

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

MANUFACTURING THE MCCITY:
A CASE STUDY OF THE RAWABI URBAN
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN PALESTINE

by
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thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

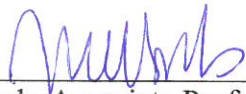
Beirut, Lebanon
April 2017

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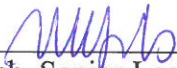
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the various stages of writing the thesis I have become intellectually indebted to many people. I would first like to thank my advisor, Mona Harb, for her patience, support, and constructive feedback throughout the entire writing process, without her help the thesis never would have materialized in the way that it has. I also want to thank her for allowing me to write the thesis in the US, for which I am most grateful. Furthermore, I want to thank Adam Hanieh and Sari Hanafi for agreeing to be on my committee and for giving me valuable feedback during the thesis defense. Their comments will inevitably be incorporated into future revisions. I also want to thank Roland Riachi at AUB, whose Political Ecology of Water course first got me to think critically about Rawabi through an exploration of its water issue and also by introducing me to Lefebvre.

My experience attending panels and talking to people I had met at the 2015 *International Conference of Critical Geography* in Ramallah was extremely beneficial to me and it gave me some much needed perspective on current issues unfolding in Palestine since I had not been in the country for nearly a decade. In particular, I want to thank Lisa Taraki who attended my panel and gave me some very insightful comments, which I hope I was able to effectively incorporate into the thesis. Also, from this conference, I want to thank Ayman Abdel Majeed at Birzeit University's Center for Development Studies for taking the time to discuss with me and to provide me with further insights on economic and agricultural development in the West Bank.

Finally, I would like to thank Noelani for her utmost patience, continuous support, willingness to always lend a fresh set of eyes to my writing, and to be there for me during what could at times be a very isolating writing process. For all of this, I am indebted and grateful.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Sami Tayeb for Master of Arts
Major: Middle Eastern Studies

Title: Manufacturing the McCity: A Case Study of the Rawabi Urban Development Project in Palestine

This thesis is a case study of the Rawabi urban development project that is currently in progress in the West Bank. Rawabi is the first master-planned Palestinian city that first broke ground in early 2010 and is the largest private sector project ever carried out in Palestine. Once the city is complete, it is expected to house more than 40,000 residents and cost more than \$1 billion.

Therefore, this thesis will investigate what recent political, economic, and social changes in Palestine have impacted urban development in the West Bank in ways that have made the emergence of Rawabi possible. Moreover, it seeks to answer what are the social relations that have produced the space that Rawabi occupies and what kind of urban form has materialized as a result. Finally, it hopes to explain what are the main drivers of the new type of urban space that Rawabi embodies, how have they come together to make Rawabi a reality, and what goals do they hope to achieve through the realization of Rawabi.

To address these questions, a framework for analysis on urban development in the West Bank that merges spatial theory with political economy will be used to explain how the coalescence of urban spatial production, neoliberalism, Israeli settler-colonialism, and the reconstitution of political-economic networks at local, regional, and transnational levels have made the realization of Rawabi possible. The thesis argues what has emerged out of these processes is a new urban form, which it calls the *McCity*.

Accordingly, this argument will be unpacked in the following chapters. Chapter two consists of two parts where the theoretical framework presents the concepts of *conceived space*, *abstract space*, and *neoliberalism*, while the literature review explores recent political, economic, and social transformations that have occurred in the West Bank – all within the context of Israeli settler-colonialism. Chapters three and four are a socio-spatial analysis of Rawabi that focuses on the project's urban form and how the project has been conceived and planned. The stakeholder analysis found in chapter five lays out the political-economic network behind Rawabi. The final chapter concludes with a brief discussion on how to strategize a new space of hope in Palestine.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Just beyond an ancient olive tree outside the visitor's center, in a seemingly grand display of Palestinian assertiveness, flies the largest Palestinian flag in the West Bank. At the base of the flagpole is a sculpture of a Palestinian family. While the parents and children are dressed in western-style clothing, the grandparents are depicted wearing traditional clothing. This symbolic bridging of the past with modernity is part of a narrative that has been advanced in recent years as a way forward for Palestinian independence of which Rawabi, the first master-planned Palestinian city, has played an integral role.

Rawabi is the largest private sector project ever carried out in Palestine, which first broke ground in early 2010 with construction still ongoing. It is located 9 km north of Ramallah, 25 km to the north of Jerusalem, and 25 km south of Nablus and its municipal boundary encompasses 6,300,000 m² of land (1,560 acres). While its developer boasts panoramic views of the Mediterranean coastline from Rawabi's hilltops, the project is located predominantly in area A of the West Bank, which is under Palestinian Authority (PA) control. The total investment in Rawabi will ultimately exceed \$1 billion.

While the first phase of Rawabi is expected to contain 5,000 housing units to accommodate the first 25,000 residents, additional housing will be built in subsequent phases that will ultimately serve a city of 40,000 inhabitants. Apart from its twenty-three neighborhoods, the city will also contain private schools, medical facilities, fire and police stations, a municipal building, recreational space, and an outdoor

amphitheater, among other facilities. Its downtown commercial center will consist of retail and office space, cinemas, a hotel, as well as a convention center.

I was first made aware of Rawabi in 2012 when I watched a Dutch documentary about the project. After watching, my first impression was one of astonishment and I was left with many questions of how Rawabi was even possible under Israel's military occupation. The last time I was in Palestine was in 2006 while the second intifada was coming to a close. The political situation in the West Bank during this time hardly allowed for reconstruction let alone the building of a new city. Something had happened from when I first visited Palestine to when I first heard about Rawabi. There were social, political, and economic processes happening on a local, regional, and transnational scale that I seemed to know very little about.

At first glance, the above description of the project seems unimaginable for something of this magnitude to emerge in Palestine given all I had witnessed of the occupation during my 2006 visit. For someone who had not been to Palestine for nearly a decade, I seemed at a loss for an explanation of Rawabi. With my background in political science, I knew well of the geo-politics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and of the curtailment of Palestinian rights (e.g. civil, political, environmental, economic, human, etc.) by the Israeli military occupation. The problematic of Rawabi is that it does not fit well into either a geo-political or any rights-based approach to the conflict, that is the manifestation of Rawabi cannot be attributed solely to the effects of Israeli settler-colonialism or to the actions of external actors such as the US. Therefore, a different interdisciplinary paradigm that also takes into account the complexities of changing Palestinian social and cultural subjectivities, recent Palestinian political and

economic transformations in the West Bank, and the development of the Palestinian capitalist class is needed to explain Rawabi.

A. Research Question and Argument

To begin to understand the emergence of Rawabi, we first have to take into account many significant social, economic, and political transformations that have affected everyday life in Palestine since the signing of the Oslo Accords.

Transformations such as the introduction of neoliberalism, the reconstitution of class relations, and a change in Palestinian cultural subjectivities have all impacted Palestinians' relationship to the state, to the market, relations with each other, and the space in which they live. Moreover, many of these changes have only seemed to intensify in recent years and their final outcomes are difficult to predict since they are still ongoing. For these transformations to be understood they must be viewed comprehensively and any analysis that privileges one discipline over others will inevitably miss the forest for the trees. While the end result of these processes is still uncertain, there is enough evidence available to draw more than conjecture. The emergence of the Rawabi urban development project is one prime example of what these transformations have produced.

Building on Henri Lefebvre's theory of spatial production, I approach urban space as a social relation. Because of the relational and historical nature of space (Lefebvre 1991), the built environment implies a certain temporality in that the dominant political, economic, religious, cultural, and social forces of a society manifest themselves through that society's architecture and urban forms (42, 46-49). Just as these dominant forces are subject to change over time, so does the architecture with it.

Accordingly, I will use urban spatial production as a method to capture the intersectionality of the prevailing political, economic, and social processes unfolding in contemporary Palestinian society. I believe by focusing on something material (i.e. Rawabi) offers a compelling way to analyze transformative processes that are in motion and help us understand the relationship between these processes and the production of urban space.

Therefore, the questions this thesis hopes to answer then is what recent political, economic, and social changes in Palestine have impacted urban development in the West Bank in ways that have made the emergence of Rawabi possible? Moreover, what are the social relations that have produced the space that Rawabi occupies and what kind of urban form has materialized as a result? Finally, what are the main drivers of the new type of urban space that Rawabi embodies, how have they come together to make Rawabi a reality, and what goals do they hope to achieve through the realization of Rawabi?

To answer these questions, I will use a framework for analysis on urban development in the West Bank that privileges a holistic interdisciplinary approach. In doing this, I hope to explain how the coalescence of urban spatial production, neoliberalism, Israeli settler-colonialism, and political-economic networks at local, regional, and transnational levels have impacted urban development in the West Bank. It should be noted that while I am doing a case study of Rawabi – in part because it is the largest private urban development project to date as well as having garnered the most media attention – it is by far not unique compared to other recent projects in the West Bank. I primarily draw the focus on Rawabi because it is the first project at the scale of a city, which is setting a new precedent for future urban development projects

in Palestine. It is only through a comprehensive understanding of how the urban space of Rawabi has been conceived and produced that I can offer a critique of Rawabi.

This thesis will make several main arguments as they relate to answering my research questions. First, I put forward the notion that Rawabi should be viewed as a negotiation where it is a hybrid between a suburban settlement and a privatized semi-public space of consumption. Opposed to a strict form of domination like the Israeli settlement, Rawabi's developer has negotiated Israeli (spatial and permit) restrictions to create a space for the Palestinian new middle class and capitalist class. Ultimately, this has manifested in the urban form of which I call the *McCity*.

Secondly, I argue that there needs to be a re-thinking of the relationship between capitalism and colonialism in the Palestinian context. The intersectionality of Rawabi as a neoliberal assemblage of space and Israel as a spatial hegemon, highlights the need for a re-examination of this relationship since they both are an embodiment of David Harvey's *accumulation by dispossession*. I specifically want to look at how Palestinian neoliberalism and Israeli settler-colonialism work in complementary to each other as well as how the former has reproduced aspects of the latter.

Thirdly, Rawabi serves as an enclave where Palestinians of privilege not only passively accept the status quo of the occupation, but where real-estate investments consolidate settler-colonialism and reproduce neoliberal development in favor of transnational elites and investors at the expense of the local Palestinian community.

Finally, as it relates to the third argument, I contend that Rawabi is part of a reactionary type of development being done by Palestinians that is becoming increasingly widespread in the West Bank. The creation of Rawabi can be viewed as a response to an inability for the Palestinian capitalist class to spatially reproduce itself in

the city, as space is too costly and in short supply. Conversely, while land in the countryside is cheaper to purchase, it is also diminishing as a result of Israeli restrictions and settlement expansion. This has resulted in a trend in which agrarian land is becoming increasingly urbanized. The construction of urban development projects in the countryside does nothing to challenge Israel's spatial regime and they, in fact, reinforce Israel's dominance through their conformity to Israel's hegemony. Ultimately, this has led to a modality of normalization with the Israeli occupation.

B. Research Objectives

In line with the above arguments, this research sets out to accomplish several primary objectives. First and foremost, it will present a counter-narrative, that builds on the theoretical framework and literature review, to the dominant "state-building" discourse that has been presented by Rawabi's proponents. Apart from Rawabi's state building framing, there are other numerous claims and arguments that have been made by the developer which I will also challenge and critically engage with throughout the thesis. The second objective is to show how the Rawabi project fits into a dominant pattern of development under globalization as well as to show how the project has reproduced aspects of Israel's settler-colonial regime. This will largely be accomplished through a socio-spatial and stakeholder analysis that maps the political-economic network behind Rawabi, which are found in chapters three, four, and five. Finally, through this research, I hope to situate Rawabi into a broader discussion of class, state, and urban development in Palestine, topics which have been largely ignored by

mainstream academia and policy experts.¹

C. Methodology

In gathering the information for my research I had to employ a variety of strategies for my data collection. There was no one source of information that could give me a complete picture of Rawabi that would also allow me to frame the project in the broader social, political, and economic processes that are presently unfolding in the West Bank. The fact that this thesis privileges an interdisciplinary approach drawing from the fields of architecture, geography, political economy, and sociology also forced me to seek out a wide range of sources. Therefore, in trying to piece together a coherent picture of the Rawabi project I used a variety of both primary and secondary sources.

