

Cities of Continuous Urban Instability

Amman and the Middle East Trauma

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Introduction

- ▶ Middle East is the cradle of civilizations and conflict and wars as well
- ▶ Unlike other Arab capital cities the urban (social/political/spatial and physical) discourse of Amman was shaped and reshaped by wars/conflicts and immigrations

It is said that :

- ▶ *“Amman was built on the pains of others”*
- ▶ *” Amman is a city of refugees. Its inhabitants do not identify themselves with it even though they live in it”*
Alaa Hamarneh 1997
- ▶ *“Amman is a divided City “* Jane Hacker 1956

Introduction

This drastic and unpredictable instability had caused :

- ▶ *rapture in the habitation patterns of Amman (**Social Spatiality of Amman**)*
- ▶ *Rapid and drastic change and growth of Amman was mostly uncontrolled (**Remote Urban planning policies**)*
- ▶ *Wars/ conflicts brought severe reductions in construction spending and development planning projects (**Economic**)*
- ▶ *it also forced the government to sponsor national projects to construct the image of Amman as an Arab National city while overcoming all the challenges that faced the city. (**politics**)*

Governmental policy

To counterbalance this challenge

- ▶ *Enormous national governmental efforts and international funds were placed to manage and control these transformations*
- ▶ *special urban and architectural legislations were designed for the city*

Research orientations

- ▶ How the Jordanian governmental urban and architectural policies and programs were affected in many ways by this continues sociopolitical instability
- ▶ How the official administrative mechanism was geared up to control and manage their urban policies and plans

Research orientations

- 1- Lessons to learn about how control Urban Development Projects from **'do-it-yourself urbanism'** to **'government-led'** under crisis in light of the on-going socioeconomic and sociopolitical instability
- 2- Lessons to learn about how planners should deal with uncertainty

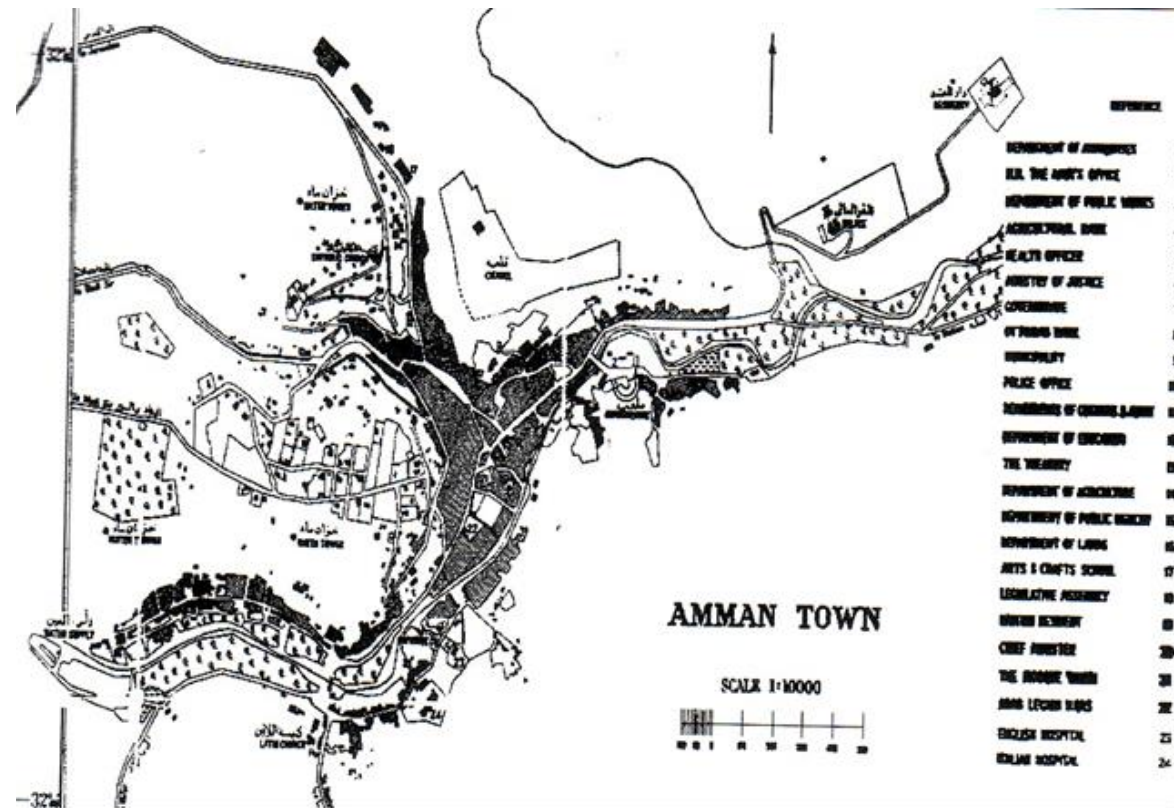
Historical flashlights /points of changes

From dominance to colonization 1921-1946

- ▶ **1916** The Great Arab Revolt (GAR) was a major turning point in the Arab Nationalism movement.
- ▶ **1921** the transformation of Amman into a capital city
- ▶ **1921-1946** the British Mandate

No visible transformation of the city urban fabric

Map of Amman 1931-1932.



