, and foreign direct investment that result in the emergence of a global capital market. Globalization, for them, is evident in the high intensity of financial flows and the high speed of multinational financial transactions, which was made possible through advanced transportation and telecommunication systems and, most recently, information

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technologies, and extensive international surveillance and regulation. Under such globalization, national financial markets become integrated into the global market, heavily influencing the role of the state and its decisions (Held et al., 1999).

Some scholars emphasize the significance of capitalist economic forces for understanding globalization. Immanuel Wallerstein was a prominent and early contributor to the theorization of globalization as it relates to capitalism. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Wallerstein’s theorization of world-system theory (1979). According to this theory, world trade between the “core,” that is, the dominant capitalist societies, and the “periphery,” that is, the dominated underdeveloped societies, is essential to the understanding of capitalism. In such a world-economy system, where there is a single division of labor, production is pursued for the purpose of exchange and as long as it is profitable. To his credit, however, Wallerstein does emphasize that multiple polities and cultures remain significant under such a definition of world system.

One important concept central to globalization, and through which globalization has been made possible, is what Harvey (1990, 1989b) refers to as “time-space compression,” or, citing the nineteenth-century theorist Karl Marx, “annihilation of space by time.” According to Harvey, time-space compression is a relative process that has been going for centuries, but we have been exposed to a new intense phase of it since the early 1970s. With increasing advancement in means of transport and telecommunication, time taken to travel, communicate, and move money and information, among other things, becomes shorter and shorter in a sense that makes space seems to be shrinking. For Harvey, the primary impetus for time-space

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4 Although both Harvey and Wallerstein understand globalization in terms of its relation to capitalist economy under capitalism, their definition of capitalism is different. As Albert Bergesen (1984) points out, Wallerstein defines capitalist world economy as a single division of labor; whereas “traditional Marxists” define capitalism in terms of its social relations of production. Harvey, as I understand, belongs to the latter group when it comes to the definition of capitalism. See “The Critique of World-System Theory: Class Relations or Division of Labor?,” by A. Bergesen, 1984, Sociological Theory, 2, pp. 365-372.
compression is the speeding up of the circulation of capital, that is, acceleration of profit turnover time under capitalism. Elaborating on this phenomenon, Harvey (1990, p. 240) writes, “I use the word ‘compression’ because … the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us.”

Taking a political-economy view, Harvey (1995) asserts that globalization is significant to the dynamics of capitalism and has always been “integral to capitalist development since its inception” (p. 2). The accumulation of capital, which is essential to the survival of capitalism, has always been “profoundly geographical and spatial” (ibid). Capitalism has always sought a “spatial fix” to its problems, not only through long-term investment in the built environment to support the processes of production, exchange, and consumption, but also through the flow of excess capital to remote geographical areas to invest in new markets and businesses (Harvey, 1989b, 1990, 1995). According to Harvey (1995, p. 2), “without the possibilities inherent in geographical expansion … capitalism would long ago have ceased to function as a political-economic system.” Harvey sees that since the early 1970s, the “globalization process” has been bringing limited “qualitative transformation” to societies and states, such as the acceleration of urbanization, changing role of the state and the role of money and finance in the power of state, and increase in world wage-labor force. But “there has not been any fundamental revolution in the [capitalist] mode of production and its associated social relations” (p. 12). For Harvey, the “process of globalization [is] a process of uneven temporal and geographical development” (p.

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5 I discuss Harvey's notion of time-space compression as it relates to capital and the production of space in more detail in the section Capital below.
6 Harvey uses the term “spatial fix” to indicate the moving of capital to investment in space production or the flow of capital into new geographic areas as a fix to the problem of overaccumulation, which is inherent in capitalism and threatens its survival. For more information on this topic, see the discussion under the section Capital. Harvey discusses elsewhere how the spatial fix in the sense of colonialism and imperialism was essential to the stabilization of capitalism. See “The Spatial Fix - Hegel, Von Thunen, and Marx,” by D. Harvey, 1981, *Antipode, 13*(3), pp. 1-12.
To better convey the meaning of globalization as he understands it, Harvey suggests using the term “uneven spatio-temporal development” (p. 12). Consequently, one does not often come across the term “globalization” in Harvey’s work, despite the fact that he provides some of the most interesting discussions of it. Although Harvey sees globalization from a political-economy perspective and focuses on the social implications globalization brings, his work recognizes and addresses cultural consequences of globalization. 

Anthony Giddens (1990) criticizes the overemphasis Marxist theorists put on the capitalist economy, although he considers economic forces, particularly under capitalism, a “fundamental globalization influence” (p. 69). Giddens believes the role of the nation-state system as a political system in a global system should not be undermined. For despite the fact that transnational corporations, for example, may have great economic power, the power of such corporations cannot compete with that of the state. Central to Giddens understanding of globalization is his notion of “disembedding,” which he defines as “‘the lifting out’ of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across time and space” (p. 21). Disembeddedness was made possible through the separation of time from space, which Giddens finds central to globalization. This latter phenomenon is what Giddens calls “time-space distanciation”: the spread of social relations across wide distances. This phenomenon is similar to the notion of time-space compression advanced by Harvey, although, as Waters (1995, p. 58) convincingly argues, it “leaves the [false] impression that time and space are becoming stretched.” Embracing the notions of time-space distanciation and disembeddedness, Giddens defines globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relationships which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away

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7 Perhaps the most obvious example is his *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, 1990, New York: Blackwell.
and vice-versa” (p. 64). This pattern of unprecedented intensification, according to Giddens, brings with it dramatic change to societies and states.

Roland Robertson (1990; also see Robertson, 1992, 2000) finds the relation between the global and the individual important to understanding globalization. He takes globalization as a “sociocultural system” (Robertson & Lechner, 1985, p. 103) that involves “both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). As Waters (1995) argues, the notion of intensification of consciousness of the world is relatively new. It suggests that many issues we encounter are likely to be redefined globally, instead of being understood as local or national issues. However, the consciousness of the world, as Robertson sees it, does not mean that the locality becomes irrelevant. For Robertson, we should not understand globalization in terms of the local-global polarity. Rather, globalization, as he understands it, involves the reconstruction or even production of locality, community, and home. Globalization as Robertson (1995, p. 30) sees it involves “the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local.” Robertson thus finds that the concept of “glocalization” conveys more accurately than the term “globalization” the complex relationship between the global and the local.

Challenging the prevalent economic approach to globalization, Arjun Appadurai (1996; also see Appadurai, 1990) takes a cultural approach. For Appadurai, capital is just one of five dimensions or “scapes” of “global cultural flows.” He uses the term “scape” to emphasize the fluidity and subjectivity of the dimensions of global flows. Thus, Appadurai talks about “ethnoscapes,” that is, the flow of people, be they tourists, guest workers, refugees, or others; “mediascapes,” that is, the flow of media; “technoscapes,” that is, the flow of technology;

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8 According to Waters (1995), Robertson is credited for providing the first sociological conception of globalization.
9 The term glocalization was not coined by Robertson. For a discussion of the origin of the term, see Robertson (1995).
“financescapes,” that is, the flow of money; “ideoscapes,” that is, the flow of ideas that have political implications and often relates to state or counter-state ideologies. Appadurai emphasizes the central role of the interconnected scapes of media and migration and how they work together to construct “imagined selves” and “imagined worlds,” the kind of imagined localities immigrants produce in their place of diaspora.\(^\text{10}\)

Martin Albrow (1997) embraces Appadurai’s scapes, but expands on them to include the notions of “socioscape” and “sociosphere.” According to Albrow, the flow of people into a city produces the city’s socioscape, which may be understood as the intersection of the different patterns of territorialized, deterritorialized, and reterritorialized networks of social relations that mobile populations have. Albrow argues that the new meanings of social relations in cities where “geographic mobility” is common should be understood in terms of the conception of sociospheres. These are “distinct patterns of social activities belonging to networks of social relations of very different intensity, spanning widely different territorial extents …” (p. 51). People have different sociospheres the intersection of which produces the socioscape of the city.\(^\text{11}\)

As the discussion in this dissertation unfolds, the complex meanings of globalization as I understand them will become clear. At this stage, it is sufficient to say that globalization as I understand is a set of processes relating to the different kinds of flows including capital, goods,

\(^\text{10}\) Appadurai’s theorization of the “imagined worlds” expands on Benedict Anderson’s theorization of nations as “imagined communities,” which challenges the essentiality of the nation-state and views it as constructed. I discuss Anderson’s notion of imagined communities in detail under the section Identity. Appadurai argues that media, particularly electronic media, help diasporic communities produce some kind of localities in their places of diaspora, thus bypassing the boundaries of the nation-state. In fact, Appadurai (1996) goes so far as to argue that “the very epoch of the nation-state is near its end” (p. 19) and that the “diasporic public spheres” of diasporic communities “are the crucibles of a postnational political order” (p. 22). This argument of Appadurai is not in line with my argument as the discussion in this dissertation will show.

\(^\text{11}\) Under such a conception, Albrow argues, the notions of neighborhood, community, and nation, which are embedded in locality, need to be dispensed with. As the discussion in this dissertation will show, I disagree with Albrow’s argument.
people, technology, and information. Globalization has much to do with what Held et al. (1999, p. 2) refer to as the “widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life,” be they cultural, economic, technological, or others.

*Periodization of Globalization*

There is no agreement among scholars and theorists on the origins of globalization. Giddens (1990) and others associate globalization with nineteenth-century Europe, finding it directly connected to modernity, industrialization, colonial expansion, and nation-state building. Other scholars, such as Harvey (1995), Robertson (1992), and Held et al. (1999), suggest that globalization predated modernity, and they speak of phases or episodes of globalization, although they adopt different time periods for those phases.

One example of such phases of globalization is the four episodes of globalization given by Held et al. (1999). The first is the pre-modern episode, which took place before the sixteenth century and involved interregional flows of people in Eurasia and the Americas as well as imperial interests. The second is the early modern, which took place during the sixteenth century into the mid-nineteenth century and is marked by the spread of world religions and the flow of people into the Americas. The third episode is modern globalization, which took place between the mid-nineteenth century and the end of World War II and in which much of the world was involved through colonial expansion, migration, and advancement in transport and communication technologies. The fourth episode of globalization, which concerns us most, is contemporary globalization, which took place from 1945 up to the present day. This is an episode that, according to Held et al., is marked by the creation of many newly independent nation-states and by new patterns of global flows of people, increasing global economic
interaction, and the spread of international economic regulations, among other things. Since contemporary globalization is the context of this dissertation, I should note that scholars such as Harvey (1990, 1995) believe this phase began in the early 1970s. Harvey (1990) attributes this new episode of globalization to the “transition to flexible [capital] accumulation,” which was facilitated by the use of “new organizational forms and new technologies in production” (p. 284) as well as “developments in the arena of consumption” (p. 285). It even could be argued that the 1990s marked a new phase of globalization as it witnessed significant advancement in information technologies and wide-spread use of the Internet, which shrank space and left the world more connected than ever.

What interests me most here is not the phases of globalization per se, but rather the notion that globalization is not a new phenomenon. What distinguishes the new episode of globalization from the earlier episodes is the extent and intensity of the flows of capital, people, goods, information, and ideologies. Advancement in telecommunication and transport technologies makes it increasingly difficult for more and more people in any certain place to be disconnected from what goes on in other places. Today, we live in a “global village,” to use the term Marshall McLuhan coined in the 1960s (McLuhan, 1962; McLuhan & Fiore, 1967; also see McLuhan & Gordon, 2003). It is worth mentioning that the four phases of globalization given by Held et al. are primarily set from a Western perspective general context. The phases of globalization and their time period may vary based on the context where they are at work. For example, Amman became deserted during the thirteenth century and was sparsely inhabited through the third quarter of the nineteenth century; thus, the early-modern phase of globalization

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12 For McLuhan, advances in media have changed societies. Through the new media, we come to know much about each other and be responsible to participate in solving the problems of the other, which, I may add, no longer can be seen as merely the other’s problems. As we now experience and are influenced by “simultaneous happening,” it seems “we now live in a global village” (McLuhan & Foire, 1967, p. 63).
given by Held et al. does not apply to Amman, nor do the time periods of the pre-modern and modern phases of globalization.

Globalization’s Influence on Cultural Production

Among the most significant aspects of globalization scholars and theorists have paid attention to is its influence on culture and cultural production: the argument of whether or not globalization is likely to produce material cultural items, such as images, artifacts, and music, and cultural meanings and symbols that look alike. If cultural productions are to become similar, then the debate is whether or not those will express domination of cultural values of certain nations or groups of people. In such arguments, one comes across discussions of diversity versus uniformity, convergence versus divergence, particularity versus universality, homogeneity versus heterogeneity, and hybridity versus authenticity. Those arguments strongly relate to the appearance of the built environment of cities under the processes of globalization and what identity it expresses or constructs, which is an important topic this dissertation addresses in the following sections.

Just as scholars have different understandings of globalization and its periodization, they hold different views on how globalization affects cultural production. Some scholars believe that globalization produces uniform culture. They argue that the West, particularly the United States, is reshaping, primarily through the media and commercial products, the culture of societies all over the world in accordance with Western ideas, values, beliefs, and lifestyles. This is obvious, for example, in the domination of English as a global language in business, academia, advertising, and others, and in the world-wide domination of US movies and TV programs (Held et al., 1999; Williams, 2003), not to mention American fast-food chain restaurants. Herbert
Schiller (cited in Williams, 2003) goes so far as to consider cultural homogeneity under globalization a kind of cultural imperialism. Under “the most pessimistic version of cultural imperialism,” write Beynon and Dunkerley (2000, p. 23), “local culture [is] being eradicated and [survives] only in museums and heritage centres.”

Other scholars argue against the homogenization thesis. True, cultural flows are basically “from the West to the rest,” but there is enough evidence that the West has its share of cultural inflows, particularly those immigrant communities bring along. Furthermore, although the adoption of Western cultural flows have erased some of the cultural differences between the West and segments of societies elsewhere, particularly the affluent and young populations in the so called developing countries, more often than not cultural flows have been reinterpreted locally resulting in cultural productions different from the Western ones (Held et al., 1999). That is why “the strong version of cultural homogeneity is now widely rejected as simplistic” (Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000, p. 26).

Appadurai is among those scholars who perceive the heterogenizing effect of globalization. For him, “locality itself is a historical product and … the histories through which localities emerge are eventually subject to the dynamics of the global” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 18). Appadurai (1990) argues that globalization forces are likely to become “indigenized” in the society where they are at work, producing heterogeneity in cultural production. Similarly, Beynon and Dunkerley (2000, p. 23) believe “no culture anywhere exists in a ‘pure’, pristine state: all cultures have changed over time and continue to change.” Robertson’s argument (1995) is in line with Appadurai’s and Beynon and Dunkerley’s. He asserts that the interconnectedness

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13 According to Williams (2003), American scholar Herbert Schiller may be considered the most prominent figure in shaping the cultural imperialism theory. Schiller sees “media and media technology … as part of a conspiracy by the American military-industrial complex to maintain its economic, political and military domination of the post-war world” (cited in Williams, 2003, p. 218; also see Mass Communication and the American Empire, by H. Schiller, 1969, Boston: Beacon Press).
of localities under globalization is not to be mistaken for cultural homogeneity. The local,
according to Robertson, is “an aspect of globalization [italics in original]” (p. 30). Furthermore,
globalization is a dialectic process in which there is a “universalization of particularism” and a
“particularization of universalism” (Robertson, 1992, p. 100). The global is interpreted locally.

Harvey (1989b, 1990, 2001a), who understands globalization in terms of global capital
flows, which seek money and profit, is of great help when discussing the influence of global
capital on cultural transformations. According to him, under globalization there is a tension
between the tendency to the “commodification of culture” and the maintenance of a
“monopolistic edge,” that is, the command of the global market ((2001a, p. 397). On the one
hand, commodification or commercialization allows “tradeability.” On the other, unless a
product has some “special qualities” (p. 396) it loses its “monopoly advantage” (p. 397).
Although “the bland homogeneity that goes with pure commodification erases monopoly
advantage,” Harvey asserts that “no item can be so unique … as to be entirely outside of the
monetary calculus” (p. 397; p. 396). As for the number of global qualities and the number of
local qualities cultural products exhibit, Harvey believes that depends on what qualities are likely
to ensure command over the international market. To be sure, if having mostly local qualities is
what makes a product or development likely to command the international market, “the most
avid globalizers will support [it]” (p. 402). In fact, Harvey suggests that “if capital is not to
totally destroy the uniqueness that is the basis for the appropriation of monopoly rents … then it
must support a form of differentiation and allow of divergent … local cultural developments” (p.
409). Stuart Hall (1997; also see King, 1990) holds a view similar to Harvey’s with regard to
how capital influences cultural production. For Hall, it is because capital consistently seeks
expansion and internationalization that it supports difference and emphasizes cultural multiplicity.

Some scholars adopt the hybridization influence of cultural flows, in which a combination of the local culture and incoming cultural flows produces a new hybrid culture that is neither Western nor local. Ali Mohammadi believes “the local is increasingly a hybrid formed out of regional, national and global forces” (cited in Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000, p. 20). David Howes also sees the potential that globalization will result in hybrid forms of cultural production. He understands the hybridization of culture as a process in which people at the receiving end make sense of the incoming cultural products as they relocate in a new context, attributing new meanings to them. The receiver or consumer of cultural flows will not necessarily recognize or respect the meaning as intended by their producer (cited in Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000).

There is no reason why globalization should lead to only one of the above forms of transformations in cultural production. The argument by Beynon and Dunkerley (2000) supports this idea that globalization may simultaneously results in a degree of both homogeneity and hybridity. Furthermore, the simultaneity of the heterogenizing and homogenizing effects of globalization can be traced in Harvey’s stance on cultural production, discussed above. We should recognize that although Western cultural influences of globalization cannot be denied, they are at work with different levels of non-Western influences. In other words, globalization is no longer “from the West to the rest”; a point my dissertation will make clear as I focus on regional capital flows to Amman and relevant regional and global flows of ideas and expertise, among other things. The various sources of inflows to a certain city, the simultaneity of cultural change under globalization, and the qualitative nature of cultural production make “measuring”
the effect of globalization on cultural transformation an uneasy, though interesting, task to pursue.

Since globalization influences cultural production, and since we can understand the urban built environment as a part of that production, it is safe to say that globalization influences the urban built environment. And since various flows of globalization affect the different aspects of social life, it is likely that globalization will bring some transformation to the built environment, which, as Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues convincingly, we now understand as both a product and a producer of social life.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{World Cities and Global Cities}

Early works on the influence of globalization on the built environment focus more on the macroscale of spatial and social organization of cities under globalization rather than on the microscale of the process of production and the shape of the built environment as it relates to globalization’s flows. The theorization of “world” cities as “the ‘basing points’ for global capital” began with the work of John Friedmann (1986, p. 69). According to him, what makes a world city is the degree to which a city is integrated into the world economy and capitalist system, its “global control functions” (p. 73), including its share of corporate headquarters and international finance, as well as its functions in the “new division of labour” (p. 70), such as serving as a financial center. Obviously, Friedmann’s theorization of world city draws upon Wallerstein’s world-system theory. The work of Saskia Sassen (2001), which expands on Friedmann’s theoretical work, is no less significant as she is responsible for the “construction” of the idea of the “global city” and for initiating the discourse on global and globalizing cities. For both Friedmann and Sassen, economic activities are the major player in shaping global cities, and

\textsuperscript{14} I will return to Lefebvre’s conceptualization of space as it relates to capitalism in the Capital section below.
the level of a city’s integration into global economy determines that city’s place in a hierarchical ranking of global cities, which divides the world into core and periphery. Friedmann’s and Sassen’s studies are based on the analysis of quantitative data, such as monetary transactions and number of transnational corporations a city hosts. For Friedmann and Sassen world or global cities relate to and are influenced by global forces more than local conditions. Their emphasis on similarities among global cities led some scholars to charge them for supposedly understanding global cities as homogeneous. To his credit, however, Friedmann mentions in passing that “economic influences are … modified by certain endogenous conditions” (p. 71). On her side, Sassen responds to the homogeneity charge by asserting that the local institutional, political, cultural components will diverge between global cities, leading to divergence between these cities. According to her, the point of convergence in “the global city model” is “the development and partial importation of a set of specialized functions and direct and indirect effects this may have on the large city” (p. 349).

The economistic approach to global cities has been adopted by many researchers concerned with the study of globalization and global influences on cities. The Global and World Cities study group (GaWC) in the UK came up with a roster of world cities in 1998, updated in 2000, 2004, and 2008 (The world according to GaWC). For GaWC, “it is the advanced producer service firms operating through cities who are the prime actors in world city network formation” (Taylor, 2001, p. 181). In their most recent roster, GaWC hierarchically rank world cities under the Alpha, Beta, Gamma, High Sufficiency, and Sufficiency tiers based on the number of advanced producer service firms those cities host. Given GaWC’s understanding of the world city, it is not surprising that New York City and London top the Alpha tier of the 2008 list, as well as previous lists. Amman, however, comes under the Gamma tier on the 2008 list. The
Gamma tier cities “can be world cities linking smaller regions or states into the world economy, or important world cities whose major global capacity is not in advanced producer services” (The world according to GaWC). Interestingly enough, Amman fails to show on GaWC’s 1998 list (The world according to GaWC 1998), not even as a city with “minimal evidence” of “World city formation.” On the 2000 and 2004 lists (The world according to GaWC 2000; The world according to GaWC 2004), Amman comes under the High Sufficiency tier, which includes “cities that are not world cities … but they have sufficient services so as not to be overtly dependent on world cities” (The world according to GaWC). It is no surprise that Amman does not rank high in such a theorization of world cities. For whatever flows of capital, people, and ideas Amman receives and no matter how significant their “qualitative” influence in transforming the city’s society and its built environment are, the “number” of “advanced producer service firms” in Amman remains far less than that in a city like New York.

In an attempt to redress problems resulting from the economistic approach to the global city and in order to acknowledge immigrants’ role in the city’s dynamics, Benton-Short, Price, and Friedman (2005) suggest that cities with high percentage of immigrants and guest workers be identified as global cities. Ironically, these scholars follow a quantitative approach similar to that of Friedmann and Sassen. Benton-Short et al. are interested in “measuring” the “globalness” of world cities, which they do by measuring the number of foreign people or foreign-born in a city, just like Friedmann (1986) and Sassen (2001) who measure city globalness by the number of transnational corporations or amounts of monetary transactions. Unlike Appadurai’s (1996) or Albrow’s (1997) approach to understanding the change the flow of people brings to social life, Benton-Short et al. do not aim at understanding the qualitative impact of immigrants on cities; rather their goal is to rank cities according to their globalness. They have simply devised another
version of GaWC’s roster of world cities, using immigration rather than financial transaction as the yardstick.

Clearly such lists of world and global cities are not inclusive when it comes to identifying whether or not and how a city is influenced by the processes of globalization. As the discussion in this dissertation unfolds, it will become clear that such lists are abstract constructions, which fail to capture the complexity and permeability of the flows of globalization. For even if we were to agree that the diverse capital flows and all sorts of flow of people can indeed be accurately measured, there remain other nonmeasurable no less significant global flows working along with the flow of capital and people, such as images, expertise, and ideas, that should be taken into consideration. Moreover, the evidence shows that what matters is not the absolute quantities of globalization’s flows, rather how large those flows are in relation to the city in question and what their qualitative influences are on that city.

*Transformations in the Urban Built Environment under Contemporary Globalization*

Not all the literature on globalization as it relates to cities deals with the macroscale of the spatial and social organization of the city. Scholars study the influences of globalization on the production of a place as small as an apartment unit and as large as a city within the city. Among the topics they address are the influences of various flows of globalization on the processes of the production of the urban built environment, the social and cultural transformations under globalization as seen through the lens of the built environment and new building types, and the degree to which globalization’s flows are “from the West to the rest.” Scholars also study the shape of the urban built environment and how homogeneous,
heterogeneous, or hybrid it becomes under globalization as well as how new the processes of globalization and their effect on the built environment are.

Farha Ghannam (2006) addresses material and cultural flows of globalization and the ways they produce “urban locality” (p. 253) in Cairo. She focuses on the microscale of an apartment unit in a working-class neighborhood, taking as the center of her narration the life of that unit’s owner, a young low-income Egyptian guest worker in Kuwait. Ghannam shows how, despite being away from his home land, that young man remains connected through exchange of letters, tapes, photos, and phone calls with his family and neighbors in Cairo. The design, size, and furniture of the future apartment unit of that young man is influenced by the money, goods, ideas, and images he sends from Kuwait to his family, who supervises work on the apartment. Thus, he manages to produce an apartment unit larger and better equipped than what his siblings and friends can afford, causing social inequalities and producing a model unit to which young men in his neighborhood now aspire. Ghannam shows that globalization’s flows are not only “from the West to the rest” and that these flows are interrelated and touches the lives of people and their places in areas that may appear local and marginal.15

Globalization scholars study the increasing introduction of certain “new” types of buildings and developments that they see as particular to the contemporary phase of globalization in certain cities. Among the most commonly studied types are malls and gated communities in cities where they were not known before, at least in their contemporary ubiquity, form, and function (e.g., Abaza, 2006; Bagaeen & Uduku, 2010; Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2008; Denis, 2006; Erkip, 2004). De Koning (2006) studies how globalization’s cultural flows

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15 Other scholars have paid attention to the influence of Arabian Gulf cities on social and cultural transformations, including changes to the urban built environment, in globalizing cities in the Arab world. For example, see “From Dubai to Cairo: Competing Global Cities, Models, and Shifting Centers of Influence?,” by Y. Elsheshtawy, 2006, In Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East, edited by D. Singerman and P. Amar, Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, pp. 235-250.
contributed to the introduction of the upscale coffee shop as a new type of public space in the late-1990s’ Cairo, changing the sociocultural landscape of the middle-class segment of society in the city. De Koning finds that although the owners of these coffee shops are Egyptians, the cafés are strongly influenced by American styles in their names, interior designs, and food and drinks menus, which the author attributes to global cultural flows. On the one hand, many of the owners of these coffee shops had lived in the West for some time and brought back to Cairo new cultural ideas. On the other, these entrepreneurs understand recent sociocultural transformation in Cairo and neighboring cities and find that their upscale coffee shops cater to affluent young Middle-Easterners who prefer the American lifestyle. De Koning argues that these coffee shops produce “spaces of cosmopolitan belonging” (p. 224) as they “suggest membership in an imaginary cosmopolitan space that is local, Cairene, and Egyptian, yet part of wider First-World circuits and publics” (p. 228). Despite the similarities between these coffee shops in Cairo and Western cities, the ones in Cairo have a particular local function as they are where night-time leisure and social life take place. They present a new – and maybe the only – venue for groups of men and women to meet together and socialize in what is seen as safe, decent, and “classy” places. As such, upscale coffee shops in Cairo produce a new “leisure culture” (p. 221) for the upper middle class, particularly young female professionals, transforming norms of “mixed-gender sociability” and “reflect[ing] class distinctions” (p. 224).

John C. Stallmeyer (2011; also Stallmeyer, 2008) studies the influence of information and communications technology (ICT) on the transformation of the built environment in Bangalore, India. He argues that “a Silicon Valley imaginary” significantly influenced the production of ICT corporate campus developments in the city (p. 20). Thus buildings in the ex-urban Electronics City development have glazed and metal-clad façades and landscapes that invoked Silicon
Valley in California, projecting a modern image, which the developers and workers equated with the West. These buildings reflect an image of a competitive global company and were a means to “define and redefine the identities of [Bangalorean] software workers” and establish them as “members of a global community” (p. 65; p. 66). Stallmeyer understands Electronics City, and similar ICT developments in Bangalore, as a part of the government’s effort in the 1990s to create Bangalore as “The Silicon Valley of India” and launch the city as a global software producer (p. 40). Stallmeyer also shows how ICT buildings in Bangalore’s Central Business District (CBD) influenced architecture and urban fabric in the CBD, increasingly replacing historic buildings and introducing new building scale and materials and architectural vocabulary. Stallmeyer also presents cases of small ICT buildings, some of which had been houses that were adapted as office spaces, to demonstrate how the global model based on Silicon Valley imaginary was contested to produce parts of Bangalore’s “informational urbanism” (p. 89) that were localized.

Another significant part of the built environment globalization scholars study is urban, suburban, and exurban mixed-use megaprojects. The increasing development of megaprojects throughout the world since the late twentieth century has been associated with globalization’s flows. Kris Olds (1995), for example, argues that megaprojects are “deeply implicated in the contemporary globalization processes” (p. 1713). Some megaprojects are developed by transnational developers and investors, while others employ the services of transnational professional experts, such as architects, planners, and engineers. Other megaprojects are produced in response to a growing demand for office space, residential units, or others as a result of new flows of people to their associated cities. More important, as Olds argues, is that the
producers of those megaprojects seek some kind of “a global urban ‘Utopia’,” a global city image, or a global firm profile expressive of the twenty-first century.

Khaled Adham (2004) analyzes two megaprojects in Cairo: the late-nineteenth–early-twentieth-century Heliopolis and the late-twentieth-century Dreamland. He finds interesting similarities between the global forces that produced the two developments as capitalist “ventures” and gave them their shapes, and shows that globalization in today’s Cairo is not a new phenomenon but rather a new episode of globalization. Heliopolis, which was undertaken by Belgian banker and business mogul Baron Edouard Empain, introduced a venue for “entertainment activities and commercialized leisure” (p. 150) in a way never heard of before in Cairo. Obsessed with the “tradition” of the area and “Arab” art, Empain produced Heliopolis as “a pastiche of an [sic] European vision of the orient” (p. 146). Heliopolis accompanied changes in Cairo’s “ethnoscape, technoscape, financescape, commodityscape, ideoscape, and mediascape” (p. 151). Similarly, Dreamland, which was developed by Egyptian businessman Ahmad Bahgat, corresponds to the period when Cairo was experiencing cultural and ideological changes. The flow of Western, particularly North American, images to Cairo was increasing, promoting Western consumption patterns as a “concept of lifestyle.” These images transformed the form of the urban built environment in Cairo, and building types that were until recently unknown to the city’s residents, such as malls, theme parks, and gated communities, began to spread in the city. Like Heliopolis, Dreamland is designed for consumption and entertainment, strongly depending on its “amusement park” and “culture of fun” to attract people (p. 161). Both Heliopolis and Dreamland are pastiche architecture. Whereas the former is a pastiche of the Orient, the latter is a pastiche of the Occident.
Several scholars address the rebuilding of Beirut’s central business district, which had sustained extensive damage by the end of the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil War. Sofia Shwayri (2008) argues that the ongoing Beirut Central District (BCD) project, which was begun in 1994, was devised to re-establish Beirut as the region’s business and tourist hub and make it a global center. The plans for this megaproject were originally prepared by Dar Al-Handasah, a regionally acclaimed firm based in Beirut and Cairo, and updated by the Beirut-based LACECO Architects & Engineers. The developer of the BCD is the privately-owned Solidere, the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District. Solidere was established through a public-private partnership and founded by the late Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri, who also was a main stockholder in the company (Al-Asad, 2012; Larkin, 2010; Makdisi, 1997; Shwayri, 2008). Makdisi and Larkin argued that Hariri’s influence in the government was used for personal gain. Thus the government gave Solidere substantial tax exemptions, provided major infrastructure for the project, and facilitated transfer of property ownership on the BCD site (ibid). Solidere expropriated all properties on the site and compensated owners with shares equal to property value as appraised by the company (Al-Asad, 2012; Larkin, 2010; Makdisi, 1997; Shwayri, 2008). Many property owners objected to the expropriation of their properties, and they argued that the shares they received were incommensurate with the actual property value (Al-Asad, 2012; Larkin, 2010). Makdisi pointed out that the public was not allowed to participate in decision making regarding how the center of Beirut would be developed. He argued that the BCD benefited foreign and national investment capital, not the majority of the city residents, anticipating that the BCD would cause social polarization in the city. Today, as Al-Asad points out, the BCD is criticized for catering to the upper class, particularly Lebanese expatriates and Gulf nationals (also see Larkin, 2010).
Yasser Elsheshtawy (2010; also see Elsheshtawy, 2004) and Ahmed Kanna (2011) study Dubai’s urbanization at the turn of the twenty-first century. They argue that the city’s spectacular record-breaking megaprojects, as well as luxury gated communities and hotels and gigantic shopping malls, are a materialization of the ruler’s vision for Dubai as a global city. According to Elsheshtawy and Kanna, most of Dubai’s megaprojects have been developed by corporations owned by Dubai’s ruler, Mohammad Al Maktoum; a number of megaprojects have been undertaken by large development firms owned by high-profile Dubayyan merchants, often connected to the government. Kanna finds the city’s new built environment a “hypermodern, Westernized urbanity,” which imposes a “Westernized, neoliberal notion of modernity onto local society” (p. 103; p. 9). He argues that Dubai’s contemporary large-scale developments are important for the ruling family’s representation of itself and they contribute to the legitimization of royal ideologies. Both Elsheshtawy and Kanna note that Western architects and planners are a significant actor in Dubai’s contemporary urbanization. Kanna agrees with the statement by Dutch starchitect Rem Koolhaas, “Dubai happened; we [the West] participated in its construction. We were complicit in its extravagance. But we were also the first to denounce its absurdity” (cited in Kanna, 2011, p. 210).

Elsheshtawy (2004, 2010) shows that Dubai’s megaprojects, as well as other contemporary large-scale developments in the city, take different shapes, including the universal and particular. Palm Jumeirah, an artificial island developed by the ruler-owned Nakheel and master-planned by the Australian GHD and American HHCP Design International, has a layout shaped as a palm tree (see Al-Asad, 2012; Elsheshtawy, 2010). The developers, according to Elsheshtawy (2010), speak of the shape of the project’s layout as a traditional form symbolic of Dubai, though the palm tree is not exclusive to Dubai, and they proudly mention that Palm
Jumeirah is visible from space. The villas in this development have many styles, including the modern, Islamic, and Asian (ibid). One of the hotels at the Palm has an eclectic style described by the architects, the American Larry Ziebarth, as blending Islamic architecture with “a strong dash of fantasy,” which Elsheshtawy views as a Disney-like development (p. 146). Unlike Palm Jumeirah, the ongoing Dubai Waterfront development, designed by Koolhaas of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), includes many high-rise buildings of universal form and “occasional bold architectural statements” (Elsheshtawy, 2010, p. 150; also see Al-Asad, 2012). The developers, Nakheel, speak of this project as the world’s largest, which will accommodate 1.5 million people (Elsheshtawy, 2010; Al-Asad, 2012). Unlike most megaprojects in the city, which Elsheshtawy and other scholars criticize for their exclusiveness, Dubai Waterfront will include low-income housing (Al-Asad, 2012).

David Harvey (1994) and Susan Fainstein (2001) are among many scholars who study the Canary Wharf development, London, which may be seen as a “classic” example of megaprojects. Beginning in the late 1980s, but not completed until 2000, and developed by the private Canadian firm Olympia & York Development (O&Y) on the site of deteriorating warehouses and shipping facilities, Canary Wharf was one of the largest and perhaps most representative of economically-driven megaprojects at that time (see Harvey, 1994). Harvey and Fainstein argue that Canary Wharf was conceived to make London Europe’s preferable financial center that will attract as much business as possible. Transnational planning and architecture experts, which include internationally renowned American architects such as I. M. Pei, Skidmore Owings and Merrill, and Cesar Pelli, were employed to design Canary Wharf. According to Harvey, these experts were selected to produce not only Europe’s “most internally efficient office complex” but also the “most prestigious, most elegant, most beautifully manicured”
development (p. 420). The result was visually impressive, well executed, and finely finished and detailed buildings (ibid). However, Harvey criticized the quality of life Canary Wharf offered. For him, this development “announces the death of public space and the street as a site of heterogeneity … and commemorates the universal and homogenising uniformity of money power” (p. 420). Canary Wharf, according to Harvey, was “central to the re-shaping of London’s urban space in ways reflective of an increasing segregation between the rich and powerful and their favoured financial institutions on the one hand and an increasingly marginalized and impoverished population on the other” (p. 423).

In all of the above examples of the transformation of the urban built environment under contemporary globalization, one can trace financial flows or the pursuit of monetary profit or both regardless of how much emphasis the economic aspect receives in the accounts of the different scholars. However, it is clear that money plays a bigger role in the production of megaprojects. Whether a certain megaproject involves capital flows or not and whatever global flows influence it, its producers are always aware that it constitutes an integral part of a global property market.

**Capital**

In the previous section, I have drawn upon scholars who emphasize the relationship between economic processes and the built environment, particularly under the circumstances of contemporary flows of globalization. I also have shown how some of these scholars understand the relation between economic forces and the built environment as deeply rooted in the capitalist system of production. Harvey, for example, sees the production and transformation of the urban built environment as an economic process that is integral to capitalist system and primarily
serves capitalist interests. In this section, I review literature on capital and the built environment to understand how scholars see the relation between capital and the built environment.

The Urban Built Environment and Capitalist Production Processes: An Overview

Harvey (1989b, 1990) understands the production of the urban built environment within the context of the processes of capital circulation and accumulation, class struggle, spatial organization of production, and the transformation of time-space relations. I have already introduced the transformation in time-space relations when discussing Harvey’s notion of time-space compression and its relation to globalization under the Globalization section above, and I will return to this later. The phrase “spatial organization of production” is self-explanatory as the arrangement of space for the purpose of serving the process of production. That leaves us with the terms capital, capital circulation, capital accumulation, and class struggle.

Harvey (1989b) explains that not all money is capital. “Capital is the social power of money used to make more money” (p. 189). Under capitalism, most of the commodities people use in their daily life involve a process of circulation in which “money is used to buy commodities (labor power and means of production) which, when combined within a particular labor process, produce a fresh commodity to be sold at a profit” (p. 189). As for capital accumulation and class struggle under capitalism, Harvey believes they are interrelated. Class relations and the system of production within the framework of capitalism are very complex. But Harvey puts it simply:

A class of capitalists is in command of the work process and organizes that process for the purposes of producing profit. The laborer, however, has command only over his or her labor power, which must be sold as a commodity on the market. The domination arises because the laborer must yield the capitalist a profit (surplus value) in return for a living wage. (p. 59)
In order to reproduce themselves, the capitalist class must “continuously expand the basis for profit” (p. 59). Capitalists’ ever increasing search for profit, to which Harvey refers as “accumulation for accumulation’s sake” (p. 187), can only be accomplished by domination over labor. Hence the link between the accumulation process and class struggle under capitalism.

But how does the built environment relate to capitalist production processes with their underlying logic of accumulation and class struggle? Both Harvey and Lefebvre are in agreement on the relation between the built environment and capital, and both are helpful here. For Lefebvre (1991, pp. 9-10), “capital and capitalism ‘influence’ practical matters relating to space, from the construction of buildings to the distribution of investments and the worldwide division of labour.” More important, Lefebvre believes the survival of capitalism was possible “only by occupying space, by producing space” (quoted in Harvey, 1989b, p. 190). Lefebvre “assumes … [an] active understanding of space” (Merrifield, 2000, p. 172). Although space, as he understands it, is where transactions of commodity and reproduction of labor power “take place,” space is active in the “production” of such activities. For Lefebvre, space is a vital part of “capitalist accumulation strategies” (p. 172). This is a position similar to that of Harvey who sees space as “an ‘active moment’ in expansion and reproduction of capitalism” (p. 173).

Harvey (1989b) speaks of three circuits of capital. The primary circuit is that of production, which includes capital and labor. The tertiary circuit includes investing in science and technology with the purpose of advancing the production process, and investing in the improvement of labor power and their integration into the capitalist system of production. The secondary circuit is the flow of capital into the urban built environment. Harvey tells us that some places in the built environment are a part of the “fixed capital” in the processes of production under capitalism. Fixed capital includes items that are not raw materials used directly
as inputs in the production process, but items that support and facilitate the production process and are used over a long time. Other places are a part of the “consumption fund” in the processes of consumption essential to capitalism. Consumption fund consists of commodities that facilitate consumption. Thus, Harvey speaks of the “built environment for production,” which serves as a “physical framework for production,” and the “built environment for consumption,” which serves as a “physical framework for consumption” (p. 64).16 A classic example on the built environment for production and the one that first comes to mind is the factory. But, as many would agree, the office building is no less significant a built environment for production. It is in this context that Harvey (1994) understands Canary Wharf, which he seems to find exemplary of his theorization of the urban built environment under capitalism. Canary Wharf, Harvey writes, “is the product of massive investment by financial institutions in an office complex designed to house other financial institutions which themselves make money out of, among other things, real estate ventures like Canary Wharf” (p. 421). As for the built environment for consumption, a classic example on it may be the department store, which has been succeeded by the shopping mall. However, Harvey (1991) shows us that even the art gallery, theater, and café can be seen as parts of the built environment for consumption since, like the store, they fetishize commodities.

The Image, Spectacle, and Fetishism of Commodity

Studying the fetishism of commodities is an essential part of Karl Marx’s project on capitalism. By uncovering the fetishism, Marx sought to unveil the dynamics of capitalism. Harvey (1991) describes Marx’s conceptualization of commodity fetishism:17

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16 Harvey is clear that some places in the built environment may serve for production and consumption at the same time, such as the network of transport; other places may transfer from one function to the other.

Commodities … are produced through social labor and come to us through a process of market exchange. The act of market exchange obscures the myriad social relations that enter into commodity production, transport, and marketing. In the end, we exchange one thing – money – for another thing – the goods we purchase. Nothing in that physical exchange reveals anything about the processes of production or the conditions of labor of those doing the producing. The market … imposes a mask upon all those basic activities of social labor that serve to reproduce daily life. Under such circumstances it is impossible … to establish social meanings and relations through simple inspection of market exchange. (p. 52)

Harvey (1989b, 1990, 1991), as well as Lefebvre (1991), follows Marx’s uncovering of the “fetishism of commodities” to expose the social relations in, and underlying dynamic of, the processes of space production under capitalism. Harvey finds the fetishism of commodity applicable to the production of the urban built environment under the capitalist mode of production. This is obvious in the importance the “image” takes in the production of urban spaces and its association with “quality” and “prestige,” among other things (Harvey, 1990, p. 288). Imaging urban spaces through the production of new buildings with distinctive characteristics proved to be so profitable that “investment in image-building … [has become] as important as investment in new plants and machinery” (ibid). Capital produces places of various scales, even whole cities, as a “spectacle” to be consumed by the public. When a city is produced as a spectacle, its spaces of collective memory are transformed and the social relations it once demonstrated are hidden or obliterated (Harvey, 1991). To be sure, the spectacle involves display and image construction, but as Guy Debord (1967/1994, p. 12) argues, “the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.” Debord is clear that the spectacle is integral to capitalist economy. In this context, Debord writes, “the spectacle corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life” (p. 29). Under capitalist economy, “the real consumer … becomes a consumer of illusion. The commodity is this illusion … and the spectacle is its most general form” (p. 32).
The spectacle has long been at work in the urban built environment. Many scholars, for example, argue that Georges-Eugène Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris during the second half of the nineteenth century produced the city as a spectacle. The opening up of vistas in conformity with the laws of perspective contributed to the construction of long, broad, straight, landscaped thoroughfares that cut through old urban fabrics and opened up into monumental urban piazzas and squares. Peter Hall (1998, p. 721) writes that such thoroughfares are “not everyday streets”; rather “they are theatrical spaces, designed for display.” Hall describes Haussmann’s fondness with the perspective view:

All the time, Haussmann was working on the vistas and on the great places-carrefours: the circular or multi-sided points where the great Boulevards converged …. His great weakness was for formal perspectives …. [H]e never thought of a new route … without considering how it would offer a new point of view. His favourite device was to place his major monumental public buildings boldly in the key angles of squares … or to site them on the closing points of long perspectives. (p. 719)

Both Harvey (1991) and Timothy Clark (1985), as well as many other scholars, agree that Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris produced the city as a spectacle, adding that the spectacle commodified the spaces in the city and emphasized the power of money. The tree-lined, well-lit boulevards, the monumental squares, and street cafés, among other things, formed new markets and engendered new patterns of consumption (Harvey, 1991).

The production of spectacle in urban space continued through the twentieth century as a way to lure developer capital and “to capture consumer dollars to compensate for de-industrialization” (Harvey, 1989b, p. 271; 1990). For Harvey (1991), Times Square in New York is a significant example from that period of producing the city as a spectacle. Harvey (1989b, 1990) finds the production of spectacle in urban space to have become even more ubiquitous since the early 1970s. Competing to become financial or consumption centers, more and more cities felt that need to “create a positive and high quality image of place” (Harvey, 1990, p. 92).
Thus, “imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban spaces” (p. 92) has become a main goal of city officials, and “urban life … has … increasingly come to present itself an ‘immense accumulation of spectacles’” (Harvey, 1989b, p. 271). “The display of the commodity became a central part of the spectacle, as crowds flock to gaze at them and at each other in intimate and secure spaces … [such as] enclosed shopping malls” (p. 271). In other words, “whole built environments became centerpieces of urban spectacle and display” (p. 271). Since the 1970s, architecture and urban design have projected an image of place in which the spectacle and theatricality have become more significant as obvious in Postmodernists emphasis on “eclectic mix of styles, historical quotation, ornamentation, and the diversification of surfaces” (Harvey, 1990, p. 93).18 It is not surprising then that Postmodern architects Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour (1972) advocate the building as a “decorated shed” and find Las Vegas with its images, signs, and billboards a significant source of inspiration for the design of the built environment.

It is within the context of the Postmodernist emphasis on urban spectacle that Harvey (1990, 2001b) understands the Baltimore development in the 1970s and 1980s. In this development, Harvey (1990, p. 90) sees “an institutionalized commercialization of a more or less permanent spectacle.” The Baltimore development is, as Harvey describes it, “an architecture of spectacle, with its sense of surface glitter and transitory participatory pleasure, of display and ephemerality, of jouissance [italics in original]” (p. 91). The 1973-1975 recession and the subsequent deindustrialization of Baltimore had led to the city’s search for a solution for its problems. The city officials seem to have found that solution in turning Baltimore into a tourist destination (Harvey 2001b). This entailed creating an image for Baltimore as sophisticated and

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18 Perhaps nowhere is the power of the spectacle more evident than in Postmodern architect and theorist Robert Venturi’s unrealized design for the Football Hall of Fame (1967) in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The building is hidden behind a large screen on which game scores and other relevant information will be displayed.
cosmopolitan, with a vivid downtown and commercial places. First, the city commercialized the city fair through the addition of various “ethnic festivals, concerts, and spectacular events” (p. 138) to attract people downtown. Once the “entertainment spectacle” (p. 139) proved successful, it was time for producing and institutionalizing a permanent spectacle in urban space through the construction of Harbor Place, hotels, and shopping malls, among other components. This permanent spectacle has the potential to further reinforce the image of the city, making it possible to attract developers and their capital, as well as businesses, particularly in the financial and entertainment sectors.

“If people could live on images alone,” Harvey (2001b, p. 139) writes, “Baltimore’s populace would have been rich indeed.” True, most of the development has been profitable to the developers who carried it out, and the development has allowed the city to do better than many other cities faced with similar problems. However, overinvestment in upscale residential and office spaces as well as in shopping and entertainment spaces may be troublesome in the long run. According to Harvey, there have been difficulties selling upscale apartment units in the Baltimore development, and some commercial spaces went out of business as new ones opened. As for the public living in the city, rather than simply visiting, the development does not seem to have helped them out. On the contrary, the city has lost jobs and population and it has fallen short in supporting the less fortunate segment of its population. Baltimore’s spectacle masks “the terrible face of Baltimore’s impoverishment” (p. 144) and announces “in glass, brick, and concrete” capitalists’ hold of “the reins of power” (p. 147).
Interconvertibility of Symbolic and Money Capital

Another way the built environment relates to capitalist production processes is by engaging in the production and consumption of what Pierre Bourdieu (1972/1977) calls “symbolic capital.” According to Bourdieu, the accumulation of symbolic capital can take “the form of the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name” (p. 179). It involves “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability” (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, p. 291). The accumulation of symbolic capital also includes “the collection of luxury goods attesting the taste and distinction of their owner” (Bourdieu, 1972/1977, p. 197). Taste as Bourdieu (1979/1984) understands it is the acquired ability to make instant and intuitive aesthetic judgment (p. 99) and “to establish and mark differences by a process of distinction” (p. 266). It is “the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices” (p. 173). Taste generates lifestyle. “It functions as a sort of social orientation, a ‘sense of one’s place’, guiding the occupants of a given place in social space towards the social positions adjusted to their properties, and towards the practices or goods which befit the occupants of that position” (p. 266). Furthermore, “taste is the practical operator of the transmutation of things into distinct and distinctive signs” (p. 174). “It transforms objectively classified practices … into classifying practices, that is, into a symbolic expression of class position” (p. 175).

Unlike fixed capital and consumption fund, symbolic capital is not a money capital. Rather, it is a “transformed kind of money capital” (Harvey, 1989b, p. 269; Harvey, 1990, p. 77),

19 Bourdieu argues that capital includes four related parts: symbolic capital, economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. Symbolic capital and economic capital are discussed in more detail in this section. As for cultural capital, it involves taste skills and competences that relate to education and familial background. Social capital is that kind of capital someone may gain from his or her class distinction and social network within a distinguished class. See Bourdieu, 1979/1984; “Pierre Bourdieu,” by G. Bridge, 2004, in Key Thinkers on Space and Place, edited by P. Hubbard, R. Kitchin and G. Valentine, London: Sage Publications, pp. 59-64.
which, to quote Bourdieu (1972/1977, p. 179), “is … convertible back into economic [that is, money] capital.” Symbolic capital is, as Kim Dovey (1999, p. 107) simply puts it, “the capital value attributable to a symbolic, aesthetic or mythological ‘aura’.” In other words, symbolic capital can be harnessed to produce money capital. Harvey (1989b, p. 269; 1990, p. 77) believes symbolic capital is “a powerful aspect of capital accumulation.”

Harvey (1989b, 1990), following Bourdieu (1972/1977), argues that symbolic capital has ideological implications. Bourdieu reminds us that symbolic capital “produces its proper effect inasmuch, and only inasmuch, as it conceals the fact that it originates in ‘material’ forms of capital which are also … the source of its effects” (p. 183). This, according to Harvey (1989b), involves fetishism that is “deliberately deployed to conceal, through the realms of culture and taste, the real bases of economic distinctions” (p. 269). Thus, “the production of symbolic capital [with its hidden mechanism] serves ideological functions” (p. 269) that perpetuate the domination of capitalist class and its taste and aesthetic preferences. It is worth noting that change in taste can enhance or devalue symbolic capital, which in turn can change producer-consumer power relations contained in symbolic capital (Harvey, 1989b).

Harvey (1989b) finds Bourdieu’s theorization of symbolic capital helpful to the understanding, at least in part, of the production of the built environment as well as communities in certain ways. For Harvey, “the ability to convert symbolic into money capital … [is] embedded in the cultural politics of the urban process” (p. 270). Symbolic capital, according to Harvey, has always had implications for the production of the built environment, particularly the environment that caters to the upper class. But, it has been reemphasized and engages wider segment of societies under the post-Fordist mode of capitalism. Postmodern architecture, with its rejection of standardization, reference to history, eclecticism, and ornamentation, seems to have
offered more opportunities to capture symbolic capital than Modern architecture. Harvey (1990) sees the strong emphasis since the early 1970s on “product differentiation in urban design” (p. 77) as inseparable from pursuing the money of potential consumers. Through their exploration and stimulation of difference in aesthetic taste, architects and urban designers have re-emphasized the production and consumption of symbolic capital as a significant part of the capitalist system. By understanding symbolic capital and its relation to money capital, ideology, taste, and social distinction, we can start to understand, for instance, developments and buildings in “historical” or “traditional” style, no matter how real or “imagined” those referents are;20 we can start to understand obsession with large-scale developments, such as high-rise buildings; we can start to understand the employment of certain architectural styles, materials, or embellishments; we can start to understand the significance of signature architecture.

The Urban Built Environment as a Fix to Capitalists’ Overaccumulation Problem

What makes the built environment even more integral to capitalism, according to Harvey (1989b, 1990, 1994), is the capitalist tendency to overaccumulate, leading to a surplus in the primary circuit of capital: excess of capital and labor, which cannot be absorbed in profitable production processes, as well as excess of goods and commodities with no demand. The problem of overaccumulation can be fixed temporarily by diverting capital to other circuits. What concerns us most here is the movement of this capital to the secondary circuit of capital, that is, investment in the urban built environment. The production of new places absorbs surplus of capital and labor over a long time. But it does not provide a permanent solution to the problem of overaccumulation, which “is transformed … into a pervasive tendency toward overinvestment [in the urban built environment]” (Harvey 1989b, p. 70). Investment in the built environment in

20 I discuss history and tradition as imagined or constructed in the sections Identity and Discourse below.
places other than where capital is generated also can be understood in this light. After all, it is the
tendency of capitalism to find a “spatial fix” to overcome its own problem of overaccumulation
(Harvey, 1989b, p. 190; Harvey, 1990, p. 183). Spatial fix can be achieved in a variety of ways,
such as opening up markets for products in new places and moving capital to investment in the
built environment abroad. Thus under capitalism, investment and overinvestment in the built
environment respond “solely to the needs of capital and has nothing to do with the real needs of
people” (Harvey, 1989b, p. 70).

It is in this context of capitalist overaccumulation that Harvey (1994) understands the
production of a megaproject such as Canary Wharf. Surplus of capital during the late 1980s led
to the flooding of capital into the construction of office spaces, shopping malls, and other types
of urban built environment in London, as well as in other places. There was, however, no
“thought that this … certainly would … create a situation in which overaccumulation of assets in
the built environment was likely to become a serious problem” (p. 425). When a certain wave of
investment in the built environment yields good profits, further waves of investment will follow.
At a certain point, the market will no longer absorb such built environment, leading again to the
problem of overaccumulation. As Harvey (1989b, p. 273) puts it, “over-investment in everything
from shopping malls to cultural facilities makes the values embedded in urban space highly
vulnerable to devaluation.” Harvey (1994) believes the collapse of the developer of Canary
Wharf in the early 1990s is to be understood in relation to this situation of overaccumulation.
Harvey (1989b) argues that the notion of time-space compression, introduced under the Globalization section above, is significant to the understanding of the urban built environment as integral to capitalism. In this context, Harvey writes:

Profit depends upon realizing the surplus value created in production within a certain time. The turnover time of capital (the time taken to get back the initial outlay plus a profit) is a very important magnitude .... Competition produces strong pressures to accelerate turnover time. That same pressure has a spatial manifestation. Since movement across space takes time and money, competition forces capitalism toward the elimination of spatial barriers and “the annihilation of space by time”. Building a capacity for increased efficiency of coordination in space and time is one of the hallmarks of capitalist urbanization. (pp. 22-23)

It follows then that urban developments consistently should be subject to change. It is the “pressures within the circulation of capital [that] lead to the systematic pursuit of the annihilation of space by time” (Harvey, 1989b, p. 191). Here we face a contradiction, inherent in the capitalist system of production. “Space can be overcome only through the production of [fixed] space, of systems of communication and physical infrastructures embedded in the land. Natural landscapes are replaced by built landscapes shaped through competition to the requirements of accelerating accumulation” (ibid). However, those same built landscapes, which are fixed landscapes, become the obstacle that needs to be conquered; hence the need to further annihilation of space by time. The space that now needs to be annihilated is the one that the capitalist system produced (Harvey, 1989b, 1990).

This leads to Harvey’s important notion (1989b, 1990) of the concept of “creative destruction.” Harvey adopts the term from economist Joseph Schumpeter, though he takes a stance different than that of Schumpeter.21 By now we know that Harvey (1989b) believes

“turnover time can be accelerated only by fixing a portion of the total capital in time” (p. 192).

“Fixed capital in the built environment is immobile in space … [and] the value incorporated in it cannot be moved without being destroyed” (p. 64). To overcome the fixity of space, the capitalist system of production opts to a process of creative destruction of the built environment. In Harvey’s words, “capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it … at a subsequent point in time” (p. 83). For Harvey, we only can understand the continuous transformations in the urban built environment in terms of such a process of creative destruction, which is all about accelerating turnover time. To give a simple example, capitalists create factories as spaces for production. With time and as capitalists look for more innovative means of production that would yield more profit, such factories become obstacles rather than facilitators of production. Consequently, they are deserted, destroyed, or rehabilitated in ways that comply with the new innovations. Harvey believes the process of creative destruction attests to capitalists’ greed. Furthermore, he argues that creative destruction is a process that derives from “the practical dilemmas that faced the implementation of the modernist project” (p. 16). In order to create a new world, modernists had to destroy the old. Harvey’s stance is unlike Schumpeter’s who sees creative destruction as “the progressive leitmotif of benevolent capitalist development” or others who see in creative destruction “the necessary condition of twentieth century progress” (Harvey, 1990, p. 17).

Haussmann’s rebuilding of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century, the rebuilding of New York City in the mid-twentieth century, and the Canary Wharf development in the late-twentieth century all, according to Harvey, should be understood in terms of creative destruction inherent in

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22 The modernist project involved significant efforts by Enlightenment thinkers to “develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic” (Habermas; cited in Harvey, 1990, p. 12). The modernist project broke with history and sought progress as well as human emancipation.
capitalist system of production. It is also within this framework that Harvey understands processes such as deindustrialization, suburbanization, and urban regeneration of many inner cities that took place over the past several decades (Harvey, 1989b, 1990, 1991, 1994).