While attending a geography conference in Ramallah during a two week period in the summer of 2015, I was able to do some minor fieldwork and primary data collection. I should mention that my participation in the conference itself gave me the opportunity to attend panels that discussed Palestinian issues and to meet with other academics and experts who are currently doing research on Palestine. This proved to be an invaluable experience. By attending the conference, I was introduced to new ideas and research that I otherwise would have overlooked to include in my thesis and it provided me with further insights in regard to political economy, urban development, and social issues in the West Bank as they relate to my research.

I was able to visit the Rawabi construction site on two different occasions during my brief trip to the West Bank. The first visit was with a group of academics from the

¹ Despite the recent resurgence of literature on Palestinian political economy (e.g. Khalidi and Samour 2011; Hanieh 2013; Abunimah 2014; Dana 2014; Turner and Shweiki 2014; Farsakh 2016, et al.), what is noticeably absent from their discussions is a critical engagement of how neoliberalism has impacted Palestinian urban development, with the notable exception of Abunimah.

conference that I was participating in. During this visit we were given limited access to the site and were only allowed to tour the showroom where we could only view the construction site from a distance. My second visit a few days later was arranged through Rawabi's marketing office where they put me in contact with one of their engineers who agreed to take me on tour of the entire site and for me to ask them questions about the project. These site visits provided me with first-hand primary source data and a means to empirically observe the progress of the project, take photos, and for me to learn more details about the project itself. While being aware that I was given the developer's narrative during these visits, they were nevertheless insightful and served to supplement my background research and content analysis on Rawabi. On a side note, during my time in Palestine I was able to unofficially visit firsthand other current housing projects in the Ramallah area such as Rihan, Reef, and Etihad Villas.

In addition to site visits in the West Bank, I also made a visit to the new town of Reston, Virginia in the fall of 2016. Reston's relevance to Rawabi stems from Bashar Masri's, Rawabi's developer, likening of Rawabi to Reston in interviews he has given to journalists as well as the fact that Masri himself spent many years in Virginia and in the Washington, DC area. Because of Reston's proximity to where I was writing the thesis in nearby Arlington, I saw this as an opportunity where I could incorporate a new perspective, which has not yet been explored in the literature that has been written on Rawabi. The visit to Reston occurred while I was well into the writing process and was re-writing a section that sought to position Rawabi's conceived space within the context of earlier urban planning movements of the 20th Century. My trip to Reston comprised of a visit to the Reston Museum as well as empirical observations of some of its villages and its town center.

Apart from the site visits, a major portion of my research focuses around content analysis, which utilizes a diverse set of primary source documents. I searched Palestinian, Israeli, and US government websites from various ministries and agencies for official documents, reports, decrees, and press releases that were relevant to my research. These documents were available in either Arabic or English and typically provided me with legal information or insights into the operations of different institutions and programs, albeit often with little context. When used in conjunction with other secondary sources the value of these documents proved to be an indispensable well of information in helping develop a narrative that emphasizes political economy.

Another significant source of primary data was information I collected from different company websites. These websites were mainly from Rawabi, Rawabi's Qatari partner, and contractors working with the project. Information I gathered from these websites largely aided in my stakeholder analysis of the project as well as other information that was useful for other sections of the thesis. Rawabi's website in particular provided a great deal of information about the project that the developer has made available to the public. I used this information in all of the chapters where I analyze Rawabi (chapters three, four, and five). I additionally made use of Rawabi's newsletter that publishes quarterly progress updates that go back to the beginning of the project which they have made available in hardcopy or can be downloaded from Rawabi's website. One methodological problem to note is that since it is the developer that controls what information is or is not released about the project, information about negotiations, discussions with members of the PA or Israeli government, and internal company meetings and discussions are either stones that have been left unturned or the

information had to be obtained from alternative sources. While I was not able to conduct interviews with key people associated with the Rawabi project for this thesis, they could have helped fill some of these gaps. Other primary sources include Palestinian Arabic newspapers and maps provided by Birzeit University's geography department. All of these primary sources proved to be useful for my socio-spatial and stakeholder analysis of Rawabi.

My secondary sources largely consist of interviews that have been conducted with Bashar Masri as well as online newspaper articles about the project, academic case studies on neoliberal urbanization, and other scholarly books and articles that helped in developing a narrative for Rawabi. The academic and scholarly sources provided me with examples of other projects to compare Rawabi to and also helped me link much of the primary source data into a coherent narrative.

D. Thesis Overview

The following chapters, therefore, seek to answer the research questions as well as to address the main objectives and arguments of the thesis. Accordingly, chapter two will present the theoretical framework and literature review. The theoretical framework will present a framework for analysis that merges spatial theory with political economy, while the literature review will provide a background for the Rawabi project by exploring recent political, economic, and social transformations that have occurred in the West Bank – all within the context of Israeli settler-colonialism.

Chapter three will first present and then analyze Rawabi's urban form in relation to traditional Palestinian architecture as well as to the urban form of the suburban settlement. This chapter will also explore ways in which Palestinian identity and culture

have been appropriated for the benefit of the project.

Chapter four will explore Rawabi's conceived space by analyzing it in relation to other prominent architectural movements of the twentieth century before coming to explicitly define and present it. The chapter will also explain how Rawabi has been planned as a node of capital accumulation and how this has manifested itself through its urban form and architecture. The final section of this chapter will briefly discuss how a new Palestinian subject is being socially engineered through Rawabi's architecture and also what this means for the average Palestinian living in Rawabi.

Chapter five will layout the political-economic network behind Rawabi and discuss the main stakeholders involved with the project, framed within the context of value creation and as neoliberalism being a political project.

The final chapter will conclude with a brief discussion, with a view towards the future, about strategies for creating a new space of hope and envisioning a resurgent politics of recognition in Palestine.

CHAPTER II:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

This section will provide a theoretical framework that builds on the work of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey by merging spatial theory with political economy. This will be done through the introduction of three key concepts that will be discussed and built upon throughout the thesis. These concepts will be presented thematically and center around: *conceived space*, *abstract space*, and *neoliberalism*. While defining and understanding the basic tenets of these concepts is pivotal to having a discussion on urban development in Palestine, they also lay the foundation for a narrative that privileges political economy to help explain the emergence of the Rawabi project in the West Bank. For the time being, these concepts will only be discussed broadly since they will be further developed in the proceeding chapters when different aspects of Rawabi are being analyzed. Furthermore, the literature review in the next section will follow several socio-economic and political transformations that are specific to the Palestinian case and are equally important to understanding a project like Rawabi.

To introduce the first two concepts of *conceived space* and *abstract space* I will draw from the work of French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991) where he focuses on how space is produced in a society. Lefebvre's conception of space is based on the premise that social space is a social product and therefore it is something that is socially produced (26-27). He states, "any space implies, contains and

dissimulates social relationships – and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)” (82-83). On this basis, he develops his *spatial triad* – spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces² – to help us understand the social patterns of how space is produced. According to Lefebvre, the three elements that make up his triad work within a dialectical tension of each other and it is for this reason he cautions that each part should not be seen in isolation or used as an abstract model (39-40). Therefore, all of these elements must be considered in order to decipher the space of any society. It is representations of space from the spatial triad that conceived space comes from, which is what will first be discussed.

With regard to Rawabi I draw the focus on its conceived space because, simply put, it is a completely planned city with only a handful of inhabitants having moved in. Since this is the case, the other two elements of the triad would be difficult, if not impossible, to analyze and it is only with the passing of time that Rawabi’s *perceived* and *lived* space can be more readily observed. Lefebvre’s conceived space stems from knowledge – a combination of understanding and ideology – that is tied to the relations of production (41). While this space is largely abstract, it also serves a practical purpose where it is subordinate to the prevailing social and political relations in society (41-42). Accordingly, he states that conceived space is the “space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (39). Consequently, the perspective and worldview of these conceivers is what determines how a space is planned.

² He reduces these three moments of social space to the *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* accordingly.

As will be shown in the literature review and the two chapters that make up the socio-spatial analysis, there are multiple conceivers of space in the West Bank (the Israeli occupation, Israeli settlers, Palestinian capitalists), and their position of authority that gives them the ability to conceive is indicative of the political-economic forces that control Palestinian space. Consequently, in the Palestinian context planning is used as a tool of conceived space by Israel, the occupation, Rawabi's developers, the PA, etc. While planning is a tool of Lefebvre's conceived space, planning should alternatively be seen as a tool of domination (26) and, indeed, it has been used this way by the actors I have already mentioned. The first two sections of the literature review in this chapter, as well as the socio-spatial analysis in chapter four, will show how spatial planning is used as a modality of inclusion/exclusion and segregation – whether it is for the purposes of capital accumulation in the case of Rawabi, or as a way to maintain the Israeli occupation and settlement expansion. On a final point, conceived space will take a prominent position when I define Rawabi's urban form in relation to other previous planning movements also found in chapter four.

In continuing with Lefebvre, he states that the social relations contained in urban space are the social relations that are produced by capitalism. It is on this point that he develops his concept of *abstract space*, which is what I am most concerned with. Abstract space, opposed to *absolute space*, is space that is subject to the capitalist system and the productive forces of labor. In his explanation of abstract space, Lefebvre's main focus is on the city where he states that “the forces of history smashed naturalness forever and upon its ruins established the space of accumulation (the accumulation of all wealth and resources: knowledge, technology, money, precious objects, works of art and symbols)” (49). The social relations that existed in space prior

to the advent of capitalism (i.e. absolute space, which was religious and political in character) were reconfigured by the change in labor relations under capitalism where the role of labor no longer served the purpose of reproducing social life, but instead became abstract labor under capitalism. In other words, the social relations embodied in space have been severed from its reproductive role in society and the social relations present within capitalism came to dominate space for its own reproductive purposes i.e. accumulating more capital.

For Lefebvre, the main place that serves as the space of accumulation is the city.

He goes on to say in his description of abstract space:

[...] the functioning of capitalism, which contrives to be blatant and covert at one and the same time. The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there. (49)

He continues by asserting that the main actor that facilitates the production of (abstract) space is the State. In reference to this he states:

It [*abstract space*] sets itself up as the space of power, which will (or at any rate may) eventually lead to its own dissolution on account of conflicts (contradictions) arising within it. What we seem to have, then, is an apparent subject, an impersonal pseudo-subject, the abstract 'one' of modern social space, and – hidden within it, concealed by its illusory transparency – the real 'subject', namely state (political) power. (51)

Therefore, the forces of capitalism and political power work in tandem to produce Lefebvre's abstract space and, hence, lays the foundation for an analysis that privileges political economy. Chapters three and four will later illustrate the pivotal role abstract space plays *vis-à-vis* Rawabi. While Lefebvre's abstract space provides a general framework for how space is constructed under the capitalist system, it ultimately loses its explanatory power when it is applied to Rawabi. This is because Rawabi embodies a

contemporary iteration of capitalism that needs its own analysis, which is a neoliberal model of urban development.

Neoliberalism has steadily become a buzzword over the last 20 years, and defining it has become problematic since the word now entails a plethora of actions and processes whose social impacts have been and continue to be investigated across multiple disciplines. Therefore, it is not uncommon to be given a different definition or interpretation of neoliberalism from the numerous scholars that write about it (e.g. Harvey 2005; Klein 2007; Brown 2015).

As a response to the difficulties of defining neoliberalism, the approach I will take is to first layout the core principles and key strategies of neoliberalism, which will serve as a starting point for an analysis on neoliberal urbanism that I will develop further throughout the thesis. Later, I will introduce other aspects of neoliberalism as they become relevant to the discussion. For example, when I discuss the political economy of the West Bank in the literature review, I will include some of the ways in which the state, or in this case the PA, has helped advance neoliberal ideology. Further on, through the socio-spatial analysis of Rawabi in chapters three and four, I will discuss how neoliberalism has affected urban development in Palestine and I will more clearly define what neoliberal urbanism is and illustrate how Rawabi embodies this mechanism of spatial production. To this end, what makes Rawabi an exemplary case study is that it is a material manifestation of neoliberalism where it can be observed as both subject and object of neoliberal practices.