(Source: GAM)

Historical flashlights

The aftermath: Discursive transformation of a national capital

- ▶ **1948** Arab-Israeli war
- ▶ The influx of thousands of Palestinian refugees to Amman in 1948 marked a turning point in the city's economic and social tissue
- ▶ Socially “**Amman is a divided City** “ Jane Hacker
- ▶ Wealthy and well-educated Palestinians resided in the West of Amman
- ▶ Poor people resided in the south and east of Amman Two Refugee camps were built: Jabal el-Hussein 1952, Amman New Camp (Wihdat) 1955,

Historical flashlights

1948 resulted in

- ▶ a major construction boom in Amman,
- ▶ accompanied by a soaring rise in rents and land values,
- ▶ and socially Amman became a “divided city,” duality in the image of the city
- ▶ The urban topography encountered with the physical topography

Historical flashlights

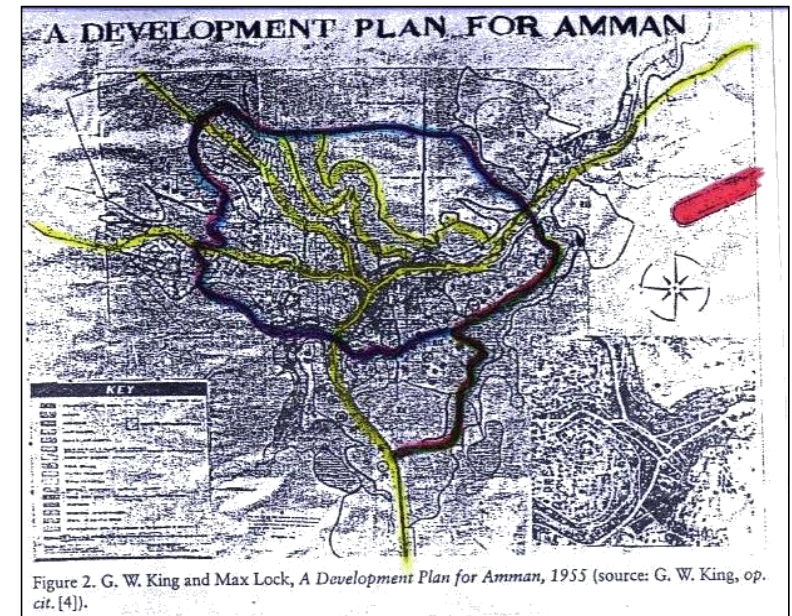
- ▶ **1950** The Municipality became *Ammanah* (Greater Municipality)
- ▶ the political unity of the West and East Banks of Jordan.
- ▶ The same year the Jordanian government decided to **raise the Amman Municipality to the status of Amana, or Major Municipality**

- ▶ The upgrading of Amman to Amana implies a political gesture regarding the positioning of Amman as a political and administrative capital over Jerusalem which would be upgraded to Amana in 1959.

Historical flashlights

1954 -1955 First physical plan for Amman

- ▶ **It was never been totally implemented** due to political obstacles that followed its approval



Historical flashlights

1967 the Arab-Israeli war

- ▶ In 1962 the Jordanian government published a five-year plan (1963-1967) for economic development.
- ▶ It was replaced by a new five- year plan that would carry the planning period forward to 1970 and drafted proposals for a ten-year development plan
- ▶ The Ministry of Interior for Municipal and Rural Affairs was established in 1965
- ▶ The Law of Planning of Cities, Villages, and Buildings No.79 for the year 1966, which is still in effect today, was approved.
- ▶ **The program was suspended after 1967 because of the Arab-Israeli war**

Historical flashlights

1973 *the Arab-Israeli October War*

- ▶ Jordan witnessed an economic boom that resulted from the **rise of oil prices following the end of the October War.**