I have shown how the logic of capital produces urban spaces for production and consumption, produces urban spaces as images and spectacle, produces urban built environments of symbolic capital to be harnessed as money capital, and produces urban spaces that are continuously transforming in response to capitalist processes of creative destruction. Considering that the production of the urban built environment relates strongly to profit making and capitalist interests in a “highly unified global space economy of capital flows,” to borrow the words of Harvey (1990, p. 296), does it follow that the built environment in cities everywhere should have certain components, building types, or aesthetic or visual characteristics that would ensure profitability? How similar or different should the forms of urban spaces be in order to perfectly serve the interest of capital? These are key questions that I will take up in the following chapters.

The Urban Built Environment and Capital Logic of Sameness and Difference

Harvey (2001a, 1990), as we have seen, suggests that the logic of capital influences the form of commodities and cultural production, which are commercialized and commodified under the capitalist mode of production. He tells us that capital is for differentiation as much as it is for similarity of commodities and cultural products. Similarity makes cultural products easily tradeable, while differentiation and uniqueness give capitalists command over the market, and striking a balance between the two is what capitalists strive to achieve (Harvey, 2001a). This, according to Harvey (2001a, 1990), also applies to the urban built environment. Urban space is a fertile environment for claiming possession of unique, particular, and authentic qualities, which
have the potential to give one space economic advantage over the other. Sometimes historical buildings and sites give the built environment such qualities; other times new images, icons, and spectacles need to be produced in the built environment so that a space becomes particular. Just as the Acropolis makes Athens particular, the Guggenheim Museum produces Bilbao as a unique place. In both examples, as well as in many others, “what is at stake is the power of collective symbolic capital, of special marks of distinction that attach to some place, which have a significant drawing power upon the flows of capital more generally” (Harvey, 2001a, p. 405).

Under globalization, competing for the accumulation of symbolic capital and marks of distinction in the built environment becomes more significant for capitalists (Harvey, 2001a, 1990). The global flow of capital “places strong emphasis upon the particular qualities of the spaces to which that capital might be attracted” (Harvey, 1990, p. 271). The increasing time-space compression “give[s] capitalists the power to exploit minute spatial differentiations to good effect” (p. 294). Thus, competition to attract “highly mobile capital” (p. 295) arises among various communities that now have developed a keen recognition of what distinguishes places and provides them with a competitive advantage. Cities and communities will now seek “the identification of place, the building and signaling of its unique qualities” (p. 271), not only as a place better than other places “for the operations of capital” (p. 303) but also as a better place for living, consuming, and achieving stability. City officials can adopt strategies to attract developer capital into their “particular space,” such as providing necessary infrastructures and relaxing tax policy. They will strive to “forge a distinctive image” and to “create an atmosphere of place and tradition” that will lure capital and the wealthy as well as influential which Harvey refers to as “people ‘of the right sort’” (p. 295). The “qualities of place” become emphasized in the increasing “abstraction of space” (p. 295).
But we should keep in mind that the logic of capital necessitates the tradeability of cultural production. If symbolic capital and marks of distinction in the built environment are of “very special qualities,” they will be hard to trade and consequently be excluded from globalization (Harvey, 2001a, p. 408). Perhaps that is in part why cities tend to reproduce similar spatial patterns, building types, and aesthetic vocabularies, a matter of which Harvey (1990) is well aware. The opening up of cities to capital accumulation, Harvey writes, “ends up producing what Boyer (1988) calls a ‘recursive’ and ‘serial’ monotony, ‘producing from already known patterns or molds places almost identical in ambience from city to city’” (p. 295).

Notwithstanding the production of general characteristics in the built environment in many cities, “the fashioning of some localized aesthetic image,” according to Harvey (1990, pp. 303-304), “allows the construction of some limited and limiting sense of identity in the midst of a collage of imploding spatialities” (p. 295).

**Identity**

In the previous section, I have discussed the production of the spectacle, image, and symbolic capital in the urban built environment as they relate to the capitalist system of production. I also have addressed the significance for capitalism of the production of places with unique or particular characteristics and qualities. The characteristics of a place or development, its image, and its symbolic capital, as well as the urban spectacle also relate to the question of identity. Therefore, understanding what identity is, how it is shaped, and how it relates to the production of the urban built environment, particularly under the processes of globalization, is significant for understanding how and why a certain development takes the shape it takes.
Identity is about “sameness” and “oneness.” Nezar AlSayyad (2001) and Kathryn Woodward (1997) take such definitions as the starting point to understanding identity, yet both agree that “identity is always about difference” (AlSayyad, 2001, p. 4). This is similar to Stuart Hall’s (1996) view that identification is a process that “operates across difference” (p. 3). Thus, identifying the Other is significant to self-identity, a matter I will return to below. With this preliminary meaning of identity in mind, scholars talk about individual identity, corporate identity, and collective identity, as well as popular identity and official identity, among others. It is difficult to completely separate these identities from one another, and it is even more difficult to comprehensively study the relation of identity to the built environment with reference to only one kind of identity. Individual and corporate identities are strongly relevant when the identity of a certain decision maker, architect, or developer prevails to shape the built environment. Popular collective identity becomes significant when the public takes part in decisions related to the production of the built environment, and it helps us understand how members of the public interact with and make sense of their built environment. However, the official collective identity is worth more emphasis here as this dissertation analyzes the production of megaprojects that involve decisions made by high state officials and, sometimes, involve the state as a partner, not to mention that such megaprojects are often promoted as part of the national, as well as local, economic and social development plan. The official collective identity is what the nation-state promotes as its national identity. But, how can one understand national identity? For a long time, scholars studying nationhood and national identity have viewed them as essential, that is, as deeply rooted “things” that have always been there and have always been the same. However, today many historians as well as other scholars concerned with this topic view the nation, nationalism, and national identity as “constructed,” a view I adopt in this dissertation.
The Constructedness of Identity

We owe the notion that national identity is “constructed” to Benedict Anderson who in his seminal work *Imagined Communities* (2006; first published 1983) tells us that the nation is “an imagined political community” (p. 6). Illustrating this notion, Anderson writes:

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion …. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined [italics in original]. (p. 6)

Anderson (2006) traces nationalism to Europe in the eighteenth century, the period of the dissemination of print or what he refers to as “print-capitalism,” which made the construction of “popular nationalism” possible. Print-capitalism, according to Anderson, produced print-languages, which reduced the many languages and dialects spoken by the various ethnic groups in any certain area to a few, thus making print profitable. At the same time, print-capitalism made it possible for different groups of people to imagine themselves as a part of a community or a nation who uses the same language and reads the same newspaper. Furthermore, print-capitalism helped one nation to imagine other nations beyond its own geographic boundaries. In response to this popular nationalism and in order to protect the interests of the imperial dynasties, the state constructed official nationalism. This kind of nationalism is produced and maintained by the many state institutions, be they military, juridical, educational, administrative, or others.

Not only is Anderson’s theorization of imagined communities significant for understanding identity as a construction, but it is also significant for understanding the relation of national identity to colonial states and space. Anderson (2006) traces official nationalism to “the imaginings of the colonial state” (p. 163). Although colonial states were “anti-nationalist,” the spread of their ideologies and the implementation of their policies were through the establishment of institutions that eventually became responsible for the production of national
identities in the postcolonial states. Anderson is explicit about “the deep driving power of capitalism” (p. 185) behind the institutions that created the national identity.

**The Constructedness of the City**

Following Anderson’s conceptualization of imagined communities, many scholars give new insights into the understanding of the city and the urban built environment as well as the relation between the city’s built environment and identity. James Donald (1999) wonders if the city even exists. He writes:

*The city* is an abstraction, which claims to identify what, if anything, is common to all cities. The category designates a space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication, and so forth. By calling this diversity *the city*, we ascribe to it a coherence or integrity. One way of thinking that coherence would be to treat the category of *the city* as a representation. But the concept of representation, although in the end it is indispensable, may raise more problems than it solves when we try to think about both the thingness of the city and the city as state of mind [italics in original]. (p. 8)

Donald concludes that the city is an “imagined environment,” which “embraces not just the cities created by … architects, planners and builders, sociologists and novelists, poets and politicians, but also the translation of the places they have made into the imaginary reality of our mental life” (p. 8).

In tandem with Donald, Alev Çinar and Thomas Bender (2007) likewise see “cities as imagined places” (p. xii). According to them, not only do “collective imaginations” constitute communities but they also constitute the city “so unquestionably and obviously as a single space” (p. xv; p. xii). In other words, “Just as the ‘nation’ is an abstract concept that is reified through a variety of … representations … so is the ‘city’” (p. xv). Similarly, Anthony King (2007) suggests that what we call the city “exists only in our heads or in the discourses of those who work in the various arts and media” (p. 2). For we mostly live in “a fragment of the city
City fragments are “the bases of communities”; they are where demonstrations as well as celebrations take place; they are the places of memory and nostalgia. As such, these fragments become the material of the “narratives and tales of the city” and the base of an “urban identity.”

King (1996) believes the city is “imagined” and “imaged” through its built environment, be it its modern architecture and the skyline it produces or its ancient architecture. Thus, he argues that “the materiality and visibility of the building” not only constitute and represent the city, but they also represent the nation (p. 101). Here, King gives the example of the emergence of the skyscraper in late-nineteenth-century America, which many scholars agree strongly relates to the “manifestation of nationalism, namely the search for a national (American) architectural style … embodying a distinctive American identity” (p. 105). The production of early skyscrapers in the United States also relates to “personal ambition” and the search for “corporate identity” (p. 109). Recognized as a feature of American civilization by the early twentieth century, the skyscraper continued throughout the twentieth century to represent the ideology and values of the economic forces that are mostly responsible for its production, including those of the capitalists. Eventually, the skyscraper becomes a global “marker of modernity” (p. 105), stimulating competition among cities to possess the tallest building.

*The Urban Built Environment as Constructive and Expressive of Identity*

Harvey (1989b, 1990, 1991) addresses identity as it relates to the urban built environment and the capitalist system of production. Harvey (1990) argues that under modernism the relation between place and individual and communal identities became stronger. More important, “loyalties to place” became more significant than “loyalties to class,” and political action became
spatialized (p. 273). For after all, the state, itself a modern concept, is a “spatialization” (p. 273). Harvey tells us that the loss of urban fabric under modernism brought about by capitalists’ creative destruction meant the loss of “traditional sites of collective memory and identity” (1991, p. 55). The urban spectacle and “the commodification of the city and its spaces and places” are meant to “compensate for that loss” (p. 55). It is in this light that Harvey understands the spectacle of Times Square in the early-twentieth century. Times Square served, at least in “surface appearance,” as “a classless space of … togetherness” (p. 62). It was “the source of civic pride,” becoming “the heart of Manhattan, of New York City, and even, at times, the nation” (p. 61). Times Square was a place to celebrate some kind of community in a situation of an increasingly class-divided, alienated society and growing “commercialism”: “the place to which the populace flocked in manifestation of communal unity at times of trauma, celebration, and ritual” (p. 62).

If Times Square served at times as the heart of the American nation, the city of Ankara at large in the 1930s was conceived to create a new Turkish national identity. Alev Çinar (2007) shows how the building of Ankara as the capital of the new Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the organization of the city’s spaces, and the shape of its buildings were inseparable from the building of the modern Turkish nation-state. The new nation adopted a secular modernization project, which replaced Ottomanism and Islam. This project was to be materialized through the spaces of the city. In other words, Ankara’s urban design and architecture were “the means” and “the product” of this project of modernization (p. 153). According to Çinar, through “the making of the city” and its spaces, “modernism as a founding ideology came to constitute the social reality of [the city’s] citizens” (p. 153). The city’s architecture, which through most of the 1920s continued to incorporate features of the Ottoman
and Islamic architecture commensurate with the then prevailing Ottoman national identity, was soon to change. Influences of Ottoman and Islamic culture were now seen as backward and to be abandoned in favor of modernism. Only Europeans, the bearers of modernity’s ideals, could help construct the modern Turkish national identity. Thus, the city employed the service of European modern architects and planners to shape the city’s national architecture and materialize the nation’s modern identity. In modern Ankara, thus, no longer was the mosque to occupy the center of the city as was the tradition in cities in the Islamic world. Instead, the Nation Square with the Victory Monument at its center and the state public buildings flanking it constituted the center of the city. It was not the Muslim nation, but rather the secular nation and the secular power that were materialized in the city’s space. Similarly, the architectural vocabulary of residential and public buildings diverted from that of Ottoman and Islamic architecture. It is notable that Ankara’s built environment consistently changes with the change of the dominant political power and its ideology. As the decision-makers’ construction of nationhood changes, the materialization of national identity in space changes.

Identity under Contemporary Globalization

How does the concept of identity as a construct and the urban built environment as active in materializing identity relate to how globalization processes affect identity and the construction of identity through and its expression in the urban built environment? As shown in the Globalization section above, the influence of globalization on cultural production in general is a topic that many scholars have been concerned with and have addressed over the past few decades. Culture and identity are inseparable; some scholars talk about “cultural identity.” In fact, many scholars tackling cultural transformations under globalization link those to the
question of identity change under the processes of globalization. It is not surprising then that we
find discourses on identity transformation similar to those on the qualities of cultural productions
under globalization. Building on scholarly work on homogeneity, heterogeneity, and hybridity of
culture under globalization, scholars have discussed how relevant the question of identity
becomes under globalization, how global flows transform identities, and the implications of this
new condition for the urban built environment.

Robertson (1995) finds that national identities are not endangered by contemporary
globalization processes. On the contrary, he argues that the drive for nationhood is an important
part of the processes of globalization. He agrees with the argument of Liah Greenfeld that
national identities “developed as a part of an ‘essentially international process’” (p. 30).23
Furthermore, Robertson argues that “much of the apparatus of … the national-state organization
of societies, including the form of their particularities – the construction of their unique identities
– is very similar across the entire world [italics in original]” (p. 34). Robertson, therefore, finds
that the argument that globalization threatens national identities oversimplifies “global
dynamics” (p. 34) in the construction of the nation-state. Robertson’s argument resonates in a
way with Anderson’s argument above.

On a related note, Harvey argues that the search for collective identity, as well as
individual identity, becomes significant under the condition of global capital flows. Harvey
understands the search for identity under globalization as an “opposite reaction” to the
continuously transforming world under globalization (1990, p. 302). Similarly, Manuel Castells
(1996) believes “cultural identities” will not disappear under globalization. Rather, the search for
and the expression of identities become fundamental under globalization.

There seems to be wide agreement among scholars on the persistence of the relevance of identity under contemporary globalization. But how do globalization processes transform identities? As shown above, Harvey (1989b, 1990) believes that in this contemporary phase of globalization, which he basically sees as driven by global capital flows and capitalists’ underlying logic of accumulation and overaccumulation, the differentiation of products becomes significant for the command over the ever-expanding global market. Capitalists, according to Harvey, are well aware that the varied products need people of “different identities” who would feel the need to consume those products. Since commanding the market requires consistent change of products and product qualities, it follows then that identities should be manipulated consistently to create people’s need for such products or commodities. Thus, as many scholars agree, under contemporary globalization, not only does the diversity of identities among nations become important, but also the fragmentation of identity into “consumer identities” becomes significant. Harvey and other scholars see such identities as superficial and defined by the “style,” “look,” and “image,” among other things. As Harvey (1990, p. 288) puts it, “the acquisition of an image (by the purchase of … designer clothes and the right car) becomes a singularly important element in the presentation of self … and … becomes integral to the quest for individual identity, self-realization, and meaning.” Thus “investment in image building” (p. 288) to establish an identity extends from the individual, through corporations, to governments, not to mention the nation.

Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner (1997) seem to be more optimistic than Harvey about the influence of globalization on identity. In understanding identity as a construct, they see the potential for remaking empowering identities under globalization. Cvetkovich and Kellner believe that the situation of intersecting global and local forces makes the construction of “hybrid
identities” legitimate, particularly considering that the local itself is a hybrid influenced by global forces. However, they argue that the endurance of national identities in their more “traditional” meaning should not be underestimated, for the last few decades witnessed a “resurgence of nationalism” (p. 8) along with the growing globalization processes. Cvetkovich and Kellner conclude that under contemporary globalization identity becomes more complex, combining local, national, and global ingredients, not to mention specificities such as gender and race. In other words, “traditional” identity is at work along with “new local hybrid” (p. 8) identities.

AlSayyad’s work (2001) on identity and hybridity is relevant here. According to AlSayyad, “hybridity tends to juxtapose … objects from different and normally separated sources” (p. 5). In other words, hybridity is not about the combination of diverse components to form a coherent entity. Since identity is about constituting unity out of different components, it seems at first that identity and hybridity are incongruent. However, AlSayyad believes that the constructedness of identity makes “hybridity and identity … less incongruent” (p. 5). Like identity, hybridity is a construct aimed at maintaining difference. Despite the relevance of hybridity today, AlSayyad, like Cvetkovich and Kellner, believes hybridity is not a product of contemporary globalization since culture has always been hybrid. Robertson (1995) holds a similar view on hybridity. He argues that the nation-state has always been “a major agency for the production of diversity and hybridization” (pp. 40-41). Robertson speaks of nation-states’ “selective incorporation” of ideas and practices from other societies they encountered, including colonizers. Homi Bhabha was the first scholar to use the word “hybridity” in its “postcolonial connotation” in the 1980s (AlSayyad, 2001), and, like Bhabha, AlSayyad believes that hybridity emerges “from a space where elements encounter and transform each other”; the space Bhabha refers to as “the third space” (p. 7).
The work of AlSayyad (2008) on identity and its relation to the built environment in the Middle East is helpful when it comes to understanding how the hybridity of culture relates to the production of the urban built environment. AlSayyad believes hybridity is intrinsic to national identity, which he sees as constructed and constantly evolving. But AlSayyad (2001, p.16) asserts that “hybrid people do not always create hybrid places,” just as “hybrid places do not always accommodate hybrid people.” AlSayyad (2008) shows how in different historical moments in the Middle East – the colonial period, nation-state building phase, and globalization phase – urban forms expressed different identities. Even during the same historical period, such as the period of independence and nation-state building, identity expression in the built environment varied from the traditional to the modern (also see Wright, 2008). AlSayyad uses the term “traditional” cautiously and shows how in many cases what was produced under the rubric of national identity and tradition was an invention based on the idea of “an imagined continuous history and an assumed homogeneous community” (p. 260).

Duanfang Lu (2011) also addresses cultural hybridity and the built environment, focusing on modernity in the context of the developing world. Lu argues that a “Third World modernism” emerged in developing countries in the mid-twentieth century as societies in these countries adapted the Western modernity. According to Lu, this new modernity was but one of many ways of being modern and it led to the production of built environments in which the Western modernity was readjusted. Similarly, Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi (2008a, p. 3) argue that Middle Eastern countries “invented their own versions of modernism.” These new versions, according to Isenstadt and Rizvi, were sometimes consistent and other times inconsistent with Western versions of modernism. Gwendolyn Wright (2008) makes a relevant argument in the context of the Arab Middle East. According to her, modernism’s ideas, images, and ideologies
were reinterpreted as they intersected with local conditions and agencies. Analyzing buildings and urban forms in the region in the third quarter of the twentieth century, Wright finds several cases where Western and local modernist architects made reference in their designs to local culture or history or incorporated specific vocabulary in response to climatic conditions, producing different architectural forms in different cities and, even, in the same city. Wright also argues that master planning for Beirut, a government complex in the city, and large-scale housing projects in Lebanon designed in the 1940s-1960s in the International Style, but only partly implemented, were conceived not only to modernize the city and Lebanon but also to unify its population under the modern identity.

Mashary Al-Naim (2008) makes a different argument about modernity and the built environment in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In the 1950s and 1960s, several government-sponsored buildings and residential neighborhoods for government employees were designed in an adapted International Style and built in concrete – as opposed to mud used in traditional buildings. The designs and materials of these buildings as well as their association with government employees, who were held in high regard by the largely uneducated society, represented modernity to the city residents. Al-Naim argues that the increasing modernization of Riyadh’s built environment through the 1970s, which many city residents welcomed, is not to be understood as a part of the society’s modernity. Saudis remained traditional with conservative social values, and segregation between men and women in the public space continued as the norm. According to Al-Naim, in Saudi Arabia modernity was, and continues to be, widely connected with Westernization, and thus rejected. By the end of the 1970s, the expression of modernity in the city’s built environment was viewed as threatening to the Saudi identity. Consequently, the city undertook in the following two decades several large-scale government developments that adopted a “new
traditionalism” in which traditional local and regional architectural vocabulary and forms were reinterpreted and reintroduced (p. 134). In the early twenty-first century, as Riyadh prepared to transform into a regional and global financial center, privately-owned modern high-rise buildings began to change the image of the city. Al-Naim notes that despite this shift away from tradition in the city’s architecture, Riyadh residents remain conservative. Whereas they do not reject the economic and technological aspects of globalization, they “resist cultural globalization” (p. 145). Thus Al-Naim concludes that, unlike other global cities, Riyadh will globalize slowly and turn into “a very conservative global city” (p. 148).

Khalid Asfour (2009) advances an argument inconsistent with Al-Naim’s argument. According to Asfour the public in contemporary Arab cities identify with the Western modernity more than they did with tradition, and modern urban developments in these cities satisfy people’s aspiration for the Western modernity. AlSayyad’s argument (2008), however, is at least partly in line with Al-Naim’s argument. For AlSayyad, under contemporary globalization it is unlikely that the built environment will be able to fully represent the peoples, nations, and cultures within which it exists. Still, AlSayyad believes that today’s built environment remains an arena where “one may observe how local cultures mediate global domination” (p. 264).

Michael Sorkin (1992a) is skeptical about the differentiation of culture under the contemporary condition of global flows of capital, where what matters most is “production” and “sale.” Today’s urban built environment, as Sorkin sees it, is disassociated from its physical and cultural context. The differentiated “traditional” cities have been replaced with “the new city” that has “a universal particular, a generic urbanism inflected only by appliqué” (p. xiii). In this new city, the place becomes completely “ageographic,” that is, “it can be inserted equally in an
open field or in the heart of town” (p. xiii). In the new city, Sorkin asserts, “the idea of the city as the site of community and human connection” (p. xiii) is no longer relevant.

Harvey, who, as shown above, believes in the persistence of the relevance of identity and identity fragmentation under contemporary globalization, seems to hold a view partly akin to Sorkin’s. Harvey (1990) argues that the particularity of place, which he refers to as place-identity, can be understood in relation to how we shape our identities through “individuation,” be it at the level of the home or the nation. Today, we are witnessing a “collage of superimposed spatial images that implode in upon us” (p. 302). The uniqueness of place “in this shifting collage world,” becomes significant to bring people together and to establish and maintain “a secure social order” (p. 302). Still, Harvey is aware that efforts made to construct place-identity have not always been successful. The result is that only a limited sense of differentiation can be identified amidst wide similarities in the shape and pattern of built environments in different geographical locations. That is, at least in part, because of the tendency to employ the image, as a fetishized commodity subject to the generic values of the capitalist system of production, to establish the individuality of the urban built environment or the city at large.

Harvey (1989b, 1990, 1991) finds the production of the urban spectacle and collective identities related. He understands the production of the urban spectacle in Baltimore in the 1970s and 1980s as a means to create a sense of community and a collective identity for the city’s class- and racially-divided population. The development of Baltimore as a spectacle gave the city’s population “some sense of place-bound identity” (Harvey, 1991, p. 61). But Harvey (1989b, p. 273) is skeptical about these “unifying effects” of “the mobilization of the spectacle.” He believes the spectacle is “a fragile and uncertain tool for unification,” and, even, alienating since in the spectacle the consumer becomes “a consumer of illusions” (p. 273).
Scholars also address the simulacrum and its relation to identity. Studying the origin of the simulacrum, Jean Baudrillard (1981/1994, p. 6) identifies four “successive phases of the image.” In the first phase, the image is the “reflection of a profound reality.” In the second, “it masks … a profound reality.” In the third, “it masks the absence of a profound reality [italics in original].” In the fourth, the image “has no relation to any reality whatsoever” so that it becomes a simulacrum. Harvey (1990) argues that under contemporary globalization, and with the help of advanced materials and techniques, images have increasingly been produced as simulacra for the purpose of marketing. He finds the production of “near perfect replication” (p. 289) of cultural products threatening to identities and place-identity. Similarly, Sorkin (1992a, p. xiv) speaks of the city as a “city of simulation” in which architecture draws its authority from images borrowed from history. Commenting on cities in the United States, Sorkin writes, “today, the profession of urban design is almost wholly preoccupied with reproduction, with the creation of urbane disguises” (p. xiv). Baudrillard also understands American cities as simulations, but, unlike Sorkin, he does not speak of these cities hiding reality. Not only does Baudrillard consider American cities simulacra that have no connection with reality, but also he goes so far as to argue that reality no longer exists (Baudrillard, 1981/1994; Clarke & Doel, 2004). For Baudrillard, today we live in the hyperreality of the simulacrum where there is no distinction between the image and reality.

The discussion of the simulacrum and simulation as they relate to the urban built environment under contemporary globalization begs the discussion of “disneyfication,” a significant phenomenon that Sorkin (1992a, 1992b) and other scholars find a serious problem in the urban built environment of the past few decades. Sorkin (1992a, p. xiv) believes that the city under global flows becomes “the city as theme park.” The theme park, Sorkin writes, is:
The place that embodies it all, the ageographia, the surveillance and control, the simulations without end. The theme park presents its happy regulated vision of pleasure – all those artfully hoodwinking forms – as a substitute for the democratic public realm, and it does so appealingly by stripping troubled urbanity of its sting, of the presence of the poor, of crime, of dirt, of work. (p. xv)

Like the theme park, which is a major design component of Disney World, Sorkin (1992a) argues, the city today disassociates itself from reality. It lacks sensibility to the needs, values, and traditions of the communities living in it. It is a city with “happy-face,” “theme-park” buildings; a city of deceptive architecture (Sorkin, 1992a). It is a city that operates, like Disneyland and its theme parks, “by means of extraction, reduction, and recombination” (Sorkin, 1992b, p. 208); a city of ageographic space. According to Sorkin (1992a, p. xiv), “whether it represents generic historicity or generic modernity,” the design of the theme-park city follows the same formula of advertising, “the idea of pure imageability.” This brings us back to the production of the urban spectacle, which, as we have seen, Harvey identifies as characteristic of today’s urban development.

Not all scholars studying transformations of the urban built environment under contemporary globalization agree that the city has become disneyfied. There are even some scholars who recognize the similarity between today’s city and Disney World but seem uncritical of it. For example, Fainstein (2001) questions the criticism of the Canary Wharf development as being Disney-like, inauthentic, and artificial, evoking a past that has never existed on the site. She argues that such a disneyfication argument suggests that there was once a time when authentic designs dominated, and points out the difficulty of defining what authentic design is. However, she accepts what she believes is a rather limited definition of the term: a historically accurate design or a design that responds naturally to everyday life and economic functions. Concerning historical accuracy, Fainstein argues that ever since the Renaissance, major works of urban design in the West have incorporated “false” facades that imitated those of past times.
Concerning authenticity as a response to social forces, Fainstein argues that today’s developments, including Canary Wharf, are “reasonably accurate” (p. 209) in portraying the social forces underlying them.

Fainstein (2001) challenges critics who hold on to Marxist concepts and see in mass production the alienation of products from their producer, thus the fetishism of commodity. According to Fainstein, these concepts are no longer applicable in our contemporary societies, in which as Manuel Castells theorizes the “space of flows” dominates the “space of places.” According to Castells (1996, p. 200), today the processes of technological revolution and socioeconomic restructuring have led to the emergence of the “space of flows,” where “social practices can … be simultaneous without being physically contiguous.” This is unlike the “space of places,” as viewed by social theorists, where “space is the material support of time-sharing social practices, and it allows for simultaneity” (p. 200). Fainstein believes that in an era dominated by movements of information, capital, and people and the “manufacture of financial products” and service consumption, “Disney World is an authentic reflection of underlying economic and social processes [italics in original]” (p. 209). But Castells himself does not regard Disney-like architecture as expressive of the era we live in, and he criticizes “architectural pastiche” (p. 202), which imitates historic cities. Perhaps, Venturi and Baudrillard would have served Fainstein’s argument best. For Venturi, “Disney World is nearer to what people really want than anything architects have ever given them” (quoted in Goldberger, 1972, p. 41). Disneyland, Venturi believes, is “a symbolic American utopia” (p. 92). For Baudrillard (1981/1994), Disneyland is no different than Los Angeles or other American cities; they all are simulacra belonging to the hyperreality in which we live today.
Discourse

In the previous sections, I have reviewed literature on the topics of globalization, capital, and identity and the ways they relate to the production of the urban built environment. I have touched indirectly, and at least in part, upon the role of the discursive in understanding such topics. In this section, I review literature on discourse and its relation to the production of the built environment under globalization processes.

The Expressiveness and Constructiveness of Discourse

The term “discourse” is one of the most complex and controversial terms. The first meaning of this term that comes to mind is that discourse expresses thoughts and ideas on a certain topic, whether in writing or in speech. The Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary also defines discourse as “a connected speech or writing,” “a linguistic unit … larger than a sentence,” and “a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts.”

English-language dictionaries generally define discourse in relation to language and as a means to “express” preexisting things or situations. Thomas Markus and Deborah Cameron (2002; also see Fairclough, 1995) find that the dominant meaning of the term “discourse” in linguists’ work is, quoting Fairclough, “social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations” (p. 10). Markus and Cameron expand this meaning, which they believe implies spoken language, to include written language.

Another body of theory on discourse is the one that sees meanings as being constructed in discourse, which some scholars, such as Kevin Williams (2003), believe may include text, images, films, or even the built environment itself. Discourse in such theory becomes “a social

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construction of reality, a form of knowledge” (Fairclough as quoted in Markus & Cameron, 2002, p. 10). The “constructive,” as opposed to the “reflective” nature of discourse, is often associated with social constructionists, postmodernists, and post-structuralists, though, as I show below, in its broader sense it is not irrelevant from Marxist theory.

One of the most influential works on the theorization of discourse as constructive of reality is the work of French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault, whose work has had great impact on the works of other theorists, including those in the fields of media and discourse. One of Foucault’s seminal works on discourse is *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969/1972) in which he carries out an analysis of discourse and discursive formations and defines discourses as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). Foucault admits that discourses consist of signs, but he believes that the role of discourses is more than to use these signs as a representation of things. Discourses, according to Foucault, should not be reduced to signs, texts, and speech. It is through discursive formations that objects, or subjects, are produced and reality is constructed.25

Foucault was attacked by historians who see in his definition of discourse a negation of the existence of historical events. Sara Mills (2004) believes this attack to be a result of a misunderstanding of Foucault’s conception of discourse. For her, what Foucault’s definition of discourse entails is that humans’ perception of objects and events and the way they interpret them depend on discursive structures. These structures “make objects and events appear to us to be real, material or significant” (p. 46). Foucault is not denying reality, but believes that it is only through discourse and discursive structures that one can comprehend reality. Similarly, C. Greig Crysler (2003, p. 7) writes, “[Foucault] asserts that what we perceive to be significant and how

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25 It is in this context that Foucault understands, for example, the objectification of madness that started at the end of the eighteenth century.
we interpret objects and events and set them within systems of meaning is dependent on ‘discursive structures’.”

It is important here to note that Foucault’s notion of discourse has evolved throughout his work. In its early conception, as obvious in Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault’s discourse does not engage the social context in which discourse is produced. Foucault has been criticized for overemphasizing the discursive and deemphasizing the non-discursive, that is, the role of the subject, object, and institutions in creating reality. As Hall (1996, p. 10) puts it, Foucault’s early work is not clear on “why it is that certain individuals occupy some subject positions rather than others.” Hall criticizes Foucault’s early work on discourse for providing a “one-dimensional, formal account of the subject of discourse” (p. 10). Similarly, commenting on Foucault’s early conceptualization of discourse, Siegfried Jäger (2001) criticizes Foucault’s emphasis on the linguistic and his dismissal of the constantly evolving context in which discursive activities take place. Jäger sees that discursive activities, non-discursive activities, and objects interact to create the reality. Gilles Deleuze (1988, p. 31) argues that “as *The Archaeology of Knowledge* proposed to define the forms of statements, it contended itself with indicating the other forms in a negative way, as the ‘non-discursive’.” *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, according to Deleuze, remained “tied to [k]nowledge” and to the “primacy of the statement in knowledge” (p. 33).

Although it may be fair to criticize Foucault for his tendency to emphasize the discursive over the non-discursive in his early work, particularly in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, it is unfair to generalize this criticism to his later work where he investigates power relations and introduces them as central to understanding discourses. Scholars such as Hall (1996) support my reading of Foucault’s work in this regard. As Hall puts it, discourse in Foucault’s later work
becomes “a regulative and regulated formation” (p. 11). Thus, who produces discourse becomes a matter that depends on social power relations, and power relations are constituted through discourse. John Tagg (1999), for instance, agrees that Foucault rejects the idea that knowledge and power are in opposition or dissociated. Tagg writes:

> For Foucault, power produces knowledge. Power and knowledge directly imply one another. The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information. Diffused and entrenched, the exercise of power is perpetually creating knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. (pp. 262-263)

In fact, Foucault (1975/1995, 1976/2003a, 1974/2007) argued that it was within the exercise of power that the formation of some new fields of expertise and branches of knowledge, such as clinical medicine, psychiatry, and educational psychology, was possible.\(^{26}\) Power supports a kind of discourse about a “natural rule” or a norm; it defines a “code of normalization” (Foucault, 1976/2003a, pp. 38-39). Such a discourse, in its turn, reinforces power and the exercise of power through discourse (ibid).

**Power Relations in Discourse**

Foucault understands power as relational and traceable in different social activities. According to Foucault (1984/2003b; also see Foucault, 1982/2003c), “in human relationships, whether they involve verbal communication … institutional, or economic relationships, power is always present: [there is] … a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other” (p. 34). Power relations, Foucault asserts, “exist at different levels, in different forms,” and they are “mobile, reversible, and unstable” (p. 34). Foucault’s power is a “disciplinary power,” which he argues partly replaced and partly worked along with “sovereign power” in the

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\(^{26}\) Another example of how the exercise of power can produce knowledge and discourse is the production of knowledge on colonized societies, which I discuss under the subsection Discourse and Identity below.
West since the seventeenth century (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 216). Describing discipline, Foucault (1975/1995, p. 215) writes, “it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology.” An important point here is that unlike sovereign power, disciplinary power is “exercised” not simply “held.” Furthermore, it is exercised “over” and “through” the subject, or individual, the capacities of the body, and groups of individuals, to regulate their behavior (Dean, 1999, p. 19). Discipline, according to Foucault (1975/1995), may be exercised by institutions, such as prisons, schools, or hospitals. It may be taken by “pre-existing authorities that find in it a means of reinforcing or reorganizing their internal mechanisms of power” (p. 215), such as intra-familial relations. In addition, it may be taken by “state apparatuses whose major, if not exclusive, function is to assure that discipline reigns over society as a whole [such as] the police” (p. 216). For Foucault’s power is “not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with” (Foucault, 1978/1990, p. 93). Rather, it “is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (p. 93).

Although many scholars and theorists agree on Foucault’s understanding of discourse as both constructive of what it speaks and being constructed through power relations, they do not necessarily agree on the way Foucault understands power relations through which discourse is produced. Marxist scholars differ from Foucault’s understanding of power, linking power to material production. They believe that the capitalist class that controls the means of material production dominates other classes in society. In other words, and as Mills (2004) puts it, Marxists think of the issue of power in a binary way: the powerful and the powerless. They, thus, diverge from Foucault who sees power as having different degrees. Where Marxists’ power is
embodied in structures such as the capitalist class, Foucault’s power, as I have shown above, is not a structure.

Since Marxist theorists see that the capitalist class controls the means of material production, they believe “it is … [capitalists’] ideas, their views and accounts of the world and how it works, that dominate the outlook of capitalist society” (Williams, 2003, p. 37). Capitalists’ ideology is “the dominant ideology of the society … [that shapes] the thinking and action of all other classes in society, including the working class” (p. 37). Lefebvre (1991), for example, identifies the hegemony of one class as an important aspect of capitalism. In this he follows Antonio Gramsci, who argues that the dominant class uses “consensual control” to maintain its rule over the rest of the society. Unlike “coercive control,” consensual control involves processes of “negotiation, mediation, and compromise” through which the public assimilate the worldview of the dominant class (Williams, 2003, p. 54; also see Bate, 1975). Lefebvre argues that hegemony extends to all aspects of society, including culture, knowledge, and ideas and that it works through “human mediation: policies, political leaders, parties … institutions and experts” (p. 10). He argues that the capitalist class uses knowledge to maintain its hegemony. Similarly, Ralph Miliband (cited in Williams, 2003, p. 38) views media discourse as a part of the “process of legitimation” for capitalism and its tenets. He argues that since media are businesses mostly owned by capitalists, they produce discourses that promote private business as significant for a good economy and for democracy. Such discourses disseminate ideas and values that are meant to enhance the domination of capitalist class, making the public believe that such domination is natural and inevitable. It follows, then, that Marxist scholars, like postmodernists, social constructionists, and post-structuralists, see the “real” constructed through
discourse. Marxist scholars, however, differ from these other scholars by seeing discourse as constructed according to capitalist interests.

*Discourse and Identity*

Discourse, because it is capable of constructing reality and is produced through power relations in society and in social activities, relates to identity. The significance of discourse for identity construction can be concluded from Anderson’s (2006) emphasis on the language. After all, discourse in its definition as a “language in use” is not irrelevant from discourse in its definition as constructive of reality and constructed through social practices and their underlying power relations, since speaking and writing is a part of any social practice (Markus & Cameron, 2002). In this sense, both discourse and language are a product and a means of developing new constructs (ibid). Anderson notes the power and efficacy of language “for generating imagined communities” (p. 133), and he sees the nation as “conceived in language” (p. 145). Perhaps, among the most obvious examples of how discourse constructs nations is the national anthem. When “people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody,” Anderson writes, “the image … [is] unisonance” (p. 145).

Hall (1996) is even more explicit than Anderson about the significance of discourses for the creation of identities. He writes, “precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies” (p. 4). The notion that discourses can construct identity, and reality in general, shows how powerful discourses can be and how useful discourse analysis may be for understanding many phenomena. In fact, this is what discourse analysts often emphasize. Jäger (2001), for
example, asserts that discourse analysis is not only concerned with interpretations of that which already exists, but also with “the analysis of the production of reality which is performed by discourse – conveyed by active people” (p. 36).

Regarding discourse analysis and how it may uncover the construction of identity, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (2003; first published 1978) is helpful. Said stresses the significance of discourse analysis for the study of Orientalism and shows how discursive practices can produce the West’s Other. Through his analysis of Western discourse on Arabs and Islam, including scholarly and literary works as well as travelers’ accounts, Said shows how discourse on Orientalism and the institutions that supported it constructed the Orient, particularly the Middle East, and the Oriental in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a reality for the West. These constructs never existed before in such a general, reductive, negative, and static manner as created by the West. Said understands the discourse on the Orient within the framework of Western imperial interests in the Middle East. In other words, he sees this discourse as a part of the colonizer’s political project to produce the colonized in a negative manner that helps maintain colonial rule. According to Mills (2004), Said’s Orientalism was significant for the development of colonial discourse theory, which critically studies colonial writings and their effects on the colonized. Colonial discourse theorists, including Said, have been criticized for adopting a binary power relation when it comes to power involved in the production of colonial discourse: the powerful colonizer and the powerless colonized. Said’s Orientalism is criticized for understanding Orientalist discourse and knowledge as “all-powerful,” leaving no room for “resistance to discursive structures” (p. 106). Furthermore, Said, as well as other colonial discourse theorists, are criticized for dismissing the colonized societies’ contribution to the production of colonial discourse and their resistance against the colonizer.
Advertising Discourse and Consumer Identities

Discourse also can construct consumer identities, a topic that Harvey addresses in the context of capitalist societies, particularly under contemporary globalization. Harvey (1989b, 1990, 1991) finds advertising discourses in their different forms to have always been significant to production and consumption processes under capitalism. He finds advertising strongly related to the acceleration of production and consumption processes and the shortening of turnover time of capital, which capitalists see as essential for achieving their goal of reproducing the capitalist class. We know that capitalists’ tendency for creative destruction is a part of their efforts to accomplish that goal. Integral to this process, Harvey (1990, p. 229) argues, is a “planned obsolescence in consumption,” in which capitalists invest in “the mobilization of … advertising to accelerate change.” It is in part through flooding the market with images that capitalists can master “the production of volatility” and “the manipulation of tastes and opinions” to serve their goals (p. 287). The increasing “construction of sign systems and imagery” (p. 287) becomes a significant characteristic of contemporary processes of globalization. Images and advertising discourses play an “integrative role in cultural practices” (p. 287), a role inseparable from capitalists’ growth and reproduction. Harvey believes advertising, particularly through the use of images, “is no longer built around the idea of informing or promoting in the ordinary sense” (p. 287). Rather it is directed towards playing upon people’s desires and tastes, even if it has to use contents, particularly images, that depart from the products it is selling.

Other scholars advance similar arguments on advertising as it relates to consumption. Appadurai (1996) argues that the global flow of media, which he refers to as “mediascapes,” particularly the circulation of advertisements, masks the agency of commodity producers and production forces. Through advertising, according to Appadurai, ideas about the agency of the
consumer are increasingly disseminated. Such ideas make the consumer believe that he or she is “an actor,” at the time he or she “is at best a chooser” (p. 42). Kenneth Thompson argues that advertising is an important mass medium in conveying “fashion and lifestyle imaginings,” thus driving “new markets” (cited in Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000, p. 15). Judith Williamson (1978) argues that advertising commodifies signifiers such as happiness and health and links them to products, the possession of which allegedly will directly give the user the desired quality.

**Discourse and the Urban Built Environment**

Crysler (2003, p. 4) asserts that “texts and writing play an instrumental role in shaping the critical and imaginative space in which members of a built environment profession – architecture, planning, urban design – operate.” Discourses, as Crysler sees them, have significant effects on the way we “understand, imagine, and act in relation to the world around us” (p. 4). Markus and Cameron (2002) are more explicit about the strong relation between discourses and the built environment. They state that although “buildings are not linguistic objects … the meaning we accord to them is heavily dependent on texts about them, texts whose medium is written or spoken language” (p. 12). For Markus and Cameron, language, whether in the form of building programs, magazine articles, or brochures, shapes buildings and the way we understand and experience them. Their argument is in line with King’s argument (1996) that, in a competitive world, cities and corporations know that it is not enough to actually build the “tallest” structure or building. “The myth,” King writes, “needs to be created discursively and then disseminated around” (p. 104). Harvey (2001a) also finds discourses, including advertising, to have always been significant for the production of the urban built environment and place-identity, particularly under global capitalist economy. According to Harvey, capitalists use
discourses as a part of their efforts to strike a balance between “commercialization” and
“distinction” of their products. Under globalization processes, “there are always strong
discursive effects at play in defining what is or is not so special about a product, a place, a
cultural form, a tradition, an architectural heritage” (p. 408).

Real-estate advertising, particularly of megaproject developments, is among discourses
on the urban built environment that have received considerable attention in the past few decades.
For example, Brownill (1994) shows how the advertisement of Canary Wharf serves to create a
new positive image for the previously derelict, deteriorating site of this development through the
use of imagery and rhetoric. Canary Wharf is advertised and marketed as a “unique place,” an
“architectural showpiece,” and a “cultural addition” to London (p. 145). According to Brownill,
the brochures and advertisements of Canary Wharf not only serve the marketing of this
development but also have an ideological component, which conceals the power relations
involved in this development. These advertisements present the high-end megaproject as all
“positive and impartial” (p. 149). They introduce it as the only alternative for the development of
the area and speak of the resulting social and economic changes in the area as inevitable.
Moreover, Brownill finds that the publicity on Canary Wharf speaks of “social regeneration,” at
the time of the development’s history when polarization between the rich and the poor, as well as
homelessness, was increasing.

Brownill’s argument (1994) is very much in line with the argument of Eric Denis (2006)
on discourse as it relates to recent megaprojects in Egyptian cities. Over the past two decades, a
number of upscale developments, such as Dreamland discussed above, took place in Cairo’s
desert lands, which were once abandoned or the sites of industrial facilities. Denis argues that the
shift in people’s perception of Cairo’s desert lands during that period is “socially constructed
through neoliberal discourses that redefine the desert as virgin terrain for the refoundation of Egyptian society” (p. 62). Similarly, the preference for gated communities located on the city’s outskirts, according to Denis, is related to discourses that stigmatize “the street” and construct the city as evil and polluted, while constructing the new developments on the city’s outskirts as the places where the elite can protect themselves from the “risks” and “ill effect” of the city (p. 50).

Dovey (1999) is another scholar concerned with advertising discourse on the urban built environment. Studying advertising of corporate office towers in Melbourne, Australia, he shows how advertising discourse reflects values of “the corporate elite” (p. 108) it primarily addresses. For Dovey, “advertising portrays an ideal rather than a reality; it distorts as it mythologizes” (p. 108). He shows, for example, how many advertisements “present the building as a ‘masterpiece’ created … by Van Gogh, Seurat, Michelangelo …” (p. 108). These advertisements endow the advertised building with an “aesthetic ‘aura’” that hides social, economic, and political processes involved in the production of the urban built environment. Furthermore, these advertisements portray the advertised building in a way that distorts its context, dwarfs its surroundings, and presents the advertised building as dominating the city’s skyline. Dovey also finds advertising discourse to have put significant emphasis on the view from the advertised building. Dovey understands such advertising discourse as a part of seeking symbolic capital, which he believes is the rationale behind the ubiquity of corporate towers in Melbourne as well as elsewhere.

The Urban Built Environment as the Medium and Message of Discourse

Another important topic scholars discuss in relation to advertising and the urban built environment is the use of the built environment as the medium for advertising, which sometimes
results in the “fusion” of advertisement and the built environment. Harvey, for example, believes that advertising strongly relates to the concept of urban spectacle. Harvey (1991, p. 62) tells us that “the selling of signs and images has always been fundamental … to capitalism,” although it became more important since the early 1970s, the period he associates with increasing global capital flows (Harvey, 1990). Buildings and urban spaces became places “for advertising and commodification” in which capitalists use “the artifices of display and spectacle as part and parcel of … [their] strategies for insertion into daily life” (Harvey, 1991, p. 62). Furthermore, in order to be up to the “interurban competition,” city officials and decision makers believe they need to produce urban spectacles with images and advertising through which they can “advertise and sell … [their cities] as prime locations for production, consumption and command and control functions” (Harvey, 1989b, p. 233). Harvey’s argument suggests that the urban built environment under capitalism has ceased, at least in part, to serve as a medium that conveys deeper messages relating to the social relations it involves. The built environment, like other commodities under the capitalist mode of production, becomes a fetish. Put in another way, dressed in advertisement and obsessed with images, the built environment as a medium becomes separated from its “original” message to take on the new message of consumption.

Guy Cook (2001) asserts that the “message” and the “medium,” as well as the power relations they involve, are integral parts of discourse. We often come across the terms “medium” and “message” in discussions about the urban built environment. For example, discussing the construction of Turkish national identity through Ankara’s built environment, Çinar (2007) views the city’s built environment as a medium through which messages of national identity are conveyed. Çinar writes, “each ideological shift in power brought a different sense of nationhood and modernity … using the city and its spaces as the medium for their material manifestation”
(p. 176). Umberto Eco (1997) speaks of the built environment as a message. He argues that “we commonly experience architecture as communication, even while recognizing its functionality” (p. 182). For him, a building or an architectural element communicates denotative meanings, that is, its function, as well as connotative meanings. A window on the façade of a building, for example, can communicate its functional meaning as an element that admits light into the internal space to which it belongs. It can communicate other denotative, but non-utilitarian, meanings such as being a part of a certain architectural rhythm. This same window may communicate some connotative meanings such as a certain ideology of the architect who designed this window. Eco expands this communicative function of architecture to consider architecture as a kind of mass communication, in the sense that it has “characteristics in common with the messages of mass communication” (p. 195). It follows, then, that the built environment itself is a discourse: its medium is the spatial organization, the architectural “vocabulary,” and the various building materials; its message can be constructing identity, selling the fetished commodity, or others.

In some way, understanding the built environment as integrated medium and message begs the discussion of McLuhan’s aphorism “the medium is the massage,” with its variant readings “the medium is the message” and “the medium is the mass-age” (McLuhan & Foire, 1967, p. 10; also see MacDonald, 2006). McLuhan coined “the medium is the massage” with electric mass media technologies, particularly the television, in mind. However, he believes this aphorism applies to all communication media even to a medium as old as the “technology of the alphabet” (p. 45). McLuhan’s “the medium is the massage,” on the one hand, indicates the oneness of the medium and the message. On the other, it emphasizes the significance of the medium over the message: the “nature of the media” (p. 8) of communication is more important
in shaping those who use it than the “content of the communication” (p. 8); thus the medium per
se becomes the message. According to McLuhan, “all media are extensions of some human
faculty” (McLuhan & Foire, 1967, p. 26; also see McLuhan & Gordon, 2003). The significance
of electric media of communication lies in their engagement of “all the senses simultaneously”
(p. 125), unlike earlier media that involve sight only. McLuhan sees a good potential for electric
media technology, which he believes are turning the world into a “global village” in the sense of
connectedness and harmony. McLuhan was criticized for his “utopian view of media
technologies” (MacDonald, 2006, p. 505). For example, Debord criticized McLuhan for being
“apologist” for the spectacle (cited in MacDonald, 2006). For Debord, the global village attests
to the success of capitalism as a “global spectacle.”

A Concluding Note

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature on the topics of globalization, capital, identity,
and discourse to help understand how scholars see the relation under contemporary globalization
processes between capital, identity, and discourse, on the one hand, and the urban built
environment, on the other. We have seen, for instance, how discourses on the urban built
environment, as well as the built environment itself, construct and express identities. These
identities, be they national identities, consumer identities, or others, are constructed in a context
of an increasing time-space compression and interconnectedness of countries and societies. In
such a context, various flows transform identities as well as discourses. The significance of
capital, particularly in the context of contemporary globalization, for the construction of
identities cannot be overemphasized. Producing national identity can be traced back to the

27 MacDonald (2006) finds such a criticism of McLuhan only partly fair. According to MacDonald, McLuhan
recognizes the bad side of the global village, including that it “has become a theatre of war, a staging area for
‘colossal violence’” (p. 507).
colonial period, which cannot be understood outside the expansionary agenda of capitalism. Discourses proved to be significant for colonial and capitalist expansion, not least for their capacity to create identities. Constructing consumer identities above all serves the interest of capitalists. And sameness and differentiation of cultural products, including the urban built environment, as well as identity construction through and expression in cultural products proved to be important for capitalists.

It is within this theoretical understanding of the interrelation among capital, identity, and discourse in the context of contemporary globalization processes at work in the city of Amman that I study transformations in the city’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century. Before I turn to the specific context of this study, it is important to elaborate on how major theoretical conceptions reviewed above inform the theoretical framework of this study. This is a task of the next chapter.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Research Method

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I discuss major theoretical conceptions and positions of scholars reviewed in Chapter 2 and how I use them to establish the theoretical framework for my analysis of recent transformations in the urban built environment in Amman under the condition of capital flows and the ways these transformations, as well as advertising discourse that accompanied them, relate to the question of identity. I end this section by describing my research methodology.

Theoretical Conceptions

I base my theoretical framework on the work of David Harvey, Michel Foucault, and Benedict Anderson discussed in Chapter 2 and illustrated in Table 3.1. Together, these works allow for an analysis of the influences of capital flows on Amman’s urban built environment at the macro-level of interstate, state, institutions, and class, on the one hand, and the micro-level of the individual who can exercise power understood in the Foucauldian sense and whose taste and identity are increasingly evolving and reconstructed through the interaction with various flows of globalization and through discursive formations.

Using the theories of Harvey and Foucault presents some challenges to my study, not least because they originate from a context different from this study. Foucault’s theory comes from his study of knowledge, power, and ethics in a Western European context. In such a context, Foucault finds disciplinary power to have partly replaced and partly worked along with sovereign power. It is challenging, but not impossible, to apply Foucault’s notion of disciplinary
Table 3.1

*Major Theoretical Conceptions Informing the Study’s Theoretical Framework*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Harvey</th>
<th>Foucault</th>
<th>Anderson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Capital is the dominant force in power relations and the major force behind the production of the urban built environment. Other forces are underplayed.</td>
<td>Capital is deemphasized as a force in power relations and in spatial production.</td>
<td>Capital is an important force behind the conception of the nation-state and the construction of nationhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The urban built</td>
<td>The urban built environment is an economic process integral to capitalist production and its logic of creative destruction. The urban built environment is produced to serve capitalists’ interest, not people’s needs. The urban image and spectacle are significant for consumption and for the construction of collective and consumer identities. Symbolic capital in the urban built environment serves capitalists’ interest.</td>
<td>Spatial arrangements are techniques or mechanisms through which power is exercised. The Panopticon, in its specific and general senses, is Foucault’s most significant example on this conception. In the Panopticon, the gaze is a technique through which normalization processes take place, and the conduct of individuals and groups of individuals is regulated.</td>
<td>The modern nation-state, which is a spatialization, is particularly the centrality of colonial-state’s government, contributed to the construction of the nation. National monuments, such as the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, express national identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Symbolic capital in the urban built environment serves capitalists’ interest.*
Table 3.1 (contd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Harvey</th>
<th>Foucault</th>
<th>Anderson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The urban built environment</td>
<td>as it is convertible to money capital.</td>
<td>Space is significant for the production of</td>
<td>Uses the terms nationness,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sameness and differentiation of the urban</td>
<td>and discourse.</td>
<td>nationhood, and nationalism; hence, national</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>built environment in different localities</td>
<td>Neither the state nor its institutions are</td>
<td>identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the logic of capital.</td>
<td>major players in the production of space.</td>
<td>identification and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Speaks of collective identity and consumer</td>
<td>Does not use the term identity. Rather speaks of</td>
<td>The nation is imagined through the nation-state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identities.</td>
<td>the production of the subject; hence,</td>
<td>institutions, which have colonial effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity is constructed through cultural</td>
<td>The subject is produced through discourse</td>
<td>Capitalism is a driving force behind its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>production, including the urban built</td>
<td>and the power relations it involves.</td>
<td>production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is constructed according to capitalists'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interest and ideologies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Advertising discourse.</td>
<td>Institutional discourse.</td>
<td>Official discourse;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse constructs consumer identities</td>
<td>Discourse constructs meanings, reality, and</td>
<td>language, particularly print-language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>imagined communities or</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse constructs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Panopticon is a schematic design conceived by Jeremy Bentham in 1791 with the aim of reforming the eighteenth-century prison in France, that is, transforming the prison from an institution of punishment to an institution of correction. Although, the Panopticon was never built, the analysis of the way it operates helped in the formulation of Foucault’s idea of the disciplinary power technology. The Panopticon consists of a large courtyard with a ring-shaped building at the periphery and a tower in the center. The building is divided into cells at different levels. Each cell has two windows: one opens onto the courtyard facing the tower, and the other opens onto the outside and brings in light. The tower has large windows facing the windows of the cells through which a supervisor in the tower observes inmates who are shut up in the cells. The Panopticon is not restricted to prisons. It is a disciplinary technique that applies to other functions and spaces, be they schools, factories, hospitals, or others, where a mechanism for continuous administration and control is required (see Foucault, 1975/1995).

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Table 3.1 (contd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Harvey</th>
<th>Foucault</th>
<th>Anderson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>the manipulation of people’s tastes. It also constructs the urban built environment.</td>
<td>objects. It is significant for the production of the subject.</td>
<td>nationness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is constructed through power relations that serve capitalists and the capitalist state.</td>
<td>It is constructed through social power relations, which may serve the state.</td>
<td>the nation-state.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power relations</th>
<th>Economic power.</th>
<th>Disciplinary power dispersed in all social activities and constituted through discourse.</th>
<th>The power of the state and its institutions. Economic power, particularly under colonial rule.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro-power of capitalists and the capitalist state.</td>
<td>Micro-power exercised at different levels, including the ordinary individual and the state.</td>
<td>Macro-power of the state.</td>
<td>Multifold and changeable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binary: the powerful and the powerless.</td>
<td>Reproduced through the urban built environment.</td>
<td>Exercised through space.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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a The Panopticon is a schematic design conceived by Jeremy Bentham in 1791 with the aim of reforming the eighteenth-century prison in France, that is, transforming the prison from an institution of punishment to an institution of correction. Although, the Panopticon was never built, the analysis of the way it operates helped in the formulation of Foucault’s idea of the disciplinary power technology. The Panopticon consists of a large courtyard with a ring-shaped building at the periphery and a tower in the center. The building is divided into cells at different levels. Each cell has two windows: one opens onto the courtyard facing the tower, and the other opens onto the outside and brings in light. The tower has large windows facing the windows of the cells through which a supervisor in the tower observes inmates who are shut up in the cells. The Panopticon is not restricted to prisons. It is a disciplinary technique that applies to other functions and spaces, be they schools, factories, hospitals, or others, where a mechanism for continuous administration and control is required (see Foucault, 1975/1995).
power in a non-Western context such as Jordan, where sovereign power cannot be overestimated. Another challenge, albeit one more easily overcome, is that Harvey’s theory focuses on what he refers to as “advanced capitalist” societies in the context of Western Europe and North America. Harvey acknowledges his Eurocentric approach (Gregory, 2006), an approach that some scholars criticize for reducing “the rest” to secondary passive places subject to the overwhelming power of capitalist systems (Gregory, 2006; Sheppard, 2006). Amman’s, and Jordan’s, economy does not follow the advanced capitalist system Harvey studies. But as Hall (1998) argues convincingly, we should keep in mind that there are “infinite variations within capitalism” (p. 615). Amman’s economy is capitalist, as I show in Chapter 4. And though using Harvey’s theory may present some challenge in the context of Amman, it is still applicable. The use of Anderson’s theorization of imagined communities and constructed identity in the context of Amman is less of a challenge than the use of Foucault’s and Harvey’s theory. For despite the significance of the European and American contexts for Anderson’s theorization, Anderson extends his theorization to include colonial effects on the construction of the identity of colonized societies and postcolonial nation-states, a context with which Jordan, particularly Amman, can very much identify. The British created the Jordanian state under the British Mandate and chose Amman as its capital. Furthermore, they established colonial institutions, such as the military, that were influential in constructing the Jordanian identity.