Geographer David Harvey (2005) has written extensively on the subject of neoliberalism and – in dissecting its various components – he provides a thorough and compelling discussion on its historical progression as an ideology, the primary

strategies it uses to achieve its goals, its various contradictions, and many of the social and material impacts it has on society. Through his work, Harvey developed the concept of *accumulation by dispossession* as a way to simplify and consolidate the strategies of neoliberalism under one explanatory phrase. It is composed of four elements: privatization and commodification, financialization, the management and manipulation of crises, and state redistributions (160-165). I believe Harvey's rubric of *accumulation by dispossession* captures the essence of the neoliberal project and is a useful explanatory tool. While I will present a definition of neoliberalism in relation to the work of multiple authors later in this section, I will make reference to some of the elements that fall under Harvey's rubric of accumulation by dispossession when the discussion necessitates further elaboration.

One last point to make before presenting a definition on neoliberalism is that the very act of naming neoliberalism and stating my opposition to it should be seen as an act of resistance and I will explain why this is so and why this is important. In addition to what was mentioned above, another reason that neoliberalism has been so difficult to define is that it is an undeclared ideology. No country publicly touts the neoliberal banner, and this is despite the fact that neoliberal policies have been in place throughout the world for the last 40 years.³ Moreover, neoliberalism has by and large been kept out of mainstream public discussions and has been relegated to the realm of academia and leftist politics. Regardless of the reasons for why neoliberalism has been kept out of the public discourse, the lack of a broad critical engagement with it has nevertheless

³ Capitalists and institutions that support the neoliberal doctrine use alternative words such as free market, structural adjustment, and supply-side economics (Reaganomics) to describe their actions but rarely, if ever, use the word neoliberal to describe themselves.

benefited the elites that propagate this political-economic system. How can opposition be mounted against something that is hardly spoken of and left undefined?

Therefore, by drawing from the works of numerous authors, the interpretation of neoliberalism that I will present and use as a point of reference is as follows: I assert that neoliberal doctrine ultimately seeks a consolidation of class power through a redistribution of wealth upwards to the capitalist class, where private property and the privatization of public assets play a central role in achieving this goal. While privatization is at the core of the neoliberal project, the redistributive goal of neoliberalism is accomplished through a three-pronged strategy comprised of privatization, financialization, and militarization.⁴ It is a highly radicalized form of capitalism that is not concerned with human well-being or creating suitable living environments for people, but is rather seen as a zero-sum that focuses on creating new strategies of capital accumulation through the extraction of wealth from the working and middle classes. While neoliberalism's main tenets are composed of the three above-mentioned features, it can also be characterized by authoritarianism, rampant speculation, austerity, deregulation, the atomization of society, and the need to seek crises. Needless to say, the neoliberal regime has had far reaching (un)intended consequences for society and many of these aspects of neoliberalism will be broached throughout the thesis when discussing recent political, economic, and social developments in the West Bank, as well as their relation to the Rawabi project.

Harvey (2005) also reaffirms Lefebvre's statement about the role of the state where, "the state, with its monopoly on violence and definitions of legality, plays a crucial role in both backing and promoting these processes" (159). Most notably,

⁴ Timothy Mitchell (1999) succinctly exemplifies these three components in his discussion on neoliberal urban development in Cairo.

Harvey includes the role of state redistributions with a focus on how the state uses eminent domain to facilitate accumulation by dispossession (163-164). This is important because, as will later be shown, the use of eminent domain has played a key role in making Rawabi possible.

It should not be overlooked that the nature and scope of the neoliberal project is indeed a political project (Harvey 2016). This is largely because in the capitalist system, the consolidation of wealth ultimately translates into the consolidation of political power. Additionally, while I believe there is compelling evidence on the homogenizing impact of neoliberalism on the city, I would also warn against discussing neoliberal urbanism as being homogenous across different geographies. The political, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which neoliberal urbanism has emerged and presented itself is different from city to city and country to country. It is because of this that Cairo will never look like New York City.

B. Literature Review

While the literature review serves to complement the concepts outlined in the theoretical framework, it is also important to understand that globalized urban development projects like Rawabi should not simply be seen as impositions by international actors upon the landscape, but that these types of projects have emerged within their own localized contexts. Therefore, the literature review will integrate into the discussion local processes and transformations that are uniquely Palestinian. It will mainly describe how social, political, and economic networks in the West Bank have been reconstituted in recent years and the effect this has had on the process of Palestinian spatial production.

The first two sections situate the Rawabi project within the context of Israeli settler-colonialism. While an urban development project like Rawabi may be unexceptional in itself, the construction of such a project by a colonized people who are subject to the restrictive spatial regime of the Israeli occupation is quite exceptional.⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to analyze Rawabi as development under occupation since this is what distinguishes Rawabi from other similar global urban development projects that can be found across the Middle East. By examining Israeli colonial practices and the planning that has gone into these practices, as well as having an understanding and engagement with the *milieu* of Israeli settler-colonialism in the West Bank, I hope to bring to the forefront the contradictions of Rawabi navigating the seemingly adverse landscape of the West Bank. As the later chapters of the thesis will demonstrate, there are striking similarities in the strategies that have been employed by the Rawabi project and by the Israeli occupation to solidify their colonization of the West Bank.

The next section of the literature review provides a brief historical account of political-economic developments in the West Bank with an emphasis on the period after Oslo. Through this, a better understanding of how circuits of capital accumulation and class formation have been established in the West Bank can be gained. Moreover, this section will also address how the Palestinian economy has become liberalized and fragmented. Directing attention to the political economy of the West Bank will help elucidate how the nexus of transnational capitalist elites, the PA, the occupation, and economies of scale have made the manifestation of Rawabi possible.

The last section of the literature review briefly discusses the socio-economic transformations that have taken place in Palestine since the Oslo Accords. I believe this

⁵ In the context of globalization, Rawabi can be considered unexceptional given the ubiquity of these types of massive development projects found throughout the Middle East and the rest of the world.

discussion is necessary in order to better understand the social acceptability of a project like Rawabi by Palestinian society and to show how this type of urban development may become the normative form of development in the West Bank in the future.

1. Israel: A Spatial Hegemon

In recent years, terms such as *urbicide* (Abujidi 2014), *spaciocide* (Hanafi 2012), and the likening of Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian territories to (creeping) *apartheid* (Yiftachel 2006) have entered the lexicon of academics and activists who study the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These terms delineate how Palestinian space/spatial practice is defined, restricted, and largely destroyed by the Israeli occupation, which I argue cumulatively makes Israel a spatial hegemon. The commonalities among these terms are the restrictive spatial regime Israel has imposed upon Palestinians, the Judaizing of the land, population transfer, and Israel's politics of separation. All of these processes are situated within a settler-colonial discourse. Instead of focusing on the materiality of the occupation, the authors describe the causal processes that are the impetus for the material manifestations of the occupation. While the physical apparatus of the occupation is important and it is what most affects Palestinian quotidian social relations in a very concrete way, fetishizing the material aspects (focusing on checkpoints, settlements, the wall, etc.) does little in the way of demystifying Israel's intentionally complex occupation apparatus. The fact that these authors are careful not to fall into this trap allows the discussion to move forward without trivializing the occupation. It is important to note that while the authors come to many of the same conclusions, their nuanced approaches that work with and complement each other should be distinguished.

Urbicide is a term that came into common use to describe the destruction of the cities in the Balkans during the war in former Yugoslavia, specifically from the Siege of Sarajevo, in the early to mid 1990s. Urbicide largely entails the targeting of cities by the military for destruction in order to erase the city's cultural, social, and historic identity (Abujidi 2014). While there are variances of urbicide according to Nurhan Abujidi (2014), she calls what is happening in the Palestinian occupied territories as part of a two-pronged strategy of direct/indirect urbicide. Direct urbicide is the targeted destruction of the urban built environment in its entirety, such as the case of the Israeli assaults on the Nablus Old Town and the Jenin refugee camp in 2002 (40) – not to mention the previous three wars in the Gaza Strip. Also included in this definition would be the targeted Israeli demolition of Palestinian houses in urban areas (69). Indirect urbicide, on the other hand, is done by methods of construction and control. In this definition she includes Israeli settlement construction, the construction of the apartheid wall, Israeli military checkpoints, and Israeli-only bypass roads in the West Bank (40-41, 71-73). While urbicide largely focuses on the destruction of the city, *spaciocide* is inclusive of both the urban and the rural, i.e. the entirety of historic Palestine.

Spaciocide is an ongoing process that is comprised of several key strategies that primarily seek to ensure Israel's politics of separation and colonization in the Palestinian occupied territories. A basic definition of Sari Hanafi's (2012) *spaciocide* is: the confiscation of Palestinian land in order to construct Jewish settlements, demolish Palestinian buildings, and to transfer Palestinians off their land (191). For Hanafi, Giorgio Agamben's *state of exception* plays a pivotal role in how Israel accomplishes this. Accordingly, the strategies Israel uses are threefold 1) space annihilation, 2) ethnic

cleansing, and 3) a system of apartheid (191-92); where the actors are the military, land grabbing by settlers, urban planners, and capitalist real-estate speculators (194). In its implementation of ethnic cleansing and establishing its apartheid system, the Israeli state mainly invokes the state of exception that exists in the Palestinian territories (198-201). Hanafi states that the weapon of choice is the bulldozer, opposed to the tank. In Israel's annihilation of Palestinian space, he says that "it is rather a spectacle of destruction without/with little death." Therefore, it is not the Palestinian people that are directly targeted by lethal Israeli violence; it is the space they occupy. He goes on to say that Israel's aggression is "a war in an age of literal agoraphobia, the fear of space, seeking not the division of territory but its abolition" (192).

In the destruction of Palestinian space, Israel is "turning territory into mere land" (192), thereby attempting to erase time from space (Lefebvre 1991, 95-96). The erasure of time from space is a theme that will be revisited in the following section of the literature review. The Israeli leveling of the land paves the way for land confiscation, settlement construction, and capitalist expansion from Israel into the West Bank. Additionally, this destruction of space facilitates Israel's "voluntary transfer" of the Palestinian population out of the occupied territories (Hanafi 2012, 192). Ultimately, Hanafi states that spaciocide is not a total project that seeks to appropriate all Palestinian land, but that the potential is there (194).

In his concept of *creeping apartheid*, Oren Yiftachel (2006) states that it is a logical extension of Israel's ethnocratic regime. He makes the claim that Israel is an ethnocratic regime opposed to a democracy, ethnic democracy, theocracy, or any other regime-type. In making this claim he defines ethnocracy as a regime that "facilitates the *expansion, ethnicization, and control* of a dominant ethnic nation...over contested

territory and polity” (11). Israel’s ethnocracy is composed of three political-historical currents, which are: the formation of a colonial settler society, the mobilizing power of ethno-nationalism, and the ethnic logic of capital (12). Yiftachel states that they have resulted in the stratification of ethnoclasses and have created patterns of long-term segregation and ethnic polarization inside Israel (12). This stratification and spatial segregation that Israel has created sets the stage for his concept of creeping apartheid.

Stratification in Israel, according to Yiftachel, starts with the issuance of the identity card and with national registration at the Interior Ministry. This is the basis for the creation of at least 10 stratified groups, in which he states that, “registration provides a different citizenship package for each group” (126). In this ethno-class stratification the top tiered group consists of mainstream and Orthodox Jews along with whom he calls pseudo-Jews while the lowest tier includes Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and labor migrants inside Israel (127). Druze, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, and Bedouins fit somewhere in the middle of this hierarchy. The spatiality of the apartheid system Israel has created plays a major role in who receives state entitlements. Citizens that reside in particular locales are granted more benefits from the state or, alternatively, they are deprived of rights (127). Therefore, a Jewish community that resides in Tel Aviv or in a settlement in the West Bank will be granted more state resources than say an Arab village in the Galilee. Accordingly, he calls Israeli actions *creeping apartheid* opposed to apartheid since they are an undeclared practice (including settlement expansion) and because the state’s policy towards Arabs and non-Jewish immigrants increasingly becomes more heavy-handed over time.