1976 *Lebanese civil war started*

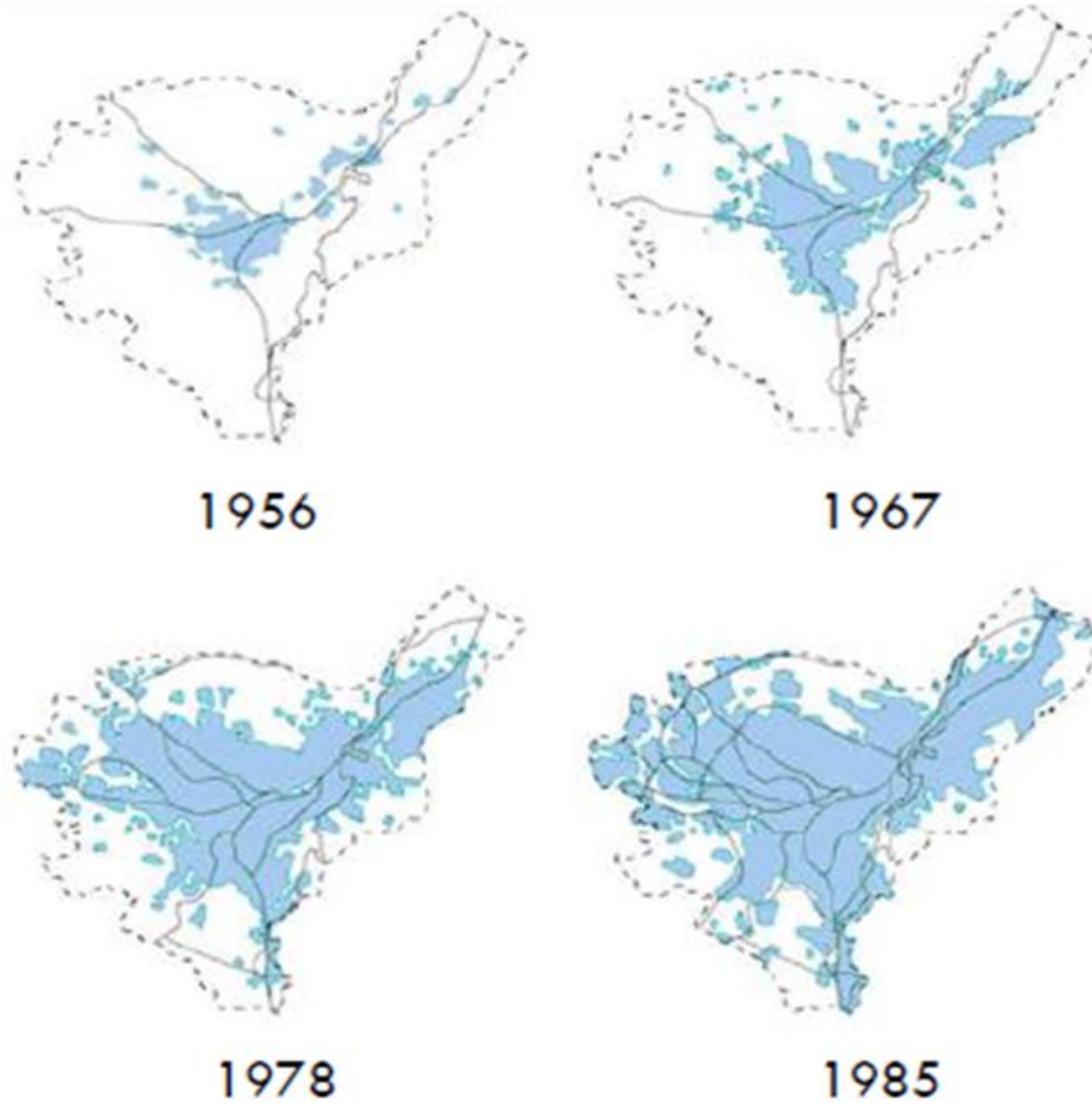
- ▶ *Economic impact not highly visible on the Amman*

Historical flashlights

1973-1984 Amman and the shadow of the oil boom : Expansion and Development

- ▶ As a result **several large-scale projects** were constructed, such as **Queen 'Alia International Airport** (1978) and **Hussein Medical City** (1974), in **the Martyrs Monument** (1977) as well as expanding the infrastructure, such as electricity, water, and the sewage systems of the city of Amman.
- ▶ 1975 the **Amman Region Planning Board** (ARPB) was established
- ▶ New architectural terms began to appear in Amman, such as "**tower**" and "**complex**".
- ▶ Between 1970s and the early 1980s **the area of Amman expanded** and reached 92 square Kilometers
- ▶ The **budget of Amman rose** from JD 5, 480,200 (US \$ 17.5 million) in 1970 to JD 20,725,000 (US \$ 62 million) in 1985
- ▶ two five-year **development plans** (1978-1983), (1983-1988)
- ▶ Amanat Amman became the **Greater Amman Municipality** (*from 7 districts into 16*)

Urban Growth of Amman (1956-1985)



Historical flashlights

1984 *the economic sharp downturn*

- ▶ in 1984 there was a sharp downturn in foreign aid to Jordan

Large scale interventions and urban projects that started before the crisis, often during the oil booming economy faced a reality of debt and/or slowness

Historical flashlights

The 1990-1991 and the 2003 Gulf War and Crises

- ▶ The 1990-1991 Gulf War brought back to Jordan around 300,000 Palestinian and Jordanian “**returnees**,” many of whom had never lived in Jordan, despite their Jordanian citizenship
- ▶ The 1990s and the 2003 Gulf War brought about **great wave of migration** to Amman in the form of some 500,000 Iraqis
- ▶ It has been an **economic benefit**
- ▶ It skyrocketed the **lands and real estates prices**
- ▶ More **housing** demands

Historical flashlights

2011 *The Arab Spring / The Syrian Crises*

- ▶ This last phase of migration has put a great strain on the city's resources, both in terms of housing and infrastructure.
- ▶ Non camp refugees in Amman “**emerged communities**”