Another challenge in using the theories of Harvey, Foucault, and, to a lesser degree, Anderson is that they all engage space at different scale and level of detail than I do in this study (see Table 3.1). This is in part because they come from outside the discipline of architecture:

1 Jordan is a monarchy that has a hereditary ruling system and quasi-absolute rule. Gabriel Ben-Dor (2000) refers to such a system as an active monarchy, as opposed to the constitutional monarchies of Europe where the monarch’s power is limited. See “Patterns of Monarchy in the Middle East,” by G. Ben-Dor, 2000, in *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity*, edited by J. Kostiner, London: Lynne Rienner, pp. 71-84; “Monarchies in the Middle East: A Concluding Appraisal,” by F. Halliday, 2000, in *Middle East Monarchies*, pp. 289-303.
Harvey is a geographer, Foucault is a philosopher and psychologist, and Anderson is a political scientist. This is also partly because they use the scale of space that serves their projects and arguments best and demonstrates their perspectives. Thus, Harvey often studies space at a large scale: the scale of whole cities and the globe at large. He also addresses space at a relatively small scale such as in his treatment of megaprojects in Baltimore and the Canary Wharf development discussed above. Foucault engages the small scale of the individual building in his theorization. So he studies the prison, the asylum, and the clinic as institutions as well as spatial organizations inseparable from the logic behind their “birth,” to borrow Foucault’s word. Again, this is no surprise given the emphasis of Foucault’s project on the microscale of power. Anderson engages the scale of the state, which serves his purpose of understanding identity as it relates to the nation-state. He also touches upon the scale of the individual building as in his discussion of the expression of national identity in the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Combining the theories of Harvey, Foucault, and Anderson, which is uncommon in scholarly works, presents another challenge I undertake in this study. This is particularly the case in combining Harvey’s and Foucault’s theories, which at first seem to be irreconcilable, not least because of their emphasis on different levels and natures of power (see Table 3.1). Harvey’s power is the macro-power of capital, the capitalist class, and the capitalist state with its political-economy system. Foucault’s power is the micro-power of the individual exercised in different social activities. Harvey is often criticized for not engaging Foucault’s work, as well as other postmodernist theory, in his theorization of urban space and capitalism. His critics argue that using postmodernist theory as it relates to space could have helped make Harvey’s project more convincing and opened it up to multiplicity of possible readings of urban space, including those
that acknowledge and engage otherness such as gender and race. According to Cindi Katz (2006), Harvey’s failure to engage theory that addresses different power relations at different scales left his project economically deterministic and totalizing. Such a critique is only partly valid.

A close reading of Harvey’s work shows that he acknowledges forces other than the capitalist economy in the production of the urban built environment, though non-economic forces remain underplayed and secondary to the economic force in his theorization of the urban built environment. Harvey (1989b, 1990) pays attention to detail within his meta-theory of capital and recognizes differences even inside the capitalist class. Furthermore, he points out the significance of “the treatment of difference and ‘otherness’ not as something to be added on to more fundamental Marxist categories … but as something that should be omni-present from the very beginning in any attempt to grasp the dialectics of social change” (1990, p. 355). Harvey also speaks of power at the microscale of the individual or a group of individuals and does not rule out the possibility that those who are subject to the macro-power of the capitalist state and capitalist class would resist that power. He writes:

Those who define the material practices, forms, and meanings of money, time, or space fix certain basic rules of the social game. I do not wish to imply by this that those who define the rules always win any contest that may ensue. There are too many examples of unintended consequences (in which those in power define rules that undermine their own power base), and of oppositional groups learning and using the rules to overwhelm those who devised them, for such a simple equation to be credible. (p. 226)

Thus, although Harvey adopts the idea that power is a system of domination, he admits that such domination does not necessarily always succeed.

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Harvey (1990) convincingly argues that, under the current condition in which global capital has command over space, the concern for differences and otherness and the emphasis on the micro-power of the individual should not lead to the denial of the macro-power of capital or its dismissal as irrelevant. Harvey criticizes postmodernists, including Foucault, for avoiding the discussion of the power of money in what he calls “money economies,” particularly in capitalist societies. For Harvey, the power of money in such societies is a pressing issue. In fact, Harvey theorizes that despite its apparent differences from modernism, postmodernism is an extension of the logic of modernism and its capitalist mode of production: under postmodernism, Fordist capital accumulation takes the new form of flexible capital accumulation. Harvey, therefore, argues that postmodernists should not avoid the power of capital and its institutions, including the capitalist state, in their work on the urban built environment. Despite Foucault’s downplaying of macro-powers such as that of the capitalist state, he acknowledges that the macro-power of the capitalist state does exist. When asked why the power of the state seems to be reduced in his work, Foucault (1980) responded that he did not mean to undermine the effectiveness of the state’s power. According to Foucault, he did not want to put excessive emphasis on the state, since this would risk portraying it as having an exclusive power and thus undermine other mechanisms of power, which do not necessarily operate through state apparatuses. In other words, Foucault (1984/2003b, p. 35) does not rule out the idea that there exists “states of domination” within power relations. He acknowledges the power of the state, although he stresses that it does not play an exclusive role (Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1984/2003b, p. 35) disagrees that “power is a system of domination that controls everything and leaves no room for freedom.”
 Whereas Harvey’s project focuses on the macroscale of power and deemphasizes power at the microscale, Foucault’s project focuses on the microscale of power and deemphasizes power at the macroscale. And while Harvey emphasizes the power of money economy, particularly the capitalist economy, over other powers, Foucault emphasizes the dispersal of power in all social activities and plays down the power of money economy. Taken alone, neither of these two approaches is adequate for understanding transformations in the urban built environment under the condition of contemporary globalization, particularly in a context such as the city of Amman. Money economy was significant in transforming the city’s built environment in the early twenty-first century, and the power of capitalist corporations cannot be overemphasized. However, as I show in Chapter 4, Jordan’s economy is a capitalist economy shaped by formal legislative and institutional frameworks as well as informal socio-political patterns, including patronage, favoritism, and tribal loyalty. This makes social and political forces significant for understanding urban transformations in Amman even when focusing on the economy as a major power in shaping the city’s built environment. Furthermore, individuals and groups of individuals, including planners, architects, and legislators, played an important role in shaping Amman’s built environment in the early twenty-first century, and the power of such actors should not be dismissed. Therefore, bringing together Harvey’s and Foucault’s understanding of power relations can help better understand contemporary transformations in Amman’s built environment. Thus in this study, I bring into focus macro-power and micro-power, the power of a money economy as well as other powers, through the application of Harvey’s and Foucault’s theory to the context of Amman’s urban built environment.
Applying Theoretical Conceptions to the Study Context

Harvey’s theorization of urban development as integral to the capitalist mode of production is helpful in understanding the role of capital flows in the transformation of Amman’s urban built environment and how this transformation fits into capitalist production processes. Following Harvey, I begin from the assumption that the power of money economy is predominant in producing the urban built environment and investigate the degree to which capitalists’ power and values drove Amman’s developments in the early twenty-first century. I particularly study how capital flows to Amman intensified creative destruction, introducing new forms of social relations in the city. I investigate what the process of creative destruction involved in the context of Amman where industrial production – an important aspect in Harvey’s conception of creative destruction as it relates to urban development – was small. I also study transformations of the city’s urban built environment as they relate to the construction of the city image, understood as the shape of the built environment and the ways it is perceived by the city residents as well as the mental construction of this environment, and the relation of the new city image to the capitalist economy. In addition, I study the commodification of Amman’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century and its relation to capitalists’ logic of profit-making and continuous growth. I also investigate how the city’s contemporary image and commodified spaces were a means to construct Amman as a global city and, thus, increase the city’s and the country’s integration into the global economy.

Despite the significance of Harvey’s theorization for understanding the urban built environment, particularly for a study such as this that deals with the influences of the flow of capital on transforming the built environment, it remains inadequate for attaining a comprehensive understanding. The power of money, understood in relation to capitalist modes of
production, is not the only power at play when it comes to shaping the urban built environment. Socio-cultural and ideological forces as well as political forces, other than the political-economy force that Harvey emphasizes, have a strong bearing on the production of the urban built environment. Those forces involve power relations of different natures and at different scales. Harvey himself acknowledges forces other than economy and discusses differences among capitalists and the play of power at a microscale among them, although he remains focused on the macro-power of the capitalist economy. Thus, even a study that focuses on the economic force and recognizes the significance of a macro-power such as that of corporate capitalists for shaping the urban built environment in ways that produce value and stimulate consumption should not dismiss the agency of other groups and individuals as irrelevant. Agency is the capacity of the actor, whether an individual or a group of people, to exert power or “some degree of control over the social relations in which … [the actor] is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree” (Sewel, 1992, p. 20). Emphasis on capitalists’ agency in the production of the urban built environment reveals a significant part of the backdrop against which the urban built environment in Amman is produced. But, this emphasis does not help identify other agencies, which, for example, may help us understand the reason behind the use of different architectural vocabularies in Amman’s new developments. True, Harvey argues that under global capital flows, marks of distinction are important for the command of the market. But, his theorization does not help us understand why marks of distinction translate into this or that architectural vocabulary in the urban built environment in the same context. By itself, Harvey’s approach to the urban built environment does not explain the different ideologies and the subjectivity of decision makers, such as national or foreign planners and architects, and local legislators, who contribute to the production of the built
environment. Moreover, Harvey’s theorization falls short when it comes to understanding how different city residents exercise power as they interact with and make sense of their built environment in multiple ways.

Thus, Harvey’s approach to understanding the urban built environment needs to be complemented by a bottom-up, microscale approach. Here the work of Foucault is helpful. Applying Foucault’s notion of micro-power helps us understand how individuals in Amman, be they city officials, architects, or users from different segments of society, exercised power at different levels and forms as they interacted with their built environment, playing an active role in determining the shape, use, and meaning of developments in the city and contributing to the success or failure of capitalists’ agenda behind the production of the urban built environment. Combining Foucault’s and Harvey’s theorizations makes it possible to understand what agencies were involved in the production and consumption of the built environment in Amman and how such agencies intersected. Using Harvey’s and Foucault’s theorizations, we can start to talk about the agency of corporate capitalists as producers of Amman’s built environment, the agency of high state and city officials as decision makers and legislators, the agency of architects as authors of the design, and the agency of the city residents as users and consumers of the built environment.

I also use Harvey’s and Foucault’s theories of power relations, along with Anderson’s notion of identity constructedness, to understand how transformations of the urban built environment in Amman in the early twenty-first century with the power relations embedded in them communicated, and contributed to the construction of, the city residents’ identity. Following Anderson, I take identity, including national identity, as a construct, not as an essential thing that has always been there and will always be the same. Based on this conception,
people’s identity in Amman, including their national identity is constructed and includes colonial influences. As such, this identity and the ways it is negotiated in the city’s built environment are constantly evolving, continuously shaped and reshaped with the changing economic, political, and socio-cultural circumstances in the city, which are inseparable from global and regional forces. Thus, I study how Amman’s early-twenty-first-century urban transformations played a role in representing the city residents’ identity, or identities, and investigate different agencies involved in the construction of this identity through the city’s urban built environment and its expression in this environment. These agencies include a macro-power such as that of the capitalist economy, which is inseparable from the power of the state and creates and promotes certain identity, or identities, that will serve the interest of those who hold this power. Another significant agency in identity negotiation through the city’s built environment is the agency of individuals or groups of individuals such as architects, planners, and city residents, who may exercise power at the microscale, contributing to identity construction and expressing certain identities in the built environment.

As shown in Chapter 2, discourse is an important means for constructing objects as well as identity. I use Foucault’s notion of discourse as constructive of meanings and reality, or the objects of which it speaks, to investigate the role of advertising discourse that accompanied Amman’s contemporary urban developments in constructing Amman as a global city. I analyze advertising discourse to understand how this discourse, through the images and texts it transmitted, created the image of the city, defined certain norms regarding what a perfect lifestyle was, and conveyed the city residents’ identity. I also use Foucault’s and Harvey’s

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3 Joseph Massad, for example, argues that the Jordanian national identity can be understood as a product and an effect of colonial institutions. I discuss the Jordanian national identity, drawing upon Anderson’s theorization of identity and Massad’s work, among others, in Chapter 4. See Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan, by J. Massad, 2001, New York: Columbia University Press.
understanding of discourse as produced through power relations to investigate how power, be it at the macroscale or microscale, played in the production of advertising discourse on Amman’s urban built environment as well as in the interpretation of this discourse.

Using Harvey’s theory of the macro-power of capitalists, I investigate how advertising discourse promotes certain ideas – those of the capitalists – over others to support the interests of capitalist businesses and the capitalist class. In this light, I regard advertising discourse that accompanied Amman’s contemporary megaprojects as intended to persuade the consumers or audience of this discourse that they needed to consume, that is, buy, lease, or frequently use, the advertised developments, which after all were integral to capitalist modes of production. Their consumption was necessary to produce the growth of capitalists’ capital. Capitalists convince audiences to consume their products, constructing the audiences’ identities in a fashion that ultimately will serve capitalists’ interests. Using Foucault’s theory of the micro-power of the individual, I investigate how the audience of advertising discourse read or interpreted such advertising and whether they exercised power to resist the producers’ preferred reading of this advertising, thus resisting the corporate power. The audience might understand advertising discourse in ways different from what the producers of this discourse intended, and different individuals might make different sense of this discourse. This discourse might overwhelm the audience and place some restriction on their power to resist, particularly when seen as a part of media discourse that promoted similar ideas serving the interest of big businesses.

**Research Methodology**

The above discussion of the theoretical conceptions underpinning my research framework and how they are applied to my study sheds some light on the paradigm and perspective through
which I approach this study. I follow the constructivist perspective of understanding phenomena, objects, events, and processes. In the tradition of constructivism, we do not engage in a process of discovering knowledge, rather we construct it. We engage with objects in the world and make models and schemes to make sense of our experiences, continuously testing our constructions as we gain new experience. The interpretations we construct are historical, cultural, and social.\(^4\)

Following this perspective, I look for the complexity of subject views and meanings that are socially and historically situated and through which I can make sense of recent transformations in Amman’s urban built environment. The fact that I accept various subject views and meanings, however, does not mean that I totally agree with the social constructionist perspective of many postmodernists and poststructuralists according to which all reality is socially constructed, nothing or no status quo is essential or inevitable, and all interpretations of a certain process or object are acceptable. Rather, different interpretations need to be verified; just as there are many possible valid interpretations, there are many invalid interpretations. Furthermore, taking into consideration subject views, be it through seeking response of individual research participants or accepting micro-theory, does not mean excluding macro-theory. In other words, just as approaching a certain phenomenon or a situation from above is inadequate for a comprehensive understanding, approaching a phenomenon or a situation from below is too limiting. For example, in advertising discourse, we must investigate the agency of its producers, their intentions, and their larger agenda, on the one hand, and yet also the multiple possibilities of interpretations of this discourse by its consumers, on the other hand. It is through the

combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches that we can achieve better understanding of any phenomenon.

My methodology is neither Marxist nor postmodernist in the strictest sense of the word. Although I draw heavily upon Harvey’s theories, which follows a Marxist meta-theory, I do not adopt a Marxist approach to this study. And although I use Foucault’s theory, which belongs to postmodernist or poststructuralist micro-theory, I do not adopt a totally postmodernist perspective. My methodology selectively combines parts from each of these two approaches.

Research Method

In this section, I describe my study’s investigative procedures. The study relies on qualitative research. Qualitative research aims at understanding the meaning of human actions, be they complicated social actions, objects and artifacts, or texts and discourses. This study is concerned with understanding meanings of human actions and power relations as they relate to the production and consumption of the urban built environment. The study also looks into meanings for advertising discourse on the city’s recent urban developments and how power relations play a role in the production and interpretation of this discourse. The study also aims at understanding how identity, as well as power relations, is constructed through this discourse and through the built environment itself, and how identity is expressed in Amman’s recent

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5 A note is due here on the nature of qualitative research, also referred to as qualitative inquiry. The main assumption behind the field of qualitative inquiry is that human action is meaningful, in the sense that the same phenomenon or action may have multiple meanings depending on the circumstances in which it takes place. Generally speaking, qualitative inquiry is concerned with the way people make sense of their lives and experiences. Within qualitative inquiry however, researchers may follow different philosophical traditions concerning the processes of interpretation or understanding of the meaning of an object or action. I follow the constructivist approach, as I have shown under Research Methodology above. For more information on qualitative research, see “Meaning,” by T. Schwandt, 2007, in *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 185-187; “Qualitative Inquiry,” by T. Schwandt, 2007, in *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, pp. 247-249.
developments. This study is a multiple-case study in which I investigate the research problem through the analysis of three bounded cases of megaprojects in Amman. The research combines several methods including review of historical and contemporary textual and visual material, site visits, interviews with professionals and decision makers, and interviews with the public.

**Review of Textual and Visual Material**

First, I have reviewed the relevant theoretical literary work (presented in Chapter 2). Second, I review historical resources on the development of modern Amman: the city’s built environment as well as its economic, political, and socio-cultural contexts. The material I review includes scholarly writings, maps, aerial views, and photographs of the city. The review of the historical background of modern Amman helps lay the historical context of early-twenty-first-century Amman. It also helps us understand how past global and regional changes in the economic, political, and socio-cultural conditions influenced the city’s urban built environment. This, in turn, helps us understand how new the processes of globalization are as they relate to the context of Amman.

I also analyze recent textual as well as visual resources on early-twenty-first-century Amman, including resources on the city’s social and demographic makeup, its economy and global economic integration, its residents’ culture and identity, recent physical transformations in the city, and the study cases. This material includes scholarly writings, local newspaper articles, statistical records, municipal documents, maps and aerial views of the sites of the case study developments, real-estate supplements and magazines, and promotional and marketing material as well as architectural and urban designs of the study cases.
Site Visits

I made multiple trips to Amman between 2008 and 2011, which varied from one month to four months long and amounted to a total of nine months of fieldwork. Specifically, I visited the megaproject cases analyzed in this study, photographing them and recording observations of them and their context. Observing these developments and studying their photographs helped identify key characteristics, their architectural and urban vocabularies, how they related to other contemporary and previous developments in their surroundings, and how people interacted with these developments. I also compared these developments to each other, to other recent architectural and urban developments in Amman, and to large-scale developments in other cities, such as the megaprojects discussed in Chapter 2. I observed how local or global Amman’s developments emerged in the early twenty-first century, what messages they conveyed to various users and residents, and how they related to the question of identity under globalization’s flows, particularly capital flows.

Interviews with Professionals and Decision Makers

I conducted thirty face-to-face interviews with actors who play an important role in shaping Amman’s urban built environment. I selected the sample of interviewees for the interviewees’ prominent role in the selected developments or for their wide knowledge about the city’s urban built environment and its recent transformation. I identified potential interviewees through the review of recent textual resources on Amman’s built environment and on the study cases. I then asked each of the interviewees to recommend other individuals who might be helpful for the purpose of my research. This was an important networking strategy through which I was able to identify and interview some of the most informative interviewees.
Among the professionals and decision makers I interviewed were city officials at Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), executive officers at investment and development corporations, and architects as well as planners who designed projects included in the study cases. I also interviewed other prominent architects who, though they did not design any of the projects included in this study, are considered influential figures in shaping Amman’s urban built environment directly, through their designs, and indirectly, through their influence on the works of younger generation of architects practicing in the city. In addition, I interviewed planning and architecture academics who were involved in some of the study cases or who influence the direction of the city’s architecture through their research work and critical writing.

I designed seven different interviews based on the position the potential interviewee held, the development to which he or she related or with which the interviewee was most familiar, and the information I needed to collect from the interviewee. Before I started the interview design, I reviewed written resources on the relevant developments and visited the sites of these developments. This helped position these developments within the theoretical context of the study. In addition, I was able to identify different stances that academics, professionals, and other individuals take on the developments in question as well as controversial issues relating to these developments, which provided me with an informed position from which to conduct the interview. Reviewing written resources on these developments also helped identify missing information that I needed to collect from the interviewee. I designed the interviews in a semi-structured manner where some questions and the order in which they were presented were predetermined, but the questions were open ended. The design of these interviews conformed to interview designs as outlined by David Krathwohl (1998). According to Krathwohl, interviews may range from the unstructured to the totally structured. In a semi-structured interview, the
open-ended questions allow the interviewer to adjust the questions to the immediate situation, thus increasing rapport. Moreover, this kind of interview allows the interviewer to pursue unanticipated topics.

I carried out the interviews in person. The importance that the researcher personally conducts the interviews with the research subjects cannot be overemphasized. For not only is the researcher more capable of driving the interviews in the direction best suited for the research purpose, but also the researcher needs to be able to capture nuances in the interviewees’ reactions and their body language, which have a bearing on how he or she interprets these interviews. The interviews took place at the workplace of the interviewees. Each interview was conducted in one meeting with the interviewee. The interviews varied in length from thirty to ninety minutes depending on how open the interviewee was, how much information he or she had to share, and how much time the interviewee was willing to give for the interview. Some of the interviewees followed up on their responses via email or over the phone as more material relating to the interview became available for them. In most of the interviews, I followed the interview design prepared in advance. In a few cases, however, it proved more efficient and informative to let the interviewee lead the direction of the interview after giving him or her an overview of my research goal and an idea of what information was needed. I conducted some of the interviews in Arabic, which is the formal language of the city residents, and other interviews in English following the preference of the interviewees. There were cases where I had to use a mix of Arabic and English languages to mirror the interviewee’s use of the language.6 As a native Arabic speaker, I had no problem moving back and forth between the two languages.

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6 It is not uncommon for people in Jordan to combine Arabic and English languages together in conversation, regardless of how good or bad their English is. To some extent, good knowledge of English language is associated with high social status, and showing off this knowledge has become one way to suggest class distinction. However given that the individuals I interviewed are highly-educated professionals, some of whom received American or
Interviews with the Public

In addition to interviewing professionals and decision makers, I interviewed ordinary citizens (see Appendix A). I carried out these interviews with the public to understand the ways people made sense of and assigned meanings to transformations in Amman’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century and how they understood the relation between globalization’s flows, particularly capital flows, and the shape of the built environment in the city. I also conducted these interviews to understand how the city residents interpreted advertising discourse relating to recent developments in the city and how this discourse affected people’s perception of their built environment. The interviews also shed light on how contemporary urban developments in Amman and the advertising discourse accompanying them related to the question of people’s identity and its negotiation through the city’s built environment.

For the purpose of the interviews with the public, I designed a model, semi-structured interview. Then I applied this design, with slight change, to the interviews about the various study cases. The design of the interview with the public was required for the review process by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at the University of Illinois, which I describe in Appendix B.

The interviews took place in public places, mainly at small businesses in the area surrounding the development in question and at coffee shops. I conducted each interview in one meeting with the interviewee. The average interview ran for ninety minutes, which is thirty minutes longer than anticipated. I conducted most of the interviews in Arabic, although there were a few cases where I conducted the interview in English because the interviewee was more
comfortable speaking in English. In general, the format of the interview followed the interview design. As a part of the interview, I showed the interviewee one or more advertisements of the development in question and I asked him or her direct questions about his or her interpretation of these advertisements as well as other indirect questions. In one of the interviews, it was hard for an elderly interviewee to follow my questions. So I just let this interviewee talk about the development in question and other things he thought were relevant and I waited for a pause by the interviewee to pose a question that fit most in the context of the interviewee’s narrative, thus getting the most out of the interview. As a Jordanian with knowledge of current economic, political, social, and cultural situation in Amman, I was able to adapt the interview questions to the specific context and situation of the interview. Most of the interviewees were willing to talk openly and share their views of the recent transformations in Amman’s urban built environment.

I did not tape-record the interviews with the public; rather I took notes of the interviewees’ responses. The decision of not tape-recording the interviews was a part of the measures taken to maintain the confidentiality of the interviewees and get the interviewees to talk freely and openly. In Jordan, many people will be intimidated and decline interviews if their response will be taped. Many individuals are not comfortable to publicly share ideas with political implication, let alone to have such ideas taped. This is in part due to the legacy of the restrictions on free speech that continued in the country through the late twentieth century. Freedom of speech has increased in Jordan over the past couple of decades. However for many, the right to free speech remains new and untested; hence their reluctance to practice this right openly. Although it is unlikely that expressing views regarding urban transformation in Amman, even when state policies and politics are involved, will pose threat to people’s safety in Jordan today, many prefer not to have their voice tape-recorded.
Interview Sampling Plan

For the purpose of selecting the sample of interviewees for the interviews with the public in Amman, I used purposeful sampling, also known as nonprobability sampling. Unlike probability sampling, purposeful sampling does not involve random selection of individuals to be interviewed. As John Creswell (2007, p. 125) illustrates, purposeful sampling involves the selection of interviewees because “they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study.”

Creswell (2007) lists many sampling strategies that a researcher can use in purposeful sampling to identify interviewees. These strategies may be used individually, or more than one of them may be combined. I use two of these strategies to select the interviewees: snowball or chain, and maximum variation. As the name suggests, the snowball strategy is used to identify interviewees from individuals who know other people who are useful for the purpose of this research. As for the maximum variation strategy, it is a common approach in qualitative research in which the researcher selects the interviewees based on criteria he or she determines in advance that consider differences and diversity among participants, thus increasing the chances that research “findings will reflect differences or different perspectives” (p. 126).

Following the maximum variation strategy, I selected the interviewees based on six criteria (see Table 3.2). The first criterion was physical distance from the site of the study case. People who are proximate to a certain location experience it and are influenced by its transformation in ways different from those who are remote from that place. Still, people’s experience of a certain location regardless of their distance from it is relevant when it comes to understanding how they make sense of their built environment. Therefore, I interviewed individuals who lived or worked in the vicinity of the development under consideration and
others who were familiar with this development, but neither lived nor worked in its vicinity. The criterion of physical distance has been considered by a number of scholars studying the urban built environment. For example, surveying people’s views concerning the increasing number of high-rise buildings in Amman, Abu-Ghazalah (2006) selected his research participants from among those who lived on the same street of the high-rise building he took as his case study and those who did not.

The second criterion was age group. In a study such as this that addresses contemporary transformations in the urban built environment and global influences, it is expected that people from different age groups will have different memories and experiences of old buildings in their built environment and various views of the new developments. Therefore, I diversified my sample to include seniors, middle-agers, and younger individuals. In fact, many researchers studying the interaction of people with their urban built environment select participants in their research from different age groups. For The Image of the City, Kevin Lynch (1960) interviewed individuals from different age groups to understand the images people in American cities held for their built environment. Similarly, Feyzan Erkip (2004) surveyed different age groups to understand how people used malls in Turkish cities and identified different patterns based on users’ age groups.

The third criterion was education level, major, and place where the interviewee received his or her education. It is expected that the level of education and what and where one studies influence people’s views of current transformations in Amman’s built environment. With this in mind, I interviewed people with different levels of education, who were from different fields of study, and who received their degrees from Jordan as well as abroad.
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The fourth criterion I used to select the interview sample was exposure to non-Jordanian culture through living abroad for an extended period. Someone who lived abroad and had a first-hand experience of non-Jordanian cities will likely hold different views of the recent transformations in Amman’s built environment from someone who has never been abroad.

The fifth criterion was social class. Upper-class people, the primary target of the developers of the new megaprojects in Amman, possibly will hold different views of contemporary transformations in the city’s urban built environment from middle-class people, who may only partly afford consumption patterns expected in such megaprojects, or working-class people, who, although are not the segment of society these megaprojects cater for, consume these places in ways different from other classes. Lynch found diversifying the sample of interviewees in terms of social class significant for studies that aim at understanding how people make sense of their built environment. He criticized limiting his sample for *The Image of the City* to middle-class individuals and admitted that his sampling gave the image of the city from the point of view of one social class only, which did not represent the complexity of images that a more varied sample might have revealed.

The sixth criterion I used to select my interview sample was place of origin. Amman has a complex demographic structure, which is particularly relevant when it comes to understanding identity as it relates to recent transformations in the city’s urban built environment. Transjordanian-Jordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians were among the most significant groups of people considered in the sample of interviewees.\(^7\) E. Anne Beal (2000) provides an interesting example on how the Transjordanian and Palestinian origins are relevant to the study of the built environment.

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\(^7\) Transjordanian-Jordanians are the native population who lived in Jordan when the state was established in 1921 as the Emirate of Transjordan. Palestinian-Jordanians are the population who moved to Jordan from Palestine and the West Bank at the conclusion of the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars. For more information on these two groups of Jordanians, as well as others, see Chapter 4.
environment in Amman. Beal interviewed upper-class individuals selected from among these two groups of Amman’s population to investigate how their tastes differ with regard to their villas, among other things, and how this relates to the question of who is and who is not a “real” Jordanian.\(^8\) This served the purpose of Beal’s study very well. For the purpose of my research, it was informative to include other groups of Amman’s population, such as Circassian-Jordanians and non-Jordanians.\(^9\)

Together, the above criteria for selecting the interviewees provide many possible combinations of criteria, allowing for maximum diversification of interviewees. Thus among the individuals I interviewed were the waiter who had never been abroad and the tailor who grew up and lived half of his life outside Jordan; the architect who visited a few non-Jordanian cities and the landscape architect who lived for an extended period in the West; the social scientist who visited a couple of non-Jordanian cities and the engineer who lived a few decades abroad. These diverse research participants had various perspectives and shared a wide spectrum of views regarding Amman’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century, which enriched the research discussion and findings.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of the extensive and detailed data that I collected from the multiple information sources discussed above included, following Creswell (2007), “within-case analysis” and “cross-case analysis.” The within-case analysis included describing the case and analyzing it thematically to gain a deep understanding of the issue under study. The cross-case analysis

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\(^8\) The issue of “real” and “non-real” Jordanians is significant for understanding the Jordanian identity, among other things. I discuss this issue in detail in Chapter 4.

\(^9\) Circassian-Jordanians are the population in Jordan who migrated to the country from the Caucasus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I address this topic in Chapter 4.
involved providing thematic analyses that ran across the cases to illustrate the issue under study from different perspectives. I looked for similarities and differences among cases and the possibilities for developing generalizations concerning the influences of capital flows on Amman’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century. I began data analysis early in the study. Considering that research is a non-linear process and the processes of data collection, data analysis, and writing of the study narrative are interrelated, I kept moving back and forth among these three processes.

I began the process of data analysis by organizing the interview notes, fieldnotes from my observation of the study cases, and visual materials, including images and maps. I then read these materials thoroughly, writing memos on the fieldnotes and interview notes and highlighting important information. This process gave me a general understanding of the material at hand. Following that, I started looking for recurrent patterns in the interviewees’ responses and classifying and sorting the material into tentative categories as I reflected on and interpreted thoughts and ideas in the interview responses.

An important part of the data analysis process in this study was discourse analysis. I analyzed real-estate advertising discourse that accompanied early-twenty-first-century megaprojects in Amman as this discourse appeared in local daily newspapers, real-estate supplements and magazines, and the developments’ marketing brochures. This discourse analysis included analyzing the visual and textual content of advertisements on the study cases and analyzing the interpretations of these advertisements by the public in Amman. I sought people’s interpretations of advertising discourse on the study cases during the interviews I carried out with the public in Amman. As in analyzing the interview responses and fieldnotes, the process of discourse analysis included the thorough reading of the advertisements and people’s
interpretations of these advertisements. This process also included interpreting the
advertisements, including their images and texts, and people’s interpretations of them,
identifying certain patterns in these advertisements and in people’s interpretations of them, such
as emphasis on the image, upscale lifestyle, consumption, modernity, and globality, and forming
relevant provisional categories.

I used the categories I formed from my reading of the interview responses, fieldnotes, and
advertising discourse, which some methodologists call “emergent” categories (Creswell, 2007),
to identify and develop the study’s themes and subthemes listed below. In developing these
themes and subthemes, I also used categories implicated in my research subquestions and
categories drawn from the literature review; Creswell tells us that methodologists call such
categories “prefigured” categories. In data analysis in qualitative studies, researchers use both
emergent and prefigured categories. Whereas the former help open up the study to the views of
research participants, the latter help link the study to literature. I used the themes and subthemes
I identified to organize the narrative of this study thematically.

Research Validation and Evaluation Strategies

The validation and judging of the quality of qualitative research is a topic that varies in its
importance, definition, terminologies, and procedures among different qualitative researchers
and qualitative methodologists. It is concerned with establishing the trustworthiness of a
qualitative study. I share with many qualitative researchers the disbelief in the rigorous
systematic procedures for quality judging of qualitative research, which have their origin in
quantitative research and on which some qualitative researchers insist. I do believe, however, that measures should be taken to validate qualitative research.

Creswell (2007) is helpful because he identifies eight strategies that qualitative researchers use to validate their studies and recommends that any qualitative researcher use at least two of these strategies. Four of his strategies are useful for the validation of my study. The first is triangulation among variety of sources, methods, and theories to support my interpretation of the cases I study and to clarify the themes and perspective of my study. The second strategy is providing thick and detailed description of the study cases and their context. This helps readers decide the degree to which the study is transferable to other contexts. The third strategy is reviews of this study by outside readers – in this case, my dissertation director and dissertation committee members – , which serves as a check on the research process.

The fourth strategy useful for the validation of my study is clarifying and disclosing my situatedness in relation to the context of this study. Describing the stance within which the researcher writes helps readers of the study understand any biases or prejudices that might have an impact on the study. I am a middle-class Jordanian who has spent more time abroad, mainly in Abu Dhabi, UAE, than in my home country. Most recently, I lived continuously in Amman between the late 1990s and mid-2000s. I am an architect by training, practicing architecture mostly in the UAE, and was engaged in many research projects, mainly in Amman, on the

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10 The rigorous quality criteria some qualitative researchers use for judging the methods and findings of qualitative research include internal validity (also called credibility), which is concerned with the truth and falsity of the research findings; external validity (also referred to as transferability), which is concerned with the generalizability of the research inquiry; reliability (also referred to as dependability), which is concerned with the repeatability of the inquiry; and objectivity (also referred to as neutrality), which is concerned with the neutrality of the inquiry. For a lengthy discussion of the different views regarding the validation of qualitative research, see Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches, 2nd ed., by J. Creswell, 2007, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; “But Is It Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Evaluation,” by Y. Lincoln and E. Guba, 2007, in Enduring Issues in Evaluation; The 20th Anniversary of the Collaboration between NDE and AEA. New Directions for Education 114, edited by S. Mathison, pp. 15-25; “Judging Interpretations,” by T. Schwandt, 2007, in Enduring Issues in Evaluation, pp. 11-14.
historical and contemporary built environment in Jordan and beyond. My connection to Amman and UAE cities provides me with thorough knowledge of everyday realities as well as recent transformations in the built environment in these cities, and as a native speaker of Arabic, the ability to communicate with citizens who spoke no other language. Furthermore, having lived inside and outside the city of Amman, I have an insider-outsider eye on the city’s built environment. By situating myself in the context of this research, I recognize that what I write in this study is based on my own interpretation of the sources of information as well as my choice of these sources and the research problem, which in turn is shaped by my personal experience and socio-cultural background, among other things. Positioning myself in relation to the study is not limited to this section. Rather whenever appropriate, I “interweave” (to borrow the word of Creswell (2007)) myself into the text of this study.

In addition to the strategies of validation of qualitative research, qualitative methodologists set some criteria for the evaluation of case study research. I find the following criteria important. The first criterion is that the study should have a conceptual structure (Stake, 1995). The second is that the study cases should be clearly identified and described (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995, 2008). The third is that attention should be paid to the context of the study (ibid). The fourth is that the themes of the study should be well identified (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2008). The fifth is that the parts of the study should fit together, the study should be well edited, and the narrative of the study should be easy to read (Stake, 1995).
Chapter 4: Research Context

To better understand transformations in Amman’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century and the ways they related to contemporary globalization processes, it is important to place these transformations in context. This chapter discusses the historical context of modern Amman, which dates back to the late nineteenth century, describing the social and demographic makeup of the city and presenting an overview of Amman’s economy and the identity of the city residents. In addition, the chapter gives an overview of the city’s urban built environment and introduces the study cases.

Social and Demographic Makeup

*Early Settlers of Modern Amman*

Human settlement in Amman goes back to pre-historic times. However, very few human populations lived in the city during the thirteenth century, and Amman continued to be sparsely inhabited through the third quarter of the nineteenth century. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century groups of Muslim Circassians from the Caucasus began to settle in the city, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire. During the early 1900s more Circassian immigrants settled in Amman and people from cities of the Bilad al-Sham region (the region that included what today is Syria, Lebanon, West Bank (Palestine), Israel, and Jordan) moved to the city, facilitated by the extension of the Hejaz Railroad to Amman in the 1900s (Amawi, 1996; Al-Asad, 1997a; Rogan, 1986; Shami, 1996; also see Musa, 1985).

Upon the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan in 1921 under the British Mandate (renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan upon its independence in 1946), the population of
Transjordan consisted mainly of tribal populations, the majority of whom had lived for generations within the geographic area of Transjordan. Some of these tribes were sedentary, some were semi-settled, and others were nomadic. There were conflicts as well as alliances among different tribes. However, almost the whole population of the area adhered to tribal customs and values (Alon, 2007). The population in the area included a large minority of Circassians, and people from Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon (Amawi, 1996; Al-Asad, 1997a; Rogan, 1986; Shami, 1996), who mainly resided in Amman. The state also had small minorities from other origins, such as Armenians, Saudis, Moroccans, and Afghans.

In the early 1920s, Amman had a population between 3,000 and 5,000 people (Rogan, 1996). By 1922, Amman was considered the capital of the Emirate of Transjordan (ibid), although it was not until 1928 that Amman became the official capital. Beginning with its designation as the capital city, Amman began to attract immigrants from the neighboring region (Al-Asad, 1997b).

**Significant Waves of Immigrants**

Amman’s population grew rapidly from the late 1940s through the 1960s. In addition to natural population growth and migration from rural areas, two regional political crises influenced the growth of Amman’s population and changed the demographic makeup of the city dramatically during this period. The first was the occupation of a part of Palestine upon the conclusion of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the settlement of about 240,000 Palestinian refugees in the following years in Amman and its surroundings. These refugees soon became Jordanian nationals. The second was the occupation of the West Bank (then a part of the Jordanian state) in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the relocation of over 180,000
Palestinian-Jordanians from the occupied territory to Amman (Al-Asad, 1997b; Rogan, 1986; UN, 2005). There is no published census for the population of Amman in the late 1960s, but the significant increase in Amman’s population by the end of the 1960s can be concluded from available official statistics and population estimates from the 1960s and late 1970s illustrated in Figure 4.1. In 1961, Amman’s population was around 246,000 people; in 1967, before the outbreak of the war, the estimated population of the city was 330,000; by 1979, the population of Amman had risen to around 624,000 people (Samha, 1996). During the 1960s and 1970s, Jordan had a majority of population from Palestinian origin (Nasser, 2004).  

![Figure 4.1. Amman’s population between the early 1960s and late 1970s.](http://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/index?action=level4#)

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1 This is apparent in the significant jump in the country’s population in the years following the Arab-Israeli wars. For example, the Central Bank of Jordan reports that in 1965 Jordan had a population of 1,028,000 people, whereas in 1970 it had a population of 1,508,200 people (See “Population,” the website of the Central Bank of Jordan, retrieved June 5, 2011, from [http://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/index?action=level4#](http://statisticaldb.cbj.gov.jo/index?action=level4#)).
The outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975 also affected the growth of Amman, though to a lesser degree than did the 1948 and 1967 wars. Approximately 30,000 Lebanese nationals moved to the city (Biegel, 1996). But many of them did not remain in Amman (ibid).

The 1990s brought about another dramatic demographic change to Amman. As a consequence of the 1990-1991 Gulf War, around 300,000 Jordanians, mostly of Palestinian origin, moved from the Gulf states, particularly from Kuwait, to Jordan within a period of months (Le Troquer & al-Oudat, 1999). Over 170,000 of these newcomers, who came to be known as “the returnees,” settled in Amman (Al-Asad, 2005). Some left Kuwait out of fear of the war and chaotic situation in the country at the time of invasion and war. Others left because they lost their jobs when Kuwait’s economy suffered due to the war. Many were laid off simply because they were of Palestinian origin and, to a lesser degree, Jordanians since Palestinians and Jordanians officially and popularly opposed U.S. military intervention to liberate Kuwait after its invasion by Iraq (Le Troquer & al-Oudat, 1999). This caused a cultural integration problem because many of the returnees were not familiar with the culture of Jordan’s residents (ibid). In fact, many young returnees had been born and lived their entire lives in the Gulf states, rarely if ever visiting Jordan. Others had gone to the Gulf from the West Bank in the 1950s and 1960s, before the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the subsequent loss of the West Bank to Israel. They were by then Jordanian nationals, as the West Bank had become a part of the Jordanian state following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, but they had not lived in the part of Jordan to which they returned (ibid). Many of these returnees had relatively affluent life-styles and

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2 Al-Asad’s figure is convincing. Le Troquer and al-Oudat (1999) mention that around 246, 000 returnees settled in Amman and Zarqa. Given that Zarqa is the third largest city in Jordan, after Amman and Irbid, and Amman has more advanced facilities and services the newcomers from oil-rich countries want, it is safe to say that more than 170,000 people settled in Amman.

3 Palestinians and the Jordanian government were in favor of an Arab solution to the Kuwait-Iraq conflict. Palestinians believed Iraq had always supported the Palestinian issue and Jordan until the outbreak of the 1990-1991 Gulf War got its oil supplies from Iraq at much discounted price, or even for free.
consumption patterns compared to Jordanians who had not worked and lived in the Gulf states (Al-Asad, 2005), and they transferred such lifestyles and consumption patterns to Amman (R. Badran, personal communication, September 1, 2010; UN, 2005).

Also as a consequence of the Gulf War, many Iraqi nationals moved to Jordan, particularly to Amman, in the 1990s to escape the difficult economic and political situation in Iraq after the war (UN, 2005). The numbers of Iraqis in Amman increased in the early 2000s, bringing significant demographic change to the city (Norwegian Research Institute Fafo, Department of Statistics & United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2007; Oxford Business Group, 2007). A study of the number and situation of Iraqis in Jordan in 2007 finds that there are somewhere between 450,000 and 500,000 Iraqis in the country (Norwegian Research Institute Fafo et al., 2007), constituting a large minority of the population. The majority of these Iraqis live in Amman and arrived after the outbreak of the 2003 Iraqi War. However, many Iraqis see their stay in Jordan as temporary and 20 percent of the Iraqi nationals in Jordan have plans to migrate to a third country. A segment of Iraqi nationals in the city is affluent and, like the returnees, they encouraged affluent life-styles and consumption patterns (UN, 2005).

Guest Workers

The population in Amman also includes guest workers, mainly from South East Asia and Egypt. In 2008, 300,000 guest workers were employed in Jordan (Oxford Business Group, 2008). Exact numbers of guest workers in the different cities in Jordan today are not available. However, a relevant study shows that 51.6 percent of guest workers in Jordan in 2001 were in Amman (Athamneh, 2004). Thus, it is safe to suggest that no less than 50 percent of the guest labor in Jordan today live in Amman. The city’s population also includes a small but significant
number of Westerners, including employees in the diplomatic corps, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations (UN, 2005).

Statistical Information

The Jordanian Department of Statistics (2009a) estimated the population of Amman in 2008 at 2,265,100 people, which accounted for 38.7 percent of Jordan’s population. The most recent statistics estimates the city’s population at 2,419,600 people (Department of Statistics, 2012). Official statistics concerning the percentage of different ethnic groups in Jordan or Amman is unavailable. However among the different groups of population, the group of most concern to Jordan and its people is the population of Palestinian origin, often reported as 50 percent of the population in Jordan. The majority of the Palestinian-Jordanians live in the capital Amman and in Zarqa, Jordan’s third largest city. Many in Amman would agree that the majority of the city’s population is from Palestinian origin.

As shown in Figure 4.2, Amman’s population is youthful. In 2008, 37.3 percent of the Jordanian population were under the age of 15, 3.3 percent were above 65, and 59.4 percent were between 15 and 64 (Department of Statistics, 2009b). Around 13 percent of the economically active Jordanians, that is, Jordanians aged 15-64, living in Jordan were unemployed in 2007 (Department of Statistics, 2007). The young population in Jordan and restrictions on women’s work result in a low percentage of labor force participation, which was only 26 percent in 2003 (ibid).

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4 Different sources estimate Amman’s population differently. It is not uncommon to come across the figure 3 million as Amman’s population.
5 Unofficial discourse speaks of the majority of Jordan’s population being of Palestinian origin.
6 I revisit the point of the different origins of Jordanians under the Identity section below.
The World Bank classified Jordan in 2007 as a low middle income country, which had an estimated per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of USD4,700 (U.S. Department of State, 2011). The Jordanian Department of Statistics (2009b) estimated the 2007 GDP per capita at USD3,000 and the 2008 GDP per capita at USD3,600. Table 4.1 shows the average yearly income in Jordan, as can be inferred from a 2010 income survey (Department of Statistics, 2012). Senior officials, managers, and legislators come in the higher tier earning USD18,816, and plant and machine operators and assemblers in the lower tier earning USD3,377.

The nuclear family, husband, wife, and children, is the dominant household type in Jordan (Department of Statistics, 2007). Kinship remains the most important unit of social organization, and an individual has responsibilities towards and expect to receive support from the family into which he or she was born. The average household size in Amman was 5.4 in 2003, which is the lowest in Jordan. It likely has dropped to 5 since then, judging from the trend of the decreasing household size in Jordan in general. The majority of households in Amman, as

Figure 4.2. Distribution of population among age groups in Jordan.
well as in other cities in Jordan, have an adult male. Home ownership is an aspiration and in 1998, 58 percent of families in Amman owned the houses where they lived (Department of Statistics, 2007). Families with heads over 50 years old are more likely to own their houses (ibid).

Table 4.1

*Average Yearly Income for Public- and Private-Sector Employees in Jordan, Sorted by Occupation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage of Workers</th>
<th>Income (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislators, senior officials, and managers</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>18,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>27.24</td>
<td>8,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>6,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>5,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers and salespersons</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>4,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>12.58</td>
<td>3,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftspersons</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>3,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and machine operators and assemblers</td>
<td>12.19</td>
<td>3,377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Economy**

Jordan has a small, service-based economy (Schlumberger, 2002; also see Knowles, 2005). Its few natural resources include mineral resources such as phosphate and potash, but it does not produce oil (Schlumberger, 2002). Jordan has a small, though significant, industrial
sector, a small agricultural sector (Pfeifer, 2010), a growing tourism sector (Schlumberger, 2002), and an emerging information and communications technology sector (Henry & Springborg, 2010). The country’s revenues depend largely on the export of labor (Pfeifer, 2010). It also receives international and regional financial assistance from countries such as the United States and Arab Gulf states (Knowles, 2005; Pfeifer, 2010; Schlumberger, 2002), as well as foreign direct investment, principally from Arab Gulf states.

A Capitalist Economy

Although Jordan’s economy is capitalist (Henry & Springborg, 2010; Pfeifer, 2010), it is not the advanced capitalist economy of the Anglo-American world. Scholars such as Peter Hall and David Soskice speak of varieties of capitalism (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). Different frameworks of political economy institutions in capitalist economies lead to “systematic differences in corporate strategies” in these economies (McDonough et al., p. 7). The European colonizers brought a variety of capitalisms to the Arab Middle Eastern region by the end of the nineteenth century, including the British, or Anglo-American, German, and French models (Henry & Springborg, 2010). The French model was abandoned soon after the French left their colonies, but the Anglo-American and German models of capitalism continue to shape the economy of the Arab Middle Eastern countries (ibid).

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7 Jordan’s industries include mining, food processing, apparel and textile, pharmaceuticals, and cement, among others (see Oxford Business Group, 2010).
8 In 2007, between 600,000 and 800,000 Jordanians were working abroad, mostly in the Gulf states (Oxford Business Group, 2008).
9 For example, foreign direct investment in Jordan in 2006 constituted 23 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Oxford Business Group, 2008).
10 Some scholars, particularly those studying Jordan’s economy up to the turn of the twenty-first century, tend to be skeptical about identifying Jordan’s economy as capitalist. For example, Warwick Knowles (2005) argues that although features of capitalist economy strengthened in Jordan’s economy by 2002, Jordan’s economy is a private-sector rentier economy, depending on the flows of remittances.
Anglo-American capitalism is “shareholder-centered and impatient capitalism” that “consists of a set of liberal market economies” (McDonough et al., 2010, p. 7). A main characteristic of this model of capitalism is highly competitive markets for the sale and exchange of stocks and bonds, with a variety of actors to create transparency and fair exchange with no insider trading (Henry & Springborg, 2010). In this model, the role of commercial banking is less significant than in other capitalist systems (ibid). The German model of capitalism is a “bank-centered and patient capitalism” that “consists of a set of coordinated market economies” (McDonough et al., p. 7). It emphasizes private-sector capitalist activities of universal banks, not individual investors (Henry & Springborg, 2010). In this model, a small group of bankers “scale the commanding heights of the economy and allocate its finance capital” (Henry & Springborg, 2010, p. 15). Although these bankers are in communication with the government, they are independent in their decision making and negotiation and they can exercise power over the government to provide conditions attractive for businesses since they are capable of holding back investments and loans (ibid).

Henry and Springborg (2010) argue that capital-rich countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were likely to adopt the Anglo-American model of capitalism, whereas capital-poor countries adopted the German model, which is better “adapted to situations of capital scarcity” and “offers protection to capital-scarce economies” (p. 15). This is particularly the case for capital-scarce monarchies in MENA, as German capitalism “facilitates palace control of heavy economies concentration” (p. 18). Jordan’s economy follows the German capitalist model. In addition to formal legislative and institutional frameworks, informal socio-political patterns have a bearing on the form of economy in Jordan (Schlumberger, 2002). Social norms such as patronage, favoritism, and rent-seeking are dominant in Jordan, permeating
political and economic activity and hindering the implementation of economic reform capable of pushing Jordan’s economy towards advanced capitalism. Furthermore, loyalty to family, clan, and tribe makes competition less relevant and interferes with the rule of law; both competition and the rule of law are essential for a capitalist economy. Schlumberger, therefore, suggests that Jordan’s economic system could be called “patrimonial capitalism,” which he believes better describes “the hybrid combination of informal socio-political remnants of a former rentier economy which coexist in structural contradiction with the formal institutions and policies associated with a market economy [that is, a capitalist economy]” (p. 244). 

**Economy During the State’s Formative Years**

During the period from the early 1920s through 1948, the Transjordanian state had a small budget and depended on financial aid from Britain, which was limited to the amount that would sustain Transjordan as a buffer to Palestine. The British were not concerned with Transjordan’s economic development, and were skeptical about the viability of Transjordan’s development; rather they were concerned with its geopolitical role (Knowles, 2005). In addition to the British aid, the economy of the state included a small agricultural sector, which suffered periodic drought. And Transjordan’s economy was linked to that of Palestine through a Palestinian merchant class (Pfeifer, 2010). Members of the merchant class in Syria also had strong links with Amman at that time (Amawi, 1996).

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11 Rentier economy “is an economy where the substantial part of its revenue accrues from foreign sources and under the form of rent” (Knowles, 2005, p. 10). “Rents need not necessarily be reinvested in the production process, but can be disbursed domestically” (Schlumberger, 2002, p. 247). This is unlike production economies in which “income is predominantly composed of firstly the productive activities of the citizens through wages, and secondly businesses through profit,” and “the state raises revenue through direct and indirect taxation of these productive activities in order to continue to recreate itself” (Knowles, 2005, p. 9). From its establishment to the late 1980s, Jordan was a rentier state. It mostly depended on international aid between 1921 and the late 1960s, and on remittances as well as regional and international financial assistance from the early 1970s to late 1980s (Knowles, 2005; Schlumberger, 2002). Despite the persistence of the significance of rents for the economy of Jordan today, “rentierism figures no longer among the salient features of Jordan’s economy” (Schlumberger, 2002, p. 245).
The 1948 and 1967 wars had economic consequences on Amman, as well as on Jordan at large. The less privileged segments of the displaced Palestinian-Jordanians and of the Palestinian refugees, who were soon naturalized, became a burden on Jordan’s economy. But, unlike the Transjordanian population in Jordan, many of the refugees and displaced were educated or had occupational skills. They served as professional workers and state employees, and in banking. Some were able to restart their businesses in Amman (Pfeifer, 2010). The Palestinian merchant class and the market it served grew as a result of migration to Jordan following the 1948 and 1967 wars. The 1948 war resulted in a large flow of capital into Jordan’s economy, which is believed to have exceeded the country’s money supply at that time (Knowles, 2005). Moreover, Palestinian-Jordanians constituted the majority of Jordanians working in other Arab countries, particularly the Gulf states, and their remittances boosted Jordan’s economy (Pfeifer, 2010).

*Economic Growth and Slowdown: The Early 1970s to the Twenty-First Century*

The early 1970s through mid 1980s was the period of an economic expansion in Jordan, which was linked to the 1973 oil boom in the Arab Gulf states. Although Jordan is not an oil-producing country, it benefited from the fact that high oil prices allowed the Gulf states to be generous with their aid (Pfeifer, 2010). Moreover, these states had capital surpluses as a result of the increasing petrodollar flows, which they could not absorb within their geographical boundaries. Thus, the capital was invested in newly established banks in other Arab countries. Many banks were founded in Jordan, particularly in Amman, in the late 1970s with considerable shares from the Gulf states (Biegel, 1996). Furthermore, as the Gulf states prospered, Jordan’s exports to these states increased and many Jordanian citizens moved to work there. The
remittances of these Jordanians contributed significantly to Jordan’s economy (Pfeifer, 2010; also see Biegel, 1996).

During the second half of the 1970s, about a hundred foreign companies and international institutions moved their offices from Beirut to Amman (Biegel, 1996). However, the influence of the flows of businesses and money, as well as people, from Lebanon on Amman’s growth remained modest. At that time, Jordan had strict policies regarding foreign businesses (ibid). In addition, Amman lacked the kind of advanced services foreign businesses and Lebanese incomers wanted (ibid). The construction of a number of banks, hotels, and commercial centers in Amman during this period (Tukan, 1996) was not adequate to satisfy the new businesses and immigrants. Consequently, many of them did not remain in Amman (Biegel, 1996). Still, as Beirut lost its status as a regional commercial and banking center during the fifteen-year Lebanese civil war, Amman gradually became more important in the region as a commercial and business center (Pfeifer, 2010).

By the late 1980s, the country’s economy was struggling (Schlumberger, 2002). Remittances from Jordanians working in the Gulf states decreased, because petrodollar flows had fallen as a result of the declining oil prices (Schlumberger, 2002; Wilson, 1991). Similarly, financial aid from the Gulf states decreased (Wilson, 1991). As a result, Jordan’s international debt increased (Schlumberger, 2002), eventually leading to the devaluation of the Jordanian currency (Knowles, 2005) in early 1988 (Kasawneh, Salem & Al shaher, 2010).

Jordan’s economy bounced back during the first half of the 1990s. Many of the returnees transferred their savings or the money they earned from the liquidation of their assets in the Gulf to Jordan’s banks, which resulted in significant rise in wealth in the country (Schlumberger, 2002), including Amman. The returnees also established businesses, boosting the service and
financial service sectors of the Jordanian economy (Pfeifer, 2010; Schlumberger, 2002). More important, they invested in real estate and the construction sector (ibid), creating a construction boom in Amman during the first half of the 1990s. By the late 1990s the economic boom had come to an end and Jordan’s economy stagnated (Henry & Springborg, 2010; Schlumberger, 2002).

The country’s economy recovered in the 2000s as petrodollars again flowed to Jordan, particularly during the boom period between 2003 and 2007 when the oil-rich Arab Gulf states diversified their economies to include productive investment in the Arab world and globally (Pfeifer, 2010). The economy slowed down by the late 2008 and continued to slow down in 2009 and 2010 as a result of the global economic crisis (see Oxford Business Group, 2009).

Economic Reform and Integration into the Global Economy

Jordan’s economic reform began in the 1990s and became more extensive between 1995 and 1997. During this period, the country adopted policies of privatization, deregulation, and liberalization of the flow of capital and goods. The economic reform aimed at enhancing the country’s competitiveness through the integration of Jordan’s economy into the global economy, opening up the economy to international businesses and new markets (Schlumberger, 2002).12 Fewer reforms were adopted in 1998 (Schlumberger, 2002). But, King Abdullah II has given high priority to improving Jordan’s economy since he acceded to the throne in 1999 (Henry & Springborg, 2010; Schlumberger, 2002), focusing “almost exclusively on economic reform during the first years of his reign” (Henry & Springborg, 2010, p. 253). Economic reform in

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12 The state introduced many laws and regulations aimed at enhancing the business environment. For example, “a new Investment Promotion Law (no. 16/1995) was designed to attract more foreign and domestic investment through generous incentives like long-term tax holidays and duty exemptions” (Schlumberger, 2002, p. 231). Also the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) was established in 1997 (Schlumberger, 2002). “QIZ products meeting certain requirements are allowed duty-free and quota-free access to the American market” (p. 231).
Jordan moved rapidly in the early 2000s at a pace much faster than the reform in other Arab countries (Schlumberger, 2002). The reforms that took place during this period included expansion of privatization, new tax legislation, reform of landlord-tenant legislation,\(^\text{13}\) vigorous marketing of Jordan’s Qualifying Industrial Zones to potential investors (Henry & Springborg, 2010), development of private-public partnerships, and lifting fuel subsidies (Oxford Business Group, 2009).