Urbicide, spaciocide, and creeping apartheid provide insight on how apartheid in Israel and the occupied territories has been codified within state institutions and expressed through state (occupation) practices. These terms inexplicitly invoke two theories that this thesis seeks to reify: 1) Gramsci's (1971) concept of cultural hegemony where Palestinians are subordinate to the will of both Israel's settler-colonial regime and to transnational capitalists, and 2) Lefebvre's idea of removing time from space; here I describe this *via* Judaization but later it will be shown how this has been done by real-estate speculators. These terms also lay the foundation for us to understand Israel's occupation policies and how Palestinian space is fragmented and restricted. They show how the fragmentation of Palestinian space leads to the political and economic alienation of Palestinians. Therefore, the works of Abujidi, Hanafi, and Yiftachel are a good introduction to the idea of Israel being a spatial hegemon since they help us understand Israel's spatial practice and its politics of separation in the West Bank. Conversely, they also reveal to us the limitations of their analyses.

For instance, there is very little mention of Palestinian agency in the above-mentioned authors' analyses. Their approaches are largely premised on the assumption of the Israeli "subject" acting upon the Palestinians as an immutable "object." In regard to Rawabi, it must be assumed that there is a great deal of Palestinian agency in order for a project of this size to come to fruition. As Koenraad Bogaert (2012) states, "human agency and political intervention are thus at the centre of the process that mediates the global accumulation flows" (260). Up to this point, there is no insight on Palestinian coping strategies that work within Israel's spatial regime. Additionally, while there is some mention in the texts of capitalist real estate speculators, there is never an in-depth discussion about them and the capitalist speculators mentioned refer

more to Israeli capitalists instead of Palestinian ones. In short, a discussion of the underlying economic structural issues of the occupation and their implications for the political economy of the West Bank is lacking. Before engaging with issues of agency and political economy, I will push the discussion of the occupation further by introducing geographers Eyal Weizman and Derek Gregory into the conversation. Through them we will be able to understand more coherently Israel as a conceiver/planner of Palestinian space in relation to its settlements, Israel's colonial narrative, and the imagined geographies of the occupation – all of which the Rawabi project has needed to engage with and navigate.

2. Imagined Geographies and Militarized Space in the West Bank

The *nakba* of 1948 was the event that first shattered Palestinian space. This is when Zionist forces took over large swathes of Palestinian land to establish the State of Israel – in this, not only was Palestinian space shattered but so was Palestinian social fabric. The creation of Israel was at a high cost for Palestinians: over 500 villages were completely wiped from the map and the 800,000 Palestinians who were expelled by Zionist forces instantly became refugees. This, however, was not the last time Palestinian space would be dramatically transformed in such a short period of time. The Israeli military occupation of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip in the wake of the 1967 war was the second time this happened. While acknowledging the exceptional significance of both events on Palestinians everywhere, the proceeding discussion will mainly focus on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Like the majority of research on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this analysis will also fall prey to privileging the West Bank over Gaza. This is an acknowledged limitation on my part.

Since the beginning of the West Bank occupation, Israel has created a colonial frontier that is “deep, shifting, fragmented, and elastic” (Weizman 2007, 4). Subsequently, the settlement strategies that Israel implemented are rooted in military and battlefield tactics that originally came out of a debate between military commanders on a defense strategy for the Sinai Peninsula after Israel occupied the territory during the 1967 War. In opposition to the Bar Lev line on the Suez Canal, Ariel Sharon proposed a network of military outposts that littered the hilltops of Sinai in a “defense in depth” strategy (57-68). In the aftermath of the 1973 October War, Sharon’s strategy proved to be more effective than Chief of Staff Chaim Bar Lev’s. Sharon later became the head of the government’s settlement committee in the occupied territories and, through his ministerial appointments (Agriculture and Defense) in successive Likud-led governments, he was able to “translate military doctrine and the principles of a dynamic battlefield into planning practices of civilian settlements and the creation of political ‘facts on the ground’” (63).

The initial settlement policy that was adopted when the Labor Party was still in power was a combination of Yigal Allon and Moshe Dayan’s proposals.⁶ When the Likud Party took over in 1977 the settlement policy changed under Sharon. While it incorporated aspects of Allon’s and Dayan’s previous settlement plans, Sharon’s policy was born out of a collaborative effort with Israeli architect Avraham Wachman (80-81). The lessons learned during the 1973 War were manifest in the Sharon-Wachman plan

⁶ Allon’s plan was focused more on agriculture and the working of the land, not unlike the early kibbutzim, and called for the Israeli annexation of Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley in order to settle Jews at these locations. Contrarily, Dayan’s plan called for the installation of military bases – surrounded by Jewish settlements – along the central mountain ridge of the West Bank by punching “five fists” deep within the territory that would be connected to Israel proper by bypass highways. Dayan’s plan sought to obstruct the continuity of Palestinian territory while the Jewish settlements he envisioned would focus on industrial production where a pool of cheap Palestinian labor could be drawn from (Weizman 2007, 94).

where Sharon's *carte blanche* authority allowed him to apply his defense in depth strategy in settlement expansion.

The goal of Sharon's settlement policy was not only to control the occupied territory through a network of strategically placed settlement/military points but also sought to emphasize visual aspects of the occupation so that Palestinians would be reminded on a daily basis of their domination (81-82).⁷ Accordingly, each settlement location was chosen based on a strategic military logic, when seen as a whole, formed a network of fortifications that sought to disrupt the pre-existing network of Palestinian spaces (81). The West Bank hilltops were the primary location for the creation of this network. This was in contrast to Allon's idea of agricultural kibbutz-like settlements in the Jordan Valley. The prevailing goal of settling the hilltops was not to take "unproductive land" and make it "productive," but should be viewed as part of an urbanization process to change the demographics of the West Bank from Arab to Jewish (125-126).⁸

⁷ Military terms such as "strong point, advance, penetration, encirclement, envelopment, surveillance, control and supply lines" were introduced to the civilian side of the occupation (Weizman 2007, 84).

⁸ To illustrate the rate of settlement expansion in the West Bank under the Likud government: before the party took to power in 1977 there were about 28 illegal settlements in the West Bank with around 4,500 settlers and by the end of its leadership run in 1992 there were 123 settlements with 100,000 settlers (92, 125). Since then, the rate of settlement expansion has grown exponentially where the current settler population stands at 550,000 to 600,000 (West Bank and East Jerusalem) with nearly 200 settlements. Additionally, there are about 100 settlement outposts that are supported but not officially sanctioned by the Israeli government (B'Tselem 2016).



FIGURE 1. Israeli settlers waiting at a bus stop near the Palestinian town of Huwwara, July 2015 (Photo by Author).



FIGURE 2. Israeli road sign warning of entering into Palestinian Authority controlled territory, July 2015 (Photo by Author).

Derek Gregory (2004) states that while there was a policy of non-interference in the nascent years of the occupation, colonial economic structures soon gave way to become the norm where, “the economies of Gaza and the West Bank were rapidly fused with that of Israel in a dependent and thoroughly exploitative relationship, through which they became cheap labor pools and convenient export markets for Israeli commodity production” (90). Coupled with a system of direct and indirect taxation the Israelis were able to pass the costs of their military occupation onto the Palestinians. The proliferation of settlements during the Likud period were catalyzed by rulings made by the Israeli High Court of Justice (IHCJ) where a draconian interpretation of antiquated Ottoman land laws was used to declare Palestinian private land as public land, which was then confiscated for new settlements and settlement expansion (Weizman 2007, 116-117).

Derek Gregory’s (2004) work on colonialism in Palestine brings to the forefront the contradictions of the imagined geographies of Israel’s occupation. While Israel’s reimagining of the land is not unique, it has nevertheless played an important role in how Israel maintains its occupation by continually reshaping its hegemony over Palestinians through colonial semantics. There are parallels that can be drawn between Israel’s imagined geographies and how the Rawabi project has marketed itself to various investors, the media, and the public (can be read as: colonial hegemony vs. capitalist hegemony). These parallels will become more apparent when Rawabi is discussed in the following chapters. Over the years, Israel has presented the trappings of its imperial conquests in ways that have made it more palatable for its colonial society to digest. The territory inside the “green line” has become “Israel,” Palestine has now become the “West Bank” and “Gaza Strip,” the “occupied territories” became “liberated

territories” and later, “disputed territories.” The “West Bank” is now “Judea and Samaria” and has been reduced even further to a mere letter, either “A, B or C,” Hebron is now “H1 and H2,” and this reimagining continues *ad infinitum* within Israel’s colonial narrative. This has happened to such an extent that Palestine has now been reimagined and re-parceled out of history.⁹ The fragmentation of Palestinian space is something I will explain in more detail in the next section of the literature review.

On a rudimentary level, Gregory reminds us that the established order of things is indeed something that has *been established* and is “validated by its own regimes of truth” where it “produces acutely real, visibly material consequences” (3). Palestinians have witnessed for decades the dominant Israeli colonial narrative that has taken precedence over their own in the West. While Israel’s narrative is a fabrication of sorts – a narrative that has been established by those in power, in order to retain their power, and has been disseminated to its colonial subjects and the rest of the world – it nonetheless has gone to great lengths to make it fact under the guise of modernity.

This narrative of modernity, to a great extent, has also been used as a tool to justify land grabbing where this has been framed in a multiplicity of ways by the Israeli regime and in ways that often contradict reality. Gasteyer et al. (2012) states (citing Geisler 2012), that one common justification for colonial land grabs stems from the *terra nullius* (empty land) argument, in claiming that no one was on the land before it was settled (452). This discourse plays into the well-recognized Israeli slogan of “a land without a people, for a people without a land.” The underlying premise of this slogan is that since the land is empty it is therefore the responsibility, if not the God-given right, of the settler population to shape, mold, and make “productive” the land in its own

⁹ Whatever territory Israel decides to leave for a Palestinian state can be called a state or “fried chicken” according to David Bar-Illan, the Director of Communications and Policy Planning during Benjamin Netanyahu’s tenure as Prime Minister from 1996-1999 (Bar-Illan 1996).

vision. Despite trivial arguments that have been made which cite a specious historical connection to the land, an Israeli type of manifest destiny, or a racist civilizing mission, the most prominent Israeli discourse makes the claim of early Zionist settlers having made unproductive land productive through the use of technology and by an enlightened settler population. Hence, we get the “making the desert bloom” mantra, which has been central to the Zionist narrative dating back to before the establishment of the State of Israel. Gasteyer et al. ties these two types of land grabbing justifications into the modernity narrative by explaining,

that across the national context these justifications were used as a way of systematically re-imagining land as having potential value that had not been realised by the local population. Colonial forces, thus, developed not only justification for expelling the indigenous population from the land, often arguing that these populations were simply not using the land to its best use, but also a narrative of indignation when the local populations reacted violently to land appropriation. This indignation then, in turn, further justified greater disenfranchisement of the indigenous by the settling population. (452)¹⁰

In returning to Gregory (2004), he asserts that while colonial narratives often times profess they are giving a voice to the voiceless, they in fact have been used as a way to silence competing alternative histories that originate from the subaltern (8). It is at this juncture that he introduces the concepts of *amnesia* and *nostalgia* to the discussion and the role they play in the creation of colonial narratives.¹¹ In using amnesia and nostalgia, Gregory (2004) dissects the “us” vs. “them” binary that is prevalent among colonial narratives and explains how they have played an integral role in fabricating the West’s colonial relationship with indigenous peoples (8-12).

¹⁰ For Gasteyer et al., the appropriation of water resources played a central role in developing these colonial narratives of modernity. While the following chapters will illustrate how Rawabi’s developer has used the modernity narrative to justify its development of the countryside, it should be noted that Rawabi has also used similar arguments to appropriate more water for the project.

¹¹ The influence of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) on this discussion is unquestionable.

Therefore, in order to deconstruct these colonial narratives, the amnesiac as well as the nostalgic histories of colonialism must be confronted and countered (9). I will use appropriation as a key word to explain these two terms.

With regard to amnesia, Gregory brings to light some of the ways in which metropolitan cultures have created an “other” from outside cultures through practices of “forgetting” (9). Apart from portraying an Orientalist vision of other cultures as “exotic,” “bizarre,” and “alien,” Gregory reminds us of the ways in which other cultures have been appropriated by the West (9).¹² In the Israeli context it is not just the “forgetting” aspect that is important, but also understanding the ways in which Palestinian culture and history has been concealed or appropriated.