The 2000s witnessed significant acceleration of the integration of Jordan’s economy into the global economy (Henry & Springborg, 2010). The fast pace of the globalization of the country’s economy is not surprising given Jordan’s dependency on economic grants and international loans, which makes it important to “stay in the good graces of the international financial community” (p. 251). In 2000, Jordan joined the World Trade Organization (Henry & Springborg, 2010). The country also entered into a number of free trade agreements (FTAs) with several countries during the 2000s, which increased Jordan’s exports considerably. These include an FTA with the United States in 2001, Singapore in 2005, and Canada in 2010 (Oxford Business Group, 2008, 2009, 2010).

During the 2000s, economic links between Jordan and the Gulf states were renewed and strengthened. These had weakened in the early 1990s due to Jordan’s stance on the 1990-1991 Gulf War and remained weak throughout the 1990s. Petrodollars flowed to Jordan, particularly between 2003 and 2007 (Pfeifer, 2010). Jordan had by then opened up its economy and encouraged foreign investment. The country welcomed the flows of petrodollars, and “King

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\(^{13}\) The old landlord-tenant legislation stipulates that tenants of unfurnished property can hold the lease of that property at the same rent rate they first leased the property; the landlord does not have the right to evacuate the tenants or raise the rent. This legislation is believed to have discouraged investment. The new landlord-tenant law allows changes in rent rates for leases held after 2000; earlier leases are subject to phased rent increase (Oxford Business Group, 2009).
Abdullah stressed the importance of tapping into the massive liquidity … available in the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] states” (Oxford Business Group, 2008). Businesspersons from the Gulf states invested in Jordan’s banking sector, tourism, industry, as well as in high-end real estate development (Oxford Business Group, 2008; Pfeifer, 2010).

Since Jordan’s economy during the early twenty-first century was integrated into the global and regional economy, it was influenced by the 2008 global economic crisis. Many foreign exchange companies in Jordan declared bankruptcy and unemployment rates increased by the end of 2008 (Oxford Business Group, 2009). However, Jordan’s economy showed some resilience through mid-2009 since tourism, remittances, and FDI resulted in growth in the country’s foreign reserves through mid-2009 (Oxford Business Group, 2009). The Gulf states’ “diversification of domestic investment and greater sophistication of the intraregional FDI” (Pfeifer, 2010, p. 349), which protected their economies from sudden crash during the economic crisis, cushioned the economies of the recipients of petrodollar flows, including Jordan.

Identity

How can one understand national identity in Jordan? Anderson’s notion of the constructedness of identity, discussed in Chapter 2, applies to national identity in Jordan. An investigation of the official national identity in Jordan reveals that it is a construct, not an essential thing that has always been there or will always be there in the same form. Like collective identities in other places, national identity in Jordan is hybrid, created through encounters with others. This identity is constantly evolving, continuously shaped and reshaped with the changing economic, political, and socio-cultural circumstances in the country (see
Furthermore, like other national identities, the Jordanian national identity is constructed through sameness and difference: the inclusion of those similar (Jordanians) and the exclusion of the others (see Massad, 2001; Nasser, 2004). The self and the other change in the process of identity reconstruction. Moreover, national identity in Jordan, as in other postcolonial nation-states, includes colonial influences. As Joseph Massad (2001) argues, the Jordanian national identity can be understood as a product and an effect of colonial institutions. Not only was the state established and its boundaries delineated by the British colonial power, but also many of the postcolonial state institutions responsible for the construction of the national identity, such as the military and law institutions, followed the colonial model and adopted colonial cultural products, which are “modern inventions dressed up in traditional garb” (p. 7). The postcolonial nation-state disseminated such modern inventions as essentially Jordanian through different state institutions and media discourses.

Rashid Khalidi’s argument that national identity in the Arab countries is “not unidimensional” but it involves “multiple identification” (Nasser, 2004, p. 224) applies to national identity in Jordan (Nasser, 2004; also see Frisch, 2002). But what are the elements that contribute to the multiple nature of national identity in Jordan? How and why are these elements ranked in importance? These are important questions for an analysis of the urban built environment in Amman and the various meanings this environment expresses or constructs. State

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14 Perhaps there is no more obvious example on the continuous reconstruction of the national identity in Jordan than that of the state’s nationality laws. Massad (2001) points out that the definition of who is Jordanian and who is non-Jordanian in the state’s nationality laws varied with the variation of the state’s historical moments, such as with its colonial and anticolonial moments, with its territorial and demographic expansion upon the annexation of the West Bank to Jordan after the conclusion of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the move of Palestinian refugees from the part that became Israel to Jordan, and with its contraction upon the severing of ties with the West Bank in 1988. Thus although the Jordanian nationality laws interpellate subjects as Jordanian nationals, they “reveal nationality as … molded and remolded by the law” (p. 18).

15 For example, Massad (2001) shows how Jordanianess was defined differently at Jordan’s different historical moments: sometimes it was opposed to the Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian, and British others, sometimes to the British other, and other times to the Palestinian other.
institutions construct Jordan’s official national identity with reference to four elements: diverse population, Islam, Arabs, and modernization and economic development. The emphasis put on one or the other of these elements differs in the official discourse on national identity at different moments of Jordan’s history. Hillel Frisch (2002) argues that even at a particular moment, official discourse on Jordanian national identity is intentionally ambiguous so that the identity of Jordan can be “shaped and reshaped for instrumental purposes” (p. 89). For Frisch, the fuzzy official discourse on national identity in Jordan is connected to the issue of national and regional security, mainly the heterogeneous population and the vulnerability of the state in the “regional system” (p. 101).

Diverse Population: Tribes Versus the Others

As stated above, the population in Jordan, particularly in Amman, is highly diverse. What concerns us most here is the diverse population of the Jordanian nationals, which is among the main characteristics of the state and an important element in the construction of Jordanianness. As Massad (2001) points out, the majority of Jordanians have their origins within living memory outside the area that became the nation-state of Transjordan in 1921. The 1928 Nationality Law constructed the diverse population living in the then recently established Transjordan state, such as the tribal people of Transjordan, Circassians, Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese, as Transjordanians. These people had never identified themselves as such before the establishment of this law. The definition of Jordanianness changed after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War when the Palestinian refugees in the country were naturalized, and the West Bank was annexed to Jordan.

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16 According to Frisch, maintaining the ambiguous identity of Jordan was the policy of King Hussein (r. 1953-1999) and continues today under King Abdullah II, though to a lesser degree. This, Frisch believes, is obvious in the different emphasis in the speeches of the kings on Arabism and the specificity of Jordanianness not only in different times, but also in the same speech, which leaves the audience unclear of the hierarchy of identification of Jordan.
and its Palestinian populations became Jordanian nationals (ibid). When the West Bank was lost to Israel in 1967, many Palestinian-Jordanians moved to Jordan, particularly Amman, thus outnumbering other ethnic groups in the country.

Although Palestinian-Jordanians are just one other among many others in Jordan, they have been of particular concern to the question of national identity in Jordan since the end of 1948. This matter has been pointed out at different times of Jordan’s history by many scholars (see Nasser, 2004; Nevo, 2003; Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). Al Oudat and Alshboul even argue that the new waves of Palestinians helped create a sense of national identity in Jordan. One of the most important reasons for the emphasis on distinguishing the Jordanian from the Palestinian is the overwhelming Palestinian population in Jordan, particularly during the third quarter of the twentieth century. This made Transjordanian-Jordanians, or “Real” or “True” Jordanians as tribal Transjordanian-Jordanians came to call themselves and, often, other Transjordanian-Jordanians from non-Palestinian origin, feel threatened by the possibility of being dominated by the Palestinian majority. The 1970 civil war between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian guerrillas is another significant reason for this distinction between the Jordanian and his Palestinian other. At the conclusion of this war, the guerrillas were defeated and a campaign of Jordanization was launched (Massad, 2001; Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). To this may be added that the Palestinian-Jordanians control the private sector in Jordan, which is more financially rewarding than the public sector that the Transjordanian-Jordanians control. Another reason for distinguishing the Palestinian from the Jordanian is the very existence of Palestinian refugee

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17 The West Bank is the area of Palestine that was not occupied by the Israeli army at the conclusion of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.
camps in Jordan, which continues to remind Jordanians of the Palestinian other, especially since the camp dwellers still hold tightly to their Palestinian identity.\footnote{Some scholars suggest that the increasing emphasis during the 1980s on tribal identity in Jordan had a political implication. According to Layne (1994) and Robins (1989) it could be viewed as a response to the Israeli claims then that “Jordan is Palestine.” Robins even suggests that the 1988 severing of the legal administrative ties between Jordan and the West Bank aimed to “reject th[is] prevalent notion among Israeli’s extreme right wing” (pp. 170-171). See \textit{Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of National and Tribal Identities in Jordan}, by L. Layne, 1994, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; “Shedding Half a Kingdom: Jordan’s Dismantling of Ties with the West Bank,” by P. Robins, 1989, \textit{Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)}, 16(2), pp. 162-175.}

Jordan’s tribal population constitutes a significant element in the construction of the Jordanian identity (see Massad, 2001; Nevo, 2003; Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). Tribesmen (and more recently tribeswomen) have been a significant part of the military institution since the establishment of this institution in Jordan in the late 1920s under the British Mandate. Their cooptation in the military during the formative years of the state was among the means the state adopted to avoid their threat to the state, to the British, and to the Hejazi Amir Abdullah (King as of 1946; r. 1921-1951).\footnote{Many scholars suggest that Jordan partly owes its creation as a modern state to Amir Abdullah whose move from Hejaz, in today’s Saudi Arabia, to southern Jordan in 1920 contributed to the decision of the British to create the state of Transjordan. Abdullah is the son of Husayn bin Ali, the \textit{Sharif} (literally means noble; but is the equivalent of a governor) of Mecca who led the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans in 1916 and shortly after lost Mecca to Al Saud, the monarchical dynasty of today’s Saudi Arabia. Since its establishment, Jordan has been a monarchy ruled by the same Hashemite family. See \textit{A History of Jordan}, by P. Robins, 2004, New York: Cambridge University Press; \textit{King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan}, by M. Wilson, 1990, New York: Cambridge University Press.} This is not to say that tribes were always a source of threat to the state in its formative years. At times tribes cooperated with the state, but at others they resisted it. Their resistance, however, aimed at influencing the state and competing for resources, rather than at overturning it. When they revolted, tribes were suppressed by the state and the British army (Alon, 2007).

As in many states, the military in Jordan is one of the most important institutions that construct national identity. It is the institution that is established to defend the nation-state and its flag, anthem, and sense of cohesion are all highly charged with nationalism (Alon, 2007;
Massad, 2001). The fact that tribesmen constituted, and still constitute, a great majority in the military played a crucial role in the Bedouinization of Jordan’s national identity and culture (Massad, 2001; Susser, 2000). As a result, in the popular imagination, the Jordanian subject became identifiable as “the” Bedouin or tribesperson, and “the” Bedouin or tribal culture became representative of the Jordanian culture. The military – together with other colonial institutions in Jordan – repressed a range of existing cultural material and practices and produced others, many of which were associated with Bedouin culture, as traditional national material and practices (Massad, 2001). In other words, this is an example of what Eric Hobsbawm (1983, p. 2) calls “the invention of tradition”: institutions of the postcolonial state adopted the colonial cultural products as the traditional Jordanian products, and nationalists viewed these products as essential (Massad, 2001).

However, the Bedouin subject that the colonial state produced, and the postcolonial state takes as its national subject, is not the same Bedouin who preceded the establishment of modern Jordan. The kind of Bedouinism that the state constructs and promotes is a homogenized Bedouin identity and culture, which in reality does not exist (see Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). Andrew Shryock (1997) shows how young tribesmen today speak nostalgically of tribesmen in pre-modern Jordan and how old tribesmen acknowledge that the “age of shaykhs” (p. 65), the time before the establishment of the state where shaykhs prevailed, has given way to the “age of government” (p. 65) in which tribes live today. Although tribespeople today define themselves as opposed to non-Bedouin others, particularly the Palestinian Other, they are aware of their place within a specific tribe and lineage that excludes other tribes.
Islam

Islam is another significant element in the construction of national identity in Jordan. Despite the diverse population of the country, the great majority of Jordan’s population is Sunni Muslim. Jordan’s monarchical dynasty is Sunni Muslim. As descendants of the same Hashemite clan of Prophet Muhammad and the previous sharifs (sharif is Arabic for noble and, in this context, the equivalent of a governor) of Mecca and custodians of the Ka‘ba, Muslims’ most sacred site, the Monarchs in Jordan have always identified themselves and Jordan with Islam (see Nasser, 2004; Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). In this sense, Jordanians are seen as a part of a bigger Muslim community that believes in one religion: Islam. Many scholars argue that the state’s emphasis on identification with Islam is a means through which the monarchs seek legitimacy (see Kostiner, 2000; Nasser, 2004). According to Nasser (2004), during the formative period of the postcolonial state, the 1950s through 1970, official discourse in Jordan identified Jordanianness with Islam, as well as Arabs, much more than it did with Jordan’s majority population, that is, the population of Palestinian origin. Nasser argues that this was a strategy for exclusion of the Palestinian majority. As shown below, Jordan’s identification with Islam was modified later.

Arabs

Identification with Arabs is another significant component of national identity in Jordan where the majority of the population are Arab. Arabs constitute the majority of the population living in the Arab World, which includes Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The majority of Arabs, but not all of them, are Muslim. Despite their diverse economic, political, social, and cultural conditions, Arabs share formal Arabic language, which
is comprehensible across Arabic speaking world despite dialectical differences. As discussed in Chapter 2, the role language plays in the construction of national identity cannot be overemphasized. Arabic was a significant element in the construction of Arab nationalism, which started to take shape in the early twentieth century and gained momentum after World War II, as a reaction against Ottoman and colonial rule (Nasser, 2004). Arab people were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire from the early sixteenth to early twentieth century. Under the Ottoman rule, current state boundaries had not yet existed and a pan-Islamic identity dominated. The end of the Ottoman rule at the conclusion of World War I led to the Western colonization of Arabs and the delineation of state boundaries. This was the time when pan-Arab identity started to replace the pan-Islamic identity (Nasser, 2004). Pan-Arabism distinguishes Arabs from others as one political entity with shared history and culture. In this sense, “the [Arab] nation was conceived of as a community speaking the same language, living in the same territory, sharing the same history, and facing the same destiny” (Nasser, 2004, p. 241). Arab states adopted pan-Arabism as part of their identity in the first half of the twentieth century and continued to do so through the 1970s.20

In the context of Jordan, Amir Abdullah hoped to unite Arabs under his leadership. He relentlessly sought unity with Syria and Iraq, but only managed to annex the West Bank to his territory in 1948 (Wilson, 1990). Nasser (2004) argues that during the 1950s through 1970s Jordan identified itself first with the pan-Arab nation, second with Islam, and last with its locality. According to Nasser, the modern nation-state was “promoted as the first step in the strategy of the Arab countries’ liberation from colonialism and not an end by itself” (p. 226).

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20 Regardless of Arab states’ emphasis on pan-Arab identity, Arabic language and cultural products in the Arab world, including movies and music, continue to be a source of unification among Arabs. Furthermore, the non-resolved Palestinian problem and Western intervention in the region reinforce a sense of pan-Arab identity among population in the Arab world.
Like the pan-Islamic identity, the pan-Arab identity also helped establish the legitimacy of Jordan’s monarchs since they relate to Prophet Muhammad, who was an Arab (Nasser, 2004). Frisch (2002, p. 100) argues that Jordan’s adoption of the pan-Arab identity, particularly under King Hussein, “possesses the additional virtue of attenuating the tension of being a minor state and societal player in the larger Arab region.”

Emphasis on Arab identity in the official discourse on national identity in Jordan, as well as in many Arab countries, has changed over the past few decades. More often than not, identification with Arabs comes second to the particular identity of the nation-state. Recent discourse on national identity in Jordan literally puts Jordan first, as obvious in the “Jordan First” campaign discussed below. Still, Jordan continues to identify itself with the pan-Arab nation, which Frisch (2002) argues will persist while Jordan is a bi-national state consisting of Transjordanians and Palestinians, and while it remains vulnerable to outside threats.

Modernization and Economic Development

In 2002, Jordan launched the national campaign “Al-Urdun Awwalan” (Jordan First), which was “a new outlook on the concept of national identity” in the country (Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010, p. 87). In some respects, Jordan First attests to the strong relation between place – in this case, the modern state as a spatialization – and collective identity, discussed in Chapter 2. Official discourse promotes Jordan First as an “instrument of modernization” (Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010, p. 87). Underlying this campaign is concern about Jordan’s economic development (Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom, n.d.; Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). The campaign also addresses political reform and social development. The Jordanian government sees Jordan First as a means to encourage the nurturing of democracy, rule of law, equality,
public freedom, accountability, and transparency (Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom, n.d.; King Abdullah II, 2002). Furthermore, Jordan First is a means to enhancing patriotism and accommodating the diverse population while maintaining the unity of Jordan (Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom, n.d.; George, 2005; King Abdullah II, 2002; Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010).

The campaign suggests that the individual’s achievement, rather than his or her tribal connection, is what matters most. However, identification with tribes continues to be a significant element of national identity in Jordan and political liberalization has not been proceeding rapidly (Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010; also see George, 2005 & Lynch, 2004).

Jordan First gives priority to the interests of Jordan and its people over regional concerns. However, the Jordanian government is keen to confirm the country’s continuous identification with Arabs and Islam as the official document states:

> Jordan is proud of its Islamic identity and Arab allegiance. It will indefatigably strive to protect the rights and interests of the nation … [and] foster Arab unity…. Nobody should take the “Jordan First” call as a bid for introversion, but rather as a deep conviction that Jordan’s economic and political strength, as well as its social security, are prerequisites that need to be safeguarded in order to strengthen our Arab surroundings and support our Arab brethren. (King Abdullah II, 2002)

In 2011, the significance of Jordan’s identification with Arabs took a new form as Jordan’s request to join the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was being considered by GCC members (Halaby, 2011). Recent political instabilities in the Arab Middle East are a major force behind Jordan’s request (ibid). In addition, as in the Jordan First campaign, economic development is a significant impetus behind Jordan’s interest in joining the GCC. The relation between political stability and economic situation cannot be overemphasized: a poor economy fuels political unrest. As Halaby points out, a membership in the GCC will boost Jordan’s small economy by increasing financial aid from GCC states, opening up Gulf markets to Jordanian

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21 Founded in 1981, the GCC includes the six oil-rich Arab Gulf states: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.
exports, and opening up job markets in the Gulf states to Jordanian professionals. In addition, it will increase Jordan’s share of petrodollar investments. In return, Jordan can provide military support to the GCC, an important gain to these countries in a turbulent period as evident in recent unrest in Bahrain (Halaby, 2011). It is still to be seen how national identity in Jordan may be reconstructed if Jordan is admitted to the GCC.

**Popular Identities**

Despite the effectiveness of the state and its institutions in the construction of the official Jordanian national identity, there are multiple popular collective identities that challenge or work along with the official identity. Some of these popular identities are closer than others to the official narrative of national identity. Like the official identity, popular identities in Jordan are constructed and multidimensional. Unlike the official identity, however, popular identities, more often than not, are constructed with reference to the different places of origin, to Arabs and non-Arabs, and to Islam and Christianity. Furthermore, these identities are constructed with reference to socio-economic status and to tradition as well as modernity.

Thus, immigrants from the Caucasus identify as a community of Circassians, as Jordanians, and as Muslims (see Shami, 1996). The population who emigrated from Armenia see themselves as Armenians, as Jordanians, and as Christians (see Derderian-Aghajanian, 2009). The majority of the population who came from Palestine define themselves as Palestinians, Arabs, and either as Muslims or Christians. Furthermore, they trace their roots to different places in Palestine. For example, it is not uncommon for Palestinian-Jordanians to associate themselves with the province, city, town, or village from where they, their parents, their grandparents, or even great grandparents came. This even applies to Transjordanian tribes, who, although they
define themselves in opposition to nontribal population, understand themselves as belonging to
different tribes and lineage. Tribal populations also see themselves as Arabs and as either
Muslims or Christians. Within each group, small subgroups or even individuals may define
themselves differently. For example, some regard themselves as Jordanians first; others as
Muslims first; some as Arabs first; others as Bedouin first. Many have also different hierarchy of
self-definitions in different contexts.

Some in Jordan define themselves based on their socio-economic status, which places the
individual or family in a certain stratum of society according to income, occupation, and level of
education. Furthermore, some regard themselves as modern; others as traditional. Some oscillate
between modernity and tradition at different times and in different situations; some define
themselves as simultaneously traditional and modern. The tension between the identification as
modern or traditional and the coexistence of tradition and modernity are not unique to
Jordanians; rather they apply to people in many Arab countries. This has been recognized by
many scholars. For example, AlSayyad (2008) argues that under the condition of contemporary
globalization people in the Arab world are developing multiple identities with reference to
tradition and modernity, among others. Tarik Sabry (2010, p. 19) argues that many young Arabs
“insist on being both modern and traditional.” They believe that “being modern does not and
should not necessarily mean parting with tradition, morality or God” (ibid). How young Arabs
understand modernity varies among groups of different ethnic, ideological, and socio-economic
conditions. Similarly, how Jordanians understand modernity and how they translate being
modern into their lifestyle vary among different groups and even among individuals in the same
group. For many, modernity is related to the West, whether they see it positively or negatively,
embrace it totally or partly, or abandon it. Possessing signifiers of Western modernities is
important for those who want to be modern and believe they can achieve modernity and the alleged happiness and goodness associated with it through the consumption of Western culture and goods: fashion, food, and gadgets, among others. In the late twentieth century, consumption patterns and image-building through consumption became a significant means of self- and group-identification, be it identification with modernity, tradition, socio-economic class, or others. As a middle-class, middle-aged, highly-educated woman in Amman puts it, Jordanians are turning into a society of appearances, or “madhahir” in her words (personal communication, July 15, 2010). Interestingly enough, this woman recognizes Jordanians as a society in which images mediate social relations. In other words, she recognizes “the society of the spectacle” Debord (1967/1994) theorized, though she has never read Debord.

The Urban Built Environment

The Small Town of the Late Nineteenth Century Through the Late 1940s

Immigrants to modern Amman first settled in what later became the downtown, then a fertile wadi (valley) surrounded by a number of Amman’s jabals (hills). Immigrants who moved to Amman in the early 1900s built their houses on the slopes of these hills. These houses were accessed from long narrow public stairs (Rifai, 1996), which over time became characteristic of Amman’s urban built environment (see Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007). In building their first houses in modern Amman, Circassians used stones taken from the city’s ancient buildings (Musa, 1985; Rogan, 1986), which resulted in increasing loss of Amman’s architectural heritage as the city grew larger (Rogan, 1986). Early residents of Amman also built with brick, wooden beams, and reeds covered with a mixture of mud and thatch for roofing (Musa, 1985). Circassians brought with them their own architectural and urban design, and vocabularies.
Unlike the traditional introverted courtyard houses elsewhere in the Middle East, Circassians’ houses were extroverted with relatively large windows and porches and were surrounded by gardens bordered by walls (Figure 4.3). These houses were accessible directly from the roads, unlike courtyard houses in the Middle East, which were accessible from cul-de-sacs (Rogan, 1986). By the end of the nineteenth century, Amman had a market, which included stores and a bakery, and a few paved streets (Musa, 1985). Circassians introduced wheeled traffic to Amman, which necessitated the paving of the city’s streets (Musa, 1985; Rogan, 1986). Settlers from neighboring areas of the Bilad al-Sham also helped shape the architecture of the city in the early twentieth century (Al-Asad, 1997a; Rifai, 1996), though to a lesser degree than did Circassians who then constituted the majority of the city’s population. By the late 1910s, Amman was a small town of an area of only a few square kilometers (Al Kurdi, 1983) and had the character of a Circassian town (Musa, 1985). With so much of its early fabric created by immigrants, early-modern Amman developed in ways that are neither indigenous to the city nor Arab (Rogan, 1986). Furthermore unlike many cities in the Muslim world, such as Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem, Amman does not have an “Old City” exhibiting “Islamic” characteristics (Rogan, 1986; Shami, 1996).

In the 1920s, basic service buildings were constructed in Amman, which up until then had no bank, hospital, hotel, electricity, or municipal water. Still, the city’s built environment remained modest and its character remained similar to that of the early 1900s. Its buildings continued to be mostly one-story structures (Rogan, 1996). Stone dominated as a building material for state buildings and houses of middle- and upper-class families, whereas mud brick was a common building material for the houses of the less privileged. Only few major buildings were constructed by the state during the 1920s due to the small economy of the state (Rogan,
1996). Three major buildings were built in the 1920s in Amman: the palace of Amir Abdullah, known as the Raghadan Palace, the British Residency, and the Husayni Mosque, the first State mosque in modern Jordan (Rogan, 1996; also see Musa, 1985). The Husayni Mosque is named after Sharif Husayn bin Ali, father of Amir Abdullah. Located in downtown Amman, this mosque was the place where congregational prayers were performed and religious ceremonies were held. The construction of this mosque despite the state’s small budget attests to the significance of identification with Islam, as well as the Hashemite family, for the state during the

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\[22\] The mosque was built on the site of the old Umari Mosque, which was built in the seventh century (Musa, 1985). The mosque was built in neo-Mamluk style and underwent renovation more than once in subsequent years.
state-building period of Jordan. Since the construction of the Husayni Mosque, mosques have been a significant component in Amman’s built environment. Some mosques are undertaken by the state, others by individuals who receive the support of the state, be it the donation of land plots on which mosques are built, the maintenance of these mosques, or the employment of their Imams. Images of mosques, particularly state mosques, on the state’s public TV, the state’s promotional material, and postcards, commonly serve as a representation of a city and a state that identifies with Islam. Amman has no shortage of churches, though they are not sponsored by the state (see U.S. Department of State, n.d.). It is not an uncommon arrangement to find a mosque and a church next to each other.

The built environment of Amman underwent gradual transformation from the early 1920s to 1948 as a result of changes in the city’s demographics (see Tukan, 1996). Schools, hospitals, hotels, movie theatres, and other service buildings were built. Faisal Square, the downtown public square next to the Husayni Mosque, with its coffee shops and political salons became a significant part of the growing city as early as the 1930s (Daher, 2008b). In addition, downtown Amman housed commercial and government buildings (see United Nations [UN], 2005; Figure 4.4). Many houses were built in Amman during this period, spreading on the slopes of the hills surrounding the downtown and up on the hilltops. Other service buildings began to occupy the hilltops, and roads leading uphill were constructed (Rifai, 1996; also see UN, 2005). Buildings were mostly one or two stories high, and did not exceed three stories (see Al-Asad, 1997a).
Figure 4.4. View of the 1930s Municipality of Amman building in the downtown. 

Builders used local building materials and techniques, and used stone with detailed openings and ornaments and different colors and textures (Tukan, 1996). But at the same time, new building materials, such as concrete and steel, were introduced (Al-Asad, 1997b; Guillot, 2004). Builders, however, managed to use new building materials along with old ones in ways that did not interrupt their building tradition. While concrete and metal frames served structural purposes, stone continued to be used as structural material in wall construction, not a mere veneer as it would later be (Guillot, 2004). This attests to the talent of builders in the first half of the twentieth century (ibid) and their deep understanding of the nature of the materials they used. Architecture during this period included Western-influenced elements and decorative features combined with traditional ones, producing elegant architecture (Al-Asad, 1997a; Figure 4.5).
Immigrants who came to Amman from major neighboring cities, such as Damascus, Beirut, and Jerusalem, which had been exposed to and influenced by Western building techniques and architectural vocabularies long before Amman did, strongly influenced Amman’s architecture. In building their houses, these newcomers were influenced by the ways architecture in their cities of origin was developing at that time. In addition, master builders who came to
Amman from neighboring cities, especially from Nablus, Palestine, transferred to the city their latest building expertise. Also, architects from the neighboring region, who were trained in the West or in Western-influenced Middle Eastern schools of architecture, started to practice architecture in Amman and introduced Western vocabularies to the city’s built environment.

The Rapidly Transforming City of the Late 1940s Through 1960s

Amman’s built environment underwent significant transformation beginning in the late 1940s. The rapidly growing population from the late 1940s through the 1960s resulted in fast expansion of the city’s built environment (Al-Asad, 1997b). In 1961, the area of Amman was 15.5 square kilometer. Amman’s fast expansion from the late 1940s through 1960s resulted in a “rupture” in the city’s evolution (Al-Asad, 1997b). The physical plans that were made for Amman in 1955 and 1968 (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004) were modernist and mostly carried out by European and North American planners. The 1955 plan, which was the first for the city, aimed at organizing the city and “bringing the country up to date and into step with those already more technically advanced” (p. 105). This plan proposed dividing the city into neighborhoods separated by green spaces and connecting neighborhoods located on different hills by elevated roads, which would bridge the city’s wadis, would be supported on buildings’ rooftops, and would constitute parts of a ring road encircling the city center. The 1955 plan also designated the city’s wadis as open green spaces and proposed a central park with cultural buildings and a town hall in the city center. The plan suggested clearing parts of the urban fabric in the city center and introducing multistory office and commercial buildings and multistory garages. It also proposed

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23 This area is given on an aerial photo of Amman in 1961, which I purchased from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in Amman in 2010.
24 The 1955 plan was carried out by the British planners Gerald Kong and Max Lock and commissioned by the United Nations as a part of its assistance program to Jordan. One of the 1968 plans was prepared by Czech planner Victor Lorenz, the other by a US-Jordanian team (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004).
the construction of a large government complex at Jabal al-Qal’a (the Citadel Hill), which
overlooks the city center and houses many archeological remains. Despite its ambition and
merits, this grand plan did not work for Amman at this time due to the city’s, as well as Jordan’s,
small economy. The 1968 plans proposed, among other things, the construction of ring roads
around the city center and the redevelopment of the city center in ways partly similar to the 1955
proposal. Only a few of the urban and architectural projects proposed in the 1955 and 1968 plans
were implemented by the end of 1960s.

As building activities accelerated in the city and new building materials and techniques
were introduced, architects used new materials in ways that did not match the nature of these
materials, producing aesthetically unpleasant architecture with poor detail (Tukan, 2009, also see
Al-Asad, 1997b). Such bad architecture, according to Jafar Tukan (2009), spread quickly in
Amman and continues to be common in the city today. Even buildings where stone was used
lacked the kind of craftsmanship common in the architecture of Amman in previous periods. The
architecture of Amman became monotonous with no distinguished character (Tukan, 1996).
Describing Amman’s architecture in the early 1950s through 1960s, Tukan (1996, p. 258) writes,
“Amman’s buildings turned into stone cubes of similar size, height, color, and shape, lining
along the sides of naively planned streets and lacking open public spaces that would encourage
human social interaction.” During this period, low-rise apartment buildings, mostly three stories
high, became dominant in Amman’s landscape (Rifai, 1996; Tukan, 1996). Only a few buildings
in the city were relatively tall. By the late 1960s, the tallest building in Amman, known as The
Insurance Building, was 11 stories high at around 40 meters.25

25 This is the building of the Jordan Insurance Company, which was completed in the early 1960s. The building still
exists on the First Circle in Jabal Amman, one of the affluent areas in the city in the 1960s. It was designed by the
Lebanese architect Khalil Khouri (Daher, 2008b).
From the 1950s through the 1970s, the International Style of architecture dominated in many cities in the Middle East (Al-Asad, 1997a), including Amman. Although the avant-garde adopted this style as early as the late 1910s and it became universal in Western Europe and the United States in the 1940s (Curl, 2000), it only spread to Amman during the second half of the twentieth century. During this period, architects trained in schools of architecture in the Arab world, such as Egypt and Lebanon, and those who received their training in Western schools increasingly adopted the International Style. For them, this was a modernizing style that the Arab world should follow in order to join the modern developed world (Al-Asad, 1997a).

Some architects practicing in the 1950s successfully incorporated the modern Western vocabulary into the traditional stone architectural vocabulary of the previous decades, producing pleasant hybrid architecture (Tukan, 2009). Similarly, Amman in the 1960s witnessed some examples of hybrid architecture. On this hybrid architecture, Rami Daher (2008b, p. 15) writes, “modernity was domesticated in Amman [in the 1950s and 1960s] and the result was a special Ammani version of Modern Architecture.” The Insurance Building is often cited as one of the best examples of such architecture in Amman (see Figure 4.6). Though relatively tall, the building responds to the urban edge through the flow of its base with the street corner on which it is located (Daher, 2008b). The height of this building’s base matches that of the surrounding buildings, and the stone on the façades of this base connects the building with its context. The upper part of the building, however, is designed in a typical International Style. With its repetitive floors, finished in strips of marble and glass, the building introduced new materials and vocabulary to Amman’s built environment. Today, with many tall buildings and large-scale developments in Amman and with various building finishing materials and architectural vocabulary in the city, The Insurance Building does not look intrusive. However, one wonders
whether back in the early 1960s this building looked the same to generations of Amman residents who were not familiar with such architecture. One may argue that there is some kind of nostalgia involved in judging buildings from the 1950s and 1960s, including The Insurance Building, by a scholar such as Daher who opened his eyes to see those buildings as a part of Amman’s built environment.

![The Insurance Building](image)

*Figure 4.6. View of the The Insurance Building on the First Circle in Jabal Amman, showing the building’s base and lower typical floors. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 27, 2011.*

**The Booming City of the 1970s and 1980s**

The regional economic and political conditions mentioned above created a dramatic construction boom in Amman during the 1970s and 1980s, bringing the city’s area by 1983 to
70.85 square kilometer. Plans were made for Amman in 1978 and 1988 (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004). The 1978 plans, primarily carried out by Japanese experts, incorporated components of the previous modernist plans for Amman and aimed at improving the urban quality of Amman’s downtown, relieving traffic congestion in the downtown, and providing investment opportunities. The plans proposed the construction of large-scale commercial centers, office buildings, and a hotel in the downtown, which would be monumental and cater for tourists as well as city residents. They also included proposals for the construction of ring roads around the downtown, which would span the wadis. These grand plans were not fully implemented, and the projects that were carried out primarily consisted of road construction. The 1988 plan, carried out by a Jordanian team of experts headed by a British planner, was less ambitious than the 1978 plans, although it had a more comprehensive scope. The 1988 plan aimed at reducing suburban growth through the introduction of a green belt around the city and the development of satellite towns. It included modest proposals for improving the city and its downtown, including the creation of landscaped public open spaces, pedestrian arcades, a produce market, schools, and clinics. The 1988 plan was not implemented in the 1980s. It was adopted in the 1990s, but was never implemented completely (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004).

The above conditions had negative impacts on Amman’s urban fabric, as well as on the environment and economy of the city and its surroundings, as Al-Asad (1997a, 1997b) argues. During the 1970s and 1980s, Amman grew into a sprawling city (Rogan, 1986). The adoption of modern planning models and the use of Western planners’ expertise to decongest the city

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26 This area is provided on a Landsat image of Amman in 1983, which I purchased from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in 2010.
27 The Japanese International Engineering Consultants Association (IECA) were in charge of main plans for Amman in 1978 (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004).
28 This plan was carried out by experts from the Municipality of Amman (later became Greater Amman Municipality, GAM) and the firm Dar al-Handasah Consultants under the leadership of British planner John Calder (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004).
resulted in streets cutting through and destroying old urban fabric and broke with the city’s past and environment (Al-Asad, 1997b; Rogan, 1986). Major geographic features of the city disappeared. For example, although until the 1940s ducks and swans could be seen in Amman’s main stream (al-Sayl as it is known locally) and small boats sailed on it during some seasons (Al-Asad, 1997b; also see Munif, 1996a, 1996b), it has been converted to a sewage conduit underneath a busy street (Al-Asad, 1997b; Daher, 2008b; Abu Dayyeh, 2004).

The direction of Amman’s urban growth from the mid-1970s through late 1980s departed from that of the past. The urban fabric of the city began to expand westward, resulting in loss of large agricultural areas (Al-Asad, 1997a, 1997b; also see Al-Zagha & Al-Maani, 1996). In addition, Amman became divided into an Eastern, less affluent section, and a Western, more affluent section (Al-Asad, 2008b). Until the early 1970s, Amman was defined as a city consisting of a number of hills surrounding the downtown. Amman’s downtown was the city’s core: the place where major businesses, government buildings, and commercial facilities were located. It was the central space where the city’s inhabitants socialized, shopped, entertained, and moved through to go from one of the city’s hills to another (ibid). Since the mid-1970s, the downtown began to lose its significance to new western sections of the city. In addition to residential buildings and commercial activities, many government and corporate offices moved from the downtown westward to what was then the outskirts of Amman (UN, 2005). King Abdullah I Mosque (Figure 4.7) was built as the new state mosque in the late 1980s in the Abdali district, which by then had become a part of Amman but until the early 1960s was an outer section of the city as evident in the accounts of Amman’s residents who recall that period (see Hammad, 2009). The new mosque replaced the Husayni Mosque as the official place for congregational prayers and religious ceremonies.
During the 1970s investment in property became common, contributing to the expansion of Amman’s geographical as well as physical area and soaring property prices. Large-scale public housing projects spread across the city and many private property investment firms were established to provide the market with housing investment projects (Tukan, 1996; see Figure 4.8). Many high-rise buildings were built, mostly hotels and commercial and office buildings, interrupting the skyline of the city and dwarfing the low-rise residential buildings in their surroundings. These high-rise buildings were made possible as modification to building regulations in Amman began to take place and as increasing numbers of influential individuals and institutions managed to bypass building regulations and gain exemptions from these
regulations.29 The building of Mujamma‘ Bank al-Iskan (Housing Bank Center), a large-scale commercial and office development by the Housing Bank located in the Shmeisani area, is one of the most famous high-rise developments in Amman to be completed in the 1970s (Figure 4.9).30 The design of the 21-story, 80-meter-tall Center, with its distinctive horizontal strips of fair-faced concrete and planted terraces, was uncommon in Amman,31 but it became an icon of modern Amman, and Jordan, often appearing on national TV, in tourist books, and on postcards.

Figure 4.8. View of Al-Hussein Housing Suburb (Dahiyat Al-Hussein li al-Iskan) for government employees on Mecca Street in Western Amman. When this development was completed in the early 1970s, Mecca Street had not yet become a part of Amman’s urban area. 

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on August 8, 2007.

29 My reference here is an article by architect Jafar Tukan that he provided me with when I interviewed him in Amman on July 18, 2010. This Arabic article is titled “‘Amarat al-Abraj: Limada wa Kay? [Tower Architecture: Why and How?]”

30 This bank was founded in 1973 by the Jordanian government with 50 percent of its shares owned by investors from the Gulf states and Iran (Biegel, 1996). The bank, which later was renamed the Housing Bank for Trade and Finance, was originally established to provide funding for housing projects in Jordan; hence its name. See the bank’s website at http://www.hbtf.com/wps/portal/, retrieved June 2011.

31 This development was designed by the firm Dar al-Handasah (Shair and Partners), a leading architecture and engineering firm in the Arab world currently based in Amman, and constructed by a Korean construction firm.
Figure 4.9. View of the Housing Bank Center in the Shmeisani area in Western Amman. 
One of the characteristics of Amman’s architecture in the 1970s and 1980s is that it was eclectic, showing a heterogeneous mix of imported architectural vocabularies (Al-Asad, 1997a, 1997b; Fethi & Mahadin, 1996; also see Abu Ghanimeh & Pisani, 2001). This architecture was influenced by Postmodern architecture with its mix of styles, historical references, and ornamentation. It also reflected the influence of architecture in the Gulf states, particularly the architecture of single-family houses. In building their houses in Amman, Jordanian expatriates in the Gulf states adopted architectural vocabularies, be they Islamic or classic, common in these states. Thus, architecture in Amman in the 1970s and 1980s borrowed from classic architecture as well as from Islamic architecture. Buildings in the city combined different colors of stone, sometimes in the ablaq pattern characteristic of Mamluk architecture, and Islamic and classic ornaments and vocabularies (see Fethi & Mahadin, 1996). This was a departure from architecture in Amman in the 1950s and 1960s, which by conforming to the International Style tended to be harmonious, though monotonous and not necessarily environmentally or socioculturally responsive. Still, as Al-Asad (1997b) points out, the use of stone as sheathing material on many buildings in Amman continued to create harmony among these buildings. Stone also blends well with the city’s natural geological and topographical features, maintaining some of the local character of the city’s earlier architecture.

_32 The ablaq pattern consists of “alternating light and dark courses of masonry” (See Dictionary of Islamic Architecture at [http://archnet.org/library/dictionary/entry.jsp?entry_id=DIA0002&mode=full](http://archnet.org/library/dictionary/entry.jsp?entry_id=DIA0002&mode=full), retrieved November 26, 2011)._
The 1990s brought about another significant transformation in Amman’s urban built environment, which by 1992 had expanded to an area of 127.8 square kilometers. This transformation is related to Jordan’s growing economy during the 1990s. Amman continued to grow westward as the western section of Amman had by then become the part where the well-to-do Ammanis lived. The city also expanded northward and southward. Some urban development projects that were included in earlier plans for the city were implemented, often with modification, in the 1990s (Abu-Dayyeh, 2004). For example, the City Hall complex, which was proposed as early as 1955, was constructed in the 1990s in the Ras al-‘Ayn district (ibid), which is located between the western and eastern sections of the city. Along with these developments, Amman witnessed tremendous upgrade of roads and construction of underpasses and overpasses during the 1990s, which continued at even a faster pace during the early twenty-first century, in an attempt to decongest traffic in the city.

The returnees had a significant influence in shaping Amman’s built environment during the 1990s (Al-Asad, 2005). Demographic changes and affluent lifestyles of Amman’s newcomers encouraged investment in today’s economy. Particularly during the first half of the 1990s, new residents of Amman increased demand for houses and office spaces, as well as health, educational, and commercial services. Thus, Amman began to upgrade its services and facilities (Al-Asad, 2005; UN, 2005; also see Le Troquer & al-Oudat, 1999).

The public sector as well as private developers and investors were active in construction and development in this period, as a review of building licenses issued by the Jordanian Engineers Association reveals. Non-Jordanian investors, primarily from the Gulf, invested in

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33 This area is given on an aerial photo of Amman in 1992, which I purchased from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in Amman in 2010.
developments in Amman (A. Zuaiter, personal communication, September 2, 2010; also see Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007). The economic conditions in the 1990s in Jordan, particularly in Amman, encouraged foreign investment. Many private universities (see Figure 4.10) and hospitals were established, and many apartment buildings and single-family houses were built. Mid- and high-rise office buildings with commercial floors at their base became ubiquitous (see Al-Asad, 2005; Figure 4.11). As many high-rise buildings were built in already shaped urban fabric mostly of four-story buildings, not on the outskirts of the city, they interrupted the city’s skyline and strained its infrastructure (UN, 2005; also see Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007). Increasing numbers of department stores (Figure 4.12) were introduced to Amman’s landscape and the mall emerged as a new mode of shopping in the city (Al-Asad, 2005; R. Badran, personal communication, September 1, 2010; A. Zuaiter, personal communication, September 2, 2010). International fast-food and coffee shop franchises became widespread in the city’s landscape.

*Figure 4.10. View of the administration building of The University of Petra (UOP), Airport Road.*

Figure 4.11. View of office buildings with commercial floors at the base, Jabal al-Hussein.


Figure 4.12. Interior view of the Safeway store in the Shmeisani area – one of the first department stores in Amman.

The scale and shape of the built environment of Amman in the 1990s departed from that of the first half of the twentieth century or even from the built environment in the previous four decades. As Ayman Zuaiter, an established architect in Amman, puts it, “the 1990s’ architecture seems to have been a transitional phase to the ‘material’ architecture of the 2000s” (personal communication, September 2, 2010). Some blame the divergence of the 1990s’ architecture in Amman from that of previous periods on the returnees, suggesting that they brought about new forms of architecture influenced by a “culture of quantity, not quality,” in which the image matters most, dominant in the Gulf states (R. Badran, personal communication, September 1, 1010).

Finishing materials such as glass and aluminum became more common on the city’s buildings than in the previous decades (Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007), and architects experimented with new building and finishing materials, sometimes successfully, according to Zuaiter. However, stone persisted as a major finishing material on the city’s buildings, visually linking the 1990s’ architecture with old architecture; few architects managed to use stone in ways sensitive to Amman’s built environment (ibid). Architects in Amman during the 1990s continued to view knowledge of stone vocabulary as most important, without necessarily paying careful attention to stone details as architects in the city did in the past. Amman’s architects up until the 1990s considered well-established architects who gained their experience in the Gulf states, where the latest technologies of glass curtain walls, aluminum cladding, and marble and granite sheathing were used in sophisticated ways, inadequately qualified to design buildings in the city as these outsiders would not know how to use stone. In the 1990s, many architects in Amman described Gulf states’ architecture with its tall buildings, large scale, and luxurious
materials as superficial and unoriginal as opposed to the “original” architecture of Amman.\textsuperscript{34} This changed in the early twenty-first century when the experience of architects and engineers who had practiced in the Gulf states became appreciated, as urban developments not dissimilar from developments in these states were increasingly produced in Amman.

\textit{The “Global” City of the Early Twenty-First Century

It was not uncommon for visitors to Amman in the twentieth century to call the city a “sleepy” or “provincial” city (UN, 2005, p. 7). “This is a nice small town,” said an engineer working in the building construction sector in Abu Dhabi when he visited Amman for the first time in the late 1990s. Similarly, non-Jordanians I interviewed during my fieldwork research who lived in Amman in the late 1990s described the city back then as sleepy. But, the early-twenty-first-century Amman was neither small nor sleepy. The real estate and construction sectors in the city witnessed significant growth during the 2000s (Oxford Business Group, 2009). This growth, and the attractive market of the booming Gulf states, resulted in a shortage of skilled labor in the construction sector in 2007 (Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 32) and shortage of experienced architects and engineers in Amman.\textsuperscript{35} By the end of the 2000s, Amman’s urban area had expanded to 281 square kilometers.\textsuperscript{36} The economic conditions of the 2000s, discussed above, encouraged investment in Jordan, including investment in the urban built environment. During the 2000s, the demand for

\textsuperscript{34} Here, I mainly draw upon the experience of relatives and close friends. Having moved from Abu Dhabi to Amman in the late 1990s, I am well aware of this situation.

\textsuperscript{35} A relatively high number of Jordanians hold degrees in engineering and architecture. In 2008, the number of architects and civil, electrical, and mechanical engineers registered in the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) was 69,717 (Department of Statistics, 2009b). Registration in JEA is required for any architect or engineer practicing in Jordan. It is likely that many Jordanian architects and engineers working abroad maintain their registration in JEA.

\textsuperscript{36} This area is given on an aerial photo of Amman in 2010, which I purchased from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in Amman in 2010. This area is not to be confused with the geographical area of Greater Amman, which by 2007 was 1,662 square kilometers (GAM, 2008).
houses and other services in Amman increased, contributing to rising property prices.\(^{37}\) The 2003 Iraqi War and the continued political and economic instability in Iraq contributed significantly to this situation. The affluent segment of Iraqis in Amman increased demand for high-end residential and commercial developments. Furthermore, Jordan emerged as a “major gateway for business with Iraq” (Oxford Business Group, 2009, p. 29) and a base for government and non-government organizations operating in Iraq (Oxford Business Group, 2008). These conditions, along with Jordan’s strategic geographic location and its image as a peaceful country amidst a troubled region, made Jordan, particularly Amman, a good place for real estate investment. Investors from the Arab Gulf states, who enjoyed high oil prices and substantial petrodollar flows through 2007, were among the most prominent groups of foreign investors in Amman in the early twenty-first century (Oxford Business Group, 2007). They hoped to “reproduce the lucrative Dubai real estate model, albeit in a far more modest scale, in Jordan” (Oxford Business Group, 2009, p. 29). Between 2001 and 2008, one hundred non-Jordanian construction firms, most of which were based in the Gulf, were registered in Jordan. In 2008, Gulf investments in Jordan were estimated at 16 billion USD, which accounted for 10 percent of Jordan’s gross domestic product (“Investment boom,” 2008).

Planning policies in Amman encouraged real estate investment in the city. Following a call from King Abdullah II to create a comprehensive plan for Amman, Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), in collaboration with local and Western experts, embarked on a master plan for the city in 2006, called the Amman Plan (Greater Amman Municipality [GAM], 2008). This plan aimed, among other things, to develop Amman into an efficient, green, sustainable city that would become a destination for investors and tourists. The Amman Plan, which took into

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\(^{37}\) According to Dr. Radwan Nazzal (personal communication, January 2010), real estate agent and political scientist, property prices in Amman increased by 40-50 percent following the 2003 Iraqi War.
Amman’s projected population in 2025 (6 million people) consisted of plans at three scales: the metropolitan scale, which addressed the growth strategy for Greater Amman; the area scale, which included land use and major road network plans for the eight areas of Greater Amman; the community scale, which included detailed plans for neighborhoods and blocks (ibid). The plans at the community scale included regulations for the location of high-rise buildings in the city and design guidelines for these buildings (GAM, 2008; also see GAM, 2007b). These plans also included a strategy for corridor intensification: the identification of urban transport corridors and the introduction of policies, plans, and guidelines for the development of vacant land in existing urban areas along these corridors (GAM, 2007a, 2008). The Amman plan created a “one-stop-shop” that would facilitate application and review processes for large-scale projects (GAM, 2007a, 2007b). Instead of submitting their designs for different authorities, investors would submit these designs only to GAM who would follow up on these submissions with relevant authorities (ibid).

Influenced by the local, regional, and global forces mentioned above, Amman underwent an unprecedented construction boom, which changed the shape of the city dramatically (see Figure 4.13). In the early twenty-first century, a new “global” Amman was in the making. Christopher Parker (2009) describes this Amman well in the following passage:

Jordan’s capital appears as a city of holes. In between detours necessitated by work at strategic points along the city’s road network, one encounters numerous fenced off construction zones spruced up with billboards that provide a glimpse of the glittering future in store for the site … Amman is being remade and presented to investors as a new city that conforms to globalized benchmarks of speed, efficiency, and connectivity. (p. 110)
To obtain speed and connectivity necessary to encourage globalization’s flows, particularly capital flows, the availability of efficient transport and communication networks in the city was essential. Thus, Amman underwent increasing developments in this vein since the early 2000s. Many underpasses and overpasses were constructed in Amman during this period. The Abdoun Bridge in Western Amman is among the latest and most monumental overpasses in the city (Figure 4.14). Completed in 2006 and designed by Dar al-Handasah (Shair and Partners), this bridge became an icon of Amman, appearing on Amman’s promotional material and national TV. The city also upgraded the Amman Queen Alia International Airport to serve 9 million passengers per year, which is over triple the number of passengers the airport previously served, and the designs will permit future expansion to serve 12 million passengers per year. The internationally-renowned British firm Foster and Partners was the main architect for the new airport, which opened in 2013 (see “Queen Alia Airport,” n.d. & “Queen Alia International Airport expansion,” n.d.).
The influence of money flows to the city could literally be identified in Amman’s early-twenty-first-century built environment where multiple branches of banks, occupying carefully designed buildings, dotted the city’s landscape (A. Zuaiter, personal communication, September 2, 2010). In fact, a review of building licenses issued by the Jordan Engineer Association (JEA) in the past two decades reveals that the number of bank buildings licensed in Amman was remarkably high in the 2000s compared to that in the 1990s. JAE’s licenses also reveal the influence of the 2003 Iraqi War on the built environment in Amman, which is obvious in the jump in the number of building licenses and the total licensed area in 2004. Although construction statistics in Amman show that the private sector’s contribution to building construction in the city during the 2000s was much more than that of the public sector, many

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38 For example, the Department of Statistics reports that 448 building licenses were issued for privately-owned non-residential buildings in Amman in 2007 as opposed to 21 licenses for public-owned buildings (See Construction Statistics, by the Department of Statistics, 2007, Amman: Department of Statistics, p. 64).
developments categorized as private-sector-owned, in reality were undertaken under a public-private partnership. This is no wonder given that public-private partnership approach to business in Amman, and Jordan at large, was among the important economic reforms the state adopted in the 2000s to encourage economic global integration and enhance the country’s economy. The review of JEA’s building licenses also show that the number of commercial buildings licensed in the 2000s was much higher than those licensed in the 1990s. High-end mixed-use megaprojects, gated communities, and large-scale designer shopping malls were common examples of the developments taking place in early-twenty-first-century Amman (see Parker, 2009; UN, 2005).

Amman’s built environment lost much of its distinctive character during the early twenty-first century (R. Badran, personal communication, September 1, 2010; Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007; A. Zuaiter, personal communication, September 2, 2010). Amman’s urban fabric no longer reflected the city’s topography and the distinctive undulating nature of Amman’s skyline was interrupted (see Figure 4.15). Furthermore, the built environment in Amman lacked harmony as buildings of different scales, materials, shapes, and architectural vocabularies were haphazardly scattered around the city (see figures 4.16-4.22; also see Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007). The use of stone on buildings had helped hide some of the chaos in Amman’s built environment, as architect Mario Botta once commented.39 But as observation of recent developments in the city reveals and architects in Amman agree, glass and other sheathing and finishing materials new to the city were increasingly used on buildings (I. Tahhan, personal communication, August 22, 2010). Even when stone was used as a finishing material, the large scale of the developments made the disparity between individual developments and their context hard to dismiss.

39 Lecture given by Swiss architect Mario Botta gave at the Amman City Hall on February 12, 2001, an event organized by the Center for the Study of the Built Environment in Amman.
Figure 4.15. View of the skyline of Amman from the Dabouq area, Western Amman, looking east.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.

Figure 4.16. View of a Western Amman area from Wadi Saqra intersection, looking west.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 7, 2010.
Figure 4.17. View of a shopping mall on Mecca Street in Western Amman. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on August 11, 2007.

Figure 4.18. View of a fast-food building on al-Medina al-Munawwara Street in Western Amman. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on August 8, 2007.
Figure 4.19. View of a new commercial building on Wadi Saqra Street in Western Amman.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 4, 2010.

Figure 4.20. View of a new commercial building on Wadi Saqra Street.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 4, 2010.

Figure 4.21. View of a new commercial building at Wadi Saqra intersection.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 4, 2010.

Figure 4.22. View of a new commercial building in the Shmeisani area in Western Amman.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.
Overview of the Study Cases

The increasing development of megaprojects in cities all over the world since the late twentieth century has been associated with contemporary globalization processes. Megaprojects in Amman are no exception. In the early twenty-first century capital flows, particularly Gulf petrodollars, were invested in several megaprojects in the city, which had significant influence on transforming the city’s urban built environment. For this study, three megaprojects were analyzed: The Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman. These are representative of large-scale urban developments that took place, or were planned to take place, in Amman in the early twenty-first century. These megaprojects exhibit many features that are better understood as a part of ongoing contemporary globalization processes in the city. It is, therefore, appropriate to use these developments as a lens through which a globalizing Amman can be understood and answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1 can be sought.

The Abdali New Downtown (Abdali, the Central Business District of Amman)

This project (Figure 4.23) is locally known as Mashru‘ al-‘Abdali, Arabic for The Abdali Project, and often abbreviated as al-‘ Abdali (The Abdali). Abdali is the name of the area where the project is located, a central area in Amman named after King Abdullah I, the founder of Jordan (see Figure 4.24). The developers of this project, who had no idea about the origin of this area’s name, suggested for this project names such as Al-Jawhara, Arabic for The Jewel, and The Upper Downtown, none of which included Abdali (Y. Rajjal, personal communication, September 22, 2010).40 The inclusion of “Abdali” in the project’s name came after the developers’ attention was brought to the connection of the name Abdali to the founder of Jordan.

40 Dr. Rajjal was Dean of the School of Architecture and Built Environment at the German-Jordanian University, Amman. He had served as Mawared’s director of Urban Studies and was involved in early stages of this project.
Figure 4.23. 3D view of the Abdali development placed in real context.

*Note.* Copyright by Abdali Investment and Development. Reprinted with permission.
Figure 4.24. A 2007 map of Amman showing the sites of the study cases and their surroundings.

Note. Adapted from an aerial view of Amman purchased in October 2010 from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, Amman.
The Abdali project is a public-private partnership. The state’s share in this development is about 44 percent of the project’s shares, which consists of the state-owned land the project occupies. This project is undertaken by the Abdali Investment and Development (AID) company, a privately-owned land development firm consisting of a joint venture of three firms. These include the financially and administratively independent state-owned real estate developer National Resources Investment & Development Corporation (Mawared)\(^{41}\); the privately-owned Horizon Group, an international real estate investment and development conglomerate\(^ {42}\); and the privately-owned United Real Estate Company-Jordan, a part of the group Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO). Together, the two non-Jordanian firms Horizon and United Real Estate hold about 56 percent of the Abdali project’s shares (Abdali Investment and Development [AID], 2008a).\(^ {43}\) The Beirut-based LACECO Architects & Engineers prepared the master plan and design guidelines for this development (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010; G. Amireh, personal communication, August 2, 2010). In addition to national investment firms, a number of international investors, mainly based in the Gulf, have acquired land plots for development within the project’s area (AID, 2008a; F. Saifi, personal communication, August 5, 2010). According to a list of investors involved in Phase I of the Abdali development, which was prepared in November 2008 and procured from AID in August 2010, around 60 percent of the built-up area is developed by non-Jordanian developers, primarily from UAE and Kuwait. The

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\(^{41}\) Mawared “is technically owned by the Jordanian military” and founded to “oversee the transfer of military sites to private developers” (Parker, 2009, p. 115).


\(^{43}\) This information also is based on a one-page document by AID titled “Abdali, the Central Business District of Amman,” which I obtained from AID on August 5, 2010.
remaining 40 percent of the built-up area is developed by Jordanian developers. The large-scale projects in the Abdali development are carried out mostly by non-Jordanian developers, whereas the relatively small-scale projects are developed mostly by Jordanian developers.

Work on the plans for the Abdali development began in 2001-2002 (F. Rabi, personal communication, January, 2010; Y. Rajjal, personal communication, September 22, 2010; M. Rihani, personal communication, August 16, 2010). Construction work on the project began in 2004 (H. Abu Hijleh, personal communication, August 2, 2010). The project originally was scheduled to be completed in three phases (AID, 2008a). Phase I was scheduled to be completed in 2010, but was delayed as a result of the 2008 economic crisis. According to AID, Phase I of this development is expected to be completed in three stages: summer 2011, 2012, and 2013 (H. Abu Hijleh, personal communication, August 2, 2010). Work on phases II and III has not yet begun. Old buildings on the site of Phase II are yet to be demolished. It will take around three years to complete this phase after the site is prepared (ibid). AID is silent about Phase III, which seems to have been put on hold as some recent AID documents on the Abdali development speak of two phases of this project, not three. The Abdali development will occupy an area of 350 dunums, and it has an estimated cost of USD5 billion. Phases I and II of this development will have a built-up area of 1.7 million square meters (AID, 2008a).

Among the most important buildings in the Abdali neighborhood are those located east of the project’s site (Figure 4.25; also see Figure 4.23). Next to the Abdali development is the Court of Law building (Figure 4.26). The headquarters for the Housing Bank for Trade and Finance is

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44 One source in Amman told me that the first idea of the Abdali development dated back to the early 1990s.
45 I am referring to documents I obtained from AID in 2010.
46 The dunum is the unit for measuring land area in Jordan. One dunum equals 1,000 square meters.
47 This information is based on a one-page document published by AID and titled “Abdali, the Central Business District of Amman,” which I obtained from AID on August 5, 2010. Previous publications on the Abdali development estimate the cost of the project at USD1 billion (AID, 2008a).
Figure 4.25. A 2007 map of the Abdali New Downtown site and its surroundings. Note. Adapted from an aerial view of Amman purchased in October 2010 from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, Amman.
located east of the Court of Law, and north of this bank is the Parliament building. Across the street, east of the bank is King Abdullah I Mosque (Figure 4.27; also see Figure 4.7). Next to the mosque is the Ministry of Education (Figure 4.28). Across the street south of the mosque and ministry is a church (Figure 4.29). A few hundred meters east of the Abdali development used to be the busy Abdali transport hub (Figure 4.30), which has recently been relocated. Some three kilometers east of the Abdali development is the downtown of Amman. To the south of the Abdali development, across the street from this development are modest low-rise commercial and residential buildings, military buildings, and Mawared’s headquarters. Next to the Abdali development on the north are low-rise residential buildings (Figure 4.31). The northern and western borders of this development face the relatively affluent Shmeisani district, the financial and administrative district of Amman where many banks, government and financial institutions, and hotels are located (see figures 4.32 and 4.33). The western end of the Abdali development occupies the site of the Central Intelligence Agency (locally known as al-Mukhabarat) buildings, which was relocated to the outskirts of the city.

Figure 4.26. View of the southeastern corner of the Abdali development showing the Court of Law buildings on the far right. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on December 29, 2009.

Figure 4.27. View of King Abdullah I Mosque across the street east of the Abdali development. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on February 13, 2010.
Figure 4.28. View of the Ministry of Education buildings east of the Abdali development, next to King Abdullah I Mosque. 
Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on September 6, 2010.

Figure 4.29. View of the church and commercial buildings east of the Abdali development, across the street bordering the development on the south. 
Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 4, 2010.

Figure 4.30. View of the site of the Abdali transport hub southeast of the Abdali development. 
Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 4, 2010.

Figure 4.31. View of buildings next to the Abdali development on the north. 
Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on September 5, 2010.
Jordan Gate

The name Jordan Gate is a translation of the Arabic name Bawwabat al-Urdun. On the project’s signs, advertisements, and press release, the Arabic or English name of this development is used based on the language of these materials. When the development was conceived in the early 2000s, I recall listening to comments in the professional circle on the logic behind this development’s name. The project, it was mentioned, will serve as the visitor’s gateway to the Jordanian political and economic capital, thus to Jordan, as the visitor approaches Western Amman from the airport. Jordan Gate is located in the affluent area of the Sixth Circle in Western Amman, some 35 kilometers from the airport (see figures 4.24, 4.34, and 4.35).

The developers of Jordan Gate are the Bahrain-based Gulf Finance House, the Kuwait-based Kuwait Finance and Investment, the Kuwait-based Bayan Holding Company, and the UAE-based Al Hamad Contracting Company (Hazaiyeh, 2007, 2010; “Wad‘ hajar asas,” 2005). The architects for this development are the Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects (J. Tukan, personal communication, July 18, 2010). The project was begun in 2005 (J. Tukan,
Figure 4.34. 3D view of the Jordan Gate development placed in real context.

*Note.* Copyright by Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects. Reprinted with permission.
personal communication, July 18, 2010; “Wad‘ hajar asas,” 2005; Hazaimeh, 2007), and it was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2008 (“Injaz 80%,” 2008). The developers rescheduled the completion of this development to 2011 (“GFH’s Jordan Gate,” 2010; Hazaimeh, 2010), but as of this writing, the project has not been completed.

The USD300-million Jordan Gate occupies a site of 28.5 dunums and has a built-up area of 220,000 square meters (Gulf Finance House B.S.C., 2006-2007; Hazaimeh, 2007, 2010; “Wad‘ hajar asas,” 2005). The project is located on three relatively narrow streets, which border it on the north, south, and west (Figure 4.36). The interviews I conducted with relevant

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Figure 4.35. View of Jordan Gate and its surroundings from the Sixth Circle.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.

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48 When this development was launched it was associated with The Royal Village – a larger project by the Gulf Finance House planned for Marj al-Hamam, south of Amman. I do not discuss the unrealized Royal Village here.
Figure 4.36. A 2007 map of the Jordan Gate site and its surroundings.
Note. Adapted from an aerial view of Amman purchased in October 2010 from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, Amman.
individuals showed that plans were made to widen one of these streets, to the extent the surrounding urban fabric allowed, but the additional width of the street would serve as a parking lane for vehicles of visitors to Jordan Gate. Located next to this development on the east is the five-star Crowne Plaza Amman hotel (also known locally by its previous name ‘Amra Hotel; Figure 4.37). The three-star San Rock Hotel is located across the street north of Jordan Gate, and a water tower stands near the northeastern corner of this development (see Figure 4.38). The rest of the area surrounding Jordan Gate basically includes single-family houses, villas, and low-rise residential buildings with small commercial businesses at their bases, such as a bookstore, a studio, a dry cleaner, and a grocery (figures 4.38-4.40).

*Figure 4.37. View of Jordan Gate and neighboring Crowne Plaza hotel.*

*Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.
Figure 4.38. View of Jordan Gate and its surroundings looking south. In the foreground on the left and right are residential buildings. In the background are Crowne Plaza hotel and the water tower in the center, and Jordan Gate on the right.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.

Figure 4.39. View of Jordan Gate and its surroundings looking north. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.
Sanaya Amman (Limitless Towers)

According to the developers of this project, the name Sanaya, which they said is Arabic for “starlight” (“Green, innovative,” 2009), was chosen because the project is “designed to make optimum use of … natural light by day, while illuminating the skyline of Amman at night” (p. 28). The name Sanaya appears on the project’s Arabic and English advertisements, press release, and signs; the name is transliterated into English but never translated. The Sanaya project (Figure 4.41) is best known in Amman for its earlier name Limitless Towers, after its developers the Dubai-based real estate development company Limitless, a subsidiary of Dubai World (see Damra, 2009). The Chicago-based Murphy/Jahn served as the architects and main consultants for the Sanaya project (“Architects appointed,” 2008; Duwairi, 2008), and the Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects were the local coordinators and supervising engineers. The

Figure 4.41. 3D view of the Sanaya development.

Construction was begun on the Sanaya development in July 2008. The project was scheduled to be completed in 2011 (Damra, 2009; Duwairi, 2008), but the troubled financial situation of Dubai World and Limitless resulted in delays in construction work, putting the
project on hold by the end of 2009 (“Limitless to press on,” 2009; also see Walter, 2010). On their website, the Sanaya developers write, “work on Sanaya Amman has been postponed as we continue to review our projects and prioritise our investments to reflect current market conditions” (“Limitless: Sanaya Amman,” n.d.). Officials at Limitless do not say that this project has been cancelled, but some sources in Amman say that the project is dead, and indeed work on the development has not moved beyond excavation. When I visited the site in 2010, it consisted of a construction fence around the site, project construction signs, and a foundation hole some 124 meters long, 74 meters wide, and 40 meters deep.

The site of Sanaya is located in Wadi Abdoun on a vacant lot previously owned by GAM (figures 4.42 and 4.43; also see Figure 4.24). In the vicinity of the Sanaya site on the Abdoun side are middle-class low-rise residential buildings, single-family houses, and many vacant plots. Sparse low- and mid-rise buildings are located along the western road to the Sanaya site on the Jabal Amman side (Figure 4.44). Across the streets from this development, which is located at one of the corners of a major intersection in the older section of Amman, are modest low-rise residential and commercial buildings, including the Qeisiyyah working-class neighborhood (Figure 4.45). The state has bought land in the area, particularly in the Qeisiyyah neighborhood, for the development of a government district that will include many government institution buildings (M. Awamleh, personal communication, September 5, 2010), but this development has yet to materialize.

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Figure 4.42. A 2007 map of the Sanaya site and its surroundings.

Note. Adapted from an aerial view of Amman purchased in October 2010 from the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre, Amman.
Figure 4.43. View of the Sanaya site looking south from the Third Circle area in Jabal Amman.
*Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on September 1, 2010.

Figure 4.44. View of buildings on the road to Sanaya from the west looking northeast towards Jabal Amman.
*Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on October 8, 2010.
The Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman, as well as other similar early-twenty-first-century developments in the city, were responsible for the introduction of new architectural vocabulary, as well as new building scale, to the city’s urban fabric, changing the city’s skyline and landscape and constructing a new city image for Amman. These megaprojects and the advertising discourse that accompanied them played an important role in constructing global Amman and the city residents’ identity. How they did so is what the following chapters address.
Chapter 5: Constructing Global Amman

Through the Built Environment

This chapter uses the case studies introduced in Chapter 4 to discuss the ways the urban built environment of Amman served as a means to construct a “global” Amman in the early twenty-first century. It addresses this issue with relation to globalization processes, particularly capital flows, and power relations. The cases are analyzed along three subthemes: creative destruction; the image; commodified spaces.

Creative Destruction

Following the theorization of Harvey (1989b, 1990), urban transformation, particularly under contemporary globalization processes, can be understood in terms of capitalism’s creative destruction. As capitalists look for more innovative means of production that will yield more profits, they destroy the built environment they produced previously in order to replace it with a new built environment that enables the new innovation. This process of creative destruction was pertinent in the context of urban transformations in Amman’s built environment in the early twenty-first century. But how did it apply to Amman? Factories – a classic example of capitalists’ spaces of production targeted by creative destruction – were not what was targeted by creative destruction in Amman. A close look at megaprojects carried out in the city in the early twenty-first century reveals what physical landscapes the process of creative destruction in Amman targeted, what power was exercised during this process, and how power relations played out in the transformation of the city’s built environment.
For the Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman to take place, buildings and landscapes already on the sites of the future projects had to be torn down. The site of the Abdali development primarily included military facilities and the Central Intelligence Agency buildings. When these buildings were built in the 1960s and 1970s, this site had not yet become the center of Amman, and it was appropriate at that time to locate state institutions such as the military at the margins of the city. Although the site became the center of the city in the 1980s, it continued to accommodate the military and other relevant state institutions as the condition that produced such state buildings remained largely unchanged. Both the defensive and, at times, repressive functions of the institutions occupying these buildings continued to be relevant through the 1980s. At the turn of the millennium, however, the condition under which military buildings in Abdali were produced had changed. The state signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, and modernization processes were underway. The state was no longer at war, and as a sign of adopting modernization and the democratic processes the state’s defensive and repressive apparatus were shifted away from the center of the city. Thus, the site could be cleared for redevelopment. In addition to the state-owned buildings, the process of creative destruction targeted privately-owned residential, commercial, and educational buildings on the site of the future Abdali project.

Creative destruction in the context of Jordan Gate targeted the public park on the site of this development. The creation of the park by Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) early in the last quarter of the twentieth century was appropriate to this particular moment of time. The land of the park, which constituted the prime cost of this park, was donated by privileged city residents. The park can be understood as an investment in the Sixth Circle area, then a suburban area of Western Amman. By enhancing the quality of space in this area, GAM encouraged city
residents to move into this western part of the city. This, in turn, relieved the crowded areas in the rest of the city, created demand for land in Western Amman, encouraged construction, and stimulated the city’s economy. By the early twenty-first century, the Sixth Circle area became one of Western Amman’s affluent areas. At the same time, developers from the Gulf states were looking for investment in urban developments in the city. New opportunities emerged for GAM to make profit through the transformation of the park into a mixed-use megaproject. Thus, the structures and landscapes in the park were demolished so that the developers could produce the new more profitable development.

Whereas the process of creative destruction targeted built environments in the cases of the Abdali New Downtown and Jordan Gate, at Sanaya Amman this process targeted the natural landscape. However, the creative destruction at the Sanaya development was different than that in the previous cases because it was not completed and so, although losses were incurred, there were no gains. The natural landscape of the Sanaya site was destroyed, but the buildings that were supposed to replace this landscape and produce profit for the developers and the city were never built. The developers failed to realize their project and the anticipated earnings. GAM, however, made some profit by selling this site to the developers, after it managed to change building regulation in the area to allow such a large-scale high-rise development to take place. Still, GAM did not accomplish the long-term gain it expected from the creative destruction process that targeted this site. At the end, the neighborhood of this site was left with a large hole, which resulted in visual and environmental pollution and may threaten, in the long run, soil stability in the area.

Yielding profit was the primary concern for the developers of Amman’s contemporary megaprojects. Investing in the urban built environment in Amman was seen as a means to
economic development integral to the modernization campaign the state launched in the early twenty-first century. Here, the Abdali development is a telling example. Mawared, the state-owned developers in the AID joint venture that developed the Abdali New Downtown, found developing the site into a mixed-use megaproject the best way to produce profit. Thus, officials at Mawared talked about how the site of the Abdali development was a “prime land” that should be invested (M. Rihani, personal communication, August 16, 2010). It turned out that the plans for this development would change more than once over the course of time as more profitable development opportunities emerged. A significant part of the Abdali development was to accommodate the American University of Amman (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010; “Tawqi‘ ittifaqiyya,” 2005). Many in Amman were optimistic about this development since an educational institution such as this could have benefited the city and given its higher education institutions, already well respected in the region, an edge over other cities. However, as more profitable options for development emerged, the university proposal was abandoned to be replaced with commercial buildings, mostly high-rise buildings. One cannot but wonder how a decision regarding the establishment of a university at the center of the city could have changed in a matter of a couple of years. It might be expected that such a decision would have been based on an extensive study of the needs of the city residents. But this was not the case. The Abdali’s principal purpose was profit making rather than the city residents’ needs.

This was also evident in another plan change for the Abdali development. Earlier Abdali plans and documents (see AID, n.d.a, pp. 13-14) included a cultural component at the eastern end of the Abdali site, which would have connected the Abdali project with the state buildings: King Abdullah I Mosque, the Parliament, and the Court of Law.¹ These plans referred to this cultural

¹ In 2010, some Abdali plans on the wall of LACECO offices at the Abdali site showed the Abdali cultural component, as well as the university sector. LACECO’s R. Abou Rayan (personal communication, August 2 & 8,
component of the project as the Abdali development’s cultural or civic pole, which included a library, a museum, and a plaza. But commercial buildings replaced these service buildings and spaces. It turned out, according to the planners of this development, that no government institution would fund the building of the cultural component at the Abdali development (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010). Instead, the developers, including the state-owned Mawared, preferred to invest in more profitable components of this project, particularly in entertainment and shopping spaces.

Decision-making regarding the production of Amman’s megaprojects followed a top-down approach. This was obvious in the planning process for the development of the site of the future Abdali New Downtown where the public had no voice in the largest development in contemporary Amman, a development that would dramatically change a central area of the city. Commenting on this approach, a planner and architect in Amman said that it was a common approach in the country (Jabir, personal communication, September 2010). High state officials involved in the Abdali development, as well as many professionals, thought the public was ignorant and did not know what was good for them or the city. The prevailing assumption was that experts were better qualified than the people – those most affected by the project – to decide. There were a number of ways the Abdali site could have been developed to benefit Amman residents, but little input was sought from them. Professionals in fields relating to architecture and urban planning who had no conflict of interest in relation to this project, including regionally renowned Jordanian architect Rasem Badran, suggested that the site should be developed into a public park that would have served as the lungs of the increasingly crowded city, which lacked

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2010) pointed out that these were old plans dating back to the Abdali project’s early phase and they had been changed, but she did not know when. A 2006 Abdali document referred to the project’s cultural component, as well as the university sector (see AID, 2006, p. 26). Later documents did not make any reference to these parts of the Abdali project (see Abdali Mall Company, 2007a).
open public spaces (personal communication, September 1, 2010). In fact, internal sources mentioned that one of the scenarios briefly considered for the development of the Abdali site was its transformation into a public park (Yusif, personal communication, September 2010). However, it soon became obvious that any development that would not yield profit was out of the question.

This was the same logic that led to the demolition of the park on the site of the future Jordan Gate development. In this case not only were the needs of the community ignored but also the legal consequences for transforming land that was donated for the purpose of creating a park into a commercial development. The place where neighborhood residents, as well as other city residents, entertained, socialized, and played games was to be transformed into an upscale development that primarily catered to the affluent segment of the society and promoted consumption. GAM made the decision to develop the park as a top-down decision with no public participation. The GAM committee consisted of planners, architects, business persons, among others. According to a committee insider, of the forty members who voted, only seven voted against the Jordan Gate development (personal communication, September 2010). City officials and the committee were lured by the profit GAM could make as a partner in this development. Thus, GAM became both the legislator and a beneficiary from this development, as GAM officials would admit a few years later (“Ittifaqiyat bay,” 2007). No wonder that building regulations, particularly as they related to building heights, were skewed in favor of the developers and certain licensing processes were bypassed.

In both the Abdali New Downtown and Jordan Gate developments, some city residents contested the power of corporate developers to destroy built environments that already existed on the sites and replace them with the new projects. In the case of the Abdali development, this was
obvious in the public’s response to the transfer of ownership of properties on the site. True at
times, the transition of ownership to the developers went smoothly as property owners were
lured by the generous amounts the Abdali developers offered them or intimidated by the power
of these developers. But at other times, the process involved a battle between property owners
who refused to sell their properties and the developers who needed these properties to execute
their plans, which had been completed before securing ownership of the site. The case of Talal
Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) became very famous in Amman. TAG-Org exercised
their power to destabilize the otherwise hegemonic power of the developers. When TAG-Org
refused to sell their property on the Abdali site to the developers, GAM put forward plans for a
new public park and a street that would cut through this property (Kayyali, 2008; also see “Abu-
Ghazaleh’ tarfud,” 2006; “Majmu‘at Abu-Ghazaleh Tuwajjih,” 2007). Consequently, GAM was
able to expropriate this property on the basis that it would be used for the public good. GAM
then sold the property to the Abdali developers who soon after demolished TAG-Org’s buildings
to realize their plans for the Abdali New Downtown. TAG-Org filed a case against GAM,
claiming that the expropriation of their property was invalid and unfair, but they lost (ibid).

Like TAG-Org, the public, particularly residents in the neighborhood of Jordan Gate,
who were outraged by GAM’s decision to transform the park and by the scale of this
development exercised their power. Consequently, a campaign was launched against the Jordan
Gate development (personal communication, September & February 2010). Although the
campaign was small, it was significant in the context of Amman, as well as Jordan, where it was
unlikely that the public would take to the streets for matters relating to the built environment in
the city. At the time, Jordan’s democratic processes were new, untested, and far from complete.
The original donors of the park’s land, according to professionals and others interviewed over
the course of this research, objected the transformation of the park into a commercial
megaproject, taking their case to court. Sources said that consequently these donors received
monetary compensation. The campaign and the court case against Jordan Gate might have
shaken those in charge of this development, but they could not stop it. One immediate outcome
was that the mayor of Amman under whom Jordan Gate took place was asked to step down. The
new mayor sold GAM’s share in this development to a private Gulf-state developer, Bayan
Holding (Hazaimeh, 2007; “Ittifaqiyat bay‘,” 2007). The mayor wanted to revoke the building
license of Jordan Gate and asked the developers to reduce the height of the buildings (Al-
Wazani, 2006), but in the end, the development continued as planned.

Jordan Gate was produced at the expense of the public. Residents of this development’s
neighborhood, as well as those who worked there, passed through the area, or visited it had to
adjust to new situations, be they traffic congestion, lack of parking space, or the loss of a much
appreciated open public space in the area. Almost everyone I interviewed who lived or worked in
the neighborhood of Jordan Gate, as well as many individuals who visited the neighborhood
frequently, talked about how the park served the local community and people of Western
Amman. Adil talked passionately about the park and the small soccer field that existed there. He
said, “I, my friends, and other neighbors used to form teams and compete against each other.
Those were great times.” Kareema talked about the park’s indoor skating rink. She said, “the
building that hosted the rink was modest, but it was spacious and nice and my children and I had
fun there.” Atif talked about how much he liked pine trees in the park and spoke sadly about
their clear-cutting in preparation for the new development. Atif said, “now that the park is
closed, I have to drive my children to a park far from home. But we don’t go as often.” Hassan
talked about how he used to go to the park with his wife and children after work. They would
play or take a walk then have some sandwiches; sometimes they met with other friends there. Clearly, the park was a breathing space for people in the neighborhood and the surrounding areas. It was a place for leisure, relaxation, and socialization, a much needed space that is missed.

As in the case of Jordan Gate, the demolition of buildings and urban spaces on the site of the future Abdali New Downtown had negative consequences for residents of the Abdali neighborhood, as well as other city residents. Those who lived, worked, or went to school there had to take longer and more expensive trips to school or work but that cost did not detract from the benefits accrued to the developers. Along with the destruction of previous buildings on the site and the relocation of those who once occupied it, good and bad memories associated with this site were fading. A decade after the project was begun, some of the middle-aged individuals I interviewed found it hard to even remember major buildings that once occupied the site, and many young adults in the city identified the site only with the Abdali New Downtown.

The above discussion shows that regardless of who the developer was or whether or not the development was undertaken as a public-private partnership, the Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman were conceived within the capitalist logic of production and its creative destruction. The power of corporations, the state, and the city was dominant in these developments, though it was sometimes contested by micro-powers such as those exercised by groups of the public in the context of the Abdali and Jordan Gate developments. It was primarily profit-making that drove the production of contemporary megaprojects in Amman, not the needs of the city residents. Amman’s megaprojects also showed how decision-makers in the city were desperate to chase petrodollars from the Gulf states. Decision-makers viewed megaprojects as
investment opportunities that would strengthen the city’s as well as the country’s economy, not least through transforming the image of the city.

**The Image**

Under contemporary globalization processes and the logic of capital associated with these processes, image building became an important form of investment. Imaging or constructing an image of the urban built environment through the production of buildings and landscapes of certain characteristics that created the built environment as a distinguished place for living, work, and entertainment proved profitable. Producing spectacular urban spaces became a common practice. Thus, developers produced splendid developments to enhance their corporate image and increase their profits, and architects designed such developments to boost their portfolio. Similarly, city officials became concerned with city imaging as a means to market and sell places and buttress their city’s economy (see Harvey, 1990, 2001a, 2001b). Focusing on creating the image of developments and the city, corporations and officials disregarded the needs of the city’s working- and middle-class residents. The large scale, high visibility, high cost, and anticipated high profit from megaprojects made them a good means through which to create a city image. Thus in early-twenty-first-century Amman, megaprojects were used to re-image the city or project a new image for Amman expressive of the new millennium. But what image did these megaprojects seek to construct and how did they construct this image?

The developers of the Abdali New Downtown and their planners were explicit about the significance of image building in the conception of this development. The Abdali project (Figure 4.23) was designed to create an image integral to the new image of Amman and the city’s, as well as Jordan’s, economic development. Thus in the regulations for this project, the developers stated that one of the “principal indicators” for the assessment of the impact of the Abdali
development on the city’s and country’s economy was its creation of an “improved image of Amman” (AID, n.d.a, p. 4). A key goal of the Abdali development as stated in these regulations was “to develop a vibrant, tightly knit, architecturally distinctive, and modern urban nucleus that [would change] the past image of the site and [become] a pole of excellence attracting the best talents to live, study, work, and entertain” (AID, n.d.a, p. 2). The developers of the Abdali New Downtown believed it would “catapult the city of Amman into the 21st century, placing it at par with most renowned cities of the world” and “provoking an unprecedented influx of investments from Jordan and the region” (AID, n.d.c). Thus, the Abdali developers sought a modern image for the project that would make Amman a global city.

Similarly, the developers of Jordan Gate praised the appearance of this development (see Figure 4.34), referring to it as a “masterpiece of architecture” that was a quality addition to Amman (“(Al Hamad) tunjiz,” 2006). The image of this development would translate into a profit (“GFH’s Jordan Gate,” 2010), attracting investors to Amman (“Jordan Gate breaks ground,” 2005), helping transform the city into a world business destination (“Janahi: 40% al-injaz,” 2007; “Jordan Gate breaks ground,” 2005). The mayor of Amman, under whom Jordan Gate was begun as a partnership between GAM and Gulf states’ developers, said that this development would be a distinctive contribution to Amman’s built environment, serving as a distinguished tourist destination, encouraging foreign investment, and enhancing the city’s economy (“Wadh al hasas,” 2005; also see “Bawwabat al-Urdun’ tunhi,” 2005). Like the developers of the Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate’s developers sought an image for their project that would contribute to the construction of global Amman.
A Modern Downtown

Whereas the developers of Jordan Gate and Sanaya Amman were concerned with creating an image of individual developments, the Abdali developers were concerned with imaging a whole district as can be inferred from the design concept of the Abdali New Downtown and its building regulations. Describing the plans of the Abdali development, the developers wrote, “view corridors form[ed] the main composition lines of the project” (AID, n.d.a, p. 7; Figure 5.1). These corridors, according to the developers, converged towards state buildings located east of the Abdali development. It was these “view corridors” that “guide[d] the alignment of streets and the placement of high [rise] buildings” (AID, n.d.a, p. 7). Not only was the image of the Abdali development important but also the images seen from this development. Thus, it was important for the planners that “building form … [be] directed toward allowing … views into local areas rather than blocking them” (AID, n.d.a, p. 7). This recalled modern planning principles as manifested in the Haussmannian Paris (1853-1870) where buildings and spaces were organized with emphasis on the image and vista. Haussmann’s planning model in turn influenced planning practices in colonial and postcolonial Arab Middle Eastern cities in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Beirut is one such city and, interestingly, the architects and planners of the Abdali development – LACECO – were based in Beirut and took part in the planning of one of the city’s largest developments in the 1990s, Beirut Central District (BCD). Also the developers of the BCD were closely connected, particularly at an early stage of the Abdali development, to Horizon, one of the developers in the joint venture of AID. In fact, Makdisi (1997) found that the appearance of the BCD was most important in the conception of this project.
The significance of the image for the Abdali development was obvious in the ways building shapes were controlled. Building regulations described the urban and architectural character of the Abdali New Downtown to which developers should have adhered (Abdali Mall Company, 2007a; AID, n.d.a; AID, 2006). They regulated building height and form as well as landscape materials. They regulated building proportions, solid-to-void ratio on the façades, and finishing materials. These regulations, according to the Abdali planners and architects, were derived from old buildings in Amman, particularly buildings in the downtown, as well as developments in neighboring cities, such as Beirut Central District.
Buildings in Abdali were required to adhere to a tripartite organization consisting of building base, body, and top, and each of these parts was regulated in terms of its design and accents used to emphasize the different parts of the building (Abdali Mall Company, 2007a; AID, n.d.a; AID, 2006; Figure 5.2). Interestingly, old buildings in Amman were known for having no distinctive top. To allow for vertical expansion, columns more often than not extended around 50cm above the roof; and the last floor was never treated as such since it was kept in mind that it might one day become a middle floor. There are different theoretical understandings of the tripartite composition of buildings. One of these is that it is a persisting influence of high-rise buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which the use of tripartite composition reflected the spirit of classical architecture through the allusion to the three components of the classical order: the pedestal, column, and entablature (see Summerson, 1963).

Another understanding is that advanced by architect and writer Louis Sullivan in the late nineteenth century in which he attributed the tripartite division of the high-rise buildings he

Figure 5.2. The Abdali planners’ illustration of design guidelines for building façades at the Abdali New Downtown.

designed to the three different functions the building served. Following Sullivan’s aphorism “form follows function,” the commercial base, typical office floors, and the attic that housed mechanical equipment were to have distinguished forms (Mallgrave, 2005, p. 280).

The Abdali planners and architects regulated the solid-to-void ratio on the façades of this development’s buildings so as it would be similar to the ratio in Amman’s old buildings (Abdali Mall Company, 2007a; AID, n.d.a; AID, 2006). But, maintaining such a ratio did not necessarily result in buildings with character similar to that of old buildings. Thus, the shape of the buildings along the southern edge of the Abdali development was different from old buildings in downtown Amman or in the Abdali neighborhood. Compare, for example, buildings in figures 5.3, 4.28, and 4.29 to those in figures 5.4 and 5.5. Some buildings at the Abdali development, such as the buildings in Figure 5.6, can be seen as hybrid, combining new and old architectural vocabulary and materials – glass curtain walls, stone-clad walls, and small windows.

*Figure 5.3. View of downtown Amman on a weekend afternoon. Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on October 15, 2010.
Figure 5.4. View of a commercial building in the Abdali development from the street bordering this development on the south.  
*Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on September 6, 2010.

Figure 5.5. View of commercial buildings along the southern edge of the Abdali development.  
*Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on October 27, 2011.
Although the rhetoric of AID and LACECO seemed to show respect for old buildings in Amman, the developers and their architects and planners were keen to differentiate the Abdali development from these buildings. This was obvious even in their regulation for building finishing. On the one hand, to keep with “the spirit” of old buildings in the immediate context of the Abdali development, stone was required as the main finishing material (AID, n.d.a, p. 48). On the other, to distinguish the Abdali development from its surrounding, warm yellow stone was to be used; and white stone commonly used on buildings in the neighborhood was “prohibited” (AID, n.d.a, p. 49). Similarly, rough-textured stone commonly used on older buildings in Amman, such as stone locally referred to as mufajjar and tubzah, was not allowed on buildings in the Abdali development. Instead, stone was to be smoothly finished (ibid).
Building shapes in the Abdali New Downtown also were controlled through the details and illustrated examples for different architectural elements, such as window shapes and proportions and canopy shapes, materials, and colors, included in the regulations for this development. The examples were primarily from Amman and Beirut, and included modern and postmodern styles. They even included sketch designs for the developments at different locations in the Abdali development showing how AID expected the buildings to look. The regulations for the Abdali development encouraged the use of double-skin façades (AID, n.d.a). Such façades would consist of an internal skin made of clear glass, and an external skin located up to 75 cm from the internal skin and made of glass, stone, and wooden or metal louvers, among others.

LACECO already used this approach in their designs for Beirut Central District where façades of historic buildings on the site were kept while the interiors of these buildings were remodeled, reducing these buildings to mere envelopes and projecting a historic image for this part of the development (see Saliba, 2007). The situation was different in the Abdali New Downtown where there were no historic buildings that needed façade preservation through the use of double skin. However, the double skin made it easier to control the image of the Abdali development, which in this case was a modern image.

To further ensure that aesthetic quality of buildings in the Abdali New Downtown was controlled, AID requested the developers of the different parcels to submit the designs of their buildings, including conceptual, preliminary, and final designs, for AID’s approval (AID, 2006). The developers also were required to submit detailed designs of façades, including windows, sun shade devices, balconies, flower beds, balustrades, and canopies as well as samples of exterior finishing. This strict regulation of buildings’ shape, material, and details paid off, producing high-quality buildings, as my observation of this project showed and some architects in the city
noted. However, this regulation sometimes resulted in architects copying the examples of designs and details that the architects and planners of the Abdali development provided (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010). The resulting similarity of the small-scale buildings along the Abdali development’s southern edge (see Figure 5.6) might be attributed, at least partly, to the control of the Abdali development’s image through AID’s strict regulation and extensive details and design examples, particularly for small-scale developments.

_Tall Buildings_

High-rise buildings were among the most important image-constructing components in the Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman (see figures 4.23, 4.34, and 4.41). Under contemporary globalization, tall buildings, as well as tall twin buildings, became a symbol of globality. The developers of contemporary megaprojects in Amman were well aware of that. The symbolic capital, which is transformable to money capital, associated with record-breaking tall buildings engendered competition for building the tallest building in Amman in the early twenty-first century. Thus, Tameer Tower at the Abdali New Downtown was designed to beat the record set by Sanaya Amman (50 stories high and 200 meters tall) just as Sanaya was designed to beat the record set by Jordan Gate (44 stories high and 150 meters tall) and Jordan Gate was constructed to beat the record set by Le Royal, which at 33 stories stood as the tallest building in Amman since its completion in 2003.

The Abdali developers referred to tall buildings at the Abdali New Downtown as landmarks. Similarly, Jordan Gate’s developers called it a “landmark project” (“GFH’s Jordan Gate,” 2010). Kevin Lynch (1960, p. 48) defines the landmark as a “point-reference,” a “simply defined physical object,” which can be singled out from “a host of possibilities.” Buildings can
serve as landmarks “seen from many angles and distances” (ibid). Lynch conceived landmarks as an important element in the design of “imageable” cities – legible cities where people moving around can easily identify physical structure and compose a mental image that helps them, among other things, navigate in the city (p. 10). Lynch’s understanding of landmarks was different from the Abdali and Jordan Gate developers’ conception of landmarks as spectacular upscale developments to project an image of these developments and Amman, which would serve corporate developers rather than the majority of the city residents.

The Abdali development included high-rise office buildings and hotels in the IT Sector – the area at the western end of this development. Ranging in height between 125 and 220 meters, these were planned and designed as state-of-the-art buildings to serve as “the landmark” (AID, n.d.a, p. 22) of the Abdali New Downtown and Amman. These buildings, according to the developers, also would serve as a “landmark of the new economy of Amman” (AID, n.d.a, p.12). The landmark buildings were placed on the western side of the Abdali site not least because it provided “the highest visibility” for these buildings, which conformed to the significant role of the IT Sector in projecting “the new business image of the country” (AID, n.d.a, p. 12). High-rise buildings at the Abdali development were not restricted to the IT Sector. Plans for the Abdali New Downtown included no less than 20 tall buildings proposed for the site at different locations. Sources interviewed over the course of this research indicated that when a developer showed interest in developing parcels in the Abdali New Downtown site as a high-rise building,

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2 In addition to landmarks, Lynch (1960, p. 47) identifies paths, edges, nodes, and districts as important elements for the design of imageable built environments. Lynch defines paths as “the channels along which the observer [of the city] … moves,” such as streets and walkways. Paths are the dominant image in the minds of the observers of the city. Edges are “the linear elements not used or considered as paths by the observer.” These are “linear breaks in continuity,” such as shores, walls, and developments’ boundaries. Nodes are “the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter.” They are concentrated centers to and from which the observer travels. Paths intersection and squares are among the examples Lynch gives on nodes. Districts are medium or large sections of the city inside which “the observer mentally enters.” They are “recognizable as having some common, identifying character.”
plans were changed to accommodate demands of this developer (personal communications, August & September 2010). Furthermore, the location of high-rise buildings on the site of this development were based on spatial arrangement within this site more than on how these buildings integrated into the skyline of the neighborhood or Amman. In the Abdali development’s documents, however, the developers justified the many high-rise buildings at the Abdali New Downtown by stating that these buildings were carefully located to “mark certain areas as critical anchors,” “define gateways to the Abdali District,” and serve as landmarks (Abdali Mall Company, 2007a, p. 11).

Unlike the Abdali and Jordan Gate developers, the developers of Sanaya Amman referred to this project as an “iconic development” (“Green, innovative,” 2009, p. 29). Regarding the term iconic, Leslie Sklair (2010, p. 136; also see Sklair, 2006) distinguishes between iconic architecture that means “the stereotypical copy, like the iconic Palladian villa” and iconic architecture that means “something unique.” It is the latter definition that is relevant here. Iconic buildings, as Manuel Cuadra (2007, p. 76) defines them, are “buildings of an extremely powerful formal appearance.” As Sklair (2010, p. 135) defines it, “iconicity in architecture” is “fame and special symbolic/aesthetic significance as applied to buildings, spaces and in some cases architects themselves.” Iconic buildings and developments have a symbolic capital that can be transformed into money capital. Under contemporary globalization and the increasing competition between cities and within cities to capture capital, iconic developments emerged as a significant means of transforming the urban built environment, re-imaging places, and boosting the economy. It is not surprising then that the developers of Sanaya, who were but one of many transnational investment corporations involved in developments in Amman in the early twenty-first century, emphasized the iconicity of Sanaya in their discourse. Limitless wrote on their
website, “Sanaya Amman [would] be an architectural wonder and an icon of luxury living” (“Limitless: Sanaya Amman,” n.d.). The Sanaya development, according to the CEO of Limitless, set “new standards in iconic, sustainable building design” (“$300m Limitless Towers,” 2008). Sanaya, as the developers described it, was a “distinctive” (“Limitless: Sanaya Amman, n.d.”) “world-class” (“Bahaa Abouhatab, Limitless,” 2008, p. 11) destination (McMeeken, 2009). For Sanaya to be an icon, it needed to stand out. As Sklair (2010, p. 143) points out, “recognition of the outline of a building, especially in a skyline, is one of the great signifiers of iconicity.” Thus, Sanaya’s distinctive height was a significant part of its iconicity. Limitless stressed that Sanaya would be “the tallest building in the country and among the highest twin buildings in the Middle East” (“$300m Limitless Towers,” 2008). Furthermore, Sanaya would have “the world’s highest suspended swimming pool” (Picow, 2009; “$300m Limitless Towers,” 2008). The developers of Sanaya were proud of this project’s role in “reshaping the skyline” of Wadi Abdoun and Amman (“Limitless: Sanaya Amman,” n.d.; also see Picow, 2009).

If Sanaya Amman was located in a wadi that had one of the lowest elevations in Amman, Jordan Gate occupied a site that had one of the highest elevations in the city. Furthermore, Jordan Gate was the first development and most likely the last of such a height to occupy such a prominent location in the city, since in 2007 the Amman Plan prohibited high-rise buildings in the neighborhood of Jordan Gate as well as in the surrounding areas (GAM, 2007c). Thus, the Jordan Gate development in the early twenty-first century stood oddly in a surrounding urban fabric of low- to medium-rise buildings; it could be seen almost from anywhere in Amman (see figures 4.15 and 4.16). This, according to Jafar Tukan (n.d., p. 3), the development’s principal architect and one of two prominent old-generation architects in Jordan, added to the “uniqueness” of Jordan Gate. But many in Amman agreed that Jordan Gate had a negative
impact on the city’s skyline. Even Tukan spoke about how Jordan Gate disrupted the skyline of the city and was reported to have said that following the construction of Jordan Gate, GAM took measures that would ensure there would be no further urban disharmony as that caused by Jordan Gate (Shamma, 2010). When asked why then the Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects undertook the design of this development, Tukan responded, “towers are a matter of reality necessitated by economic forces, not just an option on the table” (Shamma, 2010, p. 36). Rasem Badran, the other prominent old-generation architect in Jordan, disagreed with Tukan’s justification for undertaking this project. He described Jordan Gate as ridiculous – “mahzala,” to use his exact word, – adding that if he had been in Tukan’s shoes he would not have undertaken the designs for this project (personal communication, September 1, 2010).

Many individuals interviewed over the course of this research were concerned about the intrusion of high-rise buildings on the city’s skyline and wished the skyline of Amman was respected. Some city residents criticized Jordan Gate’s extreme height, particularly when compared to its surroundings, referring to it as an urban disaster that damaged the city’s skyline (personal communications, September & October 2010). Similarly, many individuals I interviewed commented on the 3D view showing the Abdali development placed in real context (Figure 4.23) by saying it was disrespectful of the city’s skyline (personal communications, January & February, 2010). One of them suggested that the developers should have made a gradual transition in building heights, locating lower buildings on the edge and rising gradually towards the center (personal communication, January 17, 2010). Some blogged about the negative influence that Sanaya Amman could have had on the city’s landscape and its skyline. For example a blogger wrote, “Amman city have [sic] such a beautiful and unique skyline and those Towers don’t belong to Amman” (“This insane skyscraper,” 2009). Another wrote,
“Amman’s hills are a precious asset and a hallmark of its identity. They are the ‘icon’ of Amman, and we really don’t need new ‘icons’ that destroy its fabric and skyline” (ibid).

High-rise buildings of contemporary megaprojects in Amman and the image they projected reflected the influence of Gulf states’ developers and urbanization in Gulf cities, particularly Dubai, which architects and architectural historians in Amman have also pointed out (Al-Asad, 2007; R. Badran, personal communication, September 1, 2010). After all, Dubai is a city that was home to many iconic high-rise buildings and, more important, the tallest building in the world, Burj Khalifa (completed 2009), which made it a tourist destination and earned it a global reputation. Furthermore, several developers of contemporary high-rise buildings in Amman were based in Dubai, including the developers of Sanaya Amman, and Vertex Tower and Residences as well as The Lofts and the Heights at the Abdali New Downtown. The influence of Dubai’s architecture also can be traced in the Jordan Gate development, which had a design program similar to the program of Dubai’s iconic Emirates Towers (completed 2000) – an office tower, a hotel tower, and a shopping mall connecting the two buildings. In fact, a few individuals interviewed for my research pointed out this similarity between the two developments (personal communications, August & September, 2010). Both Jordan Gate and Emirates Towers are clad in modern glittering materials – the former is finished in glass, and the latter in aluminum panels and glass. At 56 and 54 stories, however, the Emirates Towers development is taller than Jordan Gate, and in 2000 it was the tallest not only in Dubai but in the Middle East and Europe (see Al-Asad, 2012).

The agency of the state and city in the production of Amman’s new tall buildings and construction of the city image cannot be overemphasized. In the case of Jordan Gate, GAM bypassed building regulations, allowing the development of this high-rise project. In the Abdali
New Downtown, the state-owned Mawared, which partnered with the corporate developers, facilitated investment in high-rise buildings. The plans for the Abdali development preceded GAM’s designation of the Abdali New Downtown as one of the areas in the city where high-rise buildings were permitted (see Figure 5.7). Thus, high-rise buildings were allowed in Abdali not because GAM deemed it was a suitable location for high-rise buildings, but because the developers of the Abdali project, including Mawared, had already decided to invest in tall buildings in the area. GAM was the facilitator for the development of the Abdali New Downtown through its involvement in rearranging the road network in the surroundings of this
project to allow for the heavy traffic this project would cause. GAM also interfered in favor of the developers, AID, in the case of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization mentioned above, helping AID realize the image they sought for the Abdali New Downtown.

GAM was a powerful agent in the development of Sanaya Amman. GAM changed building regulations to allow high-rise buildings in the wadi where Sanaya was located (GAM, 2008; Figure 5.8; also see Figure 5.7). GAM officials even designated the site of Sanaya, which GAM owned, for a landmark that was the tallest of the high-rise buildings in the area, inviting bidders for the site development. In fact, officials interviewed over the course of this research referred to Sanaya as “the landmark” (B. Haddaden, personal communication, July 21, 2010). According to GAM officials, the designation of the wadi for tall buildings was made following careful studies that paid close attention to the city’s urban fabric (B. Haddaden, personal communication, July 21, 2010; R. Odeh, July 15, 2010; also see “Mayor Omar Maani comments,” 2009). GAM believed the city needed high-rise buildings (B. Haddaden, personal communication, July 21, 2010; Maani, 2007). For GAM, high-rise buildings, which officials often referred to as towers, were an “essential component of thriving, modern cities” (Maani, 2007, p. 12). High-rise buildings, according to GAM, “address[ed] real and emerging market demands and [met] the interest of investors” (ibid). Thus, GAM in the early twenty-first century wanted to “Partner with Tower Investors” (ibid). GAM’s justification for allowing high-rise buildings in areas such as the site of Sanaya was that high-rise buildings were “least disruptive” in wadis (p. 42). By describing high-rise buildings as disrupting the city’s landscape and skyline, GAM acknowledged that high-rise buildings would negatively influence the city’s urban fabric. Furthermore, as architect Zuaiter pointed out, GAM’s justification of its regulation for high-rise buildings in wadis showed that this regulation was based on a “formalistic study” that prioritized
Figure 5.8. Map of the Wadi Abdoun area illustrating the regulation for high density mixed use (HDMU) developments. The regulation designates the site of Sanaya Amman for a landmark.


the skyline of the city over the social aspects of the neighborhoods where high-rise buildings were allowed (personal communication, September 2, 2010). In fact, city officials’ rhetoric supported this point. They said that they regulated high-rise buildings in wadis so that they would “control” and “preserve” the “image of the city” (R. Odeh, personal communication, July 15, 2010). But Sanaya’s site connected visually and socially with Eastern Amman, with its
modest low-rise buildings and working- and lower-middle-class residents, rather than with Western Amman. Thus, it is safe to conclude that high-rise buildings were not regulated in response to market demands, as GAM claimed, as much as they were a means to image Amman as a competitive modern city, hoping the new image would attract investors, tourists, and businesses and consequently create demand for the office, residential, and commercial spaces of these high-rise buildings.

Spectacular Developments

Contemporary megaprojects in Amman were conceived as spectacular modern developments. To create the desired image of these developments and the city, the developers hired regionally and, more important, internationally acclaimed architects. By the late twentieth century, employing the services of highly reputable international architects, or starchitects as they are often called, had become important for creating spectacular high-quality developments that would enhance the image of the city to which they belonged and help market it worldwide. The most quoted example on the significant role starchitects played in city imaging is Frank Gehry’s designs for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (completed in 1997), which transformed the image of the city and enhanced its economy. Similarly, the role starchitects such as Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Rem Koolhaas played in re-imaging and marketing Dubai in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is undeniable (see Kanna, 2011). In Amman, the developers of Sanaya hired the internationally renowned Murphy/Jahn. Known for their spectacular high-rise buildings in the United States, Western Europe, and the Gulf states, Murphy/Jahn constituted an integral part of the iconicity of Sanaya Amman. Similarly, in the Abdali New Downtown the developers of Vertex Tower and Residences employed Claudio
Nardi, and the developers of Tameer Tower chose Foster + Partners as the architects for their project.

For the buildings at the IT Sector in the Abdali New Downtown, the developers and their starchitects sought a high-tech character, and, thus, glass curtain walls and metal finishes were encouraged on these buildings (AID, n.d.a). A good example of how buildings in this sector would look was Tameer Tower (Figure 5.9), which was announced in mid-2008 and was expected to be completed in 2011 (“Tameer Holding plans,” 2008; “Ta’meer al-Qabida,” 2008). However, Tameer Tower was never realized due to the global economic crisis that hit its UAE-based developers Tameer Holding. The Abdali developers exempted Tameer Tower and other high-rise buildings in the IT Sector from regulation of building shape, finishing materials, and colors, among other things (AID, n.d.a). Regardless of their location, high-rise buildings in the Abdali New Downtown were considered landmark buildings, and, thus, architects were allowed more room for creativity. Relaxation of regulation for high-rise buildings also can be seen as a means to attract big developers to invest in the Abdali development. Still, some developers of high-rise buildings in Abdali were able to dismiss AID’s building regulations with regards to façade colors and architectural vocabulary. For example, the developers of the Vertex Tower and Residences (Figure 5.10) on the southern side of the Abdali development replaced the yellow color required by AID’s regulations with grey. Similarly, this development’s façade composition, which is remarkable for its use of small narrow vertical and horizontal openings arranged in an apparently chaotic way, did not match its surrounding and interrupted the continuity of the southern façade of the Abdali development (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010). Just as AID and LACECO wanted an image that distinguished the Abdali New Downtown from buildings in the neighborhood, the Vertex Tower and Residences’ developers
Figure 5.9. 3D view of the unrealized Tameer Tower in the IT Sector of the Abdali New Downtown.

Note. Copyright by Tameer Holding. Reprinted with permission.
Figure 5.10. 3D view of the Vertex Tower and Residences in the Abdali New Downtown.

Note. Copyright by Dubai Construction Company (DCC). Courtesy of DCC.
and architects wanted to distinguish their buildings from their surroundings. The Abdali
development’s image was compromised in concession to big developers’ requirements. It was
the same logic of capital that made the implementation of the Abdali development in the heart of
Amman possible, compromising the city’s skyline and landscape.

Like their counterparts in the Abdali development, the starchitects of Sanaya Amman
prepared a design for this development that was unusual in Amman, a “daring” design as the
developers described it (“Limitless digs deep,” 2009; McMeeken, 2009). Sanaya’s twin towers,
which had simple rectangular floor plans, split away from each other as they rose up, leaving the
buildings inclined (R. Dahdaleh, personal communication, July 2010; see Figure 4.41). The
façades of these buildings had a double skin: the internal of glass and the external of a stone
mesh. The developers’ rhetoric stressed the appearance of these buildings, emphasizing the
different colors of the façades during the day and night as the stone mesh would reflect sun rays
during the day and allow light from the interior of the buildings to illuminate the façades at night.
It could be argued that by using this mesh as an outer skin disconnected from what went behind,
Sanaya’s architects, who were known for their modernist designs, borrowed, at least partly, from
the postmodern concept of the decorated shed. It is tempting to say that the extensive use of
stone on the façades of the Sanaya development, although in a way new to Amman, would have
produced Sanaya as a hybrid development that would have connected with the city’s landscape
and its stone-finished buildings. But, the large scale of this development, particularly its
significant height, its unusual form, and the glazed suspended swimming pool as well as the steel
and glass bridges connecting Sanaya’s twin buildings made it unlikely that Sanaya would have

3 According to architect R. Dahdaleh of Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects, the local coordinators
and supervising engineers for the Sanaya development, these buildings were designed with some nine meters
difference between the outer face of the building at the bottom and top.
4 For more information on Murphy/Jahn, see “Murphy Jahn Architects,” Mapolis Magazine, retrieved February 13,
blended with its surroundings, particularly the modest low-rise buildings in the neighborhood (Figure 4.45).

Achieving a satisfactory relation between high-rise buildings and their surroundings was a challenge many architects designing in the city faced in the early twenty-first century. Jordan Gate’s architects admitted that it was a great challenge to “create a project of such unusual size for Amman and yet keep it sympathetic to the dominant low rise fabric of the city” (Tukan, n.d., p. 2; Figure 5.11). The Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects designed Jordan Gate so that it would include a low-rise base primarily finished in stone, which would be in harmony with the surrounding low-rise, stone-sheathed urban fabric (ibid; Figure 5.12). However, site observation showed that stone used on Jordan Gate was not in harmony with the surrounding

*Figure 5.11. View of the neighborhood of Jordan Gate showing this development’s glazed high-rise buildings and neighboring stone-finished low-rise buildings. Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on January 23, 2010.*
buildings. While the surrounding urban fabric had a white color, Jordan Gate’s base had a yellow color; and while the surrounding urban fabric had a mixture of textures, Jordan Gate’s base had a smooth texture. Both the color and texture of stone used on the façades of this development were similar to those the Abdali developers regulated for buildings in the Abdali New Downtown. The architects of Jordan Gate designed a high-rise development in Abdali around the same time they designed Jordan Gate. Possibly, they were influenced by the Abdali regulations in their selection of stone color and texture. As in the Abdali development, it was likely that the smooth texture of stone on the façades of Jordan Gate’s base was selected to emphasize the modern character of this development, and the selection of the yellow color for stone was to differentiate it from the surrounding urban fabric. Tukan was well known in Jordan for his mastery of stone in buildings.
Many architects and architectural historians in the country agreed that Tukan was a pioneer in introducing new textures and details of stone to the country, many of which were adopted by other architects and became common in Amman. Tukan attributed his fondness for stone and his continued experimentation with it to the influence of the places rich in stone architecture where he lived: Palestinian cities where he grew up, Beirut where he studied architecture and established his career as an architect from the late 1950s through mid-1970s, and Amman where he lived and practiced architecture continuously since the mid-1970s (personal communication, July 15, 2010; “25 questions,” n.d.). Another significant influence on Tukan’s use of stone, and on his architecture in general, was Frank Lloyd Wright’s work, particularly Falling Water (1935-1948; also called Kaufmann House) in Connelsville, Pennsylvania, and Taliesin West (1937) in Scottsdale, Arizona (“25 questions,” n.d.), where the buildings strongly connected to their natural context and stone from nearby sites was used for walls.

If Jordan Gate’s base was only partly in harmony with its surroundings, the two high-rise buildings of this development completely disconnected from their urban context (see Figure 5.11). These buildings were finished in glazed curtain walls, which departed from Tukan’s use of stone in most of his buildings in the city. When asked about whether the decision to use glazed curtain walls was made by the architects or by the developers, Tukan asserted that it was his own decision to use glass curtain walls (personal communication, July 15, 2010). Glass curtain walls were rare in Amman, particularly on such tall buildings, but very common in the Gulf states. The fascination with glass and its extensive use on buildings became increasingly common as early as the early twentieth century in Western Europe and the United States. Since Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace (1851), glass has become associated with modernity and technological innovation, among others. Explaining his design approach to Jordan Gate’s buildings, Tukan mentioned that
he “conceive[d] them as two minimalistic crystals rising high above the horizon dissolving in the surrounding sky” (Tukan, n.d., p. 2). Tukan mentioned how the glass curtain walls had sloping tops and were designed so that no metal parts were visible on the buildings’ façades, emphasizing the lightness and transparency of the buildings (ibid). The architects’ 3D view of Jordan Gate conveyed, to some extent, the conception of this development as described by Tukan (Figure 4.34). Although sometimes from certain angles these buildings look light (see Figure 4.37), to borrow Tukan’s word, more often than not they look heavy and disrupted the city’s skyline (see figures 4.15, 4.35, and 4.38). Tukan spoke about how glass on the buildings would reflect the skies and change color during day and night, “dramatiz[ing] the mystical presence of such an urban landmark” (ibid). For some people in the neighborhood and in the surrounding neighborhoods, however, the reflective glass caused annoying glare, which required tenants and property owners to take measures to protect themselves from sun reflection such as installing awnings (personal communications, September 2010). The mystical quality of Jordan Gate that Tukan mentioned was absent; and some individuals in the city went so far as to refer to this development as the “ghost” (personal communications, October 2010). However, people’s judgment of Jordan Gate might have been influenced by its look at night since it was not yet completed and stood remarkably tall and unlit.

Regardless of how people viewed Jordan Gate, Tukan’s description of this development’s conceptual designs showed how significant the image was in the conceptualization of Jordan Gate. The imaging of Jordan Gate was similar to the imaging of Sanaya Amman, particularly in the emphasis on the surfaces of the buildings and their changing appearance during day and night. Interestingly, both Helmut Jahn, president and CEO of Murphy/Jahn, and Tukan, who is
two years Jahn’s senior, were influenced by the Modern school of architecture, particularly by the work of Mies van der Rohe ("Murphy Jahn Architects," n.d.; Tukan, 1999). These architects, however, adapted modernity differently. Ironically, it was Sanaya’s American architects, not Jordan Gate’s Jordanian architects, who chose to use stone on the façades of the high-rise buildings of their development. It is tempting to say that the architects were experimenting in materials new to them. This might have been particularly true for Murphy/Jahn who were mostly known for their steel and glass buildings in the United States and Western Europe (see “Murphy Jahn Architects,” n.d.). But Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects had used glass curtain walls on many of their buildings in Gulf cities, though glass curtain walls were new on their buildings, particularly Tukan’s buildings, in Amman. It is also likely that Sanaya’s architects believed their use of stone in such a unique way would have distinguished this development from other large-scale developments in Amman as well as in other cities, adding to its symbolic capital, whereas Jordan Gate’s architects found symbolic capital in glass as a material associated with innovation and modernity.

Of course, one could not rule out the agency of the developers in the selection of the finishing materials for these developments. Although Jordan Gate’s architects said they were responsible for selecting glass curtain walls, they mentioned that the developers provided them with “schematic designs” for the Jordan Gate development (J. Tukan, personal communication, July 15, 2010). These schematic designs “defined the general idea of the massing,” among other things (ibid). It is likely that such designs showed glazed high-rise buildings, particularly as they came from Gulf-state developers. Glazed high-rise buildings had been a distinctive marker for

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the urban built environment in the Gulf in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Furthermore, the developers of Jordan Gate took pride in this project’s finishing material. Al Hamad, for example, said that glass was used to “achieve the architectural and aesthetic goals the project sought” (“(AL Hamad) tunjiz,” 2006). In their designs for DAMAC’s The Lofts and the Heights at the Abdali New Downtown, Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects used stone more extensively on the façades of this development (Figure 5.13). The agency of AID, the main developers of the Abdali development, and their planners and architects who set building

![Figure 5.13. View of The Lofts and the Heights in the Abdali New Downtown.](http://www.damacproperties.com/en/project/projects/the-heights.html)

regulations for this development was evident in shaping DAMAC’s and other buildings in the Abdali development. Similarly, the agency of the developers of Sanaya with regard to the use of stone as a finishing material on the façades of this development should not be dismissed. In fact, Limitless emphasized that the company used local building materials in its developments as a part of Limitless’s environment-friendly strategies.