According to the Israeli narrative, the expulsion of Palestinians from their land during the *nakba* of 1948 became a day of celebration by reclaiming it as Israel’s day of independence. Soon thereafter, when Israel was established as a state, the map of the land was redrawn (in Hebrew) with no reference to the hundreds of Palestinian villages that were demolished. During this time, Zionist forces also looted the private libraries of notable Palestinian families whose contents were of great cultural and historical significance and irreplaceable (The Great Book Robbery 2011). The Jewish National Fund (JNF) has also played an instrumental role in erasing Palestinians from the land. Since the inception of the State of Israel, the JNF has planted forests of conifers throughout the country. While, at first glance, this may appear to be a benign conservation effort, the intentions behind these actions are more insidious. The non-native, fast-growing coniferous trees that the JNF has planted and continues to plant are a kind of arboreal colonization of the landscape. While the Israeli state actively cuts

¹² E.g. Israel claiming Arabic food (hummus, falafel, fattoush, couscous, sahlab, za’ater, etc.) to be their own or the appearance of the Palestinian *hutta* as a fashion accessory in Western clothing shops such as *Urban Outfitters* readily comes to mind.

down Palestinian olive trees, the JNF plants conifers to replace them. The same trees can also easily be spotted around the illegal settlements in the West Bank. In the instance of Canada Park in Israel, these trees have been planted over Palestinian villages that were razed in 1948, forever erasing their existence.

In pivoting to nostalgia, Gregory (2004) states that “nostalgia for the cultures that colonial modernity has destroyed” has been channeled through Western art, design, fashion, film, literature, music and travel which seek to recapture the “traditional” or “authentic” of a romanticized past (10). Israeli society is replete with examples, one just needs to skim any passage of *The Arab Mind* (1973) by Raphael Patai, look through an Israeli travel guide, watch any video that promotes tourism to Israel, take a visit to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, or watch a performance by an Israeli dance troupe. Gregory (2004) argues that this is not merely a benign longing for the past but refers to this nostalgia as a kind of *cultural cryonics* where he warns that fetishizing the cultural practices of the colonized only serves to aggrandize the colonial past (10). On this he states:

Other cultures are fixed and frozen, often as a series of fetishes, and then brought back to life through metropolitan circuits of consumption. Commodity fetishism and cannibalism are repatriated to the metropolis. But there is a still more violent side to colonial nostalgia. Contemporary metropolitan cultures are also characterized by nostalgia for the aggrandizing swagger of colonialism itself, for its privileges and powers. (10)

It is on this note that we must, therefore, break away from what anthropologist Johannes Fabian calls anthropology’s *denial of coevalness* and the discipline’s creation of *secularized time*.¹³ That is, the space of the colonized is frozen in time where anyone from the West can be a modern-day time traveler (Fabian 1983). In an insightful

¹³ It is from this notion of secularized time that we get 1st, 2nd, and 3rd world to discern how “developed” different cultures have become.

passage, Gregory (2004) aptly applies his concept of colonial amnesia to a political context. Citing what two prominent Palestinians have said about how the Oslo map was drawn between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations during the peace negotiations, he states that:

It [Oslo Accords] nullified the Intifada, transforming the resistant contours of an anti-colonial struggle into a compliant cartography drawn in collaboration with an occupying army and, as Salah Hassan has argued, fully compatible with the colonizing imperatives of globalization. Its map marked not a site of memory, therefore, but a site of amnesia. [Edward] Said bitterly observed that the Oslo process required Palestinians ‘to forget and renounce our history of loss and dispossession by the very people who have taught everyone the importance of not forgetting the past.’ (97-98)

To conclude, while Israel has used its colonialism to transform Palestinian space in ways that have solidified its domination, both materially and discursively, it is but one of two significant events that have affected urban development in the West Bank – the other is the transformation of the Palestinian economy since the Oslo Accords.

3. The Political Economy of the West Bank: Fragmentation, Neoliberal Restructuring, & the Formation of the Capitalist Class

Before looking inwards at PA neoliberal reform I will first briefly explain how the West Bank has become spatially and socially fragmented through the Oslo process. The fragmentation and bantustanization of the West Bank that can be witnessed today is a direct result of the Oslo II agreement that was signed by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1995. This agreement partitioned the West Bank into areas A, B, and C with area A under Palestinian control, area B under Palestinian civil control/Israeli security control, and area C under complete Israeli control (see table 1). Successive negotiations throughout the 1990s (Wye River (1998) and Sharm El-Sheikh

(1999) memorandums) resulted in minor readjustments of land allocation under areas A, B, and C. While the negotiations over these areas were intended to be a temporary solution during a five-year interim period in the latter half of the 1990s, the negotiations came to a halt and have not been revised since 1999.

Land use for 70% of area C is for settlements, military zones, and nature reserves – all of which are off limits to Palestinians (PASSIA 2012). The remaining 30% of area C is where approximately 300,000 Palestinians reside (B’Tselem). Within this 30%, Palestinian construction is highly restricted by Israel’s Civil Administration (CA), where less than 1% of the land has been approved for development (PASSIA 2012).¹⁴ Often times, Palestinians residing in area C have to resort to building without a permit and are therefore subject to routine house demolitions by the Israeli military. As a consequence, Palestinians are left only to build in areas A and B. Furthermore, the non-contiguous nature of these areas has resulted in intensified Palestinian urbanization and population growth that are concentrated in the archipelagos of areas A and B.

TABLE 1.

Oslo II Fragmentation of the West Bank <i>(As of the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum, 1999)</i>			
	% of West Bank	Civil Control	Security Control
Area A	17.2%	Palestinian	Palestinian
Area B	23.8%	Palestinian	Israeli
Area C	59%	Israeli	Israeli

Source: PASSIA 2012

¹⁴ Many Palestinian communities in area C are intentionally kept impoverished where they lack electricity, adequate roads, and a reliable supply of water. In what has been called the “silent transfer,” these conditions have led an unknown number of Palestinians living in area C to relocate to areas A and B (PASSIA 2012).

The spatial fragmentation of Palestinian land has also had a transformative impact on the Palestinian economy. As a result of this fragmentation, Raja Khalidi and Qossay Alsattari (2014) discern multiple Palestinian economies that work in relation to the central Israeli economy. They cite the economies of Ramallah, Hebron, Area C, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the economy that exists between the Jenin-Nablus region and the Arab Galilee, and the Arab economy that works inside Israel (9). Each of these Palestinian economies are peripheral and subordinate to the dominant Jewish-Israeli economy (9). Since the Israeli shekel is the main currency, despite the widespread use of US dollars and Jordanian dinars in the West Bank, monetary policies such as inflation, circulation, interest rates, and exchange rates are all regulated by Israel.

An examination of the economic transformations and conditions in which Palestinian development occurs is pivotal to understanding the *how* and *why* of urban development in Palestine. Sara Roy's concept of *de-development* is an ideal starting point for a discussion on the political economy of Palestine because it lays bare Israel's colonial-economic structure in the Gaza Strip a few years before the Oslo Accords were signed. While Roy's analysis focuses solely on the Gazan economy, the processes she describes and the conclusions she makes can similarly be applied to the economy of the West Bank.

As a basic definition, Roy (1987) defines de-development as "a process which undermines or weakens the ability of an economy to grow and expand by preventing it from accessing and utilizing critical inputs needed to promote internal growth beyond a specific structural level" (56). She claims this is what Israel has produced in the Gaza Strip, where the Gazan economy is allowed to grow only in the way and extent that the

Israeli regime allows.¹⁵ She maintains that Israel's economic hegemony over the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip goes well beyond a dependency type of relationship by saying:

[...] preconditions of dependent development exist to such a low degree in the relationship between Israel and the Gaza Strip that not only is basic economic development suppressed inside Gaza, but so is dependent development itself. Therefore, in the absence of economic growth, even as achieved through dependent development, the distinguishing features of Gaza's economy increasingly become the erosion of its own internal economic base and its resulting dependency on Israel, both of which are indicators of economic de-development (58).

This, however, should not be interpreted as Israel having completely suppressed economic growth in Gaza, but rather as Israel having allowed the Gazan economy to grow only to the extent that it best serves the demands of the Israeli economy, primarily where Israel can draw from a pool of surplus wage laborers and export Israeli goods to Gaza. Roy goes on to make the point about economic growth in Gaza by saying, "it is possible to achieve certain forms of economic prosperity without any real economic development" (57). She frames this process as part of what Meron Benvenisti calls Israel's policy of "integration and exclusion," that is, Israel integrates the Gazan economy into its own when it is beneficial to Israel and excludes it when it is not (73).

While Roy lays the groundwork for examining the political economy of Palestine, her analysis still does not give an adequate explanation for Rawabi. Certain features of the Palestinian economy that relate to Rawabi are not addressed in her analysis. Most importantly there is no discussion of how the Palestinian economy has been integrated into global circuits of capital, nor does she speak of the role that

¹⁵ Much has happened in the Gaza Strip since Roy wrote her article, and later her book, on de-development in Gaza. In the aftermath of the 2008-09, 2012, and 2014 Israeli wars on Gaza, it has come to light that the Palestinians in Gaza have been reduced, in the most egregious of ways, to Giorgio Agamben's "bare life," where construction material allowed into the strip is counted by the ton and the amount of food let in is calculated by the caloric intake needed for Palestinians there to survive (Cook 2012).

Palestinian capitalists and the PA have played in shaping economic development in Palestine. Therefore, other authors need to be brought into the discussion to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the current Palestinian economy.

The liberalization of Arab economies is not a new phenomenon, and the beginning of this process can be traced at least as far back as Egypt's *infitah* in 1974, when Egypt's market was opened to the West (Adham 2005, 20; Mitchell 2002, 211). Neoliberal urbanism in the Arab world began to emerge during the 1980s and large-scale real-estate projects have proliferated since (Hanieh 2006). These projects are now ubiquitous in every country in the region, from Rabat, Cairo and Beirut to Amman (Bogaert 2012; Adham 2005; Makdisi 1997; Parker 2009). It is important to note that neoliberalism was not able to penetrate the Palestinian economy before the middle of the 1990s since, as mentioned in the previous discussion of Roy's de-development, the Palestinian economy was subject to the whim of Israel's economic dominance. Therefore, neoliberal ideology could not take hold in Palestine prior to the formation of the PA when the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993. This time period is a common starting point for most authors who write about Palestinian neoliberalism.

Adam Hanieh (2013) explains that the Oslo agreement was very much "suited to the capitalism of its time" and that there was no contradiction between Oslo style peace and colonialism (107). While the Oslo Accords were the political mechanism that opened Palestine to global capitalism, the return of the cadre of Palestinian transnational businessmen who were allowed to enter Palestine under the agreement provided the economic impetus for liberalizing the economy. Later, when Salam Fayyad was

appointed prime minister in 2007,¹⁶ neoliberal doctrine was embraced to such an extent that its influence could be found in nearly every sector of the Palestinian economy – anywhere from real-estate development, financial and banking services, the public sector, tax collection, security, education, telecommunications, and so on. The PA’s adoption of neoliberalism in the West Bank became so pervasive during this time that it came to be known colloquially as “Fayyadism.”

Raja Khalidi and Sobhi Samour (2011) effectively situate Palestinian neoliberalism within the context of the occupation while being careful not to fall into the trap of essentializing Palestinian neoliberalism as an (un)intended consequence of the occupation. Contrarily, their harshest criticism is reserved for PA decision makers who have been the vanguard for the West Bank’s path to neoliberalism. The Palestinian turn to neoliberalism, while it may be related to, should not be viewed as a direct result of the occupation but should be seen as the outcome of a series of local, regional, and global political-economic transformations and events that have occurred under globalization and after the Oslo Accords. The main point is that no single underlying reason can be attributed to the rise of Palestinian neoliberalism, but rather the explanation is more complex and nuanced. Hence, the choices made by top officials in the PA, particularly after the passing of Yasser Arafat in 2004, must not be neglected.

Khalidi and Samour (2011) assert that Palestinian economic reform is neither a substitution for statehood nor a way towards liberation. They analyze initiatives related to reducing public expenditure (austerity) and increasing tax revenues (13-14). Some of the mechanisms of Palestinian economic reform they mention are layoffs, hiring freezes, metering of utilities, more rigorous tax collection, the creation of industrial zones, and a

¹⁶ Fayyad was undemocratically appointed by President Mahmoud Abbas at the behest of Western donors, despite the fact that his Third Way party received only two percent of the vote in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections the previous year (Lunat 2010).