The above discussion shows that the producers of megaprojects in early-twenty-first-century Amman, be they the state, city officials, private developers, architects, or planners, were concerned with image building. They sought for these developments a modern image, which they believed would make the developments competitive at the local, national, regional, and global levels. More important, contemporary megaprojects constituted an integral part of the image that decision-makers sought for the city: an image that would construct Amman as a competitive global city. This image of Amman was to be created through a modern downtown similar to those in other modern cities, spectacular high-rise buildings, modern finishing materials, innovative use of traditional materials, and the city’s association with names of starchitects.

The power of corporate developers, particularly Gulf corporations, and the state was dominant in creating this city image. However, corporations competed for power among themselves, as evident in the case of Vertex Tower and Residences where the developers overruled AID’s regulations and forced their vision on the Abdali development and the city. City officials exercised power through setting building regulations that could change the city’s appearance. They wanted to capture the flowing petrodollars from the Gulf states and “enhance” the image of the city. This, they believed, would increase the city’s competitiveness in the
regional and global market and strengthen its economy as well as the country’s economy. The agency of the private architects and planners was also operative in shaping the city’s contemporary megaprojects and consequently the image of the city. However, by commissioning certain architects for the design of their developments, the developers would have already limited the options for the shape of these developments. For example, when AID assigned the Lebanese LACECO for the designs of the Abdali development, they had in mind LACECO’s previous work on Beirut Central District. Had AID assigned the Jordanian Rasem Badran, who was known for his tradition-inspired designs, for this job, the image of the Abdali development would likely have been completely different. This is not to say that Jordanian architects necessarily did a better job connecting to the city’s urban fabric. It could be argued, for instance, that Murphy/Jahn’s designs for Sanaya were better connected to Amman’s urban built environment than the Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects’ designs for Jordan Gate.

In the early twenty-first century, ideas and images transferred to Amman from the Gulf states, the West, and, to a lesser degree in the case of the Abdali development, Lebanon. The result was sometimes developments more similar to those in other places, particularly Gulf cities, than those in Amman, other times hybrid developments. The flows of petrodollars from the Gulf made the transfer of ideas and images larger and their adoption and adaptation more likely, and transformed the city’s urban built environment. Not only did Amman’s contemporary megaprojects create images to see but also they were integral to life in the city, constituting a significant part of the commodified spaces of Amman.
Commodified Spaces

In their continuous pursuit of profit, and, particularly under contemporary globalization processes, capitalists produce built environments of various scales, even whole cities, as commodified spaces for public consumption. Spectacular buildings, landscapes, and urban spaces are envisioned and then mediate people’s social relations; they become an integral part of people’s daily life and the center of attention. They become a signifier of qualities such as happiness, joyfulness, and elites, hiding the processes that produced them that have nothing to do with joy or happiness. Believing that these buildings and spaces can give them the qualities they signify, people begin to compete to occupy or acquire spaces in the spectacular built environments and shop the fetishized commodities displayed in these environments. In this sense, the built environment becomes a large-scale fetishized commodity, which attests to the dominant role of the fetishized commodity in modern societies. Thus, developers produce urban developments as a marketable commodity, along with the fetishism, and city officials strive to produce and construct their city as a spectacular place for consumption, hoping to strengthen the city’s economy. Megaprojects in early-twenty-first-century Amman were a significant example of producing the built environment, and the city, as a commodity for consumption.

The developers of contemporary megaprojects in Amman made sure their developments consisted of commodified spaces both for work and living and, most important, entertainment and shopping spaces. The Abdali New Downtown was the most significant example of consumption spaces in the city. Thus, the Central Market Place, also called the Abdali Mall, constituted the core of the Abdali development. The plans for this development showed three main poles: the IT Pole at the western end of this development; the Civic Pole at the eastern end; the Commercial Pole, which consisted of the Abdali Mall, at the center (Figure 5.14). The IT
Pole was not the place where IT-related manufacturing or services were accommodated; rather it was the place where IT was consumed in office spaces and hotels as well as in the retail stores located at the bases of these buildings. The Civic Pole originally referred to the Abdali development’s cultural component, which included a library and museum, and was planned for the eastern end of the Abdali New Downtown to connect this development to the state institutions next to it on the east. But as this component was abandoned to be replaced with developments that fitted well into the consumption spaces of the Abdali development, later plans
for the Abdali New Downtown marked the state institutions, including King Abdullah I Mosque and the Parliament building, as the Civic Pole of the Abdali development. However, these preexisting state institutions were not a part of the Abdali development. Thus of the three poles shown on the Abdali plans, the Commercial Pole was the only pole the Abdali New Downtown actually included when built.

In other words, the Abdali project was planned around the commercial component, that is, the Abdali Mall. It is not surprising then that this component was located in the center of the Abdali development where the axes connecting the development’s poles and those connecting the northern and southern gates intersected (Figure 5.15). The developers were explicit about the centrality of the Abdali Mall to the Abdali development. They stated that it was “situated at the heart of the project at the intersection of all land uses of the project” (AID, n.d.a, p. 12), and they described how it opened into two of the Abdali development’s gates on the south and north and faced the western gate of this development (AID, n.d.a). Similarly, the developers of the Abdali Mall stressed the central location of this mall and its significance to the Abdali development (Kabariti, 2010). So important was the Abdali Mall for AID that they maintained ownership of it while selling the rest of the site as serviced plots to developers (F. Saifi, personal communication, August 5, 2010). According to the developers, this mall would be “one of the largest and most entertaining components” of the Abdali development and “the largest mall in Jordan” (Kabariti, 2010; figures 5.16 and 5.17). It was “designed in a dynamic modern style” (ibid). It would introduce a “new style of living, shopping, [and] dining” so that “citizens and visitors” would spend “a joyful time” in the Abdali development (ibid).

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6 The Abdali Mall Company was the owner of the Abdali Mall. This company, however, consisted of AID and United Real Estate Company-Jordan, one of the companies in the AID joint venture (Kabariti, 2010).
Figure 5.15. Site plan of the Abdali New Downtown.
Note. Copyright 2008 by Abdali Investment and Development. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 5.16. 3D view of the Abdali Mall.
If the Abdali Mall constituted the “heart” of the Abdali New Downtown, the Abdali Boulevard constituted the “spine” of this development (Figure 5.15). This was a major east-west axis running through Phase I of the Abdali development, connecting the IT Sector in the western end of the Abdali development to the Abdali Mall. In planning the Boulevard, the Abdali planners had in mind “the commercial viability and interest that commercial spines create[d]” (AID, n.d.a, p. 12). Thus, it was designed with retail stores, restaurants, and cafés along its sides, in the lower stories of office and residential buildings bordering the Boulevard on the sides (AID, n.d.a). Not only was the Boulevard designed as a place for consumption, but it also connected places of consumption together: the mall, the exemplary place of consumption, and the IT
Sector, where places of consumption, such as hotels and retail stores located in their bases as well as in the bases of office buildings, were located. The Boulevard’s developers spoke of its “state-of-the-art” buildings, “exciting” street shops, and “breathtaking” rooftops (“Visualizing the essence,” 2009; figures 5.18 and 5.19). They viewed it as “Amman’s new landmark” (ibid) and “the premier entertainment and leisure destination in Amman, inviting visitors to experience a new and vibrant lifestyle, day and night” (“On the rise,” 2009). They even went so far as to

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7 The developers of the Abdali Boulevard were United Real Estate Company-Jordan (Kabariti, 2010), who were a part of AID joint venture.
compare the Boulevard to Paris’s Champs-Elysées and London’s Oxford Street (ibid), two of the busiest commercial avenues in Europe. The Champs-Elysées is known for its upscale retail stores, restaurants, and cafés as well as for the spectacular parades and other events it hosts. At 70m wide, the Champs-Elysées is definitely much more spacious than the Abdali Boulevard at 20m, and Paris is certainly more of a world destination than Amman. Still, the comparison made by the Abdali Boulevard’s developers was interesting because it showed the ambitions of development corporations investing in Amman in the early twenty-first century, and how urban planning ideas and models integral to capitalist economies and deeply rooted in the West transferred to Amman to reshape its urban built environment. As a commodified urban space, the
Boulevard expresses and constructs Debord’s (1967/1994) society of the spectacle, a modern consumer society in which images mediate social relations.

The Abdali Mall and Boulevard were not the only shopping and entertainment spaces in the Abdali New Downtown. Many developments in this project, including office and apartment buildings and hotels, were required or encouraged to include retail stores at the lower stories (AID, n.d.a; AID, 2006: Figure 5.20). The stores were required to have galleries and wide shopwindows to “encourage transparency and animate streets [and] sidewalks” (AID, n.d.a, p. 48). Even store shutters were to be “transparent” so that “display windows [were] always visible” (AID, n.d.a, p. 37). Designed to attract consumers who have the means to spend, the Abdali upscale stores were unlike the modest stores in downtown Amman, for example, where

*Figure 5.20. 3D view of the Avenue Buildings in the Abdali New Downtown.*  
*Note. From “The Avenue in Jordan: An Experience Like No Other,” 2009, Real Estate & Investment: Middle East, April-May, p. 41. Copyright 2009 by Corporate Finance House (CFH). Courtesy of CFH.*
affordable merchandise was displayed on walkways in front of stores or hung from canopies or galleries’ ceilings (see Figure 5.3). Throughout the Abdali New Downtown, walkways and piazzas were “enlivened” by upscale cafés and restaurants (AID, n.d.a, p. 12; Figure 5.21). These were a part of the Abdali regulations and designs that would ensure producing the Abdali New Downtown as a commodity, which visitors would consume as they gaze at commodities displayed there, and at one another.

*Figure 5.21.* 3D view of the Abdali New Downtown showing retail stores and galleries and outdoor cafés and piazzas.

The Abdali developers wanted to ensure that the “consumerist space” – Sklair’s (2010, p. 147) term for the space where “users are encouraged and provided with opportunities to spend money –” was as central for Phase II of the Abdali development as it was for the previous phase. Thus, the plans for Phase II showed a commercial spine, similar to the Abdali Boulevard, running through this development (Figure 5.15). Somewhere in the center of this spine was a large spherical structure, which included retail stores and entertainment spaces, surrounded by high-rise residential buildings, which included retail stores at their bases (AID, 2009a; Figure 5.22). The planners referred to this part of Phase II of the Abdali development as “the spectacular event” (AID, 2009a), which supports the conclusion that the Abdali New Downtown was conceived as a commodity for consumption.

*Figure 5.22. The spectacular buildings and spaces the developers envisioned for Phase II of the Abdali New Downtown.*

*Note. From Abdali Master Plan Extension (Phase 2 & 3): The Urban Park, Civil Defense Presentation, by Abdali Investment and Development (AID), 2009. Copyright 2009 by AID. Courtesy of AID.*
As in the Abdali New Downtown, shopping and entertainment spaces were a significant part of Jordan Gate. These spaces constituted the “base” of Jordan Gate, just as shopping and entertainment spaces constituted the heart and spine of the Abdali development, as well as the bases of the Abdali buildings. It was in the upscale retail and entertainment spaces occupying the five-story base of Jordan Gate that fetishized commodities would be displayed, gazed at, bought and sold. These spaces were Jordan Gate’s most obvious spaces to serve image building, image consumption, and communication through images.

Similarly, retail stores, designer boutiques, and gourmet restaurants and cafés were to have occupied the lower stories of the unrealized Sanaya Amman. The glazed façades of these spaces of consumption were meant to connect shopping and entertainment spaces with the plaza outside (Figure 5.23). This is unlike Jordan Gate, where the stone façades of the building base left the retail and entertainment spaces introverted. Sanaya’s plaza would have served not only as
a recreation space or a space for socialization and relaxation, as the developers described it, but also, and most important, as an expansion for the realm of the consumerist space. It would have attracted visitors to this development, some of whom would have been overwhelmed by the extensive display of commodities and views of shoppers and diners in Sanaya’s stores and restaurants and would have become consumers of these spaces.

Shopping, dining, and entertainment spaces at Sanaya Amman, Jordan Gate, and the Abdali New Downtown were the most obvious component of the consumerist space in Amman’s contemporary megaprojects, for it was in such places that commodities would be displayed and shopping, a significant activity in Amman’s modern society, would take place. But in fact all buildings and spaces in the Abdali New Downtown, Sanaya Amman, and Jordan Gate were conceived as commodified spaces, of which the image was an integral part. As Sklair (2010) points out, under contemporary globalization, iconic and monumental buildings become significant for the production of the consumerist space. Thus, the new megaprojects in Amman were different from the city’s unpretentious, stone-finished utilitarian buildings that respected the human scale. They also were larger and more spectacular than consumption spaces the city already had.

The monumental scale of the Abdali development and its high-tech high-rise buildings and spectacular structures designed by internationally and regionally renowned architects played a role in commodifying Abdali’s spaces (see figures 5.9 and 5.10). Hotel buildings also were an important part of the Abdali development’s consumerist space, designed to be among the tallest buildings in this development as well as in Amman, located on sites that had the highest elevation for high visibility, and finished in innovative materials (AID, n.d.a). Residential developments in the Abdali New Downtown, such as The Lofts and the Heights, were not only
spaces for living but also for consumption as they included, in addition to retail stores, entertainment spaces, fitness clubs, swimming pools, and supporting facilities.\(^8\) So important was producing the Abdali New Downtown as a consumption space for the Abdali developers that they had proposals to recreate this space in Phase II of the development: in spectacular buildings, in hotels as places for consumption, in commodified residential and office spaces of which retail stores and entertainment spaces constituted an integral part, in large images on buildings’ façades, and in hot air balloons never heard of in Amman in the sky of this development (Figure 5.22).

Like the Abdali buildings and spaces, the two high-rise buildings of Jordan Gate were a significant part of this development’s spaces of consumption (see figures 4.34 and 5.24). Produced to project a modern image that would attract visitors and consumers, they were located at a prominent site that insured high visibility; they were designed to surpass the tallest building in Amman; they were finished in glass, a material associated with transparency and vision, display and the gaze, among others. Similarly, Sanaya’s iconicity, record-breaking height, unusual inclined structure, and glazed skybridges and swimming pool were conceived as an integral part of this development’s consumerist space (figures 4.41, 5.25, 5.26, and 5.27). Sanaya’s luxurious apartments, lofts, and penthouses as well as its leisure amenities, including the swimming pool and fitness club, would have served an upscale lifestyle based on commodity consumption and the significance of the image – a lifestyle in which upmarket commodities are consumed for the qualities they signify and for the image they project. More important, these spaces, like their counterparts at the Abdali development, would have contributed to the construction of such a lifestyle as the new normal style of living.

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\(^8\) This is based on the review of architectural maps for this development obtained from the developers, DAMAC Properties, and conceptual drawings obtained from the architects, Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects.
Figure 5.24. 3D view of Jordan Gate.  
*Note.* Copyright by Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 5.25. 3D view of Sanaya Amman.  

Figure 5.26. 3D view of Sanaya’s suspended swimming pool.  
The developers of Amman’s megaprojects made sure that the city and its natural landscape became a commodity that would earn them profit. This can be inferred from the emphasis on the views from these developments. Thus unlike ordinary rooftops in Amman,
where water tanks, satellite dishes, and clotheslines were placed, spectacular rooftops at the Abdali New Downtown were used as terraces, gardens, and swimming pools ("Ihalat ‘ata’ Boulevard," 2007) from where the Abdali development and the city at large could be experienced (figures 5.18 and 5.28). The developers of Sanaya Amman also were concerned with the views of the city from this development, and they spoke of Sanaya’s buildings “boasting rich and varied views” of the city ("Sanaya Amman," n.d.). However, the surroundings of Sanaya had low-income neighborhoods, which were not the kind of view one would expect from an upscale development such as Sanaya; there was no river, sea, or forest to look at (Figure 4.45). But the image from Sanaya, particularly from the upper section, would not have showed details of the context. That Sanaya’s surroundings would have looked small and abstract from the top would have been a view worthy of looking at for many who belonged to the modern culture in which the image ruled. Furthermore, Amman’s hilly landscape and its skyline were an important part of the city image promoted by the Sanaya developers, an irony since the city’s landscape and skyline were being damaged by the very development that imaged them. Thus, the developers of Sanaya wrote, “the narrow paired slabs [of the Sanaya buildings] form a soaring gateway [which] … will frame dramatic views of the city and the sky” ("Sanaya Amman," n.d.). Sanaya’s designs encouraged the gaze from and at this development. Thus, people living in Sanaya’s apartments would have been gazing at the city’s landscape and its residents below while the stone mesh on the façades of this development and the distance from the street and the surrounding buildings, which the height of this development offered, protected them from the gaze of the public. People in the city, particularly in the neighborhood of Sanaya, would have

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9 For example, architectural maps for The Lofts and the Heights development obtained from the developers, DAMAC Properties, and conceptual drawings obtained from the architects for this development, Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects, show that rooftops at this development served as terraces and roof gardens.
been gazing at the unusually designed buildings and at activities taking place in the glazed
sections of this development, particularly the swimming pool (Figure 5.26).

Figure 5.28. Architects’ conceptual drawing for The Lofts and the Heights in the Abdali New
Downtown showing roof gardens.
Note. Copyright by Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects. Reprinted with permission.
How did the public in Amman view and interact with contemporary megaprojects and who were the consumers of these developments and the participants in their spectacular events? The Abdali New Downtown, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya Amman produced images and spaces that city residents, visitors, and business persons, seeking prestige, distinction, happiness, or other qualities associated with these spectacular developments, would compete to consume. In addition, these developments helped create a lifestyle of consumption. Comments by individuals interviewed over the course of this research showed that the public in the city interacted with Jordan Gate as a spectacular space of consumption. Sherif said that Jordan Gate had a “distinctive shape” and it transformed the neighborhood into a more “dynamic,” “joyful,” “prestigious” place. He added, however, that as someone of a limited income, he only could gaze at this development from afar and could not enjoy being among the restaurants, hotel, and shops. Ahmed believed that designer stores in the mall were a big advantage of Jordan Gate as they would introduce the latest fashion trends and the right way to don such trends. Adil said that he liked this development since it was a “beautiful view,” which “enhanced the shape of the neighborhood.” He added that although this was an upscale development and the office and hotel buildings would be accessible only to those people who had business there, everyone would be able to visit the mall and the entertainment spaces in Jordan Gate. Atif liked the mall in this development most and said, “I will shop there instead of shopping at more distant malls.” Mansour said, “the residents of the Jordan Gate neighborhood have high income and can afford shopping at the mall and paying for entertainment … [but] not many Jordanians can afford leasing office spaces or stores at this development.”

With these disparities, Jordan Gate will likely widen class difference. This can be concluded from the comments made by a number of individuals I interviewed for my research.
Sherif’s comment above that he only could gaze at Jordan Gate, which he believed catered to the upper class, was but one example of how such a development could intensify social polarization in the city. Similarly, Husam believed the users of Jordan Gate were from the upper class: “those seeking uniqueness and prestige.” The most telling example of how megaprojects such as Jordan Gate contributed to establishing class segregation was the comments made by Mohammad who viewed Jordan Gate as “a beautiful landmark” that helped him find his way in the city. He wished it included affordable housing for young men like him, but believed that “not everyone could interact with this development.” Working-class people, according to Mohammad, would not even visit the mall or cafés in this development. Not only did he attribute this to the lack of material resources for these people, but also believed that low-income people would be intimidated by commodities sold in this development. Mohammad said, “working-class people will not know the kind of meals served in Jordan Gate’s upscale restaurants and cafés.” Humble people from his class, Mohammad added, would visit less sophisticated places, “places commensurate with their understanding and their limited resources.” In contrast, “developed” upper-class people, Mohammad said, “have the money to spend in Jordan Gate as well as the culture and understanding needed to interact with this development’s mall, restaurants, and health club.”

Like Jordan Gate, the Abdali New Downtown might not have been as inviting to working-class people as it was for the upper class segment of Amman’s residents, tourists, and business persons, despite the rhetoric of the Abdali developers that indicated otherwise. The developers and their planners and architects confirmed that the Abdali development was not a gated community (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010; F. Saifi, personal communication, August 5, 2010). The development was not surrounded by walls, and
the “gates” shown on the Abdali plans did not control access to this development; rather, they only visually defined entry points to the Abdali New Downtown and helped orient people in space (R. Abou Rayan, personal communication, August 2 & 8, 2010; Figure 5.14). According to the developers, access to residential and office spaces was limited to those who lived, worked, or had business there. However, spaces such as the Abdali Mall, the Boulevard, restaurants, and cafés, which were major sites of consumption, were open to people from all walks of life. This made sense as it was in the interest of the developers to draw as many people as possible to the Abdali development in order to increase consumption and encourage a lifestyle of consumption.

Still, the Abdali New Downtown would likely intensify social polarization in the city, which Daher (2007) and a number of individuals interviewed over the course of this research recognized (personal communications, January 26 & February 9, 2010). The Abdali development’s designs already separated this development from its surroundings and defined it as the modern, joyful, clean environment. The ring road around the Abdali site isolated this development from the environment outside (AID, n.d.a). The yellow smoothly finished stone on its buildings was meant to differentiate the “modern” Abdali development from the “rural” character that stone on neighboring buildings had. Glazed and metal-sheathed high-rise buildings, as well as other buildings in the Abdali development, were produced as images. The developers used trees as a “fence” to separate the Abdali development from the outside, to “isolate the site from neighboring buildings where activity [was] dense and form[ed] a certain congestion and noise pollution,” and to “minimize … discomfort” (AID, n.d.a, p. 19). Moreover, the neighborhood of the Abdali was cleansed of the busy Abdali transport hub and facilities such as street vendors and Friday Market, a weekly outdoor market held on Fridays that had attracted many city residents shopping for affordable foods and clothes. For decades, these had served
Amman’s residents, particularly the working-class segment, but the developers of the upscale Abdali New Downtown squeezed out all spaces that would not encourage consumption. These arrangements, among others, defined the Abdali development as an exclusive development, which was insensitive to the complex urban life as experienced by many people in the city. Thus a scholar such as Daher referred to the Abdali development as an “elitist urban island” (p. 276).

Some city residents began to accept the new standards of living that the city’s contemporary megaprojects constructed. While many people interviewed for my research talked about Sanaya’s unsuitability for the city, that it was insensitive to the difficult economic situation of the majority of the population in the city, and that it was designed for the upper-class segment of the society and wealthy people from outside Jordan, even those who criticized Sanaya wished they could be a part of the lifestyle suggested by this development. Some said that they had been working so hard for so long, but they did not know if they ever could own an apartment in such a development (personal communications, October 18 & 19, 2010). There were others who, without the means to own a place in Sanaya, were not critical of this development and would have liked to be a part of it. For example, commenting on a blog post wondering who the prospective buyers of the upscale apartments in Sanaya were, a blogger wrote, “I would definitely buy one if [I] had the money and it had a balcony” (“Would you buy,” 2008). Another responded, “I would buy one. Nice pool!” (ibid).

The pool was ostentatious and contentious (Figure 5.26). Regardless of how much the developers talked about the water-conserving measures they adopted in the designs of Sanaya Amman, the pool would have reminded people in the water-scarce city of how resources were unfairly distributed. Comments made by individuals I interviewed and bloggers support this conclusion (personal communications, October 17 & 18, 2010; “Would you buy,” 2008).
Furthermore, the “display” of people swimming and sun bathing in Sanaya’s pool would have intensified social polarization in the city and the country in which, according to Arnold (2008), 50 percent of the population were unable to own a house of 65 square meters or smaller. The sarcastic comment by a resident of a low-income neighborhood in the surroundings of Sanaya on this development’s empty foundation pit, which at times held water, is relevant here. This resident said, “they wanted to build a suspended swimming pool here; instead a natural pool resulted from the abandonment of the site” (Damra, 2009). Similarly, others were critical of Sanaya’s swimming pool and recreation spaces as well as its luxury apartments, pointing out that many in the city could not even afford food due to the increasingly rising food prices (personal communications, October 2010). Kareem said, “really! A suspended glazed swimming pool in Amman! What were city officials thinking when they approved this development?” City officials wanted to project Amman as a modern city, capitalizing on the petrodollars from the Gulf states. They wanted to market the city as a perfect place for living and entertainment for those who can afford an upscale lifestyle and who were a part of the society of the spectacle. City officials were a powerful agent not only in producing Sanaya, and other commodified developments in Amman, but also in shaping the city residents into a consumer society in which social life was mediated by images.

In the early twenty-first century, Amman’s urban built environment was being produced, experienced, and constructed as a commodified environment, which was integral to capitalist means of production. Amman’s megaprojects produced spectacular, theatrical spaces for display and consumption, which were unprecedented in the city. They produced upscale consumerist spaces, which became a model to emulate, engendering similar developments in Amman. They
promoted a lifestyle in which the fetishized commodity ruled and helped present the city residents as and shape them into a society of the spectacle. But Amman’s spaces of consumption were not entirely alien from the city’s society. City residents had been transforming into a consumer society since the late twentieth century. This transformation was influenced by globalization processes, including the flows of capital, people, ideologies, ideas, and images. The Gulf states had a strong influence on producing the commodified spaces of Amman. But these states did not invent such spaces; they were influenced by Western ideas, images, and consumption patterns dictated by capitalists’ interests. In Amman, state and city officials were a powerful agent in the commodification of the city. State and city officials wanted to capture petrodollars from the Gulf and produce developments similar to those in modern cities, which would attract more capital, transnational businesses, and tourists and would place Amman on what they believed the right track to globality. Thus, contemporary megaprojects in Amman, as in Dubai and many other places, were not produced in response to the needs of the majority of the city residents: working- and middle-class people. In fact, they intensified social inequality in the city. However, the producers of megaprojects knew that even working- and middle-class segments of the society could help make these developments a success. Although the public did not participate in the decision to produce the city’s megaprojects as a commodity, they were an agent in the production of these spaces, not least through their adoption of a lifestyle based on the image and the commodity, a lifestyle that encouraged the commodification of the built environment and served corporations. These corporations could then manipulate images and commodities and set new standards for what “the” lifestyle should look like, continuously shaping and reshaping the city residents into a society of the spectacle.
Chapter 6: Identity in and Through Amman’s Built Environment

The urban built environment plays a significant role in communicating and shaping national, group, and individual identities (see Çinar, 2007; Harvey, 1989b, 1990, 1991; King, 1996). This chapter discusses the ways the urban built environment of Amman in the early twenty-first century related to the question of city residents’ identity. It investigates what identities this environment conveyed, created, or conveyed and created, what identities it disconnected from, and how and why it did so. The chapter also discusses how identity construction through and expression in Amman’s built environment related to capital flows to the city, the state, the capitalist system of production, and power relations in the city. As shown in Chapter 4, in the early twenty-first century state institutions constructed Jordan’s official national identity with reference to four elements: tribes versus the other; Islam; Arabs; modernization. Thus, the discussion in this chapter includes four subthemes: the tribal Jordanian versus the other; the Muslim Jordanian; the Arab Jordanian; the modern Jordanian.

The Tribal Jordanian Versus the Other

Jordan’s tribal population constituted a significant element in the construction of the Jordanian tribal identity, not least through their inclusion as a great majority in the military institution, which, as Massad (2001) pointed out, was a most important institution for the creation of national identity in Jordan. Tribal identity was also a significant element of the popular identity in Amman, and Jordan at large; tribespeople constituted the core of the Transjordanian-Jordanian population, who, as shown in Chapter 4, considered themselves the “real Jordanians.” How did contemporary megaprojects in Amman relate to the tribal identity of Jordanians?
The formal composition, architectural vocabularies, and function of the study cases did not show any strong connection with the tribal Jordanian. Still, tribal identity, as well as otherness, should not be dismissed as irrelevant to the argument of identity as it related to the new megaprojects in the city. Amman’s diverse population, particularly tribespeople as the quintessential Transjordanian-Jordanians and the Palestinian-Jordanians as the quintessential other, constituted a significant part of the production process of the megaprojects and people’s perception of these projects. The Abdali New Downtown was a telling example of the relation between these megaprojects and identity as it related to the diverse population in the city. On the one hand, Mawared, a corporation owned by the Jordanian military, was a partner in the Abdali Investment and Development (AID) joint venture developing the Abdali project. Mawared’s income from this development will be invested in military-related developments and facilities and in the pension fund of the military, which mostly consists of tribal Jordanians (Mernin, 2007; Parker, 2009). On the other hand, the Abdali New Downtown involved the relocation of military buildings, as well as other state buildings, to less central locations and the selling of military- and state-owned land to the private sector. This reflected, at least in part, the diminishing role of state institutions, and consequently deemphasized the status of tribespeople as the major part of the state.

Amman had a majority of Palestinian-Jordanians and, thus, some Transjordanian-Jordanians who saw the contemporary megaprojects as a means of economic growth and development worried that the development of these projects in the city primarily served Palestinian-Jordanians, but at the expense of Transjordanian-Jordanians. Hence the comments a blogger posted on the Sanaya Amman development who complained that the state spent more money on large-scale projects in the city, particularly the wealthy West Amman, leaving
educational and health facilities in other Jordanian cities and towns underdeveloped ("Would you buy," 2008). The comments were exaggerated and evidence could in fact be provided for the state’s concern about the development of urban and rural areas in cities other than Amman. However, the connection the blogger made between the state and its spending and the megaprojects was justified considering that major megaprojects in the city were developed by or in partnership with the state.\footnote{The many public appearances of high state, and city, officials at the sites of the megaprojects further strengthened the connection between these developments and the state, as well as the city. For example, Jordan’s prime minister and the mayor of Amman attended the launching ceremony of the Sanaya development (Duwairi, 2008), although neither the state nor the city was a partner in Sanaya. High state officials attended the launch of Jordan Gate, and many officials regularly visited the construction site of this development ("Bawwabat al-Urdun’ tunhi,” 2005; “Wad’ hajar asas,” 2005). Similarly, many high state officials regularly visited the site of the Abdali New Downtown and expressed their endorsement for this development. See “Leading Jordanian Politicians Visit Abdali,” 2009, Abdali Newsletter, 8, p. 4, retrieved March 5, 2012, from http://www.abdali.jo/admin/docs/issue8.pdf; “Prime Minister, Chairman and CEO Visit Abdali Construction Site,” 2009, Abdali Newsletter, 9, p. 3, retrieved March 5, 2012, from http://www.abdali.jo/admin/docs/issue9.pdf.} Besides the partnership of the state-owned Mawared in the development of the Abdali New Downtown, the state-owned Development and Investment Projects Fund (DIP) was the developer of the Living Wall, an upscale megaproject under construction in the Wadi Saqra area of Western Amman. This blogger stated that by embarking on such large-scale developments in Amman, the state disfavored the “native Jordanian,” that is, the Transjordanian-Jordanian. He even went so far as to say, “should we just have a country called West Jordan?” This comment implied a connection between West Amman and Palestinian-Jordanians whose roots were in the West Bank, west of Amman. It also showed how the question of identity was strongly related to Amman’s contemporary megaprojects.

There was no evidence that the Palestinian-Jordanian constituency benefited, or would benefit, more than other ethnic groups from these large-scale developments. While the private sector in Jordan had more Palestinian-Jordanians than Transjordanian-Jordanians, private developers involved in the city’s megaprojects were primarily from outside Jordan. Jordanian firms who were involved in these projects included firms whose ownership belonged to different
ethnic groups and whose employees included Jordanians from different origins. As for the users of these profit-driven megaprojects, they would include Jordanians from different origins as well as non-Jordanians. What mattered most was not the ethnicity of these users but having the means to spend in such spaces of consumption. These megaprojects differentiated between city residents in terms of their socioeconomic class rather than ethnicity. And it was hard to make the argument that in the early twenty-first century Transjordanian-Jordanians had less means than Palestinian-Jordanians.

Ironically, Amman’s megaprojects seemed to have had the potential to symbolically connect the Palestinian in the West Bank with the Jordanian. For example, some individuals noted that the high-rise buildings of the Jordan Gate development could be seen from some Palestinian cities, such as Jerusalem (personal communication, February 2010; also see “One heart,” 2009). Jafar Tukan, the principal architect of Jordan Gate who was of Palestinian origin, confirmed that he could see this development from the West Bank (personal communication, July 15, 2010). According to him, Jordan Gate served as a visual connection between the West Bank and Jordan and a reminder of the strong ties between the people of the two countries (ibid).

**The Muslim Jordanian**

State institutions constructed Jordan’s official national identity with reference to Islam, and Islam was a significant element in popular identity. But, how was the Islamic identity of Amman residents and Jordanians negotiated in the city’s contemporary megaprojects? The most significant feature of the built environment in Amman that connects the city and its residents with Islam is the mosque. The location of King Abdullah I Mosque just east of the Abdali New Downtown begs the discussion of the relation between the Abdali development and the mosque
and the extent to which this relation emphasized Islam as an element of the city residents’ identification (see figures 4.7, 4.23, 4.27, 5.15). King Abdullah I Mosque was the most prominent building in this central area of Amman. It was the state congregational mosque that not only has served as a place for prayers and religious celebrations since the late 1980s but also was an icon of Amman, and Jordan, appearing on postcards, tourist promotional material, and TV. This mosque expressed Jordan’s identity as Islamic and Jordanians as Muslims; however, rather than responding to King Abdullah I Mosque, the developers disconnected this mosque from the Abdali New Downtown.

The planners and architects of the Abdali development talked about visually connecting the Abdali New Downtown and King Abdullah I Mosque by organizing this development’s components along “visual corridors” that converged towards the mosque (AID, n.d.a). But these corridors, shown in Figure 5.1, were not accurately reflected in the organization of spaces and buildings in the Abdali development. One would expect these view corridors to translate into buildings organized along axes that radiated from the mosque, which was not the case as the Abdali site plan shows (Figure 5.15). Earlier Abdali plans included a cultural component, the Civic Pole, linking the Abdali New Downtown to the mosque and other state institutions east of the Abdali development (AID, n.d.a). Visually, the Civic Pole’s low-rise buildings and open spaces would serve as a transitional zone between King Abdullah I Mosque and the remarkably tall commercial developments in the Abdali development, reducing the overwhelming impact of these buildings on the mosque and neighboring urban fabric, and the plaza would open up the vista to the mosque. Functionally, the planned Civic Pole would help integrate the mosque, a significant part of the social life in the city, into the Abdali New Downtown and, thus, invite city residents from different socioeconomic status to the Abdali development and nurture a sense of
belonging and communal as well as national pride. But this cultural component was abandoned at an early stage of the Abdali development and replaced with profit-driven buildings, mostly high-rise buildings, which closed the development off from and over-powered the mosque, which had once dominated the skyline and landscape of the area (see Figure 4.23).

Some individuals interviewed over the course of this research expressed their discontent about the striking contradiction between the scale of buildings in the Abdali development and King Abdullah I Mosque and the likelihood that this development eventually would overwhelm the buildings of the mosque and state institutions. For example, Jawdat said, “the Abdali development is in contrast with its surroundings and its many very tall buildings will eventually dwarf the mosque, which once was considered a large development.” Dana said, “I don’t like that the tall buildings of the Abdali development reduce the size of the mosque and the court of law.” Similarly, Adham said, “it is unfortunate that the mosque, the landmark of the area, is being superseded by commercial buildings.”

By physically surpassing King Abdullah I Mosque, the Abdali New Downtown’s developers, including the state-owned Mawared, de-emphasized the city’s and its population’s identification with Islam and asserted the power of and identification with capitalist corporations. The status of King Abdullah I Mosque as the official state mosque was changed in the mid-2000s when the new King Hussein bin Talal Mosque became the state’s official mosque in 2006. Whereas the former was in the center of Amman, the latter was placed in an affluent area on the outskirts of the city. The continued state sponsorship of the state mosque, however, showed that the state in Jordan continued to identify with Islam and express Islam in the built environment as an element of identification for Jordanians.
The state mosque was not the only component through which contemporary megaprojects in Amman could connect with the city residents’ Islamic identity. The planners, architects, and landscape architects working on different developments in the Abdali New Downtown incorporated elements and features of Islamic architecture, which had already become associated with Islam in the minds of Jordanians. However, the rhetoric of these professionals more often than not did not draw a link between such features and Islamic architecture. One of these elements was Islamic ornaments. For example, in the elevator lobby of a small-scale development at the Abdali New Downtown, the developers installed traceries of interlaced geometric patterns featuring the star ornament common in Islamic art and architecture (Figure 6.1). Similarly, in the Abdali Boulevard the developers used decorative elements inspired by Islamic calligraphy on the façades of office and residential buildings (figures 6.2 and 6.3). Another element that connected the Abdali development with the city residents’ Islamic identity was the use of water channels and pools (see figures 5.18 and 5.20), a significant component of the Islamic garden that served as a means of irrigation and climatic control, an aesthetic component, and a symbolic element through their connection with Paradise (see Bianca, 2000; Ruggles, 2008).

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3 Among the most famous examples of such water features was the fourteenth-century Alhambra in Granada, Spain. For a discussion of Alhambra gardens and water features, see *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palace of Islamic Spain*, by D.F. Ruggles, 2000, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 163-208.
Figure 6.1. Traceries featuring Islamic ornament in the elevator lobby of one of the buildings in the Abdali New Downtown.

*Note.* Copyright by Abdali Investment and Development (AID). Courtesy of AID.

Figure 6.2. Islamic-calligraphy-inspired decoration on the façades of office buildings in the Abdali Boulevard.


Figure 6.3. Islamic-calligraphy-inspired decoration on the façades of residential buildings in the Abdali Boulevard.

*Note.* From the Boulevard brochure, p. 27. Copyright by ABC. Courtesy of ABC.
Similarly, the use of *ablaq* stone, a decorative technique with alternating courses of light and dark stone, on parts of the Abdali Boulevard’s buildings could serve as a connection with Islamic identity. *Ablaq* was a feature commonly used in historic Islamic architecture on sacred and secular buildings, and it became characteristic of Mamluk architecture in Bilad al-Sham and Egypt.\(^4\) This arrangement of stone on buildings also was used on buildings in Western cities. However, given the extensive use of *ablaq* in Islamic architecture, it is not surprising that it became associated with Islam. Thus Eldemery (2002) argued that in the early-twenty-first-century “Future Housing” project, located east of Cairo, the use of *ablaq* on the façades of residential buildings was among the architectural vocabularies that connected this project with the Islamic architectural heritage. According to Eldemery, one of the reasons the Future Housing project received the 2000 Council of the Arab Ministers for Housing and Reconstruction Award was that it successfully incorporated Islamic architectural features and modern technologies, thus expressing Islamic identity in contemporary architecture. In Amman, the *ablaq* technique also was adopted in the architecture of contemporary mosques, and it had been used on old mosques of special significance for many Muslim Jordanians. These include the Abu Darwish Mosque (1961) in Eastern Amman, which became known as the Ablaq Mosque because of the extensive use of stripes of black and white stone all over its façades, and the Husayni Mosque (1920s) in downtown Amman, which was the first state mosque and where *ablaq* was used primarily on window and door openings as well as arches (Figure 6.4). Some city residents interviewed for my research noted the connection between *ablaq* and Islam. For example, describing the gallery columns with alternating courses of yellow and brown stone in the Abdali Boulevard, Ghada said, “this striped stone is similar to the stone you often see in mosques.” Similarly Fatima referred to this arrangement of stone as “an Islamic feature.”

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\(^4\) Mamluks ruled Bilad al-Sham and Egypt between 1250 and 1517.
The shape of the Le Royal development is relevant in the context of the relation between Islamic identity and Amman’s new megaprojects (Figure 6.5). This development had an elliptical plan that narrowed down in the upper section of the building and outdoor stairs that spiraled around the building’s lower section and led to the roof of this section. The shape of this development and its brownish stone finish made reference to the Malwiyya, the mid-ninth-century spiral minaret of the Great Mosque of Samarra in Iraq. The Malwiyya is a famous Islamic monument and a source of Iraqi national pride. By making reference to this monument, the private-sector developers of Le Royal, who included Iraqis, associated this development with Islam and Iraq. Some architects in Amman as well as other residents in the city recognized the connection between the shape of Le Royal and the Malwiyya as an Islamic monument. And Iraqis in the city were likely to understand the shape of this development as symbolic of Iraq.
However, other city residents and visitors did not identify this development with the Islamic Malwiyya; nor did they draw any connection between Islam and Le Royal, which aside from its symbolic function had no particular connection with Islam.

In fact, a few city residents interviewed over the course of this research viewed Amman’s extravagant megaprojects as incompatible with Islamic values of moderation and social equality. For example, Riyad said, “it is inconsistent with Islam to build pretentious developments such as

Figure 6.5. View of the Le Royal hotel in the Third Circle area of Jabal Amman.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on October 27, 2011.
Sanaya Amman, particularly in a low-income neighborhood; it is harmful to people in the neighborhood.” He added, “why build such gated communities and exclude the poor? Islam does not favor the rich over the poor ... Islamic values bring harmony among Muslims” (ibid). Khamis said, “such fancy buildings are a waste of resources; Islam teaches us not to be wasteful.” Explaining his point, he added, “they [i.e., the developers] spend too much on these large-scale projects instead of using the money in more useful ways ... they demolish buildings in good condition that would have served for decades.”

The swimming pools in the contemporary megaprojects are another relevant feature in the context of these projects’ relation to the identity of the Muslim Jordanian. Islamic teachings require conservative dress in public, particularly for women, which could not be achieved in the Sanaya development’s glazed pool designed for display or in the rooftop pools at the Abdali development (figures 5.18 and 5.26). This is not to say that all Muslims in early-twenty-first-century Amman adhered to Islamic dress code, but by including such pools, the megaprojects disregarded an important part of Islamic culture.5 Interestingly enough, the Sanaya developers talked about Sanaya including separate gymnasium facilities for men and women, which, unlike the glazed pool, was consistent with the Islamic culture in which privacy and sex segregation, particularly in informal contexts, are emphasized.

The emphasis on privacy and sex segregation in Islamic culture was reflected in the design of Muslims’ houses in old Islamic cities where houses were introverted, sometimes organized around courtyards, and included separate spaces for family members and guests (Bianca, 2000; Mortada, 2003). The concern for privacy in the houses of Muslims continued

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through the early twenty-first century in many cities in the Islamic world, including Amman, though it varied in intensity depending on the degree to which a society, a group, or a family accepted social contact between women and men. But how did the architects of Amman’s new megaprojects address privacy as it related to apartment units? A review of floor plans of apartment units in the Sanaya development showed that in some of the designs for the two-bedroom units the apartment door opened into a small entrance hall, which directly opened into the reception and dining areas where guests were welcomed (Figure 6.6). To go from the entrance hall or the kitchen to the bedrooms, one had to pass by the reception and dining rooms. In some of the larger apartment units in the Sanaya development, however, the architects were more sensitive to the privacy issue. For example, in one of the designs for the three-bedroom units, the apartment door opened into an entrance hall that led to a hallway on one side of which were placed the public areas and on the other the family areas, allowing family members freedom of movement without exposure to guests (Figure 6.7). Similarly, in the two-story loft units, the bedrooms were located at the upper level and the guest areas and kitchen were located at the lower level, giving privacy for family members (figures 6.8 and 6.9). However, the stairs were sometimes located in the reception and dining areas where guests would be entertained, an arrangement that interfered with the privacy of the family members (Figure 6.9). One can conclude from the floor plans of Sanaya’s apartment units that privacy was a secondary concern for this development’s architects, Murphy/Jahn.
Figure 6.6. Floor plan of a two-bedroom apartment unit in the Sanaya development.
Note. Adapted from Limitless’s promotional material for Sanaya.

Figure 6.7. Floor plan of a three-bedroom apartment unit in the Sanaya development.
Note. Adapted from Limitless’s promotional material for Sanaya.
Figure 6.8. Upper-level plan of a loft apartment unit in the Sanaya development. 
*Note.* Adapted from Limitless’s promotional material for Sanaya.

Figure 6.9. Lower-level plan of a loft apartment unit in the Sanaya development. 
*Note.* Adapted from Limitless’s promotional material for Sanaya.
Similarly, residential developments in the Abdali New Downtown did not always succeed in addressing the privacy issue, although the developers and architects paid more attention to it in their rhetoric than did the Sanaya developers and architects. Thus the architects for The Lofts and the Heights in the Abdali development, Consolidated Consultants – Jafar Tukan Architects, emphasized their concern for privacy in the conceptual study for this development. They described how they arranged the interior spaces of the apartment units to separate the public from private areas, providing a transitional space between the apartments and the elevators lobby, locating the areas used by guests, including the reception hall and dining room, close to the apartment entrance, and placing the bedrooms far from the entrance and guest areas for an increased privacy.\textsuperscript{6} The Jordan Gate development did not fare better than the Abdali and Sanaya developments when it came to addressing privacy. After all, as high-rise buildings overlooking low-rise residential buildings and single-family houses in the neighborhood, Jordan Gate invaded the privacy of the residents in these buildings and houses (see figures 4.34, 4.38, and 4.39).

The Arab Jordanian

Identification with Arabs was another significant component of the official identity of Jordanians, and the majority of Amman residents, as well as the country’s population, identified with Arabs. The relation between Amman’s megaprojects and Arab identity of the city residents and Jordanians can be investigated through the projects’ developers, who were mostly non-Jordanian Arabs. How did Jordanians relate to Arab developers investing in the new megaprojects in the city? One would expect that since officially and popularly Jordanians identified with Arabs, Arab developers would be viewed favorably by the state and the public in

\textsuperscript{6} This is according to the conceptual drawings and concept study obtained from the architects for this development, Consolidated Consultants-Jafar Tukan Architects.
Amman. But this was not necessarily the case. Hoping to enhance the country’s economy, the state welcomed Arab developers from the Gulf states who had extra petrodollars to invest in Amman, and other cities in the country. For these developers, Amman, and Jordan, served as an extension to their national territory, which could not absorb excess capital. Jordan’s request to join the GCC, which was being considered by GCC members in 2011 and would strengthen the country’s identification with Arabs, can be understood, at least partly, in light of this mutual benefit.

The public in Amman were not always as welcoming as the state was to the opening up of the city to Gulf developers and their increasing investment in megaprojects. Individuals interviewed over the course of this research had different views with regard to Arabism as a common element of identification between Gulf developers and Jordanians. Interestingly enough, non-Jordanian interviewees, including Arabs and non-Arabs, tended to understand Gulf developers’ investment in Amman’s urban built environment as reinforcing of Arab ties and identity (personal communications, January 17 & October 4, 2010). Many Jordanians, however, did not understand Gulf developers’ investment in megaprojects in the city as reinforcing of Arab ties or Arab identity, and many did not favor Arab over non-Arab developers. Some believed Jordanian developers were as unlikely as Gulf developers to be loyal to the city, and Gulf developers were unlikely to be loyal to the city simply because they were Arabs. For them, capital had no nationality under globalization. Thus Amani said, “the concern of any investor whether from Jordan or from outside the country will always be money and profit.” Leena said, “I don’t think foreign developers are different from local ones; we could have local developers as insensitive to the city as foreigners.” She added, “I think opposing them [i.e., non-Jordanian developers] is not a valid point since locals [i.e., Jordanian developers] can be the same.”
Still, some of the individuals interviewed for my research were concerned about the involvement of non-Jordanians in Amman’s contemporary megaprojects (personal communications, January, February & October 2010). For example Dana said, “so far, the influence of foreign developers on the city has been not good; they control the city.” Similarly, Fatima said, “I know it may be good to encourage foreign investment, but developers from outside Jordan should not be so influential [in shaping the city].... As foreigners, the moment they find a better place to investment they will leave the country.” Some expressed their worries that the new megaprojects were disconnected from Jordanians and their socioeconomic conditions and seemed to have been designed for some other “unknown people” from outside Jordan (personal communications, October 2010). One Transjordanian-Jordanian interviewee commented, “these megaprojects could have made sense if the population in Amman were replaced.” As innocent as these comments might have been, they were sensitive in the context of Jordan. As shown in Chapter 4, at least half of the country’s population and the majority of Amman residents were of Palestinian origin, and the relationship between Palestinian-Jordanians and Transjordanian-Jordanians was not always without tension. Some Transjordanian-Jordanians feared that Jordan could become the substitute homeland for the Palestinians who lost Palestine to Israel in the aftermath of the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars. This fear was fueled by Israeli claims in the 1980s that historically Jordan was a part of Palestine and that Palestinians should move to Jordan and establish the Palestinian state there, thus solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (see Robins, 1989). In the context of Amman’s early-twenty-first-century megaprojects, the source of threat to the Jordanian identity was not the Palestinian-Jordanian other, against whom the Transjordanian-Jordanian had identified himself or herself, as much as it was the Gulf developer and, to a lesser extent, the Gulf tourist. This threat was considered so serious as
reflected in one interviewee’s comment that Amman was being “invaded by outsiders in the hand of whom laid its future” (personal communication, October 2010). Some city residents publicly expressed their concern and discontent about the Gulf developers’ ownership of land and property in Amman, and in Jordan, which they understood as selling the city and country to these developers (“Investment boom,” 2008). In response to this situation, the king stated that Jordan needed to attract investments from the Gulf to boost its small economy, assuring the public that Jordan’s “national identity [would] never be for sale” (ibid).

**The Modern Jordanian**

A major element of identification for Jordanians and the one that dominated the official discourse in the country in the early twenty-first century was modernization, which constituted the core of the 2002 Jordan First campaign. The state adopted universal standards of modernization, which had emerged from the West, under which economic progress would be achieved and values such as democracy, equality, and freedom would prevail. Thus, Jordan’s modernization project can be understood as a means to produce Jordanians as a modern nation and individuals like modern nations and individuals of the developed world – a nation and individuals who have ideals of development and standards of comfort similar to those of their counterparts in the developed world, as well as urban built environments and infrastructure that support these ideals and standards and enable economic progress. This is not to equate modernization with Westernization, which as Gress (1997) and Huntington (1996) pointed out would be simplistic. Adopting modernity does not necessitate embracing the Western culture that produced it, and different nation-states could produce varied modernities (ibid). In fact, many Amman residents see themselves as modern and, for them, being modern did not mean breaking
with their identity as Muslims, Arabs, tribes, or others. Jordanians formed a hybrid modernity in which characteristics from Western and non-Western modernities were adapted and became one dimension of the multiple dimensions of the Jordanian identity. How then did Amman’s contemporary megaprojects contribute to the expression and construction of the modern identity of the city residents and Jordanians?

The new megaprojects in the city can be understood as a means and a product of the modernization project of Jordan and Amman. The developers of the Abdali New Downtown and their architects and planners were explicit about the role of this development in constructing and expressing the modern city, country, nation, and individual. Thus, according to these developers, the impact of the Abdali development on the economy of Amman and the country would be assessed based on, among other things, its “creation of a ‘physical presence’ to a vision” (AID, n.d.a, p. 4). Illustrating this point, they wrote, “the development of a modern city center would be a major tangible achievement on [the] drive towards modernization of the city and the country” (ibid). The developers considered the Abdali New Downtown “an accomplishment that [made] Jordanians proud of always aiming higher and reaching further” (“Project focus,” 2009).

According to them, this project was an accomplishment that moved Jordan into the twenty-first century “as a solid and strong country” (ibid). Following the lead of the Abdali developers, a high city official described the Abdali New Downtown as “a modern commercial center” similar to those in other “modern cities” and associated it with big businesses and upscale recreation and shopping (“Interview,” 2008). The media, in their turn, emphasized the Abdali development’s role in modernizing Amman, describing it as “breathing modernity into the center of Jordan,” a comment that the Abdali developers were proud to highlight in their discourse about this development (“Executive Magazine highlights,” 2008; “Jordan – Building Amman’s,” 2008,
para 1; also see “International media,” 2008). Similarly, many people in Amman, particularly those from the upper-class segment of the society, took pride in the Abdali New Downtown, which they found indicative of progress, modernity, and hadara, Arabic for civilization (personal communications, February 2010).

Amman’s contemporary megaprojects helped fashion the city residents into modern consumers and communicated the message that Jordanians had consumption patterns and lifestyle similar to those of wealthier modern societies in the West and East (Chapter 5). These megaprojects also conveyed the idea that the city residents, and Jordanians, were technologically advanced and environmentally conscious.

The Technologically Advanced

In order to express modernity, megaprojects in the city incorporated features associated with the urban built environment of modern Western cities and prominent non-Western cities that had followed the lead of the West, particularly Gulf cities, which would construct Amman, its residents, and the Jordanian nation at large as modern. One way to create the modern nation was to present it as technologically advanced through the incorporation of sophisticated technologies into the built environment. These technologies were manifested in the megaprojects’ tall buildings, new building techniques and materials, and information and communications technologies (see figures 4.23, 4.34, 4.41, 5.9, 5.10, 5.13, 5.22, and 5.24-5.27).

By the early twenty-first century, tall buildings had already become signifiers of modernity and technological progress in cities around the world no less because of their association with U.S. cities and America as a modern nation. The United States was a part of the industrial revolution and the innovative technologies it produced, which made possible the production of tall
buildings. Thus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, high-rise buildings in American cities expressed the modern technologically advanced American nation. Since then, nations around the world adopted these buildings to mark their modernity (see King 1996). Tall buildings also became a means to construct modernity, and Gulf cities, particularly Dubai, excelled in utilizing them for this purpose.

In early-twenty-first-century Amman, high-rise buildings were conceived to project the Jordanian nation as modern, technologically advanced. It is not surprising, then, that tall buildings constituted the landmarks for the Abdali New Downtown and were emphasized as the main component of this development’s IT Sector, which was considered the area of the Abdali development with the newest technologies and the one most responsible for creating a modern image for this development, the city, and the country (AID, n.d.a; figures 4.23 and 5.9). The unusual inclined tall buildings of Sanaya Amman also were designed to communicate the message that Jordanians were technologically advanced (figures 4.41 and 5.25). When the Sanaya development was begun some city residents applauded it as a modern addition to the city’s built environment (“Would you buy,” 2008). Developments such as Sanaya, according to these individuals, would help the city grow and evolve, leading city residents to take pride in this iconic modern development (ibid).

Similarly, the record-breaking high-rise buildings of the Jordan Gate development were seen by many, even by some of those who criticized them for interrupting the landscape and skyline of the neighborhood and the city, as markers of progress and modernity (figures 4.34, 4.35, 4.37 and 5.24). Jordan Gate became the source of pride for some city residents and conveyed the idea that the Jordanian was modern. This can be concluded from the responses of individuals interviewed over the course of this research. For example, Husam said, “tall
buildings are a sign of progress and to have a development such as this [i.e., Jordan Gate] in Amman means that Jordanians have taken a step towards progress and modernity.” He also mentioned that his neighbor in a modest neighborhood in Eastern Amman was so excited about the height of the buildings of Jordan Gate that he used the construction elevator to go up to the top of these buildings before they were completed and took the stairs on his way down; he, then, went on to tell his neighbors and friends about his exciting experience of these buildings, how tall they were, and how the city looked from above. Adil also was excited about these buildings and said, “Jordan Gate is a marker of advancement and modernity.” Similarly, Mohammad said, “only in advanced and foreign countries can you find skyscrapers, because you need high technologies to build them.” He added, “any visitor to Amman will see that these buildings are similar to skyscrapers in the West and know that Jordanians, as Arabs, are advanced. The progress of any Arab country will show the world that Arabs are modern.” Mohammad even interpreted the name Jordan Gate as “Jordan’s gateway to modernization.”

The building process of Jordan Gate showed that, like other megaprojects in early-twenty-first-century Amman, this development did not reflect the real technological status of the city or the country. Nor did it reflect the status of the city’s infrastructure or its residents’ economic situation. The city’s infrastructure was not equipped to handle such megaprojects. Amman suffered from traffic congestion, lack of public transportation, and scarce water resources. Parts of the city were still not connected to the sewage network; rather, they used septic tanks. The majority of the city residents had modest means and could not afford the upscale lifestyle Jordan Gate promoted, not to mention that many could not afford owning a small humble house or shopping for necessities. Although the architects and some of the engineers who designed Jordan Gate were Jordanian, much of the expertise, equipment, and
technologies used in the construction of this development were not Jordanian. In the early twenty-first century, the building industry, including builders, craftsmen, and relevant regulatory institutions in Amman, and the country, had not yet assimilated the new imported building systems, materials, and technologies used in Jordan Gate and other megaprojects in the city. This situation in the case of Jordan Gate contributed to a number of accidents during the construction process. For example, three concrete slabs in one of the high-rise buildings fell down and a part of the construction crane collapsed at the level of the 44th floor, causing safety threats to residents in the neighborhood (“Crane delaying,” 2009; “Idarat (Bawwabat al-Urdun) yu‘ayyin,” 2006; Kheetan, 2009; see Figure 6.10). Jordan did not have the expertise or know-how to handle these situations since buildings of such a height were not a part of an evolving building tradition. Thus, following the collapse of floor slabs, the developers appointed an international, not a local, consultant for safety (“Idarat (Bawwabat al-Urdun) yu‘ayyin,” 2006). To fix the crane problem, the expertise of foreign specialists was sought and equipment needed to dismantle the broken crane had to be brought from the UAE (“Bad‘ ‘amaliyyat,” 2009; “Crane delaying,” 2009; “Khubara‘ yusun,” 2009). One of the members of the committee formed for addressing the concerns for public safety as a result of the crane collapse mentioned that the incident was unprecedented in such a large-scale development in Jordan and there were no specialists in the country who could assess the risks from the crane failure (Kheetan, 2009). Employing the service of international experts, mostly based in the West, was also obvious in the Sanaya Amman development, which had a more complex structure than Jordan Gate as evident in its inclined high-rise buildings and skybridges, requiring sophisticated designs and building technologies that had not been mastered nationally (see figures 4.41, and 5.25-27).
Finishing materials used on the city’s megaprocesses were another feature that conveyed Jordanians’ technological advancement. The façades of the Abdali development’s tall buildings, particularly those in the IT Sector, were to express modernity (AID, n.d.a). In the Abdali regulations, the developers were encouraged to reflect a high-tech character through the use of glazed curtain walls, metal cladding, and other materials associated with modernity and technological innovation (ibid; see figures 4.23, 5.9, and 5.17). Similarly Jordan Gate’s glass curtain walls and Sanaya’s steel-and-glass skybridges, suspended swimming pool, and innovative stone mesh incorporated new building technologies and materials and connected these
developments with modernity (see figures 4.34, 4.35, 4.41, and 5.24-5.27). Even in smaller developments in the Abdali New Downtown where a traditional material such as stone was recommended as a primary façade material, the modern character was to be emphasized by using relatively smooth-textured stone with fine uniform surface patterns, which required the use of advanced polishing machines and electric saws (AID, n.d.a; Figure 6.11). Roughly finished stone, which signaled traditionalism, was not allowed on the Abdali buildings. According to the Abdali developers, this “rural type” of stone would “carry … dust and pollution” and it was incommensurate with “the urban modern image” of the Abdali New Downtown (AID, n.d.a, p. 49; p. 52; p. 49; Figure 6.12). Similarly, canopies and awnings in all buildings in the Abdali development should have a modern character (AID, n.d.a). Like tall buildings, building materials were to express modernity and technological progress to create a modern image for the megaprojects, which would construct the city, its residents, and the nation as modern.

Figure 6.11. Examples of smooth-textured stone allowed on the Abdali buildings.  

Figure 6.12. Examples of roughly finished stone disallowed on the Abdali buildings.  
Automated systems of building and security management as well as information and communications technologies in megaprojects in the city were also a significant feature for establishing these developments as modern. For example, the Abdali developers emphasized this development’s technologically advanced systems for remote monitoring of interior space and control of services and appliances in this space, high-speed Internet connections, and triple play bundles that combined TV, phone, and Internet (“A smart city,” 2008). The Abdali developers highlighted the smartness of the Abdali New Downtown, which they considered “the most impressive” feature of this development (ibid; also see AID, n.d.d). Technologies at the Abdali development, according to the developers, were “the world’s most advanced” and “the wonders of technology,” which would make Amman a “leader in the world of communications” (“A smart city,” 2008). Obviously, even if the Abdali development included state-of-the-art information and communications technologies, it would not make the city a leader in these technologies since the Abdali New Downtown was not a place where information technologies were produced rather it was where these technologies were consumed. This is not to mention that the Abdali development was but a part of a large city in which many residents had no access to such advanced technologies. However, the Abdali development, like other megaprojects in Amman, was meant to image Amman as a modern city with good information and communications technologies. The naming of a section of this development as the “IT Sector” can be understood in this light of the Abdali development’s role in constructing modernity. Considering that the country had an emerging information and communications technologies industry, emphasis on these technologies in the Abdali development is even more understandable. The IT Sector and the information and communications technologies used in the
Abdali New Downtown presented the yet to be developed sector of the country’s industry as completely developed industry and the city and nation as modern and technologically advanced.

*The Environmentally Conscious*

The environment-friendly designs for the new megaprojects in Amman conveyed the message that Jordanians were modern and environmentally conscious as well as technologically advanced. As King (1996) points out, the West by the late twentieth century was moving towards environment-friendly architectural and urban practices. The developers of megaprojects in Amman realized that their projects should show some concern for the environment if they were to claim keeping up with Western standards of modernity.⁷

Thus, the Sanaya developers applauded the designs of this development for setting new standards for sustainable building in the city. Sanaya Amman would have included water recycling systems capable of cutting water consumption by 30 percent (Picow, 2009; also see Damra, 2009; Ward, 2008). In addition, it would have included wind turbines to generate power, energy-efficient glass, and stone mesh utilized for water heating, among other energy-saving measures (Damra, 2009; Picow, 2009; Ward, 2008). Similarly, the regulation for the Abdali New Downtown required the developments in this project to include graywater treatment units, which recycled water from basins, showers, and bathtubs and used it for flushing toilets and watering plants (Abdali Mall Company, 2007b; AID, n.d.b). In addition, AID installed in the Abdali development a central sewage water treatment plant for the purpose of irrigating public green areas in this development (AID, n.d.b; Amireh, 2010). These measures would save on municipal

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⁷ The concern for natural resources was not completely absent from Amman, particularly because water and energy resources were scarce. However, environment-friendly architectural and urban practices in Amman, as well as in other Jordanian cities, gained momentum in the early twenty-first century following the promotion of these practices by the West through green building and publications on green building.
water consumption, a matter of particular significance for the water-scarce city of Amman. The developers also encouraged the use of double-skin façades, which, along with proper insulation and low thermal conductivity materials, would reduce energy losses through the building’s envelope and save on energy used for cooling and heating (AID, n.d.a; AID, n.d.b).

However, the Abdali developers were not environmentally conscious when dealing with 750 trees on the site of Phase II of the Abdali New Downtown. The developers proposed cutting the 80- to 90-year-old trees to implement their designs for the Abdali project (Kraishan, 2013; Namrouqa, 2012; Figure 6.13). Environmentalists in the city were concerned that the removal of these trees would interrupt the “integrated and independent ecosystems” they sustain (Namrouqa, 2012, para 13), and these environmentalists as well as others in the city worried that Amman would lose one of the few much needed green areas. Despite recommendation from the Ministry

*Figure 6.13. Historic trees on the site of the Abdali New Downtown, which the developers will cut to implement their designs for the project.*

of Agriculture and suggestions from the Farmers Union, environmental societies, and activists that the developers alter the designs of the Abdali project to accommodate the trees, which they argued were a part of the natural heritage, the Cabinet gave AID permission to uproot two-thirds of the trees on the site, requiring that the developers plant in an area outside Amman five trees for each tree they cut (Kraishan, 2013; Namrouqa, 2012).

Notwithstanding their intention to cut the trees on the site, AID encouraged developers of projects in the Abdali New Downtown to certify their projects by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and a few developers sought certification of their projects as green buildings (AID, n.d.b; Amireh, 2010; “Crystalle by Matrix,” 2009; EDGO, 2009; M. Rihani, personal communication, August 16, 2010).8 The Abdali developers, and developers of other projects in Amman, followed the footnote of Limitless who designed Sanaya Amman as the first development in the city to be LEED certified (“Baha Abouhatab, Limitless,” 2008; Duwairi, 2008; “Eco-friendly design,” 2009). By itself, LEED certification connected these developments with the West, particularly the United States, and its modernity. LEED certification also required the employment of professionals who had knowledge of green building designs and practices as they related to LEED. Such professionals were not available nationally; rather, they had to be brought from abroad. LEED certification of Sanaya, and later other developments in the city, also promoted LEED and its accreditation courses for proficiency in green building to Jordanian professionals. In fact, some architects and engineers I interviewed for my research noted that they or someone they knew had recently taken or considered taking LEED accreditation courses (personal communications, September & October, 2010). Furthermore, LEED certification helped establish standards set by a Western organization, the

U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), as the yardstick against which developers and architects of large-scale projects, as well as other projects, in Amman would measure their buildings’ environmental performance. At that time, the city and the country had not yet developed comprehensive local or national standards for green building practices, although several green pilot projects and studies on water- and energy-efficient buildings had been carried out by Jordan-based professionals.

In the early twenty-first century, identity in Jordan was multidimensional. Official identity was constructed with reference to tribes, Islam, Arabs, and modernization. Jordanians identified with modernity and tradition, different ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes, Islam and Christianity, and Arabs and non-Arabs. However, Amman’s contemporary megaprojects primarily connected with modernity, but not with the particular modernity of the majority of the city residents or Jordanians. The new megaprojects collectively presented Ammanis, and Jordanians, as technologically advanced, consumers, and environmentally conscious like their counterparts in modern Western and non-Western cities. The technologies these megaprojects incorporated, the environmental standards they adopted, and the consumption patterns they encouraged and helped establish did not reflect the city residents’ capabilities, needs, and socioeconomic and cultural condition; rather, they were imported, primarily from the Gulf states and the West.

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The new megaprojects in Amman were a part of the official construction of Jordanianness at the turn of the millennium as evident in the agency of the state and city in the production of these developments. Greater Amman Municipality, overlooked building regulations, eased licensing processes, and set new building regulations to allow the construction of contemporary megaprojects. The military-owned Mawared was a partner in developing the largest megaproject in early-twenty-first-century Amman, the Abdali New Downtown. Like the military in other nation-states, the Jordanian military was one of the most significant institutions that created national identity. As Massad (2001) pointed out, the Jordanian military in the colonial and postcolonial states had generated a set of practices, rules, habits, and orders that aimed at normalizing and controlling its members. Not only did the military produce the disciplined soldier but also it produced the disciplined citizen (Massad, 2001; Mitchell, 1988). The military permeated civic society as its discipline was adopted by other state institutions and the discourses it generated were disseminated through public schools and the media (ibid). The military had repressed some cultural material and practices and produced others as the national cultural products, and produced the Jordanian as primarily tribal or Bedouin (Massad, 2001). At the turn of the millennium, however, the modern Jordanian was more in synch with Jordan’s modernization and the democratic processes it promoted. Thus the military helped construct the Jordanian as modern, technologically advanced, consumer, and environmentally conscious, partly through investing in a megaproject such as the Abdali New Downtown.11

Corporate developers from outside Jordan, particularly from the Gulf states, were a major agent in projecting the Jordanian as modern through the new megaprojects they produced in Amman. The developers’ willingness to invest in the city’s urban built environment encouraged state and city officials, who did not have the money to embark on such megaprojects, to push hard towards reimagining the city and reconstructing its residents’ identity. In addition, these developers had great agency in the shape, components, and functions of Amman’s megaprojects, which not only created the city’s commodified space and its new image but also helped fashion the lifestyle of Jordanians and their identities in ways that served capitalists’ interests rather than the public good. The agency of the architects and planners was also obvious in defining the Jordanian identity through Amman’s megaprojects as these professionals shaped the image of the developments and through them the image of the city, consequently influencing the city residents’ identity. However, these architects and planners based their designs on the developers’ design program and guidelines and, sometimes, conceptual designs and design regulations, which limited design alternatives and made design and planning professional less powerful agents. The public in Amman lacked agency in the communication and construction of their identity through contemporary megaprojects in the city. After all, they were not given a means for input into the production of the modern image and commodified space of the city’s megaprojects or the city at large. But as consumers of the megaprojects’ spaces, merchandise, and services, they helped fashion their own identity as modern consumers.

Given the strong agencies of corporations, the state, and the city in the production of Amman’s new megaprojects, it is not surprising that these developments created the identity of the city residents in ways that connected Jordanians to the modern world and its capitalist economy. Considering the political condition of the time and the economic integration in a
global world, the modern Jordanian seemed more appropriate than the Arab, Muslim, or tribal
Jordanian for a country and a city seeking financial assistance, foreign investment, and regional
as well as international businesses. Furthermore as a modern consumer, the Jordanian will
become an agent in perpetuating the capitalist system of production, thus making Jordan more
likely to attract businesses. The modern Jordanian identity along with the modern image and
commodified space of the city, which the city’s megaprojects produced, served capitalists’
interests and furthered the construction of global Amman.
Chapter 7: Global Amman, Identity, and Real-Estate Advertising Discourse

As shown in Chapter 2, particularly in the review of Foucault’s work, discourse is a significant means for constructing meanings, the objects of which it speaks, reality, and identity. In addition, discourse is produced through and productive of power relations. This chapter discusses the ways that the real-estate advertising discourse that promoted Amman’s early-twenty-first-century megaprojects constructed a global Amman and conveyed the identity of the city residents. It addresses power relations through which this discourse was produced and interpreted, including the power of the corporations, state, and public in the city. The discussion in this chapter is carried out primarily through the analysis of texts and images of advertisements and marketing brochures of the study cases, as well as the public’s interpretation of them. The chapter includes two subthemes: global Amman and advertising discourse; Amman residents’ identity and advertising discourse.

Global Amman and Advertising Discourse

Amman’s contemporary megaprojects produced modern urban images. They created an image of Amman as a modern city with a spectacular modern downtown and iconic high-rise buildings designed by starchitects and executed with innovative technologies and materials; a city with distinguished places for work, living, and entertainment. These megaprojects were conceived to make the city competitive on a global scale. Corporate developers and the state, which served as a co-developer, legislator, or facilitator of megaprojects, knew that in a global Amman, marketing, selling, and consuming the megaprojects and the city’s urban built environment, in general, were profitable. Constructing Amman as a global city was a means to
attract regional and international businesses and tourists along with the capital they would invest in the city and the money they would spend, thus strengthening the city’s economy. But, it was not enough to actually build spectacular developments and record-breaking high-rise buildings to build the image of these developments and the city as modern and global; the image needed to be constructed and disseminated through discourse. Thus, Amman’s megaprojects were accompanied with large advertising campaigns. Advertisements of these large-scale developments appeared in national and regional newspapers, real-estate supplements and magazines, and TV, and brochures and advertisements of these projects were disseminated at conferences on real estate and the built environment as well as national and international real-estate exhibitions, such as MIPIM 2010 in Cannes, Cityscape 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 in Dubai, and PropertyLink 2009 in Amman. How did advertising discourse on Amman’s contemporary megaprojects construct Amman as a global city?

The largest advertising discourse on the city’s megaprojects was the advertising that the developers of the Abdali New Downtown created. So proud of their advertisements were the Abdali developers that describing these advertisements, praising their scale and quality, and even, on a few occasions, explaining the messages they conveyed became an integral part of the developers’ discourse on the Abdali development. Among the earliest advertisements of the Abdali New Downtown were those posted on the enormous construction fence encircling the site (figures 7.1 and 7.2). AID praised the fence for being “the first of its kind in Jordan” in terms of its size and aesthetics and for showcasing to Jordan and the world the innovation and unique experience of the developers (“Sharikat al-‘Abdali tushayyid,” 2006). AID’s CEO commented that the advertisements on this fence “provided Jordan and the world with views that embodied … [the developers’] vision of the [Abdali] project” (ibid). This comment reveals that the
Figure 7.1. View of Abdali advertisements posted on the construction fence of the Abdali development.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on August 11, 2007.

Figure 7.2. View of Abdali advertisements posted on the construction fence of the Abdali development.

Note. Photo was taken by the researcher on August 11, 2007.
advertisements were directed not only to the city residents and Jordanians but also the “world.” Thus, the advertisements included phrases such as “let us welcome the world,” which presented the Abdali project as a gateway to the world, as a regional and global development, not merely a local or national project. This phrase also implicitly suggested that Amman and its residents were not open to the world and needed a development such as the Abdali New Downtown to facilitate such openness. Advertisements’ texts also included phrases such as “a vision come to life” and “let tomorrow start today,” which, along with the previous phrase, represented the Abdali development as the embodiment of a shared vision of how the Abdali site should be developed and how Amman’s built environment should look in order to bring a bright future to the city and its residents. According to the Abdali advertisements, this development would “accompany Amman into the 21st century” (Abdali Investment and Development [AID], n.d.e).

In line with the Abdali advertisements, the advertisements of Sanaya Amman spoke of this development as “a new triumphant chapter in the Jordanian future growth story” (Limitless, n.d.a). Sanaya “mark[ed] a new era in Jordan’s journey towards further urban development” (ibid). It was a means to boost the city’s economy and support the local community (ibid). In other words, the Sanaya development would fit and contribute to Amman’s “continuous modernization and growth” (Limitless, n.d.b). Similarly, the advertisements of Jordan Gate portrayed this development as a product and means of modernization in Amman and the country. These advertisements spoke of Jordan’s economic expansion and of Jordan Gate as an “architecture expression” of the country’s growing economy (Bayan Holding, Gulf Finance House, & Kuwait Finance & Investment Company, 2007; Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). According to the advertisements, Jordan Gate would energize the country for it was a new start for Jordan, or “intilaqa jadida li al-Urdun” as the Arabic advertisements put it (Bayan Holding et
al., 2007; Bayan Holding, Gulf Finance House, & Kuwait Finance & Investment Company, 2007-2008; also see Jordan Gate Company, n.d.).

At the same time that the advertisements emphasized the modernity and globality of the city, they represented Amman, and the country, as unique with rich heritage. This can be understood as a means to define for the regional and international audiences of these advertisements what was special and distinctive about the advertised developments – in this case, their context. As Harvey (2001a) pointed out, striking a balance between commercialization and distinction through discourse, including advertising discourse, was a significant strategy for the production of the urban built environment, as well as other products, particularly under the capitalist mode of production. The advertisements’ emphasis on Amman’s architectural heritage can be understood in light of the city’s competition with Dubai, which, as Al-Asad (2007) and Elsheshtawy (2004, 2010) pointed out, lacks historic buildings and sites. In fact, the developers of Beirut Central District (BCD) adopted similar strategy in the advertisement of the BCD (Makdisi, 1997). Beirut and the site of the BCD had historic buildings and significant archaeological remains, and the developers were clear that the emphasis on Beirut’s heritage was meant to give the city and BCD leverage over Dubai and its megaprojects (ibid). In the context of Amman’s megaprojects, the advertisements of the Sanaya development featured images of Amman’s Roman amphitheater and other archaeological sites and spoke of the city’s “unique blend of the old and the new” (Limitless, n.d.b), the traditional and the modern (Limitless, n.d.a). The advertisements also described the location of Sanaya as central, connecting traditional downtown Amman with modern Western Amman (ibid). Similarly, the advertisements of Vertex Tower and Residences in the Abdali New Downtown spoke of Amman as “a living history book” and “a picturesque … historic city” with “old-world charm and modern hustle and bustle”
The Abdali advertisements highlighted Jordan’s ancient landmarks, speaking of “the world-famous Petra site” and “the ancient city of Jerash” (AID, n.d.c). These advertisements even compared the Abdali development to the country’s ancient landmarks, claiming that just as the country’s historic monuments served as hubs for ancient civilizations the Abdali project would transform Amman into a competitive global hub (ibid).

It is in light of this perceived role of Abdali that the advertised names for this development “The New Downtown of Amman” and “Abdali New Downtown” can be understood. These names constructed the Abdali development as the replacement for the city’s downtown, as the new place where city residents would shop, socialize, and entertain and major businesses and commercial facilities would be located. For the state, these names meant Jordan could claim that its capital city had a downtown similar to downtowns in modern and global cities, a downtown that could support regional and international businesses and host activities similar to those hosted in the downtowns of other prominent cities. Such a downtown would enhance the image of Amman, attracting businesses and individuals along with their capital and money. For the Abdali developers, referring to this development as the new downtown was a means to emphasize the significance of the Abdali development and its central location and, consequently, attract more investors, prospective property buyers, businesses, tourists, and city residents, and thus increase the developers’ profit. Developers of other megaprojects in Amman understood the role the Abdali development played in the construction of the city as global. They knew that their projects would be more profitable if promoted as a part of this global Amman. Thus, the Sanaya developers made sure to highlight the Abdali development in the advertisements of Sanaya, referring to it as Amman’s business hub that expressed modernity and
innovation, embodied luxury and leisure, and would reshape the way business and commerce were conducted in the Middle East (Limitless, n.d.a). The Sanaya developers further connected Sanaya with Abdali when they described the “exclusive location” of Sanaya as having been close to Abdali (ibid). The proximity of the Sanaya development to the Abdali development was exaggerated to increase Sanaya’s symbolic capital.

Advertisements of megaprojects conveyed the globality of Amman by portraying it as the perfect place for work. The Abdali advertisements constructed this development as a competitive regional and global business center, as the place for leading national, regional, and international businesses. The Abdali developers were explicit about the constructive role of the advertisements. Thus, commenting on the Abdali advertising campaign featuring one of the earliest and most circulated advertisements of Abdali, “The Downtown Comes Soaring to Life. Witness Its Rise,” the developers said that the advertisement would institute the Abdali development as the future business center (‘Abdali PSC launches,” 2008). It is not surprising, then, that the Abdali advertisements spoke of this development as the destination for businesspersons (AID, 2008c, 2010b) and “the business hub of the future” that would set “new foundations for business excellence” (AID, 2008b) and “make Jordan the first and ideal choice for regional firms and investors” (AID, 2010b). The advertisements spoke of the Abdali development’s high-end office buildings and their “integrated services” that conformed to the “latest technical specification” (ibid). They spoke of this development incorporating “the world’s most advanced technology” (AID, 2008c). The advertisements emphasized the smart buildings of the Abdali development and, even, referred to this development as a smart city (AID, n.d.c, 2009b; also see AID, 2008b, 2008c). They spoke of the broadband, high-speed Internet connection, extensive wireless network, and audio and video communication systems at the
Abdali office spaces as well as everywhere in the Abdali New Downtown (AID, n.d.c, 2008c). Such “impressive technology,” according to the Abdali advertisements, would provide secure and reliable connection to businesses around the world, making the work of multinational companies easier and faster (ibid). Similarly, the advertisements of Jordan Gate spoke of this development’s smart technologies providing corporations “fast and efficient communication with … global business operations” (Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). They spoke of Jordan Gate as “the perfect working [sic] environment” for national and international businesses (ibid), referring to it as “home to the ‘crème de la crème’ of the corporate world” (Bayan Holding et al., 2007).

Advertising discourse on the city’s megaprojects depicted these developments as the perfect place for living and entertainment, as places fit for global Amman. Jordan Gate’s advertisements described this development’s upscale shopping and leisure amenities and luxury hotel (Bayan Holding et al., 2007; Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). Similarly, the advertisements of Sanaya spoke of this development’s luxurious apartments, gourmet restaurants, designer stores, and world-class leisure amenities (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b, 2009d). And the Abdali advertisements spoke of the Abdali New Downtown as “the favored destination” not only for businesspersons but also for tourists and wealthy international travelers (AID, 2008b). These advertisements described the Abdali development as a “microcosm of the perfect city,” in which road networks, office and residential spaces, shopping and entertainment facilities, and green and open spaces were “meticulously planned” (AID, n.d.c). The Abdali advertisements also emphasized the high-end quality of the different components of this development: the upmarket office spaces (AID, 2010b), “upscale facilities,” “contemporary luxury apartments,” “shopping facilities that [would] sparkle with global brands” (AID, 2008b), and “spectacular high-rise buildings” (AID, 2008c). By portraying the well-planned, spectacular upscale Abdali New Downtown as a microcosm of
the perfect city, the advertisements defined the perfect city as the place that catered to the rich and disregarded the complex urban life that most city residents experienced.

Initially it might seem that the advertisements of megaprojects were addressed solely to the wealthy businesspersons, tourists, and others, who could afford the kind of consumption patterns that these developments encouraged. However, a closer look at these advertisements revealed that they also addressed the average city residents. For example, the Abdali developers commented that the advertisements of the Abdali New Downtown would enable the public to “envisage” the Abdali development in the near future and “permit their vision to come to life” (“Abdali PSC launches,” 2008); hence the frequent use of the phrase “live the vision” in the advertisements of this development (see AID, 2008b). In other words, the developers wanted city residents from all walks of life to create a conception of the Abdali development based on the images and texts of the developers’ advertising discourse. Furthermore, the Abdali developers wanted to persuade the city residents that the realization of the Abdali development would be a materialization of the city residents’ own image of this development, not the developers’ image. There was no better way to draw the public into Amman’s megaprojects than making them believe they were a dream come true: the modern developments they desperately needed to bring a better future to the city and its residents.

Advertisements of megaprojects portrayed the city as global through the emphasis on the grandness of these projects and their tall buildings. Here the image in the advertisements played a significant role. The Abdali developers were well aware of the constructive role of the advertisement images, which showed individual buildings and groups of buildings at the Abdali development as well as the whole Abdali project. These images, according to the Abdali developers, would engage the public in Amman with the Abdali project as they would “make
their eyes familiar” with this development and the new shape of the city center (“Sharikat al-
‘Abdali tushayyid,” 2006). Ironically, the developers did not engage the public in the city with
the Abdali development when it was first conceived. The Abdali developers did not ask the
opinion of the city residents regarding how the central site of the project should be developed,
what functions the new development should serve, or what form it should take. The developers
did not take the needs of the city residents into considerations when they conceived the
development as an upscale megaproject. They even went so far as to finalize the Abdali plans
before purchasing privately-owned property on the site. The public were marginalized when their
marginalization served the interest of the developers just as they were induced to become a part
of this project when their participation as consumers of this development’s spaces and
commodities served the interest of the developers.

In all of the advertisements analyzed in this study, the image was predominant, taking up
a large area, which was not surprising considering the emphasis the developers put on the image
in the conception of these developments. The developers conceived these developments as
spectacular buildings, landscapes, and urban spaces, which would convey a modern image for
these developments and the city. This is not to mention that images of buildings in the media
were no less significant a medium than the buildings themselves, sometimes even more
significant, to command people’s attention, communicate certain messages, and construct the
meaning of these buildings (see King, 1996). There was no more telling example of the use of
the image in advertising Amman’s megaprojects than the large advertisement of the Abdali
development that covered one of the façades of a mid-rise building on a busy street in Western
Amman (Figure 7.3). This advertisement primarily consisted of a 3D view of the Abdali New
Downtown dominated by tall buildings with glittering surfaces towering over the surrounding
Figure 7.3. View of a large Abdali advertisement posted on one of the façades of a mid-rise building on al-Madina Street in Western Amman.

*Note.* Photo was taken by the researcher on October 9, 2010.
urban fabric of the Abdali neighborhood. The Abdali developers clearly thought an enormous advertisement would help convey the idea of the Abdali New Downtown as a modern, spectacular competitive development. The advertisement itself became a part of the competition to produce the biggest product as can be concluded from the developers’ comment that it was the “largest outdoor sign in the Levant,” an advertisement that was “worth noticing” (“Abdali launches,” 2010). This advertisement, according to the developers, was commensurate with the Abdali New Downtown as it “display[ed] the magnitude and grandeur of the project” (ibid).

Similar imagery was featured in the Abdali advertisement “The Downtown Comes Soaring to Life,” which also portrayed a flock of oversized birds heading towards the Abdali development (Figure 7.4). The developers described these birds elsewhere as “majestic birds” that migrated to the Abdali New Downtown (“Abdali PSC launches,” 2008). They “symbolize[d] the bustling energy” flowing into the Abdali development and “foreshadow[ed] the stirring human migration” to this development (ibid). By providing their interpretation of this component of the advertisement’s image, the developers meant to construct the Abdali development as the lively city center to which city residents, and others, would be attracted. As if the image of this advertisement and its title were not enough to emphasize the significance of high-rise buildings for the Abdali development, the advertisement text indicated the great stature of the development’s buildings. To make sure that the message was clear to the audiences of this advertisement, the developers elsewhere proudly described the buildings at the Abdali development as they appeared in the image of this advertisement as “rising tall” over the surrounding urban fabric (“Abdali PSC launches,” 2008).

The advertisements’ emphasis on tall buildings at the Abdali development was not surprising given that tall buildings, be they office, residential, or hotel buildings, were among the
The downtown comes soaring to life. Witness its rise.

Figure 7.4. One of the most circulated advertisements of the Abdali development featuring a 3D view of this development placed in real context.

Note. Procured from Abdali Investment and Development (AID) in August 2010. Copyright by AID. Reprinted with permission.
most important image-constructing components of this development. They were conceived as the landmarks of the Abdali New Downtown, which would help make this development “a modern landmark for Amman” (AID, n.d.c). High-rise buildings have become markers of modernity and globality with which the Abdali developers were keen to associate this development. These developers understood that high-rise buildings had symbolic capital that could be transformed into financial capital.

Like the Abdali advertisements, the advertisements of Sanaya emphasized the height of this development’s buildings. One of the most telling examples of the pride the Sanaya developers took in the grandness of this project was the advertisement titled “Sanaya Amman” featuring a 3D view of Sanaya supposedly placed in context (Figure 7.5). In the foreground of the advertisement’s image, at the bottom right corner, appeared a blond female painter in modern clothes putting the final touches on a painting showing the landscape of Amman. In the background of the image appeared the city’s landscape depicted on this painting. The landscape of the city appeared unrealistically flat and monotonous for the hilly city of Amman, consisting of low-rise buildings above which Sanaya towered. The developers distorted the context of this development and dwarfed the surrounding buildings to further emphasize Sanaya’s distinctive height. They understood that under contemporary globalization the monumental scale of a development was an important characteristic to draw attention to this development. To make sure the message of the advertisement’s image was successfully communicated to the readers of this advertisement, the advertisement’s text spoke of Sanaya rising above the skyline in the Abdoun area. The developers appear so proud of this unreal depiction of the city’s landscape that they showed it in Sanaya’s other advertisements and marketing materials in which they also stressed that Sanaya would reshape the skyline of Amman (see Limitless, n.d.a, 2009c). For the Sanaya
Figure 7.5. Advertisement of Sanaya Amman featuring the high-rise buildings of this development towering over the city's landscape.

developers, the image of this development standing out in Amman’s skyline served as a signifier of Sanaya’s iconicity. Thus, the title of the text of the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement read “Jordan’s New Icon” and the advertisement’s text spoke of Sanaya having been “set to be universally admired as Jordan’s new icon” (Limitless, 2009d).

Other Sanaya advertisements also spoke of this development as “one of the highest towers” (Limitless, n.d.b), “standing powerful and tall above the capital” (Limitless, n.d.a). The Sanaya advertisements even included figures that showed the magnitude of this development. For example, they mentioned that Sanaya would “soar … over 200 meters above ground,” “rise more than 50 storeys,” and its swimming pool would be suspended “100 meters above Amman” (Limitless, n.d.a; also see Limitless, n.d.b). The Sanaya developers’ name “Limitless,” which appeared in the Sanaya advertisements, contributed to the showcasing of Sanaya’s magnitude and its innovative designs. This name presented the developers as having had unlimited power, infinite resources, endless capabilities, and unconfined imagination, among other superior qualities. It, in turn, helped communicate the message that Sanaya Amman was an extraordinary development.

Like the advertisements of Sanaya Amman and the Abdali New Downtown, the advertisements of Jordan Gate emphasized the distinctive height of this development. Thus, one of the most circulated advertisements of Jordan Gate was titled “Jordan’s Highest Landmark” and featured a 3D view of this development in which the glazed high-rise buildings of Jordan Gate soared into the sky and its stone-clad base ran long (Bayan Holding et al., 2007; Figure 7.6). In the background of the advertisement’s image appeared other buildings that were toned down and mostly reduced in size. This unreal depiction of the context of Jordan Gate was a means to emphasize the distinctive height of this development and construct it as superior to the
Figure 7.6. Advertisement of Jordan Gate featuring a 3D view of the glazed high-rise buildings of this development.

surrounding urban fabric. It was not dissimilar from the way the Sanaya developers depicted Sanaya Amman in the advertisements. Such a distortion of the context of the advertised development and the domination of the context by the advertised development were an advertising strategy many developers in cities around the world adopted to make their developments stand out (see Dovey, 1999). The Jordan Gate developers further emphasized the height of this development through the advertisement’s text, which referred to Jordan Gate’s “two luxurious high-rise towers.” Moreover, the advertisement spoke of Jordan Gate occupying a site that had one of the highest elevations in the city. For the developers, this site along with the excessive height of Jordan Gate created better visibility for this development, which they considered an advantage even though Jordan Gate interrupted the city’s skyline and strongly contrasted with its surroundings, which consisted of low- to medium-rise buildings.

Advertisements of Amman’s contemporary megaprojects conveyed the message that the city was modern and global through the emphasis on these projects’ high-quality designs and their starchitects. Thus, the Abdali advertisements spoke of the “world-class” “inspired” designs of this development’s high-rise buildings and described them as “works of art” (AID, n.d.c). The advertisements also spoke of these buildings as “designed by some of the world’s most celebrated studios,” listing names of architectural and planning firms that they represented as internationally renowned (ibid). The names included Foster + Partners, an internationally acclaimed firm, but they included firms that were known only regionally or nationally and others that were not even among the most famous in the city. In this way, the developers misrepresented the information about the designers of the Abdali development to serve their own interest. Similar advertising strategy can be seen in the advertisement for many global megaprojects. For example, the marketing material of the Lujiazui Central Finance District in Pudong, Shanghai,
spoke of this development’s internationally renowned architects and featured designs and images of this development that were prepared by these architects but were never implemented and had little influence on the final shape of the Lujiazui development (Olds, 1997). The Lujiazui developers did not provide the audiences of this development’s marketing material with facts about the designs and architects of this development; rather, they used the names and designs of celebrated architects to communicate the idea that the Lujiazui development was a global financial center and Shanghai was a competitive global city. Similarly, the Abdali developers were not concerned with providing the audiences of the Abdali advertisements with facts about this development; rather, they wanted to create a modern image for this development fit for a global Amman and with potential for great profit.

The developers of Sanaya Amman did not put equal emphasis on the starchitects of this development. However, Sanaya’s advertisement images and texts were no less effective than the Abdali advertisements in conveying the message that Sanaya had innovative iconic designs. The painter who appeared in the foreground of the image in the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement painting the Sanaya development and its surrounding urban fabric helped convey the iconicity of Sanaya (Figure 7.5). One of the messages this feature of the advertisement communicated to the advertisement’s audiences was that Sanaya was aesthetically significant and unique and enhanced the landscape of the surrounding area, as well as Amman, thus painters admired it and made it the topic of their paintings. Another relevant message was that Sanaya was a creation of an artist, and hence a work of art. The concept of the image of this advertisement was not different from advertisements of large-scale developments, particularly high-rise buildings, in cities around the world in which the advertised development was presented as a masterpiece created by a world-famous artist, which endued the advertised development with an “aesthetic
‘aura’” (Dovey, 1999, p. 108). The text of the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement supplemented this advertisement’s image as it spoke of Sanaya’s “distinctive split tower configuration” and referred to this development as a “beacon of distinction” (Limitless, 2009d; also see Limitless, 2009b). Similarly, other Sanaya advertisements described this development as “a modern day masterpiece” and “an architectural wonder” that “paid tribute to … creativity” (Limitless, n.d.a). They spoke of Sanaya’s world-class design and how it would “enhance the natural beauty of the Wadi Abdoun area” and stand out as the city’s “new architectural marvel” (ibid).

The advertisements that emphasized environment-friendly designs and technology of megaprojects and their connection with the West helped convey the modernity of Amman. By the early twenty-first century, green building had gained momentum in the West, and developers who wanted to associate their projects with modernity began to incorporate environment-friendly features into these projects. Both the Abdali and Sanaya developments incorporated such features and highlighted them in their press release and newsletters. However, only the advertisements of Sanaya emphasized this development’s environment-friendly features. These advertisements spoke of Sanaya as having been designed in conformity with “world environmental standards” (Limitless, n.d.a). The advertisements emphasized that Sanaya would be the first in the country to meet such standards and become a certified green development (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b, 2009d). The certification the advertisements referred to was LEED’s and the world environmental standards the advertisements mentioned were those set by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The Sanaya developers seem to have understood that adherence to the standards of this American organization and certification by the American LEED would make the Sanaya development a “real sustainable development” (Limitless, n.d.a). The advertisements listed many eco-friendly features of Sanaya, including its water recycling
and waste management systems and wind turbines (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b). The advertisements also spoke of this development’s cross ventilation system, which would reduce dependency on mechanical air conditioning, and its naturally-lit spaces, which would reduce the use of artificial light (Limitless, n.d.a). These eco-friendly features became a part of Sanaya’s symbolic capital. For not only did they connect this development with Western ideas about green design but also, according to the Sanaya advertisements, they would protect Sanaya residents’ well-being and health, improve productivity, and reduce environmental pollution and degradation (Limitless, n.d.a).

How did the public in the city interpret the megaprojects’ advertisements, and how successful were the developers in creating a modern and global image of these developments and the city? City residents interviewed over the course of this research expressed different opinions regarding the names of the Abdali development as they appeared in the advertisements: “The New Downtown of Amman” and “Abdali New Downtown.” Some people were happy with these names and found them legitimate, considering the status of downtown Amman in the early twenty-first century. As a visitor to the city commented, the downtown “lack[ed] most of the attributes of a downtown: [t]he bright lights, shops, sights and attractions” (Mumtaz, 2006, para. 5). According to this visitor, he passed through the downtown without realizing it. This is not to say that downtown Amman turned into a deserted area. In fact, it was still busy, and sometimes overcrowded, on weekends and on weekday mornings and afternoons, but not as busy at night (see figures 6.4 and 5.3). Anyone who visited the downtown or passed through it would realize that it was no longer the place that brought together people from all segments of Amman’s society. Instead, the downtown mostly served working-class residents of the city. Many
Ammanis rarely passed through the downtown, let alone shopped or wandered in it (see Al-Asad, 2008a; Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007); a situation that traces back to the 1970s and 1980s, but became more obvious in the 1990s and the 2000s.

Thus, Sarah found that the name Abdali New Downtown made sense as not only did this development have a central location, but also it could replace the old downtown, which, according to her, “was taken over by laborers.” Ula said downtown Amman was “disgusting” and hoped that the Abdali development soon would become the city’s downtown. Basim directly referred to the Abdali development as the new downtown after he had read the development’s name on the Abdali advertisement I had shown him, commenting that “the public in the city soon would get used to having this new downtown.” Fatima thought this development could become the city’s new downtown since “the old downtown [was] no longer fit for twenty-first-century Amman.” Interestingly enough, she mentioned earlier during the interview that her understanding of the Abdali development was based on its advertisements. Fatima’s opinion regarding the Abdali development being the new downtown and Basim’s automatic adoption of the advertised name of this development were telling examples of how the developers’ advertising discourse on the Abdali development established this development as a part of the reality in the city.

Other city residents were not as happy with the Abdali advertisements referring to this development as the new downtown, but they tried to justify the name of the development. Ghada found that the name was directed at tourists and expatriates because “city residents knew that the Abdali development was not the real downtown of Amman.” Similarly, Nura thought it was not wrong to refer to this development as the new downtown. But this new downtown, according to her, “would be completely different from the old downtown: the new downtown would be an
upscale development serving different segments of the society.” Leena first tried to justify referring to the Abdali development as the new downtown, saying that “it would serve the functions that the old downtown no longer served, such as providing main offices for big businesses.” She then added, “the Abdali developers should not have named this development the downtown; they could have called it a new business center.” Leena was aware that although the Abdali development would serve some functions of the downtown, it would not be the same as the old downtown. This can be concluded for example from her comment that “there would be no street vendors in the Abdali development.”

Some in the city were unhappy with and critical of the advertisements referring to the Abdali development as the new downtown. For example, Daher (2007, p. 276) found that the names of this development indicated a “symbolic replacement of the existing historic downtown.” Similarly, Andrew and Riyad were critical of corporations redefining the city spaces in order to market the city and serve their own interest. For them, the rich in the city might have decided to consider the Abdali development the downtown, but this development was by no means the downtown for the poor. Such criticisms of the names of this development show that these individuals, and other city residents, exercised their power to resist the developers’ preferred reading of the advertisements that the Abdali development was the new downtown. The name “Abdali, The Central Business District of Amman,” which the developers came up with for their project in 2010, can be understood, at least in part, in relation to this criticism and resistance to the developers’ designation of the Abdali development as the new downtown of Amman.¹ But referring to this development as the new downtown was never completely

¹ Abdali advertisements that appeared in 2010 referred to the Abdali development as the central business district, and Abdali newsletters referred to this development as such for the first time in 2010. Earlier Abdali advertisements and newsletters referred to this development as the new downtown. See “The Downtown Comes Soaring to Life.
abolished, for the developers and state needed to establish this development as the downtown of Amman, the downtown that would “transform the capital into one of the most advanced hubs in the world” (AID, n.d.c) and put the city on the right track to globality.

The Abdali developers succeeded, at least in part, to create the image of this development in the minds of the city residents as globally competitive. Almost everyone interviewed over the course of this research made a similar comment as they read the advertisement “The Downtown Comes Soaring to Life”: they said that the Abdali development looked like large-scale developments in Dubai and American cities. That the Abdali development was comparable to spectacular modern developments in a wealthy city such as Dubai, which by the early twenty-first century had become a global hub for business and tourism, and American cities, many of which had become the epitome of modernity and globality, was an important message the Abdali developers wanted their advertisements to convey. Some in the city viewed the similarity between the Abdali development and developments in Dubai and American cities favorably, assuming that it would bring Amman and its residents the riches and modernity of these cities (personal communications, January 19, 2009, October 7 & 19, 2010). Razan even thought that with spectacular developments such as the Abdali New Downtown, Amman could compete with Dubai as a destination for tourists and businesspersons. For her, the Abdali development would be a landmark suitable for twenty-first-century Amman, a comment she seemed to have borrowed from the advertisements. Fatima had a similar view; “less spectacular buildings,” she said, “will not reflect the spirit of the time.” Basim was so excited about the Abdali development; he could not believe that Amman would have a development as stunning as this. Nura thought

Witness Its Rise” [advertisement], by Abdali Investment and Development (AID), 2008, procured from AID; Abdali newsletters 7, 8, & 9, 2009; Abdali newsletter, 10, 2010; “Experiences You Desire” [advertisement], by AID, 2010, procured from AID; “Lifestyle You Aspire To” [advertisement], by AID, 2010, procured from AID.
that the Abdali development as presented in the advertisements was “beautiful” with buildings that were “neat, clean, and uncluttered with water tanks, solar water heating panels, and satellite dishes, which clutter[ed] the roofs of Amman’s buildings.” She said, “it is about time the city cleared rooftops and created orderly buildings like those in modern cities.” For Nura, the Abdali development with its high-rise buildings was “modern and indicative of the city’s progress.” Ironically, Nura herself was not comfortable living or working in a high-rise building since she was worried about safety issues in tall buildings in case of a fire or an earthquake.

Like the Abdali advertisements, the Sanaya advertisements created this development in the minds of some city residents as a modern development and a masterpiece of architecture, which would enhance the image of Amman as a modern city (personal communications, October 7 & 12, 2010; also see “This insane skyscraper,” 2009). Similarly, for many city residents the advertisements of Jordan Gate created the conception that this development was modern and fit for twenty-first-century Amman (personal communications, October 2, 4, & 12, 2010). Not only did Sadiq conclude from the advertisement “Jordan’s Highest Landmark” that Jordan Gate’s buildings were the tallest in the country but also he formed the idea that they were the first tall buildings in the city, which was untrue.

Not everyone interpreted the advertisements exactly as the developers would have liked. Some city residents formed an image of the advertised developments that only partly matched the image projected by the advertisements; others formed an image that contradicted the image in the advertisements. For example, Jamal thought the Abdali development was a modern center and a landmark of Amman. However, he thought this development was not without problems since it would cause traffic congestion in the neighborhood and the surrounding areas. Furthermore, he thought the buildings in the advertisements lacked harmony. That the Abdali
New Downtown lacked a unified image definitely was not a message the Abdali developers wanted their advertisements to communicate, especially that the developers were very keen to control the image of this development through strict regulation of buildings’ shapes and finishes, among other things. Jamal also thought the Abdali development was visually disconnected from its surroundings. Similarly, Ghada, who found the Abdali development beautiful, said it did not blend into its surroundings.

Other individuals in the city had similar views regarding the relation between the Abdali development and its context, which they primarily formed through the advertisement “The Downtown Comes Soaring to Life.” For example, Dana said this development as it appeared in the advertisement “looks like an island.” Sarah at first was excited about the Abdali development and spoke of the wide open spaces and green areas she thought this development had, but changed her mind about the Abdali project when she read the advertisement “The Downtown Comes Soaring to Life” and said, “it is out of place and crowded with buildings.” Similarly, Amani changed her views regarding the Abdali development as she read this advertisement, commenting that this development was crammed with high-rise buildings and had little open space and narrow streets. Jawdat said, “large-scale developments such as Abdali do not belong in Amman.” Fatima said, “when it comes to buildings’ height, neither the Abdali development nor the city in general is [globally or regionally] competitive.” Similarly, Basim said, “as tall as the high-rise buildings at the Abdali development look in the advertisements, they are not that tall in comparison to tall buildings in Dubai and other modern cities.” Andrew said, “there is a major disconnect between the Abdali development and its context; it does not integrate well.” He commented on Abdali as it appeared in the advertisement, “looking like Dubai, but never will be
Dubai.” For him, Abdali and other contemporary megaprojects in the city would “destroy Amman’s once unique image.”

As in the case of the Abdali advertisement, some city residents had interpretations of the Jordan Gate advertisement different from the developers’ preferred interpretation. Ahmed said that the advertisement, which referred to Jordan Gate as the tallest in the country, was misleading since the Abdali development would have buildings taller than Jordan Gate’s buildings. Ahmed had a point; it was likely that a few buildings in the Abdali New Downtown eventually would surpass Jordan Gate in height. Had the Sanaya development been realized, it also would have been taller than Jordan Gate. In a world where competing for the tallest building was common, the developers of Jordan Gate would have anticipated that by the time this development would have been completed it might not have been the highest in the country as the advertisement of this development stated. However, the developers used the advertisement to construct Jordan Gate’s buildings as the tallest in the country and capitalize on this construction regardless of the reality. After all, many in the city and abroad would understand Jordan Gate through advertisement.

Some in the city did not interpret the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement as the developers would have liked. For example, commenting on the phrase “Jordan’s New Icon” that appeared in this advertisement, Ashraf said that Sanaya was not an icon of Jordan. According to him, Petra, Qubbat al-Sakhra (the Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem, West Bank, and the Raghadan Palace in Amman were true icons of Jordan, but not the Sanaya development.² Ashraf, as well as some

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² A note on this individual’s inclusion of the Dome of the Rock as an icon of Jordan is due here. This seventh-century Islamic monument became an icon of Jordan after the annexation of the West Bank to Jordan in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Jordan continued to be a patron of the Dome of the Rock and other Islamic monuments at al-Haram al-Sharif (The Holy Sanctuary) in Jerusalem even after the severing of ties between the West Bank and Jordan in 1988. In the early twenty-first century, the Dome of the Rock continued to serve as an icon of Jordan and was featured on banknotes of the Jordanian currency.
other city residents, believed Jordan’s icons should be historically significant, associated with Islam, or related to the state and monarchs or combining more than one of these features. But that was no longer the case by the early twenty-first century.³ For example, official promotional material for Jordan featured state mosques next to the Abdoun Bridge and the Le Royal development.

Other city residents reading the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement did not agree that Sanaya was a masterpiece of architecture that would have enhanced the image of the neighborhood or Amman (personal communications, October 17 & 18; “This insane skyscraper,” 2009). They took issue with the way the painter in this advertisement looked, saying that the blonde in modern clothes looked like a Westerner (ibid; Figure 7.5). Although there are women in Jordan who look like the painter in the advertisement, these are not representative of the great majority of Jordanian women. Therefore, some thought the advertisement’s image was intended to convey the message that since a Westerner admired Sanaya and made it her painting’s topic, this development should have been a world-class development worthy of admiration by everyone (personal communications, October 17 & 18, 2010; “This insane skyscraper,” 2009). More likely, the developers wanted to communicate the message that women in Amman had a lifestyle similar to that of women in modern and global cities, thus conveying the modernity of the city residents and the city.

Some city residents interviewed for my research commented on the developers’ misrepresentation of the context of the advertised developments. For example, several individuals pointed out that the flat landscape portrayed in the image of the “Sanaya Amman”

³ Even during the last two decades of the twentieth century, some buildings that did not have any historic significance and were not associated with the state or Islam became icons of Jordan, appearing on Amman’s and Jordan’s postcards and in promotional material. Here, the Housing Bank Center building discussed in Chapter 4 was a good example from the late twentieth century.
advertisement was not Amman’s since the city had a hilly topography (personal communications, September 2, October 17 & 18, 2010). Ammanis took pride in the topographic nature of their city; they saw it as an integral part of Amman’s character, which made the city and its landscape unique. Taking this away even through the misrepresentation of the city in advertisement was something many in the city could not tolerate. Many city residents also mentioned that the scale of the Sanaya development was exaggerated in the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement (personal communications, September 2, October 17 & 18, 2010); some referred to Sanaya’s depiction in this advertisement as a “giant” and, even, a “monster” (personal communication, September 2, 2010; “This insane skyscraper,” 2009). Some city residents found the dwarfing of the city’s landscape in this advertisement along with the exaggerated size of Sanaya offensive to the city and its residents, and they thought that the developers should have been held responsible for this advertisement (personal communications, October 17 & 18, 2010; “This insane skyscraper,” 2009). Others blogged that this advertisement’s image communicated to developers the message that they could be as disrespectful of the skyline of Amman as the Sanaya developers were (“This insane skyscraper,” 2009). In response, the mayor of Amman assured these bloggers that there was no way Sanaya would look as it was depicted in the advertisement since this development was located in a wadi that had one of the lowest elevations in the city (“Mayor Omar Maani comments,” 2009). According to the mayor, the designation of this wadi for high-rise buildings followed careful studies that paid close attention to the city’s urban fabric and skyline. The mayor also mentioned that he would convey to the Sanaya developers his dissatisfaction with the image of this advertisement (ibid). However, other city officials said that Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) had no control over the way the developers advertised Sanaya (B. Haddaden, personal communication, July 21, 2010; R. Odeh,
personal communication, July 15, 2010). The private developers were the powerful agent in the production of this advertisement. City officials could not stop this advertisement; the global economic crisis, which put the Sanaya development on hold, would.

Some in the city thought that the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement should have been dismissed as irrelevant since the city residents knew the advertisement’s image distorted the city’s landscape and embellished the size of Sanaya and it was obvious that this development in reality would look different than it did in this image (personal communication, July 21, 2010). But this advertisement, like other advertisements of Sanaya and large-scale developments in the city, was not only directed toward the city residents but also targeted residents of neighboring countries and beyond. Many of these receivers would form an image of Sanaya and the city through this advertisement. Furthermore, to say that everyone in the city understood that the advertisement’s image was a misrepresentation would be inaccurate. Some of those who identified misrepresentation in advertisement dismissed it all together as in the case of the Jordan Gate advertisement. For example, Mansour said, “the wide green area that appears in the foreground of the image of the advertisement [“Jordan’s Highest Landmark”] does not represent the real context of Jordan Gate.” He was right. There was no large open space in front of Jordan Gate and the buildings in the neighborhood of this development were much closer to Jordan Gate than the advertisement depicted. Mansour, thus, concluded that the advertisement was not realistic; rather, it was imaginary. Similarly, Ahmed said, “Jordan Gate will look differently in reality, since it is located on a site smaller than that in the advertisement.” Ahmed added, “the developers want through this misrepresentation of Jordan Gate’s context to convince the public that this development is the best in the country, but they failed to convince me.” Adil said, “I did not expect everything in the advertisement to be true, since it is just advertising.” He understood
that the developers depicted Jordan Gate the way they did to attract people’s attention to this development. The comments of these individuals, and similar comments on the “Sanaya Amman” advertisement, show that some city residents were not passive receivers of the advertisement’s message that the developers sought to communicate. Rather, they exercised their power to resist the developers’ preferred reading of the advertisement. Although Mansour and Ahmed’s comments implied that these individuals expected advertising discourse to reflect reality, the comments show that some city residents were aware that the developers used advertisement to shape people’s conception of the advertised developments in a way that would serve the developers’ interest.

Advertising discourse on Amman’s contemporary megaprojects was designed to create the image of these projects as outstanding modern developments and convey the message that Amman was a competitive regional and global city; a city with distinguished work, living, and entertainment spaces, which made it the perfect place for regional and international businesses as well as tourists. This discourse presented the megaprojects as a materialization of a vision for the city that the public shared with the developers. It hid these projects’ negative impacts, including social polarization and straining of the city’s infrastructure, presenting them as developments that served the city and its residents, whereas in actuality they primarily served the interest of corporations. Furthermore, advertisement of Amman’s megaprojects hid the real power relations involved in the production of these developments, where the private developers had the greatest agency followed by the agency of state and city officials, and the public had the least agency.

Some city residents exercised power in the interpretation of advertisement, although to different degrees. Some were aware of the advertisements’ constructive role and resisted the
developers’ preferred reading of these advertisements, thus resisting the power of corporations. Others tended to understand advertisement as expressive of reality and, thus, they dismissed the advertisements that they thought were unreal. Some were only partly able to resist the power of the advertisements’ producers. Other city residents, however, were overwhelmed by the developers’ advertising discourse and did not exercise any power to resist it. Rather, they unconsciously adopted the ideas and meanings that the developers intended the advertisements to communicate; their perception of the advertised developments was completely shaped by the developers’ advertising discourse.

Not only did advertising on Amman’s megaprojects influence the way people perceived the advertised developments and the city in general, but also it influenced the way prospective developers and property owners conceived their future developments. In addition, advertisements of megaprojects disseminated images and ideas that contributed to the way architects in the city designed their projects. The new large-scale development consisting of a group of glazed mid-rise buildings in the Sixth Circle area, near Jordan Gate, and high-rise buildings in the Abdali area were but two examples on the effect of the circulation of images of, and ideas on, the city’s megaprojects through advertisement. Advertising discourse that accompanied Amman’s megaprojects defined certain norms regarding what good architecture should look like. Along with the megaprojects themselves, this discourse established new architectural and urban vocabularies and forms, and it helped reshape the city’s built environment. The developers were aware of the role their megaprojects and advertisement played in shaping future developments in the city. Thus, the Abdali developers proudly pointed out in their advertisements that the Abdali New Downtown introduced to the city a “new language of architecture” (AID, n.d.c). This was a language fit for modern developments and twenty-first-century Amman; a language that
produced and would produce the city’s built environment as images. Thus, as advertising discourse disseminated this language of architecture, it not only created the image of the advertised developments and the city image, but also helped establish these images as integral to life in the city and the way city residents understood themselves.

**Amman Residents’ Identity and Advertising Discourse**

Amman’s contemporary megaprojects communicated the modernity of the city residents, and the nation, specifically conveying the message that Jordanians were technologically advanced, modern consumers, and, to a lesser degree, environmentally conscious. The modern Jordanian was integral to the construction of global Amman since it connected Jordanians to the modern world and its capitalist economy and served capitalists’ interests. Advertising discourse on Amman’s megaprojects contributed to the conception that the city was global and the city residents were modern. How did this discourse convey, and influence, the identity of the city residents?

The Abdali developers stated that their advertising campaign of the Abdali development would “instill a sense of Jordanian pride and belonging” to the Abdali New Downtown (“Abdali launches,” 2010). In other words, the Abdali advertisements were meant, among other things, to make the city residents proud of their Jordanianness for having had the Abdali New Downtown, which these advertisements described as modern and speaking development (AID, 2008b, 2009b). Thus, the Abdali advertisements aimed at unifying under one modern identity the city residents and the nation who had multiple elements of identification. The modern image that the advertisements created for the Abdali, Jordan Gate, and Sanaya developments not only helped construct the megaprojects and city as modern but also served as a medium through which the
city residents would understand who they were and how they should live. The advertisements communicated the message that Jordanians were capable of producing the kind of innovative developments modern nations produced, conveying the modernity and technological advancement of the nation. Thus, some city residents reading the advertisements commented that the megaprojects expressed the modernity of the city residents (personal communications, January 1 & 19, October 7, 2010). The Sanaya advertisements also suggested that the city residents were modern and environmentally conscious through their emphasis on Sanaya’s environment-friendly designs and technologies and its certification by the U.S. energy-efficiency rating system LEED.

The modern image of the megaprojects, which the advertisements created, enhanced the appeal of these upscale commodified spaces, induced city residents into consumption, and helped fashion Ammanis into consumers. The images and texts of the Abdali advertisements presented the components of this development as spectacular buildings and landscapes, high-end office spaces, luxury apartments and hotels, and, more important, upscale entertainment and shopping spaces that the city residents, as well as others, needed to consume in order to achieve the high social status, joyfulness, and other qualities these spaces signified. Thus, the Abdali advertisements not only would “bring people closer to the Abdali project” and allow them to “live the opportunities” and “experiences” of this development, as the developers’ comments on these advertisements suggested (“Abdali launches,” 2010), but also these advertisements induced city residents into consumption and helped shape them into modern consumers. These city residents would consume commodities and spaces, which became commodities, similarly to the residents of modern cities. And like residents of modern cities, they would seek to build their image through consumption of such commodities, which were after all images signifying
favorable qualities. Thus, the Abdali advertisements, which presented Abdali as the perfect place for an ideal quality of life, spoke of the “individual’s self-image” as having been “based on the quality of his or her daily life” (AID, n.d.c). According to these advertisements, those who would work, live, shop, or entertain at the Abdali New Downtown would be “actively participating in a thriving lifestyle shared by thousands of visitors and residents” (ibid).