PA willingness to privatize anything. All of these initiatives are manifest in Salam Fayyad's Palestinian Reform and Development Plan for 2008-2010 (PRDP), which was presented at the December 2007 Paris Donor Conference. The announcement of the PRDP also coincided with Benjamin Netanyahu's "economic peace" strategy the previous year (Lunat 2010).

Fayyad's PRDP and his subsequent statehood plans (PNA 2009; PNA 2010) follow the logic that a Palestinian state will emerge if Palestinians can show the international community that they are mature enough to govern themselves via good governance, economic growth, and security. I will refer to this argument as the "state-building narrative" hereinafter. The recommendations in these plans embrace the adoption of neoliberal economic reforms that promote private sector intervention in the Palestinian economy and where a large portion of the PA budget is allocated to security resources. Fayyad being a former employee of both the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it should come as no surprise that the PRDP and statehood plans are largely an assemblage of WB and IMF recommendations (Khalidi and Samour 2011, 9; Hanieh 2011b, 100). A multi-donor WB trust fund was also created to ensure the successful implementation of the PRDP as well as that of the Palestinian National Development Plans that have been proposed by current prime minister Rami Hamdallah. The PRDP (2007) outlines a number of actions to be taken, least of which include: privatizing public services (37), implementing austerity measures (34) such as having a 3-year moratorium on public sector salaries and placing a hiring freeze on the public sector (42), installing 300,000 pre-paid electric meters by 2010 (84, 87), and nearly doubling the security budget (45). In describing the private sector as "the main engine of sustainable, long-term economic growth," the report seeks

to greatly expand the development of the Palestinian private sector so as to achieve an annual GDP growth rate of no less than 5% (64, 104-105).

Moreover, while the PA has implemented reforms to increase tax revenues, it has also conversely passed laws that give tax breaks to foreign companies that are invested in Palestine. For example, the 2011 Investment Law¹⁷ allows companies to take advantage of major tax incentives such as not having to pay taxes to the PA for up to a period of eleven years depending on the size of the investment.¹⁸ There is also a similar tax break scheme based on the number of local professionals that a company hires (U.S. State Department 2014, 7).

Ultimately, Khalidi and Samour (2011) state that the PA's reforms are "normalizing, depoliticizing, and neoliberalizing the Palestinian struggle" (16). These neoliberal programs opened the Palestinian economy to foreign investment and private sector development and provided a hospitable environment for the neoliberal state to take hold. They also opened the gate for several major urban development projects to take form, the most grandiose being Rawabi.

Hanieh (2013) notes that class formation and labor relations are not homogeneous, "class...is always a social relation, which is continually being made and remade in an ongoing process of accumulation and contestation" (6). Furthermore, he states, "in the Middle East context, as well as globally, class formation cannot be understood without tracing movements of people across and within borders – it is thus

¹⁷ This law is an amendment, issued by presidential decree, of the 1998 *Law on the Encouragement of Investment in Palestine*, Law No. 1. While the 2011 law does not give tax incentives to all businesses in the private sector, it does notably include real estate development projects such as Rawabi (U.S. Department of State 2014, 2-4).

¹⁸ An investment between \$250,000-\$1 million is exempted for seven years, between \$1 million-\$5 million is exempted for nine years, and any investment over \$5 million is exempted from paying taxes for eleven years (U.S. Department of State 2014, 7).

also marked by distinct and concrete relationships between geographical spaces. These processes need to be considered concurrently if a full picture of class formation is to be grasped” (7). It is for this reason that it is necessary to look at the development of class and labor relations on a case-by-case basis.

By pursuing the modal pathway of class formation, an idea, as seemingly foreign as Rawabi is to Palestine, can seem more or less a “natural” manifestation of global real estate development. When actors such as Palestinian capitalists from the *shattat* (diaspora), the IMF, the WB, and international donors/investors are brought together into the picture of development in the West Bank, the reproduction of the capitalist class through neoliberal urban development becomes a clearer process to unravel. Following Hanieh’s work on *Khaleeji Capital*, I will approach the issue of class formation in Palestine by looking at the role Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have had in shaping the Palestinian capitalist class. While I will briefly outline some main ideas in this section, the link between Khaleeji Capital and Rawabi will become more pronounced through the stakeholder analysis in chapter five.

In assessing the capitalist class in the GCC countries, Hanieh (2011a) uses the concept of the *internationalization of capital* as an analytical frame of reference, through which he integrates broader regional processes (19, 23-24). Internationalization of capital stems from capitalism’s aim of tearing down spatial barriers through technological innovations that reduce the amount of time needed to move commodities over different geographies. Technological innovations that have been made in communication, transport, and electronic banking have unquestionably aided this process. In their process of creating a frictionless and homogenous flow of commodities and surplus capital, coupled with a scaling-up in production, capitalists will eventually

come to realize that the national market that they are working in is no longer large enough to support the type of growth they seek and, therefore, the need to expand their reach across national borders and “internationalize” becomes apparent.

Hanieh describes the internationalization process as follows:

Because the aim of production under capitalism is not human happiness or the satisfaction of needs but the pursuit of profit, capitalists are forced to compete with each other or face being swallowed by a more successful rival. Those capitalists able to engage in large-scale investments generally out-perform smaller capitalists – they have better ability to produce cheaper commodities, swamp markets, and engage in price wars. One of the effects of this competition is an ever-growing increase in the scale of production. The increasing amount of capital, however, is amassed in fewer and fewer hands – a feature of capitalism described by Marx as the concentration and centralization of capital. (19-20)

For Hanieh, it is not just the scaling-up in production that makes capital internationalized, but the fact that the entire process of capital circulation is “conceptualized, produced, and realized” on an international scale (20).

Accordingly, the emergence of the capitalist class in the GCC and their integration into the international circuits of capital was first done through a process of *regionalization*, or intra-trade, in the GCC countries (24). As the markets in the GCC expanded, the capitalist class in this region became more of a reflection of the capitalist world market.

Hanieh (2011b) underscores the relevance of the State in mediating capital flows across and within national borders. Indeed, he notes, “that internationalised capital now depends on *all* states to ensure that the conditions of accumulation are met” (85).

Policies like trade agreements, low tax rates, relaxed labor laws, unregulated lending, and other “business friendly” laws have helped tear down spatial barriers to create a hospitable environment for capitalist growth on an international scale. Furthermore, he says, “while capital tends to expand and move at an ever-increasing pace across nation-state borders...the accumulation and production of value must necessarily take place in

territorially bounded and place-specific locations” (85). As it is largely fixed capital that produces value, the built environment and urban space increasingly takes center stage since the majority of value is produced in cities. Therefore, it is essential to investigate, on a national and local level, the political-economic networks that materialize in urban space.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize the “revolving door” between the state and the private sector. While Hanieh largely focuses on the interwoven relationship between class and state as it pertains to the GCC countries, he rightly extends this discussion to Palestine. In maintaining that class and state are two intertwining social relations that work within each other, Hanieh (2011a) asserts that in the GCC, as in other capitalist societies, the state should be considered an integral part of the dominant capitalist class (13-14). Or simply put, the demands of the capitalist class are met by the state. Whether or not state officials are participatory members of the capitalist class, they nonetheless “act to articulate and manage the interests of the capitalist class” (13). The importance of the relationship between class and state, as it relates to urban development, will be further unpacked in the following chapters on Rawabi.

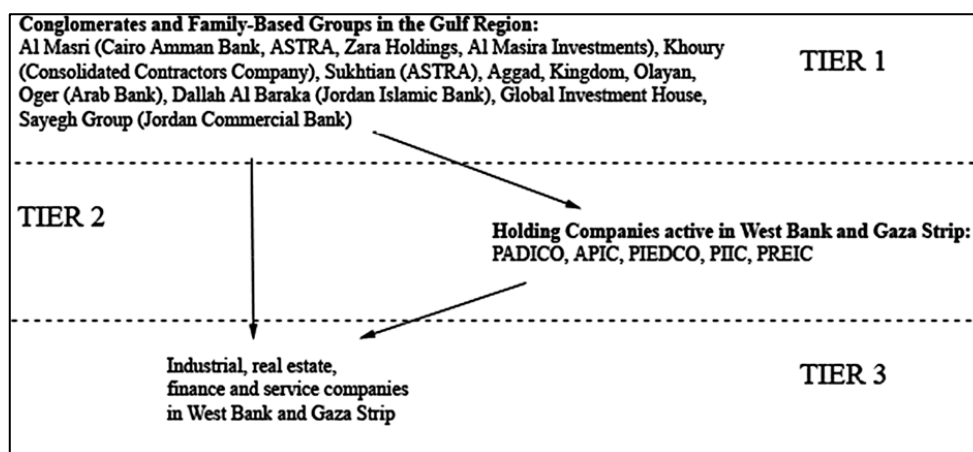


FIGURE 3. Ownership structure of the Palestinian capitalist class in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Hanieh 2011b: 92).

In turning to Palestine, Hanieh outlines two ways in which Khaleeji Capital has impacted economic development in the contemporary West Bank. The first is through direct investment in the private sector by Khaleeji Capital, whether through individual businesses or holding companies found in the West Bank. The second is through Palestinian capitalists whose main base of capital accumulation is situated in the Gulf states (2011a, 163-164). With regard to the latter, Hanieh describes how Palestinian capitalists who made their fortunes in the Gulf came to dominate the Palestinian economy after the signing of the Oslo Accords. He maps out and profiles major Palestinian capitalists' investments and businesses tracing the origins of their wealth from the Gulf to Palestine. Accordingly, he divides these capitalists into three interconnected ownership tiers, ranging from conglomerates to holding companies (see figure 3). It is significant to note that the majority of the companies he investigates are in fact family-owned companies.¹⁹ Ultimately, Hanieh concludes that nearly all of the major companies operating in the West Bank are controlled by either the first or second

¹⁹ Timothy Mitchell's (2002, 282-285) brief discussion on family-based conglomerates in Egypt evokes a *déjà vu* for what Hanieh describes is happening in the West Bank.

types of Khaleeji Capital (163-164). In chapter five, I will show how both types of Khaleeji Capital have facilitated the realization of Rawabi.

4. The Palestinian Middle Class: From a “Joyless Culture of Resistance” to a Culture of Conspicuous Consumption

The political and economic events that have been discussed in previous sections have had a deep, resounding social impact on the Palestinian middle class. Before delving into a discussion on how the middle class socially reproduces itself in the urban context, it is first important to trace more general social transformations that have occurred in Palestinian society from the years 1967-1993.

A first transformation is a transition from social reproduction grounded in peasant life to one that is based on abstract labor. On this point Hanieh (2013) states:

The overriding theme since the onset of Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967 has been the transformation of Palestinian society from a predominantly rural existence – with social reproduction centered around agriculture and the traditional authority structures of village life – to an incorporated, dependent, and subordinated appendage of Israeli capitalism. This mode of incorporation has underpinned a change in the social relations of the West Bank, characterized, on the one hand, by the proletarianization and dispossession of much of the West Bank population, and on the other, by the development of a tiny layer of Palestinian capital that articulates Israeli rule and whose accumulation is dependent on this mediating position. (100)

Once the Palestinian economy was integrated into the Israeli economy (*via* the occupation) in a highly disproportionate way, as has been observed in Roy’s analysis, Palestinian social reproduction was redefined in relation to the dominant political-economic structures of the occupation. As Hanieh notes, most Palestinians in the West Bank were relegated to wage laborers, while a handful actively collaborated with the Israeli regime which, in turn, formed the elite capitalist class (at least until 1993).

Salim Tamari (2009) insightfully corroborates this account and underscores two interconnected processes:

Although most Palestinians living in the West Bank today still reside in rural districts, they cannot be characterized as living in a peasant society, that is, a society deriving its livelihood from agriculture and organized around the family farm. The impact of this change, from a peasant society to a merely rural one, however, has been different for urban and rural areas. Two parallel processes relating to this change can be sketched here: *the urbanization of rural areas and the ruralization of towns*. (45; emphasis added)

In acknowledging the penetration of abstract labor into the Palestinian countryside,²⁰ it is the urban-rural dialectic Tamari highlights that is doubly important for a discussion on urban development and social reproduction in Palestine. Tamari puts forward several critical questions about the relationship between town and country and investigates the debate that has centered around a cultural definition of urbanity as it relates to Palestine (38-39). Interestingly, he suggests the emergence of “a new symbiotic relationship” where “the culture of rural society invaded the city, while ‘urban’ commoditization and monetization permeated rural society” (48).