Advertisement of Amman’s megaprojects emphasized these developments’ shopping facilities, which were significant for the production of the megaprojects as commodified spaces. A telling example of the advertisements’ inducement of city residents into consumption was the advertisement of shopping spaces in the Abdali development unsurprisingly titled “Experiences You Desire,” a title that represented these spaces as something for which people longed (AID, 2010a; Figure 7.7). The advertisement’s image, which, as in other advertisements of the Abdali development and large-scale developments in the city, dominated the advertisement, showed a woman with a big smile on her face gazing at a store window in which were reflected images of other good-looking happy female shoppers. No men appeared in this image. Instead, men appeared in the images of the advertisements on the Abdali development’s office spaces (see Figure 7.8). The Abdali advertisements associated men with work and business and women with shopping and recreation activities, thus reinforcing the idea that men were economic providers and women were dependent on men. All six women in the image of the “Experiences You Desire” advertisement are dressed in fashionable modern clothes; one of the women in the background of the image wears a head cover. This did not represent the real situation in the city where a great number of women cover their heads, and some wear jilbabs (loose-fitting dresses that cover the whole body except the head, hands, and feet). Instead, the advertisement’s image projected a modern image of the Jordanian woman dressed similar to that of the modern woman
Figure 7.7. Advertisement of shopping spaces in the Abdali development.

Note. Procured from Abdali Investment and Development (AID) in August 2010. Copyright by AID. Reprinted with permission.
Figure 7.8. “Furas A’mal Taliq Bik” [Business Opportunities that Suit You]: An advertisement of office spaces in the Abdali development.

Note. Procured from Abdali Investment and Development (AID) in August 2010. Copyright by AID. Reprinted with permission.
in the West to enhance the modern image of the Abdali New Downtown and the city. Furthermore, this image communicated the message that the Abdali development was a place that would bring to those who would shop its stores and wander its spaces happiness, joyfulness, and all the good qualities associated with modernity. Likewise, the advertisement’s text depicted the Abdali development as the perfect place for shopping and entertainment, referring to it as “the best that Amman [had] to offer.” The advertisement spoke of the Abdali development’s “dynamic and stylish venues,” “vibrant shopping environment,” and brand-name stores, including those at the Abdali Mall and Abdali Boulevard – the two major shopping facilities in this development.

Similarly, the advertisements of Jordan Gate promoted this development as “the newest up market [sic] district for shopping” (Bayan Holding et al., 2007) where “the world’s favorite brands [would] vie for [the visitors’] attention,” providing “prestigious, new retail experience” (Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). The advertisements spoke of Jordan Gate’s stylish gourmet restaurants and their international cuisine, which would make “eating out at Jordan Gate … a gastronomic journey” (Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). The Sanaya advertisements also spoke of this development’s “spacious retail floors,” which were “luxurious” and “exclusive” (Limitless, n.d.a). Sanaya’s retail area, according to the advertisements, included “internationally renowned stylish boutiques” (Limitless, n.d.b) and “high end stores” (Limitless, n.d.a), which featured “the latest designers” (Limitless, 2009d). The advertisements noted that the Sanaya plaza and side street cafés would “invite” those living in Sanaya and the city residents to this development’s shopping and dining spaces (Limitless, n.d.b). The advertisements also spoke of Sanaya offering its visitors a “multitude of culinary experiences to choose from”: “high-end restaurants,” “romantic cafés,” and “fast food chains” (Limitless, n.d.a). Such experiences would have come
with a high price tag; even fast-food meals from chain restaurants such as McDonald’s and KFC were a luxury for many city residents.

The advertisements further lured the readers to become consumers of the city’s megaprojects. Thus, Jordan Gate was the “most favored destination for elite shoppers” (Bayan Holding et al., 2007); Sanaya would provide the visitors with “a lifestyle experience” (Limitless, n.d.b); the Abdali development had “something for everyone” looking for “lively entertainment, fine dining, family events … and more” (AID, 2010a). The advertisements presented new standards of living that many in the city could not afford as the standards city residents should adopt to achieve the happiness and satisfaction modern societies enjoyed. The advertisements did not express the needs of the city residents and their identity as consumers as much as they created these needs and helped fashion the city residents into consumers of the megaprojects’ upscale commodified space to serve the interests of the developers, other capitalists engaged in these developments, and the capitalist system in general.

It is not surprising, then, that many city residents interviewed about the megaprojects’ advertisements said they were excited about shopping and dining spaces at these developments. These were not only from the upper-class segment of the society but also included middle-class individuals who said they would enjoy visiting shopping and entertainment spaces at these developments where they could have a cup of coffee, window-shop the stores, or purchase upscale commodities sold there. Ghada, for example, felt the need to visit Abdali and shop its designer stores after she had read the advertisements of the Abdali development. Similarly, Shakir was excited about the Abdali shopping spaces featured in the advertisements. He said that, like many other city residents, he would shop the Abdali stores for designer clothes during the sale season. Working-class individuals were intimidated by the advertisements’ emphasis on
the exclusiveness of the advertised spaces (personal communications, September 30, October 4, 2010). However, some of these did not exclude themselves completely from participating in the upscale megaprojects as can be concluded from Sherif’s comment that he would be “just looking” at the Jordan Gate development and the commodities sold there.

Another way the advertisements of megaprojects induced city residents into consumption and helped fashion them into consumers was through the advertisement of residential spaces in these developments. Here, the Abdali advertisement titled “Lifestyle You Aspire To” was a good example (AID, 2010c; Figure 7.9). As the title suggested, this advertisement manipulated the desires and tastes of the reader. It presented the upscale lifestyle of consumption to which the Abdali development catered as the “new and vibrant way of life,” which city residents, as well as others, should seek to achieve high status, happiness, and other good states and attributes. The image of the advertisement showed a smiling woman dressed in modern clothes standing in a luxurious living room next to a floor-to-ceiling corner window talking on her cell phone. Reflections of this woman and a young girl enjoying leisure activities appeared on the glass panes. According to the advertisement text, the living spaces in the Abdali development made within one’s reach “everything … [one] could ever imagine in a home.” The advertisement did not mention that these spaces came with a price tag that made them beyond the reach of most people in the city. This advertisement associated the Abdali residential spaces with luxury, health, and comfort. Thus, it spoke of these spaces having “important amenities.” It spoke of the landscaped and pedestrian areas around the residential buildings supporting an “active, healthy lifestyle.” The advertisement also emphasized the close proximity of these residential spaces to shopping and entertainment spaces in the Abdali development.
Figure 7.9. Advertisement of residential spaces in the Abdali development.

*Note.* Procured from Abdali Investment and Development (AID) in August 2010. Copyright by AID. Reprinted with permission.
Like the Abdali advertisements, the Sanaya advertisements lured the city residents to consume upscale residential spaces in the new megaprojects. Sanaya, according to the advertisements, would define a “new era of residential developments” (Limitless, n.d.a) and set “new standards in luxury living” (Limitless, n.d.b). Had this development been realized, these statements would have been true in the context of Amman, and Jordan in general, but not in the regional or global context. The Sanaya development, as well as the Abdali New Downtown, was conceived as a spectacular upscale consumerist space, which was an approach developers of megaprojects adopted worldwide. Producing the urban built environment as a fetishized commodity for consumption, particularly under contemporary globalization processes, followed the logic of capital where capitalists continuously pursue profit. Although Sanaya did not materialize, its advertisements played a role in establishing an upscale lifestyle in which the image and commodity consumption were most significant as the new normal lifestyle of the city residents. This new lifestyle was promoted as the lifestyle appropriate for the twenty-first-century modern societies; the lifestyle that would bring all the best to the city and its residents. Thus, when the Sanaya advertisements asked the city residents to “be part of Jordan’s new icon of the 21st century” (Limitless, 2009c, 2009d; also see Limitless, 2009b), they called on them to become consumers of Sanaya’s spaces and commodities.

The advertisements spoke of the Sanaya development providing “exclusive living at the most exclusive address in Amman” (Limitless, n.d.a). The Sanaya advertisements did not describe this development’s real location; rather, they created it as exquisite. The advertisements depicted this development as a place for distinctive living through the texts that spoke of Sanaya’s “luxury,” “elegant” “lush” apartments (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b, 2009a). The advertisements mentioned that these apartments had “palatial proportions” (Limitless, n.d.a,
which was not true as the review of floor plans of the Sanaya apartments showed that even the largest of these apartments was small when compared to the spaciousness of a palace. Again, the advertisements did not express the reality of the Sanaya apartments; rather, they created the conception that the apartments were splendid and spacious through this text, as well as other advertisements’ texts and images. The advertisements also spoke of the Sanaya apartments’ world-class designs (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b) and “superbly designed finishings and appliances,” which followed “the latest trends in interior design” (Limitless, 2009a; also see Limitless, n.d.a).

The Sanaya and Abdali advertisements also spoke of the residential apartments at these developments providing security for the residents (AID, 2010c; Limitless, n.d.a). Although Amman was relatively safe, the advertisements posed security as a problem in order to answer the imagined need in the residential apartments. Thus, the Abdali advertisements mentioned this development’s life safety system (AID, n.d.c) that allowed residents to remotely “monitor motion in the house against intruders” (AID, 2008c). Similarly, the Sanaya advertisements highlighted this development’s “smart building management system” and “in-house dedicated team of door guards, security guards, and supervisors” (Limitless, n.d.a). Such security measures, according to the Sanaya advertisements, would provide Sanaya residents and visitors with “24-hour peace of mind” (ibid).

The advertisements emphasized the smart technologies incorporated into the megaprojects to further encourage the city residents to become consumers of these developments. Thus, the Sanaya advertisements noted this development’s cutting-edge, state-of-the-art smart technologies, which were utilized for maximum satisfaction and convenience of Sanaya residents as well as visitors (Limitless, 2009a; also see Limitless, 2009d). The
advertisements spoke of this development’s “smart home automation system,” which, through the use of web-based software that met modern-day needs, would enable Sanaya residents to remotely monitor and control power consumption at their apartments (Limitless, n.d.a).

Similarly, the Abdali advertisements spoke of this development’s smart systems “simplify[ing] every aspect of daily life” and introducing “a new way of living” (AID, 2008c). These practical systems, according to the advertisements, would allow the Abdali residents to “indulge in every comfort, entertainment, and security that technology … allowed” (ibid). The advertisements portrayed pictures of the comfort and entertainment the Abdali technologies promised. Thus, they spoke of the Abdali housewives remotely monitoring the appliances at home as they strolled in the open spaces of the Abdali development and the Abdali residents turning on the AC before they got back home or turning off the lights after they had left home. They spoke of residents playing outside not worrying about missing their favorite TV show as it would be available on demand at home “when they [got] tired from playing” (AID, 2008c).

Advertisement of the leisure amenities and sport facilities at the new megaprojects in the city induced city residents into consumption and played a role in fashioning them into consumers. The Jordan Gate advertisements spoke of this development’s leading-edge gymnasium and its facilities and equipment needed for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and sound mind and body (Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). The advertisements presented Jordan Gate’s leisure spaces as the places for the socially distinguished and the “most desired leisure destination for hard workers to unwind” (Bayan Holding et al., 2007). The Jordan Gate advertisements lured city residents to become consumers of this development’s leisure spaces by associating them with eliteness and accomplishment. Exercising at Jordan Gate’s world-class gymnasium and
relaxing at its luxurious leisure facilities allegedly would assume for the city residents a high social status along with all the good qualities befitting it.

The Sanaya advertisements noted this development’s incorporation of “the world’s highest suspended swimming pool” (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b, 2009d). The advertisements’ images and texts portrayed the joyful refreshing experience Sanaya residents would have as they kicked off their day with a dip in this pool and enjoyed the “majestic views” of the city’s landscape and its clear sky, which the glazed pool offered (Limitless, n.d.a). This experience, according to the advertisements, was but one demonstration of the “distinctive living” at the Sanaya development “where dreams [became] reality” (ibid). The spa facilities at Sanaya were another feature of this development that the advertisements highlighted as conducive of comfort and enjoyment. Thus, the advertisements spoke of Sanaya’s steam rooms, saunas, and Jacuzzis, which would provide Sanaya residents with “an escape from city life” (Limitless, n.d.a). By presenting these facilities as signifiers of well-being and much needed resting, refreshment, and rejuvenation (ibid), the advertisements helped establish a lifestyle of upscale consumption as the lifestyle that the city residents should have. Ironically, the city life from which these facilities were an escape was integral to the experience of Sanaya residents since Sanaya was located in a central area of the city, a location that the advertisements applauded as exclusive. In other words, the Sanaya advertisements depicted the city as the best place for living to increase this development’s symbolic capital. At the same time, these advertisements suggested the city life was stressful and unsafe to establish the Sanaya development with its leisure amenities and security measures as the ideal place for living in the city.

Advertisement of contemporary megaprojects encouraged the city residents to become consumers of these developments’ upscale commodified space by representing the city’s
landscape and skyline as a key attraction. Thus, the Sanaya advertisements emphasized the view of landscape from this development’s apartments, which they described as “stunning,” “breathtaking,” and “unparalleled” (Limitless, n.d.a, 2009a, 2009d). They spoke of the distinctive height of the Sanaya buildings and the apartments’ floor-to-ceiling windows, balconies, and terraces all of which made it possible for the Sanaya residents to capture the “scenic” “panoramic” views of the city (Limitless, n.d.a, n.d.b, 2009a, 2009d). Similarly, the advertisements of Jordan Gate highlighted the height of the Jordan Gate hotel and office buildings and their glazed façades as well as the location of this development on a site that had one of the highest elevations in the city, which offered thrilling expansive views of the city’s landscape (Bayan Holding et al., 2007; Jordan Gate Company, n.d.). The Abdali advertisements even put more emphasis on the view from buildings. The image of the advertisement “Lifestyle You Aspire To” showed large glass panes revealing a good part of the city’s built environment (Figure 7.9). The advertisement spoke of the Abdali high-rise residential apartments “overlooking a stunning skyline” of the city, which would enable the Abdali residents to “see Amman with a new perspective.” The Abdali advertisements also stressed the view that could be seen from this development’s tall office buildings (Figure 7.8). Similarly, the advertisement “Experiences You Desire” spoke of the “breathtaking roof tops” at the Abdali development (Figure 7.7). On these rooftops, the Abdali visitors would engage in the consumption of leisure commodities, gazing at the city’s architecture and landscape. The views that the advertisements of Amman’s contemporary megaprojects depicted did not necessarily reflect how the view from the buildings would look in reality since, more often than not, competition for the tallest building and the best view from the building would result in buildings blocking the view they had sought.
Instead, these views were imagined to help increase the symbolic capital of the advertised developments.

Advertising discourse that accompanied Amman’s contemporary megaprojects represented the city residents and the nation as modern. It communicated the message that Ammanis had built environments similar to those of wealthy modern societies and lived under similar conditions. The advertisements created the conception that the city residents were capable of producing technologically advanced developments, thus conveying the globality, modernity, and technological progress of Ammanis, and Jordanians. The advertisements also portrayed the city residents as modern consumers who had patterns of consumptions and lifestyle similar to their counterparts in modern cities. They constructed the megaprojects as spectacular commodities signifying good attributes that people allegedly could possess through consumption, inducing city residents into consumption and partly fashioning them into consumers for whom modernity was to be achieved through spending. The city residents have been transforming into a consumer society since the late twentieth century. However, the significance of the new megaprojects’ advertisement was that it promoted consumption of upscale commodities, which the majority in the city could not afford, and helped create living and work spaces in the city as a significant part of these commodities.

The advertisements’ representation of the city residents as modern advanced the construction of Amman as a global city. In the imagined global Amman, the built environment was modern like that in global cities and the city residents were modern like residents of these cities, providing the perfect place for international and regional businesspersons and tourists to work, live, visit, shop, and entertain. Projecting a global city image for Amman was a means to
attract investors’ capital and tourists’ money, which primarily served the corporate interest. Similarly, inducing city residents into consumption, and shaping them into consumers, served the interest of corporations investing in the advertised developments and capitalists’ interest in general. After all, urban developments were integral to capitalist modes of production, and their consumption, like the consumption of other commodities, would generate profit for capitalists. Advertising discourse on Amman’s contemporary megaprojects was produced through power relations in which corporations were the main agent. In fact, the formation of the whole body of real-estate advertising discourse in the city, and the country, in the early twenty-first century was possible within the exercise of power by corporations investing in the city’s built environment. This discourse, in turn, produced power relations in which capitalists continued to have the greatest power.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This research has sought to understand the influences of capital flows to Amman on the city’s urban built environment in the early twenty-first century. Amman underwent significant urban transformation in this period of time primarily as a result of petrodollar investment in the city’s built environment. This influenced the ways the city residents interacted with the built environment and how identity was negotiated and Ammanis understood themselves through this environment. With Amman as its focus, and having investigated the urban built environment against the background of capital flows and with relation to architecture, discourse, and identity, this study provides a valuable interdisciplinary contribution to the scholarly body of knowledge on globalizing cities, especially in the Middle East.

The study consisted of an in-depth analysis of three cases of early-twenty-first-century megaprojects in Amman: the Abdali New Downtown, Sanaya Amman, and Jordan Gate. The research methods included the review of relevant literary work to set the theoretical context for this study and establish the study’s theoretical framework. The research reviewed the historical textual and visual resources on Amman and laid the historical context for the study. In addition, the research methods comprised the review of contemporary resources on early-twenty-first-century Amman and the study cases, multiple site visits conducted between 2008 and 2011, and face-to-face interviews conducted between 2009 and 2010 with stakeholders: those involved in, influenced by, or have a concern or interest in the city’s megaprojects, including decision makers, professionals, and city residents.
Limitations of the Study

This study has four limitations, shortcomings that I could not control or are the outcome of restrictions I set for this research. The first limitation is that the sample of the public I interviewed is small. This was the result of time and budget constraints on fieldwork research. The small sample makes generalization about the public views and its understanding of the urban transformation in Amman’s built environment difficult. Still, the diversification of the sample and the use of relevant blog posts by some city residents and published interviews with others provide stakeholder insight into the issues.¹

The second limitation is that I could not interview all professional individuals I wanted to interview. Most important among these is the mayor of Amman,² whom I contacted several times regarding the interview but who did not respond to my requests. I could not interview the CEO of Mawared, the state-owned real-estate developer involved in two megaprojects in Amman. Mawared was undergoing a restructuring process and a new CEO was appointed during the period I conducted the interviews. Moreover, corruption charges against Mawared were being investigated at this time, which may account for the minimal cooperation from Mawared during the study. Although I could not interview the mayor of Amman or the CEO of Mawared, I was able to partially understand their views and positions on urban transformation in the city through the interviews I conducted with other individuals who worked with them, online posts by these officials, and published interviews with them.

The third limitation of this study is that some city officials I interviewed were not open or transparent in responding to the interview questions. For example, one Greater Amman

¹ Some scholars argue that in qualitative case study research researchers often seek optimization of understanding. This is because the contextuality and subjectivity, which are important components of qualitative research, limit generalization. For example, see Stake (2008).
² The mayor of Amman is an appointed official. A new mayor of Amman was appointed in early 2011.
Municipality (GAM) official preferred not to answer my interview questions and instead presented what seemed to be an official narrative of GAM’s achievements over the past decade or so, much of which was only remotely relevant to the purpose of the interview. And when asked about a large-scale development initiative by GAM that was put on hold at a very early stage due to the 2008 economic downturn, some city officials gave responses that contradicted the information gained from other professionals.

The fourth limitation is that I could not gain access to all local written resources that I knew might have been useful. A few resources were not publicly accessible or they had to be purchased for a large sum of money. However, the inaccessibility of these resources was made up for through the review of the extensive and diverse local material I obtained and the interviews with professionals and decision makers.

**Key Findings of the Study and Their Theoretical Implications**

In the 2000s, particularly between 2003 and 2007, oil-rich Gulf states had capital surpluses as a result of the substantial petrodollar inflows, which they could not absorb within their geographical boundaries. Thus, they moved excess capital to other countries where it was invested in many urban developments. The integration of Jordan’s economy into the global economy and the economic reform in the country in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, along with Jordan’s political stability, its proximity to Gulf states, and its pleasant weather, attracted capital from the Gulf and encouraged foreign investment in Amman in megaprojects, many of which were unprecedented in the city. Having been integrated into the global economy, the country’s economy was hit by the 2008 global economic crisis and urban developments in the city were affected. By the end of the 2000s, some investors had suspended
their developments, prospective property buyers put buying decisions on hold in hopes that real estate prices would fall (Oxford Business Group, 2009), many buyers of under-construction property broke contracts after having made advance payments, and construction activity in the city had slowed. The fieldwork I conducted showed that construction activity picked up in 2011, but as of this writing, it has not matched the level before the economic crisis.

The theorization of Harvey (1989b, 1990, 1994) that urban transformation can be understood in relation to capitalism and capitalists’ search for a spatial solution to the problem of overaccumulation inherent in capitalism is relevant here. Although Harvey’s argument was made in response to advanced capitalism in the West, it proved applicable in the context of this study with respect to the advanced capitalism in the Gulf and the patient capitalism in Jordan, described in Chapter 4. As in Canary Wharf and other projects, capitalists move excess capital - petrodollars in this case - that cannot be absorbed in profitable production processes to investment in the urban built environment. But the increasing investment in the production of urban developments, as Harvey (1989b) argues, eventually leads to overinvestment and market saturation, leading back to the problem of capital overaccumulation. It follows, then, that the spatial fix is only a temporary fix for capitalists’ problems, and it foreshadows economic collapse. Canary Wharf failed in the early 1990s because it was an example of overinvestment in urban development. Similarly, the failure of some of Amman’s megaprojects in the late 2000s and early 2010s and the construction slump that faced other megaprojects in the city can be attributed to overinvestment in urban development in the region. Investment in the urban built environment in the Gulf where capital surplus problem arose was nearing its peak when capital began to be diverted to investment in Amman’s built environment. Whereas Canary Wharf had

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3 This is according to individuals involved in the design, construction, or investment of some large-scale developments in Amman.
recovered from the economic downturn of the 1980s and was considered economically successful by the early twenty-first century, it remains unknown whether Amman’s megaprojects will be viewed similarly after the economic crisis of the 2000s has passed.

The study found that the production of Amman’s contemporary megaprojects caused the destruction of buildings and landscapes in the city deemed less lucrative than the new developments. Harvey (1989b, 1990) argues that urban transformation under capitalism, particularly under contemporary globalization processes, follows the process of creative destruction inherent in the capitalist system of production. It is in light of this process that Harvey understands the destruction of factories and docklands in the West in the last quarter of the twentieth century and their replacement with office buildings, shopping malls, and entertainment facilities such as those of the Baltimore and Canary Wharf developments. In Amman, the process of creative destruction occurred with alteration, thus expanding on Harvey’s understanding of this process. Urban fabric that had evolved over many decades in response to various economic, political, and socio-cultural forces from inside and outside the city was replaced with instant large-scale developments that responded to regional and global economic forces. Among the built environments the process of creative destruction targeted in Amman were military facilities and other public-owned buildings, privately-owned residential, educational, and commercial buildings, and a public park. Unlike the abandoned deteriorating factories and docklands in the West, most of the buildings and landscapes in Amman were in use just before they were demolished. But by the turn of the millennium, the price of land they occupied had increased significantly and developers from outside the country, particularly from Gulf states, were looking for investment in urban developments in Amman. State and city officials were instrumental in replacing existing buildings and landscapes in the city, along with
the socio-economic and cultural activities they supported, with upscale mixed-use megaprojects driven by profit-making, not the needs of the city residents. Lacking democratic processes in the country and city facilitated the process of creative destruction. The public’s opinions about the replacement of existing buildings and landscapes with the new megaprojects were not sought and its objection to this transformation was not heard. Another characteristic differentiates creative destruction in Amman from this process in the West. Although in both contexts creative destruction was designed to attract capital, corporations, and tourists, in Amman it was also a means to develop the economy in ways that paralleled other modernization processes underway in the country in the early twenty-first century. The process of creative destruction fulfilled the aspiration for modernity as it involved the replacement of modest buildings and landscapes with spectacular ones similar to those in global cities, thus redefining the city as global and the city residents as modern.

The city’s urban built environment shaped over decades was considered incommensurate with the newly defined global Amman. As shown in Chapter 4, by the early twenty-first century Amman’s built environment included unharmonious buildings of different styles, architectural vocabularies, shapes, height, materials, and colors. The International-style buildings of the 1950s-1970s, which once were considered modern buildings, no longer reflected the spirit of the time. Nor were the city’s unpretentious, low- and mid-rise stone-clad buildings, or even the luxurious buildings of the 1970s and 1980s, fit for twenty-first-century Amman. Housing projects of the 1970s and public and private educational and health buildings of the 1990s were not the kind of projects that would showcase the globality of the city. To the contrary, the 1990s’ upscale commercial high-rise buildings, spectacular buildings finished in glass, aluminum, and other innovative materials, shopping malls, and global fast-food and coffee shop franchises were
the kind of developments that developers and decision-makers wanted for twenty-first-century Amman. However, these were to be reproduced at a larger and wider scale and in more spectacular ways than their 1990s’ counterparts. Spectacular megaprojects similar to those in global cities, large-scale developments that became markers of modernity and globality, were believed to be a means to construct this Amman. As shown in Chapter 5, these megaprojects would include a downtown speaking progress and modernity such as the Abdali New Downtown, iconic developments by Western starchitects such as Sanaya Amman, and glazed, record-breaking tall landmark buildings such as Jordan Gate.

Encouraged by foreign investment opportunities in Amman and lured by petrodollar flows from the Gulf, state and city officials exercised their power to reimage the city as a global city. As shown in Chapter 4, late-nineteenth-century and twentieth- century Amman was a globalizing city continuously shaped by global and regional economic, political, and socio-cultural forces. In the early twenty-first century, however, state and city officials sought to construct the city as a global city, a city that was competitive in terms of its global economic integration, international producer-services, and spaces supporting international corporations and financial transactions. As shown in Chapter 2, these were main indicators of the degree of a city’s globality under the limited understanding of globalization as primarily economic processes. Up to the early 2000s, Amman was not a global city as defined by such indicators. However, Jordan’s economic reform and integration combined with the city’s new global image, which was being produced partly through the transformation of the city’s built environment, led to the inclusion of Amman in 2008 on a list of global cities by the Global and World Cities group (GaWC). Because the city ranked low on this list, enhancing Amman’s global image was a deliberate strategy to place it higher on the list.
Thus GAM devised the Amman Plan between 2006-2008, which encouraged real-estate investment in the city in an effort to make it a destination for foreign investors and tourists. The new regulation for high-rise buildings in this plan allowed the development of a megaproject such as Sanaya Amman in the city’s wadis. It also legitimized high-rise buildings within the Abdali New Downtown, in a central area of the city previously designated for low- and mid-rise developments. Here, the developers included a large number of high-rise buildings, pressuring GAM to change building regulations for the Abdali site accordingly. The partnership between the state-owned Mawared and the private developers Horizon and United Real Estate in the Abdali New Downtown was a strong factor in influencing GAM’s regulations and helping the Abdali developers reshape the city’s built environment. The development of public-private partnership (PPP) in the early twenty-first century as a new approach to business in Amman, as well as the country, helped attract many investors and facilitated the production of several megaprojects in the city. But as the study found and Daher (2008a) pointed out, PPP in Amman’s megaprojects served the interests of private corporations at the expense of the public. In the case of the Jordan Gate development, the city’s partnership with corporate developers even led to the privatization of public space – the park. Such consequences of PPP are not unique to Amman. Stallmeyer (2011) shows how in the case of Divyasree Chambers, one of the largest ICT developments in Bangalore Central Business District, a previous joint venture between private developers and the city made possible the transformation of a former public site into a privately-owned development. However, unlike the case of Jordan Gate, the private partner in Divyasree Chambers was local.

Other scholars have identified the effect of PPP in urban developments in Western and non-Western contexts on disenfranchising the public (see Ghosh, 2005; Harvey, 1989a; Makdisi,
Drawing upon the case of urban developments in Baltimore, Harvey (1989a) argues that the partnership between the private sector and local public sector is an essential component of “urban entrepreneurialism,” which is concerned more with producing large-scale developments that can enhance the image of the city and attract investment capital, particularly foreign capital, than smaller projects that cater to the needs of local communities. According to Harvey, PPP in the United States subsidizes corporations, taking resources away from the less privileged population and increasing social inequality in the city. Furthermore, more often than not the private sector reaps the benefit from PPP while the public sector suffers the perils that may result from the speculative nature of the developments produced under this partnership. Urban entrepreneurialism applies to Amman, though with modification. The PPP model used in Amman was different from Harvey’s model since it operated not only at the level of the city but also at the level of the state as evident in the Abdali development where the military was a part of this partnership, giving this development legitimacy. With the state as a partner, national resources were diverted to subsidize corporations, and thus failure of any speculative development carried out under this PPP to recoup its costs or generate profit will have an impact at the national level. Here the case of Beirut Central District (BCD) during the first decade of this development’s construction is instructive. The Lebanese government, which was a partner with the private sector in the BCD, had to borrow substantial amounts so that it could provide the infrastructure for this development. This left Lebanon with substantial foreign debt, which ultimately would be paid for by the public, particularly the poor since Lebanon had a regressive tax system (Kubursi, 1999; also see Larkin, 2010). Makdisi (1997, p. 672) argued that PPP in the BCD was a “decisive colonization” of the public interests by the private interests. As in Amman, and Beirut, urban development in Dubai is entrepreneurial (see Kanna, 2011). But in
Dubai, PPP is not as important a component of urban development as in Amman, Beirut, or Baltimore. Instead, the ruler of the emirate owns many major corporations developing the city’s megaprojects (Kanna, 2011; Elsheshtawy, 2010). Corporations owned by Dubai’s influential merchants, who are often linked to the government, are also active in urban development in the city. That the ruler of Dubai owns much of Dubai’s land further facilitates the production of large-scale developments in the city, which, like their counterparts in Amman, are devised to create a global city image and attract investors and tourists.

Unlike Dubai, in Amman private corporations, particularly Gulf corporations who partnered with the state or city, were a more powerful agent than the state and city in reshaping the city’s landscape and constructing global Amman. The state and city needed the capital of these corporations to transform the image of the city. As shown in Chapter 4, lack of financial resources in the city, and the country in general, hindered full implementation of the ambitious urban plans proposed for Amman in the second half of the twentieth century. These plans envisaged the downtown with large-scale developments, including high-rise office and hotel buildings and commercial centers, to encourage investment and tourism in the city. The early-twenty-first-century Abdali New Downtown was reminiscent of the developments proposed for the downtown in the previous plans. As Abu-Dayyeh (2004) pointed out, parts of the previous plans for the city would eventually materialize, although not necessarily in the originally proposed location. The architects and planners hired by private corporations were another agent, although a less powerful one, in shaping the city’s megaprojects and, consequently, the city image.

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4 For example, Abu-Dayyeh (2004) traced back the early-twenty-first-century Abdoun Bridge to the elevated roads bridging the city wadis proposed in the mid-twentieth-century plans for Amman.
The city residents had the least degree of agency. They were not allowed to participate in decision-making regarding the function or form of these developments. In a few cases, some city residents tried to resist the power of the developers, state, or city to transform the built environment, but ultimately the developers, state, and city predominated in producing the city’s megaprojects. As Harvey (1989b, 1990) argues, the macro-power of capital, capitalists, and the capitalist state is predominant in the production of urban developments. The macro-power of these actors was even more dominant in Amman than in the Western context on which Harvey based his argument. In Amman, as well as many other Arab cities, lack of public participation in urban development can be attributed, at least in part, to the authoritarian power of the state (see Barthel, 2010). The limited exercise of power by individuals and groups of individuals only partly connects with Foucault’s (1984/2003b) understanding of power as exercised in different social activities and at different levels, including the micro level of the individual. In Amman, the micro-power of the city resident was more at play in the construction of the city image and identity than it was in the production of these megaprojects. The public exercised more power in making sense of and understanding themselves through these megaprojects and the city than they did in decision-making regarding the actual production of megaprojects. Still, the public did not always challenge the macro-power of corporations, the state, and the city; when it did, it did not always prevail.

The study found that image-building was significant in the conception of megaprojects in Amman. As Harvey (1990, 2001a) argues creating a quality image of the urban built environment through the production of conspicuous buildings and urban spaces is most important in the production of urban developments under contemporary globalization processes. Thus, as shown in chapters 5 and 7, the developers of Amman’s megaprojects produced and
constructed these projects as spectacular developments that appealed as much as imagined images as real entities. This was evident, for example, in the Abdali New Downtown’s designs in which theatrical buildings and urban spaces were organized based on view corridors and conspicuous tall buildings served as landmarks, building regulations in which buildings’ shape, details, and materials were strictly controlled, and discourses in which the image was elevated. For the city’s megaprojects, the developers created a modern image that would produce a new image for Amman: an image deemed fit for the new millennium, a global city image. As Olds (1995) argues, the producers of megaprojects seek, among other things, a global city image. In fact, scholars have credited contemporary megaprojects in Dubai – the city with which Amman and other cities in the region try to compete – for creating Dubai’s global image (see Kanna, 2011; Elsheshtawy, 2004, 2010).

Like other global cities, Amman was to be constructed as the perfect place for work, living, and entertainment. It was to be created as the place that primarily catered to international, regional, and national businesspersons, tourists, and well-to-do individuals. Thus the city’s megaprojects included high-end office, residential, shopping, and entertainment spaces, which served functions similar to those of megaprojects in globally competitive cities and portrayed Amman as a competitive global city to attract corporations, investors, and visitors. Corporations investing in these megaprojects and the state and city, who served as co-developers, legislators, or facilitators of these developments, believed it was more profitable to market, sell, and consume the city’s megaprojects and urban built environment in a global Amman. For state and city officials, the making of global Amman was a means to stimulate the city’s, as well as the country’s, economy and increase its integration into the global economy; for the private developers, it was a means to grow their capital.
That Amman’s megaprojects constructed global Amman is in part consistent with the argument by King (1996) that the city is imaged and imagined through the built environment. In line with King’s argument, the study finding indicates that buildings and urban spaces shape the city and create images in the minds of their viewers and users, which became for them representative of the city as a whole with its complex social, economic, political, and cultural structure. This study finding, however, is inconsistent with King’s argument that since the city residents are unlikely to visit or know the whole city, the city exists in their minds only and, thus, it is imagined. Concluding that Amman’s megaprojects produced the city image and global Amman is not to say that the city does not exist. Rather, it means that these megaprojects shaped the city’s built environment and the way people perceived this environment, and created a mental construction of the city, which does not necessarily correspond with the city’s reality. In other words, the ideas people form about the city through the built environment, among other things, can be imagined. Still, the physical components of the city, including buildings, urban spaces, and natural landscapes, do exist regardless of how people imagine them or whether or not they will ever visit or know them. This finding connects with Donald’s understanding (1999) that the city is both a thing and a state of mind.

Amman’s new megaprojects introduced different urban patterns and architectural vocabulary, interrupting the city’s landscape and skyline. Since the mid-twentieth century, Amman’s built environment had been undergoing increasing transformation. This transformation was influenced by regional and international circulation of images and ideas, the encouragement of transnational investment capital, and hosting refugees and displaced people from neighboring war-affected countries. In the early twenty-first century, however, the city’s attraction of petrodollars and their investment in the built environment played greater role in further
intensifying the transformation of this environment. This also increased the dissemination of ideas and images, particularly from the Gulf, and made possible the production of large-scale developments influenced by these ideas and images, significantly reshaping the city’s landscape.

Some in the city, including practicing architects, suggested that architects designing for the city in the early twenty-first century imported packaged architectural forms that belonged to different geographical context and forced them into Amman’s built environment (R. Badran, personal communication, September 1, 2010; Malkawi & Kaddoura, 2007). This was only partly true. Not all architects and private planners working on the city’s megaprojects simply copied designs of developments in other cities. After all, some of these architects and planners were established professionals of national and international reputation, and large-scale developments in Amman provided them with an opportunity to showcase their creativity, leave their mark on the city, and boost their portfolio. However, these architects and planners were responding to the developers’ design programs and conceptions, which were similar to those of megaprojects in the region and worldwide. In addition, state and city officials sought to realize through these large-scale developments their vision for Amman, a vision where the city was modern and global. This vision was shaped, at least partially, by Dubai’s spectacular megaprojects, which enhanced Dubai’s status as a modern and global city. It is not surprising, then, that state and city officials were more concerned with producing spectacular, record-breaking, technologically-advanced globally recognizable developments than producing developments that connected to the city’s architectural tradition.

The designers of the city’s megaprojects tried at the same time to distinguish these projects from and maintain resemblance to other global large-scale developments catering to international and regional businesspersons and tourists, among others. Some designers made
reference to the city’s architectural tradition, but often in a distant and indirect way. The most common strategy was the use of stone on buildings’ façades, although not necessarily as the major finishing material or in colors, textures, or patterns similar to those used on buildings that were a part of the city’s architectural tradition. For example, the stone mesh on the façades of Sanaya Amman did not connect this development with its significantly tall buildings and glass and steel bridges and swimming pool with the city’s landscape, and the stone-clad base of Jordan Gate was inadequate to relate this development with its fully-glazed high-rise buildings to Amman’s architectural tradition. Although some developments, particularly small-scale developments in the Abdali New Downtown, could be considered hybrid, many large-scale developments in early-twenty-first-century Amman were unlikely to qualify as hybrid. The scale of these developments, their programs, and, more important, their conception as modern developments similar to those in global cities suggested their divergence from the city’s architectural tradition. But it would be simplistic to say that they looked exactly the same as megaprojects in other cities. More often than not, these developments connected more with the generic megaproject, particularly in Gulf cities, than they did with the particular architecture of the city. Two points need to be emphasized here. First, unlike the product, the processes that produced the megaprojects in Amman were particular. Compare, for example, PPPs in Amman to PPPs in Baltimore and to public-sector megaprojects in Dubai, the foreign investors in Amman to the local investors in Dubai, and the creative destruction in Amman to that in Canary Wharf and Baltimore. Second, the developers of Amman’s megaprojects were selective when borrowing from the architecture of the Gulf. Whereas many megaprojects in the Gulf have universal forms, other large-scale developments invoke local or regional architectural tradition or borrow architectural vocabularies from beyond the region.
The study’s findings support the argument by Beynon and Dunkerley (2000) that globalization may simultaneously lead to the homogeneity and hybridity of cultural production. The findings are also consistent with the widely accepted scholarly understanding identified by Beynon and Dunkerley that rejects the strong version of the homogeneity of cultural production under globalization. More important, the study’s findings indicate that the strong version of the heterogeneity and hybridity of cultural production under globalization does not always apply to the urban built environment, which is an important part of cultural production. After all, the shape and function of Amman’s megaprojects were more universal than particular, which is consistent with Harvey’s argument (1990) that the opening up of cities to capital accumulation often results in a limited sense of differentiation amidst wide similarities in the shape and pattern of built environments in different geographical locations. Harvey (2001a) argues that under contemporary globalization capitalists seek a balance between the need to produce urban spaces that are similar to those in other localities so that they will be easily tradable and, at the same time, different enough from urban spaces in other localities so that they will have economic advantage over them. Since urban spaces that are completely different from those in other cities will be untradeable or “outside globalization,” to use Harvey’s words (2001a, p. 408), there is a tendency to produce built environments with similar spatial patterns and characteristics in different cities. The producers of Amman’s megaprojects were keen to produce global developments and construct a global city image for Amman, and thus the megaprojects had wide similarities in their shape and function with megaprojects in other global cities, particularly in the Gulf. The influence of the Gulf on shaping Amman’s megaprojects demonstrates that the source of cultural flows under contemporary globalization processes is not limited to the West. However, the influence of the West should not be overlooked since Western architects and
planners had helped shape the built environment in Gulf cities, and Western architects, engineers, and other professionals, as well as others who were educated in the West or in institutions modeled after Western universities, played an important role in shaping Amman’s megaprojects.

The study found that, like the megaprojects themselves, advertising discourse on the city’s megaprojects created the image of these megaprojects as outstanding modern developments and constructed a modern city image for Amman. As shown in Chapter 7, advertisements featured images of monumental developments, spectacular buildings, and high-rise buildings with glittering surfaces. They spoke of the city’s megaprojects as modern like those in other modern cities and emphasized the record-breaking height of buildings, state-of-the-art technologies, unmatched designs, internationally-renowned designers, and innovative environment-friendly designs and technologies. Furthermore, advertisements emphasized the city’s modernity and economic growth and spoke of the megaprojects as a product and a means of the city’s and country’s modernization.

Advertising discourse constructed Amman as a competitive regional and global city. It did so partly through conveying a modern city image and partly through promoting Amman as a city that had distinguished work, living, and entertainment spaces and was the perfect place for regional and international businesses and the destination for businesspersons and tourists as well as city residents. Advertisements spoke of Abdali’s and Jordan Gates’ high-end smart office buildings, Abdali’s and Sanaya’s luxury apartments, and these developments’ upscale shopping spaces and world-class leisure amenities. They spoke of these developments’ global competitiveness. These advertisements portrayed the Abdali development as a competitive regional and global business center, and, at the same time, established this development as the
city’s downtown. Furthermore, the advertisements highlighted the city’s and country’s global integration, spoke of the city’s megaprojects as commensurate with twenty-first-century Amman, and emphasized the role of these developments in transforming the city into a most advanced regional and global hub.

The role that advertising discourse played in creating a global city image for Amman is consistent with the theorization of Foucault (1969/1972) that discourse produces the objects of which it speaks and shapes reality. It is also in line with Harvey’s understanding (2001a) that under the global capitalist economy, discourse, including advertisement, is significant for defining products and the built environment. This finding also relates to King’s argument (1996) that discourse on buildings is significant, even more significant than buildings themselves, for creating the “myth” about buildings. However, the present study found that discourse produced a construct, not necessarily a myth, about the built environment and the city. Whereas the word “myth” implies that discourse produces what is false, delusional, or unreal, the word “construct” indicates that discourse produces conceptions and ideas, which may or may not be mythical. Thus the construct that Amman’s megaprojects are modern developments serving global functions, which the advertisements produced, is not false; these developments are by world standards modern and global. But the construct that the city is a competitive global city is unreal.

Not only did Amman’s megaprojects and the advertising discourse surrounding them construct global Amman, but they were designed to create and communicate a modern identity of the city residents and Jordanians. The constructedness of the Jordanian identity is in line with Anderson’s argument (2006) that the nation is imagined and Massad’s argument (2001) that the Jordanian identity had been shaped and reshaped over the past decades in response to the country’s changing circumstances. As shown in Chapter 4, state institutions defined Jordan’s
official national identity with reference to four elements: tribes, Islam, Arabs, and modernization. Popularly, Jordanians identified with these elements as well as others, such as different ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes. However, Amman’s megaprojects did not connect equally with these elements of identification. As shown in Chapter 6, these developments primarily connected with modernization, an official discourse that predominated in the country in the early twenty-first century. Many Ammanis, and Jordanians, had identified themselves as modern by the time the country’s modernization project was launched and they had adapted modernity and made it an integral part of their Jordanian identity. However, Amman’s megaprojects did not express a particular Jordanian modernity.

Here the argument of Lu (2011) about modernity and the urban built environment in developing countries is relevant. In mid-twentieth-century developing countries, according to Lu, modernity was adapted and made into a new modernism: “Third World modernism.” This was not an incomplete or imperfect modernity yet to be developed into the Western modernity; rather it was one of the multiple ways of being modern. Lu argued that Third World modernism produced its own architecture, an architecture in which the Western modernity was domesticated. This was not the case in Amman. Only a few scholars argued that Amman’s architecture in the 1950s and 1960s reflected a particular Jordanian modernity (see Daher, 2008b), and even these were arguably nostalgic about the built environment they experienced growing up (Chapter 4). In the context of Arab cities and their modernity at the turn of the twenty-first century, Asfour (2009) argued that the built environment that reflected modernity satisfied the public’s aspiration for the Western modernity and expressed people’s identification with this modernity, whereas the built environment that made immediate reference to tradition disconnected from Arab

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5 Lu speaks of “the” Western modernity. One can argue that there are many Western modernities, and thus it would have been more accurate to refer to these modernities or to “a” Western modernity.
societies who aspired to modernity, not tradition. Asfour failed to recognize the complexity and multidimensionality of identity in the Arab world, which included, as shown in Chapter 4, modernity and tradition, among other things. In addition, he emphasized the expressiveness of identity in the built environment over the constructedness of identity through this environment and, thus, he failed to recognize the agency of the producers of urban developments in shaping identity. If the urban built environment in the Arab world was to express the identity of the city residents, it should have related to the multiple elements of identification of these residents. Similarly, if megaprojects in Amman were to connect with the public in the city, these developments should have reflected the city residents’ multidimensional identities. They should have represented and solidified a Jordanian modernity, rather than imposing a modernity on the city and its residents that was not theirs.

The modern and global image that Amman’s megaprojects and the advertisements on them created conveyed the message that Jordanians were technologically advanced like their counterparts in modern Western cities and prominent non-Western cities. Building designs, materials, and technologies associated with progress and modernity, such as tall buildings, glass-and metal-clad buildings, and glass and steel skybridges, did not express the advancement of Jordanians. Rather, they were employed with the help of foreign expertise to communicate the message that Jordanians were at the forefront of technology and innovation. Similarly, environment-friendly designs and technologies that used Western green building criteria and expertise projected a modern Jordanian identity. These designs and technologies reflected a particular kind of environmental consciousness and demonstrated that the developers of Amman’s megaprojects were keen to keep up with Western standards. Power-generating wind turbines, stone mesh utilized for water heating, and water-recycling systems were energy- and
water-saving measures that conformed to Western LEED standards, required Western expertise, and suggested that Jordanians were modern environmentally conscious, as well as technologically advanced.

Amman’s contemporary megaprojects were produced as commodified spaces and they helped shape Ammanis into consumers. While it is true that a number of developments produced in Amman during the last quarter of the twentieth century were places for consumption, including the shopping malls of the 1990s and the 1970s Housing Bank Center with its iconic building, terraces overlooking the city’s landscape, and dining and shopping spaces, in the early twenty-first century the intensity and extensity by which the consumerist space was produced in the city were unprecedented. Furthermore, the commodified space of early-twenty-first-century Amman was upscale targeting the city residents, most of whom were of modest means, as well as corporations and individuals from outside the city. In Amman’s contemporary megaprojects, the image of high-end buildings, luxurious spaces, and upscale commodities displayed and sold there became the center of attention and an important part of people’s everyday life. Shopping, living, and work spaces became fetishized commodities, attesting to commodity domination of urban social life and the commodification of the city. As Debord (1967/1994) argues, in modern societies appearances and images become predominant and commodities colonize social life; the society becomes a society of the spectacle. The spectacle, as Debord identifies, is “a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” (p. 12). Harvey (1989b, 1991) argues that capital produces places, built environments, and cities as a spectacle to be consumed by the public. The commodified space of Amman’s contemporary megaprojects can be understood as a part of the spectacle that Debord theorizes and Harvey applies to the urban built environment. However, since the term “spectacle” is overused and scholars from different disciplines
understand it differently, I find the term “commodified space,” as well as the terms “consumption space” and “consumerist space,” more appropriate to describe Amman’s new megaprojects. The spectacular commodified space of Amman is reminiscent of Gulf cities, reflecting the fact that much of the capital invested in the city’s megaprojects came from the Gulf where many urban developments, and cities, had been similarly produced as commodities. Western ideas, images, and consumption patterns shaped and enforced by the logic of capital had influenced the Gulf cities’ urban developments, which in a city such as Dubai even exceeded developments in Western cities in grandeur and luxury.

Produced for show, Amman’s megaprojects hid the processes and social relations that produced them and became signifiers of attributes such as happiness, healthiness, and eliteness, which the city residents, as well as others, would seek through their consumption of these megaprojects. Abdali’s spectacular buildings and landscapes and upscale shopping, entertainment, residential, and office spaces, Sanaya’s iconic buildings, luxurious apartments, high-end leisure amenities, and designer stores, and Jordan Gate’s exclusive shopping, residential, and office spaces were spaces for display and consumption. These spaces even turned the city’s architecture and landscape into a commodity to be consumed by those who live or work in the megaprojects or visit them. The view of Amman’s hilly topography and built environment, as well as life in the city, from these megaprojects became a signifier of eliteness that the developers would sell for those seeking social status through the “possession” of this view, thus commodifying the city’s landscape. The commodified spaces of the megaprojects promoted high-end lifestyle based on the significance of the image and upscale commodity consumption. They established new ways and standards of living that many Jordanians could not
afford as the new normal lifestyle Jordanians should pursue if they were to join developed societies and achieve the happiness and contentment modernity promised.

Like the megaprojects themselves, advertising discourse created these developments and the city’s built environment as an upscale commodity and helped fashion the city residents and Jordanians into consumers. Thus, advertisement images featured spectacular shopping spaces and shop windows, happy shoppers, and joyful diners and advertisement texts spoke of the modern upmarket shopping spaces, gourmet restaurants, and fine cafés, representing these spaces as the perfect place that city residents needed to shop, dine, and entertain in order to become modern and achieve happiness. Advertisements on upscale residential spaces showed spectacular exteriors, luxury interiors, and scenic views from these spaces and spoke of the information and communications technologies and modern automated building management systems in the buildings, associating these spaces with modernity, exclusiveness, health, entertainment, comfort, and security. They manipulated the tastes and desires of the city residents and induced them to become consumers of such spaces to better their lives and join modern societies, when these advertisements lured the public to consumption to yield a profit to the capitalist corporations that produced the advertised spaces and commodities, reinforce the consumerist space, and bolster the capitalist economy and the power of capitalists. It is not surprising, then, that the private developers of these megaprojects had a strong desire to produce the city’s megaprojects as a commodified space. Like these developers, state and city officials had agency in commodifying the city. For them, this was a means to attract transnational capital, corporations, and tourists, grow the economy, and make Amman a global city. The macro-power that produced the city’s megaprojects shaped these developments and the city and influenced the identity of the city residents and Jordanians in ways that mostly reinforced this power. Similarly,
the corporate macro-power that produced advertising discourse on the city’s megaprojects created power relations that enhanced this power. This finding demonstrates Foucault’s theorization (1975/1995, 1976/2003a) of discourse as produced through and productive of power relations. However, the dominant macro-power in the production of advertising discourse on Amman’s megaprojects demonstrates Harvey’s understanding (1989b, 1990, 2001a) of how power relations play out in advertising discourse.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Four important topics relating to the present study are worthy of investigation in the near future. The first is the social impact of Amman’s early-twenty-first-century megaprojects. The present study has shown that these developments affected local communities and social equality in the city. However, the study has not covered this topic extensively. It is, therefore, recommended that an in-depth study be carried out on social aspects relating to the city’s megaprojects. The future study may investigate, for example, gentrification in the neighborhoods of these projects. It also may tackle the privatization of the public space in the city and the interruption of social activities, particularly for the less privileged segment of the society, as these relate to the production of the city’s megaprojects.

The second significant topic for future research, which partly relates to the above subject, is the processes through which ownership of property on the sites of the megaprojects was transferred to the developers of these projects. The present study has briefly addressed these processes and the power relations as well as social implications they involved. An extensive investigation of the topic will further our understanding of the regulative, legislative, and social dimensions underlying the production of contemporary megaprojects in the city. The future
study may address, among other things, voluntary and involuntary selling of privately-owned properties, property expropriation, and the roles of the different parties involved in these processes, including the developers, private owners, city officials, and legislators.

The third important subject recommended for future research is the influence of the continuous flow of people to Amman, particularly as a result of conflicts and wars in the region, on the city’s early-twenty-first-century built environment. The present study has focused on the influence of capital flows on the city’s built environment in the early twenty-first century. However, this study has shown that globalization’s other flows, including people, images, and ideas, influenced urban transformation in the city during this period of time. The large numbers of people who moved to the city following the 1990-1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraqi War transformed the city’s built environment significantly. Not only did war refugees increase demand for residential and office spaces and health, educational, and commercial services but also they brought money, images, ideas, lifestyles, and traditions, which were important factors in transforming the city’s landscape. In 2012 and 2013, substantial numbers of Syrians fled to Amman and, like the previous waves of refugees, this is likely to have a strong influence on shaping the city’s built environment and the ways people interact with this environment. Thus, a comprehensive study of the influence of the increasing movement of people to the city on the built environment is significant for advancing our understanding of urban transformation in the city in the early twenty-first century.

The fourth topic worthy of investigation in the future is the influence of globalization’s flows to Amman on small-scale developments produced in the city in the early twenty-first century. The present study has investigated urban transformation in Amman through the lens of the city’s early-twenty-first-century megaprojects, which constituted a significant part of the
city’s built environment. Small-scale developments were another important part of Amman’s built environment and their study will further our understanding of how the city’s landscape transformed under contemporary globalization processes. Furthermore, these developments were likely to express and construct identities primarily through the agency of individuals. This is unlike the city’s megaprojects, which constructed the official Jordanian identity primarily through the agency of corporations, the state, and the city. Thus, the future study will help understand how the city residents negotiated their constantly changing identities in the built environments they produced and how they contested or reinforced the official identity.

**Conclusion**

In the early twenty-first century, Amman attracted substantial investment capital, particularly petrodollars from the Gulf states, which led to the production of several megaprojects in the city. These developments, and the advertising discourse surrounding them, were devised to make Amman a global city and redefine the identity of the city residents and the nation as modern like their counterparts in the developed world and globally competitive cities. Amman’s megaprojects were a part of global capitalism’s mode of producing urban space and they showed commonalities in shape and function with megaprojects in other cities, particularly in the Gulf. However, the intersection of petrodollar inflows with global, regional, national, and local processes, conditions, and agencies, including the circulation of ideas and images, transfer of expertise, Jordan’s modernization project and economic integration, and the agencies of corporations and the state, resulted in differences between the processes that produced Amman’s megaprojects and the processes that produced megaprojects in other cities.
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25 questions for Jafar Tukan [interview; obtained from Jafar Tukan on July 15, 2010]. (n.d.).


Appendix A: List of Research Participants

Adham, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, September 15, 2010.

Adil, a middle-class college graduate in his mid-twenties who worked in the surroundings of Jordan Gate, personal communication, September 29, 2010.

Ahmed, a college graduate in his mid-twenties who worked in a small business in the neighborhood of Jordan Gate, personal communication, September 30, 2010.

Amani, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, February 9, 2010.

Andrew, a highly-educated middle-aged Westerner who lived in Amman for a long time, personal communication, January 17, 2010.

Ashraf, an upper-middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, September 2, 2010.

Atif, a middle-class small business owner in the neighborhood of Jordan Gate who used to live in the neighborhood, personal communication, September 28, 2010.

Basim, a working-class community-college student in his early twenties, personal communication, October 7, 2010.

Dana, a middle-class college graduate in her early thirties, personal communication, February 1, 2010.

Fatima, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, February 3, 2010.

Ghada, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, October 19, 2010.
Hassan, a middle-class college-graduate in his early fifties who lived in Western Amman, personal communication, August 2010.

Husam, a forty-five-year-old, lower-middle-class, community-college-graduate government employee, personal communication, October 12, 2010.

Jamal, an upper-middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, January 31, 2010.

Jawdat, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, January 22, 2010.

Kareem, a middle-class college graduate in his late twenties, personal communication, October 18, 2010.

Kareema, a working-class community-college graduate who worked at the neighborhood of Jordan Gate, personal communication, September 28, 2010.

Khamis, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, September 3, 2010.

Leena, an upper-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, February 7, 2010.

Mansour, an upper class college-graduate businessman in his late fifties living in the neighborhood of Jordan Gate, personal communication, October 3, 2010.

Mohammad, a working-class college-graduate Egyptian in his late twenties, personal communication, October 4, 2010.

Nura, a middle-class college graduate in her early thirties, personal communication, January 19, 2010.

Razan, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communications, January 19, 2010.
Riyad, an upper-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, September 2, 2013.

Sadiq, a working-class middle-aged man, personal communication, October 2, 2010.

Sarah, a middle-class college graduate in her mid-twenties, personal communication, January 16, 2010.

Shakir, a middle-class middle-aged college graduate, personal communication, January 1, 2010.

Sherif, a middle-aged non-Jordanian Arab working in the neighborhood of the Jordan Gate development, personal communication, September 30, 2010.

Ula, an upper-class woman in her late fifties, personal communication, September 17, 2010.
Appendix B: IRB Application

Since my research involves collecting personal views from individuals, it was subject to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This process included completing and submitting the Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects to the University’s IRB Office. The Application included information concerning the research objective, sites where the research would take place, human subjects expected to participate in the research and procedures for recruiting them, and measures for keeping the collected data confidential.\footnote{As a part of the measures I took to protect the interviewees’ privacy during the processes of data collection and data analysis as well as in the narrative of the study, I did not tape the interviews, nor did I require the interviewees to give their names in the interview. I coded the interview responses early in the process and removed any identifying information. I kept the collected data confidential in securely stored files. Furthermore, throughout the discussion I did not refer to interviewees by their real names, nor did I disclose any private information that might lead to invasion of the interviewees’ privacy.} The Application required completing and submitting the questions of the interview with the public. The IRB process also included completing online training requirement on the conduct of research involving human subjects, and attaching the training certificates and completion reports to the Application. The training included the UIUC Human Subjects Training module, the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Training module, which consists of four core modules, and the CITI module for international research. The Application also required the submission of the general oral script used when approaching prospective subjects. In addition, the Application required completing and submitting the Informed Consent document. This is the written document given to research participants to help them decide whether they would like to participate in the research. In some research, the participants are required to sign the Consent if they agree to participate in the research. In the case of my research, however, I asked for and got a waiver of the requirement of
signing the Consent by participants since my research presented no risk of harm to the participants and did not involve the collection of sensitive or highly personal data.

I completed and submitted the Application and the required attachments to the IRB office in the fall 2009 semester. The Application went through a pre-review process. Upon receiving the pre-review comments on the Application, I reviewed the Application and resubmitted it, along with the Arabic translation of the interview questions, Consent, and oral script used in the recruiting process, to the IRB office. Given the nature of my research and the measures for the conduct of interviews, the IRB office decided that my research meets the criteria for exemption from the IRB. I received an official letter of approval from the IRB office on November 30, 2009.