Tamari attributes the urbanization of rural areas to several factors including the materialization of new sources of wage labor, remittances from relatives abroad, and the suburbanization of villages (45-46). He indicates the occurrence of an ideational exchange where urban centers serve as “centers for the diffusion of modern technology and international consumption patterns and behavioral norms into village society” (39).

As for the ruralization of urban areas, he notes that up until the year 2000, there was no noticeable increase of urbanization in the West Bank. Tamari cites the absence of a dominant urban center and the fact that population growth rates have remained at

²⁰ Salim Tamari contends this process started at a much earlier date and gained momentum shortly after World War I.

an even level between urban and rural areas (47). While the evidence is largely anecdotal, he contends that a significant number of villagers commute daily to urban centers for work, commerce, and real estate transactions opposed to taking up residence in the city (47). He also points to war relocations as an additional factor that has contributed to the ruralizing of Palestinian cities (i.e. forced migration of villagers to the city resulting from the 1948 and 1967 wars). Therefore, Tamari puts forward his notion of a “peasantized urbanity” where the urban-rural nexus “has produced in cities a normative system that is essentially a peasantized culture functioning in an urban context” (49). He concludes that “the values of small towns became the values of society in general” (55).

If Lefebvre’s notion that ‘social space is socially produced’ is true, it can then be said that Palestinian urban space, between 1967-1993, was an embodiment of peasant ethos, the absence of political leadership, and a local economy that is subject to the dominant colonial structures of the occupation. The period after Oslo then marks a departure from how space was previously constructed, as well as a transformation of the social relations embedded within it. This brings us to the second transformative phase, the emergence of what sociologist Lisa Taraki (2008) calls the “new middle class” and “new normal politics.” She describes how the post-Oslo Palestinian middle class has redefined what it means to be part of a “culture of resistance.” Taraki details the stark contrast of Palestinian self-expression during the intifada of 1987-1993 and again after Oslo:

[...] banning popular music, weddings, dance, fashionable dress, and all other trappings of “normalcy,” lack of seriousness, and frivolity in honor of martyrs and in respect for the sacrifices made by the thousands of detainees and the wounded. Only particular forms of artistic expression were permitted, largely infused with a peasant ethos and presented as “folklore.” Few dared to put forth alternative forms. But hardly a decade later, new ideas began to be articulated, and intellectuals and other

trendsetters, emboldened by the collapse of the nationalist “consensus” and the erosion of the “culture of resistance,” began to articulate not only new conceptions of “culture,” but new ideas of the place of art in resistance. With time, even recreation and entertainment were subsumed under “resistance.” (77)

During the intifada, political activism against the Israeli occupation was widely accepted by Palestinian society, while a deviation from conservative social norms was not.²¹ Today, almost a complete reversal of this can be observed. One reason for this transformation can be attributed to the instrumental role the PA has played. That is, under the neoliberal PA, political activism of any kind is typically discouraged if not outright repressed by the security forces (Purkiss and Nafi 2015). The appearance of good governance, a democratic rule of law, and political stability needs to be projected to international donors and organizations in order for them to continue funding the PA and various projects in the West Bank.²²

On the other hand, the PA has encouraged the advancement of a more liberal society that is more in line with Western culture and conspicuous consumption. This phenomenon can be witnessed in Ramallah’s built environment as venues for leisure and entertainment have proliferated across the city. The result has been the materialization of spaces that mirror the consumption patterns of the upper-middle and capitalist classes such as upscale cafes, five-star hotels, restaurants, discos, towers filled with high-end retail stores, and luxury housing that prices out most Palestinians. As we will see shortly, this capitalist production of space is not limited to the confines of the

²¹ This, in what Tamari (2009) calls, “joyless culture of resistance” seemed to transcend all class levels. A case in point is that Bashar Masri, Rawabi’s developer, has claimed in media appearances that he was arrested by Israeli security for being a stone thrower in the 1970s. While it was socially acceptable for him to engage in this activity, it would have been impossible for numerous reasons, least of all socially, for him or any other Palestinian capitalist to introduce a development project like Rawabi during this time.

²² The adoption of international corporate language with key phrases such as “good governance,” “rule of law,” “best practice,” and “security/stability” can be found in virtually every Palestinian National Development Plan that has been published by the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development.

city but has interestingly engulfed the countryside as well.



FIGURE 4. A banner advertising a comedy festival outside the Mövenpick Hotel in Ramallah, July 2015 (Photo by Author).



FIGURE 5. Skate park at Yousef Qadura Park in Ramallah, August 2015 (Photo by Author).

A secondary explanation for the change that Taraki describes can be attributed to the fruition of a new social dynamic found within the middle class. The Palestinian new middle class that can be seen today in the West Bank was born out of the homogenous “joyless culture of resistance” (Tamari 2009, 23-24) that prevailed during the first intifada. The shift in middle class aspirations and dispositions from the first intifada is the impetus for what Taraki (2008) calls the new normal politics, which is “a new, deradicalized politics of normality” (69). The ascension of the new normal politics is a critique of the cultural austerity of the first intifada as well as a rejection of conservatism and Islamism (71, 77).

According to Taraki, the driving force of the new normal politics is an amalgamation of middle-class professionals, former members of popular organizations, and academics involved with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (69). Through their activism for social, political, and economic rights, these actors present themselves as the “voice of civil society,” which contrasts sharply with the organization and politics of the first intifada (70). So it is through this “new normal politics” paradigm that the new middle class has created new ways to resist, many of which are aligned to the cultural markers of a globalized petit bourgeois and an attempt to maintain a kind of normalcy in everyday life. Activities that are now considered to fall under “resistance” can include festivals, concerts, cultural events, non-invasive types of protests, and children’s face painting at street demonstrations (77-78).

In tandem with Taraki’s explanation for the emergence of the new normal politics, Nasser Abourahme (2009) observes how, in recent years, Palestinian capitalists from the diaspora and from the upper-middle class have also had a significant impact in transforming the West Bank for what they believe Palestine should look like, both in the

built environment as well as socially. This class of diasporic Palestinians has created new subjectivities of consumption and taste that are more aligned with Western culture and are indicative of the prerogatives of the new middle class (505).

In continuing with Taraki (2008), she situates the advancement of the new middle class into a broader regional process and, at the same time, lists some of its defining characteristics by saying:

In our case, the “legitimate” culture that is the point of reference for the aspiring is neither an indigenous bourgeois culture, nor is it a legitimate culture in society at large. This culture is the hybridized culture of what we may call a trans-Arab upper middle class, a culture sought after and honed with considerable effort, diligence, and often sacrifice. The hallmarks of this culture are the symbolic (linguistic and behavioral) and material markers of distinction and are acquired in a multiplicity of sites, the most important of which are private schools, music academies, fitness centers, foreign and local cultural centers, cinema clubs, resorts, and for the more fortunate, international conferences and meetings. It may be added that in this respect, the Palestinian upper-middle-class culture is part and parcel of the trans-Arab culture of the same class being crafted and nurtured in the more “globalized” cities such as Cairo, Beirut, or, more recently, Amman. (73)

It is important to note that while the new middle class has a presence in various cities across the West Bank, a majority of the members of this class have coalesced in the conurbation of Ramallah. Ramallah is where the seat of the PA resides, is home to a plethora of NGOs, and is the main economic center, but it has also become the site of intensified internal immigration in the past decade – all of which has contributed to the city becoming a mini-metropolis (65-67).

The springing up of upscale neighborhoods in Ramallah, like Tireh and Masyoun, have served as the nesting ground for the new middle class. The twin city of Al-Bireh is another site that spatially reproduces this class.²³ Furthermore, the new

²³ While new spaces are being produced in the city to accommodate this class, the gentrification of older neighborhoods is almost non-existent. There are several reasons for this phenomenon, but an analysis of this is outside the scope of this research. Part of the explanation for a lack of gentrification has to do with

middle class has also found respite in the countryside. In recent years, numerous housing projects have been built on either agricultural or what was considered to be “unproductive” lands (Yaser 2015). The commodification of land in the countryside has contributed to both the parceling of land for middle class families to build on as well as for mega projects like Rawabi and Jericho Gate to take form.²⁴ This outward trajectory of development is urbanizing the rural in a very tangible and concrete way and appears to be the new paradigm of development in Palestine for the years to come. It is a kind of reversal from what Tamari described previously; instead of the peasant invading the city, the city has now come to invade the rural. Rawabi is very much part and parcel of this process.

As has been shown through Tamari and Taraki, Rawabi’s emergence fits into a social process that has been unfolding in the West Bank for the past two decades, a process that has become normalized to such an extent that Rawabi cannot be considered something all that foreign in present-day Palestinian society. This is true, at least for those who currently make up the upper-middle class, and for those who aspire to be a part of this class in the future.

the tastes of the new middle class as well as the extremely high price of real estate in and around the city center. In short, the addition of new neighborhoods has contributed to urban sprawl in the Ramallah area.

²⁴ Jericho Gate is an urban development project in Jericho that is being developed by PADICO, the largest holding company in the West Bank, whose chairman is Munib Masri. It is expected to be two to five times larger than Rawabi in terms of capital expenditure.

CHAPTER III: RAWABI'S URBAN FORM



FIGURE 6. Rawabi construction site, July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).

A. Introduction

The socio-spatial analysis of Rawabi seeks to disentangle the conceived space of Rawabi's urban landscape and to challenge some of the developer's assertions. This will be presented in two chapters. This chapter will engage with Rawabi's urban form while the following chapter focuses on planning. While the literature review outlined many important transformations that have occurred in the West Bank during the post-Oslo period, this has only provided the background and context in which Rawabi has emerged. The *why* and *how* of the project has yet to be answered; that is, why was Rawabi conceived, how was it conceived, and how did it come to fruition? Therefore,

these two chapters and the following chapter on Rawabi's political-economic network (chapter five) seek to answer these questions.

Thus, Rawabi will be examined through a multifaceted socio-spatial analysis that invokes the concepts of conceived space, abstract space, and neoliberalism – previously described in the theoretical framework. Drawing from Lefebvre's social space, I will approach Rawabi's conceived space by focusing on five features of the project, which are as follows: After presenting a brief profile of the project, this chapter will primarily focus on Rawabi's urban form by 1) exploring the project's suburban typology and contrasting it to how Palestinian space has historically been produced and 2) briefly presenting some of the ways Rawabi's advertising and stagecraft has appropriated Palestinian culture and identity to market Rawabi to Palestinians. In continuing with the socio-spatial analysis, the subsequent chapter will then 3) situate Rawabi's conceived space within the context of other architectural and planning approaches before explicitly defining Rawabi's conceived space, 4) explore how Rawabi has been planned as a node of capital accumulation, and 5) examine how Rawabi has been designed to socially engineer a new Palestinian subject through its architecture.

While the focus of the socio-spatial analysis will be to answer the *why* and *how* of Rawabi, this analysis also hopes to show: the ways in which Rawabi was conceived and planned, provide greater insights into the developer's motivations and purpose for the project, highlight Rawabi's own imagined geographies, challenge some of the developer's assertions, and emphasize some of the socio-economic consequences a project like Rawabi will have on Palestinians.

B. Rawabi Profile



FIGURE 7. Model display of Rawabi in visitor's center, July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).

The Rawabi urban development project was proposed at the 2008 Palestine Investment Conference in Bethlehem, which was presided over by former prime minister Salam Fayyad. The conference was sponsored by local Palestinian companies as well as by international organizations like US defense contractor Booz Allen Hamilton, the British Department for International Development (DFID), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The head of the Quartet, Tony Blair, was also in attendance. The message of the conference was “you can do business in Palestine.”

Before the investment conference, the Rawabi project was first conceived in 2007 in close collaboration between Palestinian-American entrepreneur, Bashar Masri,²⁵ and a British based pro-business “action tank” (opposed to a think tank) called

²⁵ The Masri family is the wealthiest Palestinian family in the West Bank and Bashar is the nephew of Munib and Sabih al-Masri, whose fortunes are directly connected to Gulf capital. After the Oslo Accords were signed, all three Masri's followed Yasser Arafat to the West Bank along with other Palestinian entrepreneurs from the diaspora. Bashar made his fortune in low-income housing projects in Morocco as

The Portland Trust (TPT), which has offices in London, Ramallah, and Tel Aviv.²⁶ The chairman of TPT's Ramallah office, Palestinian businessman Samir Hulileh, contacted Bashar Masri in 2007 about plans for such a project (Segel et al. 2014, 2-3). While Masri had already conceived of Rawabi, since their initial meeting TPT has provided institutional support and resources for the Rawabi project. TPT also played a crucial role in the realization of Rawabi by lobbying support for the project from both the Israeli government and the PA. Additionally, it was through TPT's chairman, venture capitalist Ronald Cohen, that Masri was introduced to architect Raffie Samach, who worked at US based firm Architecture, Engineering, Construction, Operations, and Maintenance (AECOM) (Segel et al. 2014, 2-3). Through this connection, Samach, in collaboration with professionals from Birzeit and An-Najah universities and Bayti's in-house team of architects, created the Rawabi master plan – all of which was funded by TPT.²⁷ The urban form of Rawabi's master plan has been a topic of contention and is something that I will discuss in more detail when I examine Rawabi's architecture later in this chapter.

In order to finance the Rawabi project, Bashar Masri also had to collaborate with Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company (Diar). Diar is the real estate branch of the

well as other real-estate projects in Libya, Jordan, and Egypt (Segal et al., 2014). To help the financing of these projects, he was able to procure USAID contracts.

²⁶ Launched in 2003, The Portland Trust has fully committed itself to the promotion of Benjamin Netanyahu's and Salam Fayyad's "economic peace" initiative. The ethos of this initiative seeks to disregard the politics of Israel's occupation in favor of economic and security collaboration between the PA and the Israeli government. Hence, the stated mission of TPT is to "promote peace and stability between Israelis and Palestinians through economic development" where it seeks to do this by working with "a range of partners to help develop the Palestinian private sector and relieve poverty through entrepreneurship and social investment in Israel" (Portland Trust). One of the primary ways it does this is through the promotion of real-estate investment projects in the West Bank (Segel et al. 2014, 2).

²⁷ Experts at An-Najah University also conducted an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for Rawabi and many of the engineers, architects, and other professionals involved with the project are graduates from Birzeit University.

Qatari government, which falls under the auspices of the Qatar Investment Authority and is overseen by the Qatari Minister of Finance. Masri’s company, Massar International, and Diar came together to form Bayti Real Estate Investment Company (which will be referred to as Bayti hereinafter), which is the development company that is overseeing the planning and progress of Rawabi. Even though Masri is the public face of the project and Massar is financing a small portion of the project, it is Diar that is the main benefactor where it is financing nearly all of the construction costs of the project.²⁸

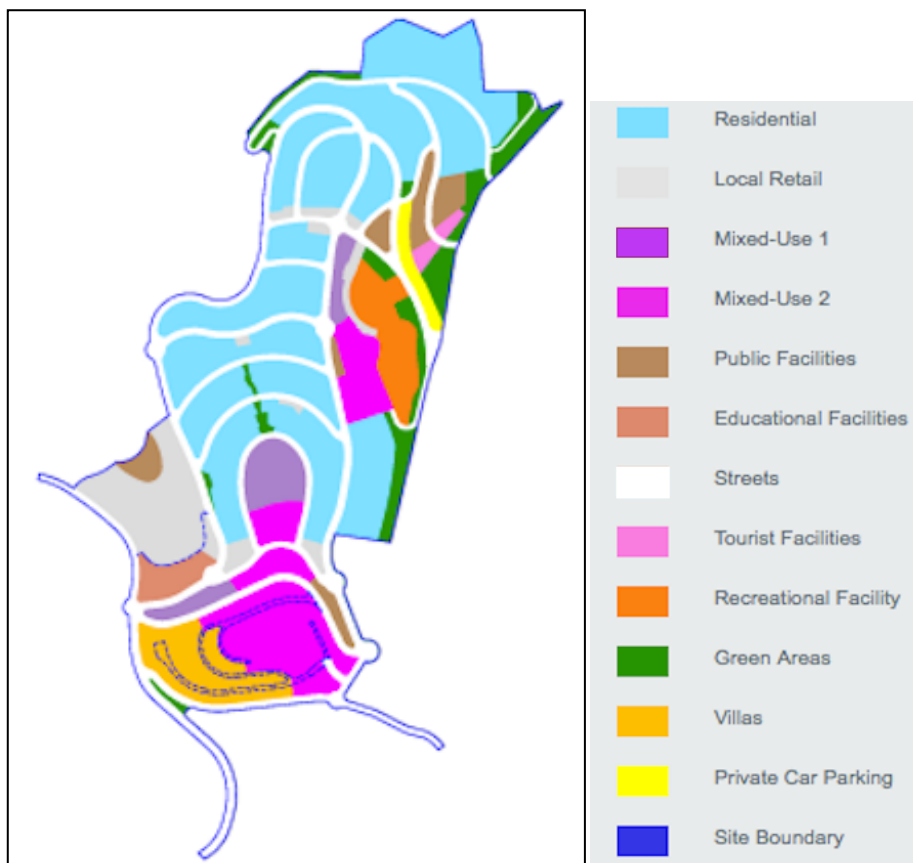


FIGURE 8. Rawabi Master Plan (accessed March 2016) (www.rawabi.ps).

²⁸ There have been conflicting statements on how much Massar and Diar are each investing in the Rawabi project. A USTDA document states that one-hundred percent of the construction costs will be covered by Diar (USTDA 2010, Annex 2-2). Another report states that Massar is contributing \$75 million to the project (Segel et al. 2014, 7). Additionally, journalists covering Rawabi have also stated that Massar is financing one-third of the project (Reguly 2017; Kershner 2013).

Construction on the project began in early 2010 after the PA approved the master plan the previous year (see figure 8). While the initial 2008 projected costs for the project were around \$350 million, it will now exceed \$1 billion, which makes it, by far, the largest private sector real-estate project in the West Bank. The project has also received funding from USAID and the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) that has gone toward the construction of a retaining wall and the building of Rawabi's internal roads (USAID 2013a), feasibility studies, and the development of an information and communications technology (ICT) master plan for the city (Consulate General 2010a, 2010b). While the PA initially promised \$140 million towards Rawabi's infrastructure and public buildings through a 2008 public-private partnership (PPP) signed with Bayti, it now appears to be uncommitted to fulfill this promise.²⁹



FIGURE 9. Regional map of Rawabi (RTI International 2008).

²⁹ As I was told during my first trip to Rawabi with the geography group, part of the rationale for the PA's about-face was that it did not see why it should direct government funds toward building schools in an empty city when current schools were already faced with severe deficiencies and demanded more immediate attention.

Rawabi, meaning “hills” in Arabic,³⁰ is located 9 kilometers north of Ramallah (see map in figure 9). The land for the project was carved out of territory located mostly in area A of the West Bank from the three surrounding villages of Ajul, Abwein, and Attara (see figures 10 & 11). In a few years time, Masri was able to obtain 6,300 dunums of land or 1,560 acres; for the land he was unable to purchase from private owners, a 2009 eminent domain decree issued by President Mahmoud Abbas allowed him to acquire the rest of the land he wanted through expropriation (*istamlak*) (see appendix 1).

In 2013, the PA approved the Rawabi municipality (see appendix 2), which allows Bayti to control zoning, tax collection, and the city budget, among two dozen other privileges (Signoles 2010, 52-54). The municipal council was appointed (not elected) by Bayti and consists of members from the public and private sectors. The only legal standing for the creation of such a municipality, in a city without residents, is a broad interpretation of a 1997 law on municipalities. Municipal status is generally granted only after a population reaches a certain threshold, which is then classified A, B, C, or D according to the number of inhabitants (24).³¹ Therefore, the granting of municipal status to Rawabi, before the city had any residents, is unprecedented in Palestinian history. On my second visit to Rawabi, I was told that once the city had

³⁰ According to a *Haaretz* article, “Bashar Masri had several options to choose from when it came to picking a name for the new Palestinian city he is building from scratch on a hilltop in the occupied West Bank. Salam (peace) and Amal (hope) were considered, while Jihad (Holy War) and Kifah (Struggle) were also suggested by Palestinians in a questionnaire he commissioned. But it was a friend who came up with the name he eventually went for - a neutral one with no political connotations: Rawabi. The word means ‘hills’ in Arabic and, explains the Palestinian businessman, reflects the typical West Bank topography of the idyllic, olive-green, ochre-brown and limestone-pale slopes some 9 kilometers north of the central city of Ramallah. ‘I didn’t want to give it a political name, not even peace, not even hope. I didn’t want to give anyone false expectations. This is about our right to live a normal life, despite the occupation,’ Masri says” (DPA 2010).

³¹ Category A is greater than 15,000 inhabitants, B is between 10,000-15,000 inhabitants, C is between 5,000-10,000 inhabitants, and D is between 1,000-5,000 (Signoles 2010, 24).

5,000 residents elections would then be held to elect a new municipal council.

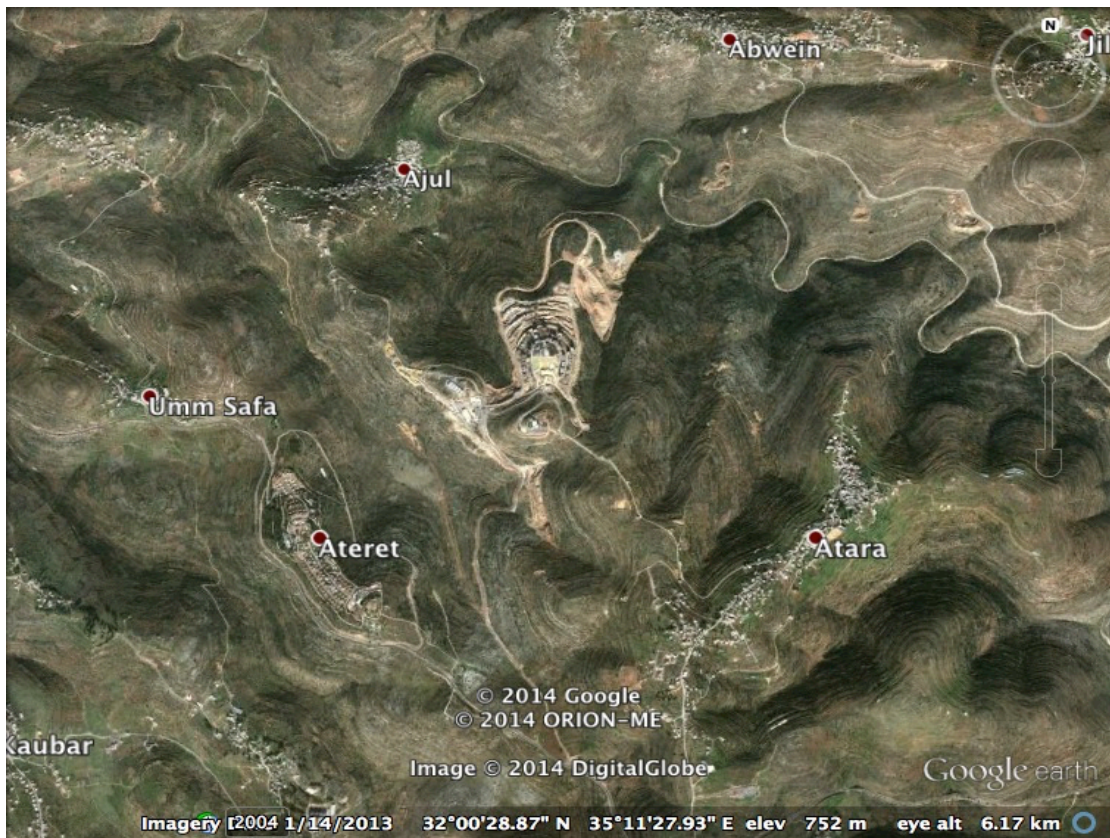


FIGURE 10. Local map of the Rawabi construction site. The surrounding villages of Atara, Abwein, Ajul, and Umm Safa can be seen, as well as the Israeli settlement of Ateret. (*Google Earth, 2014*).

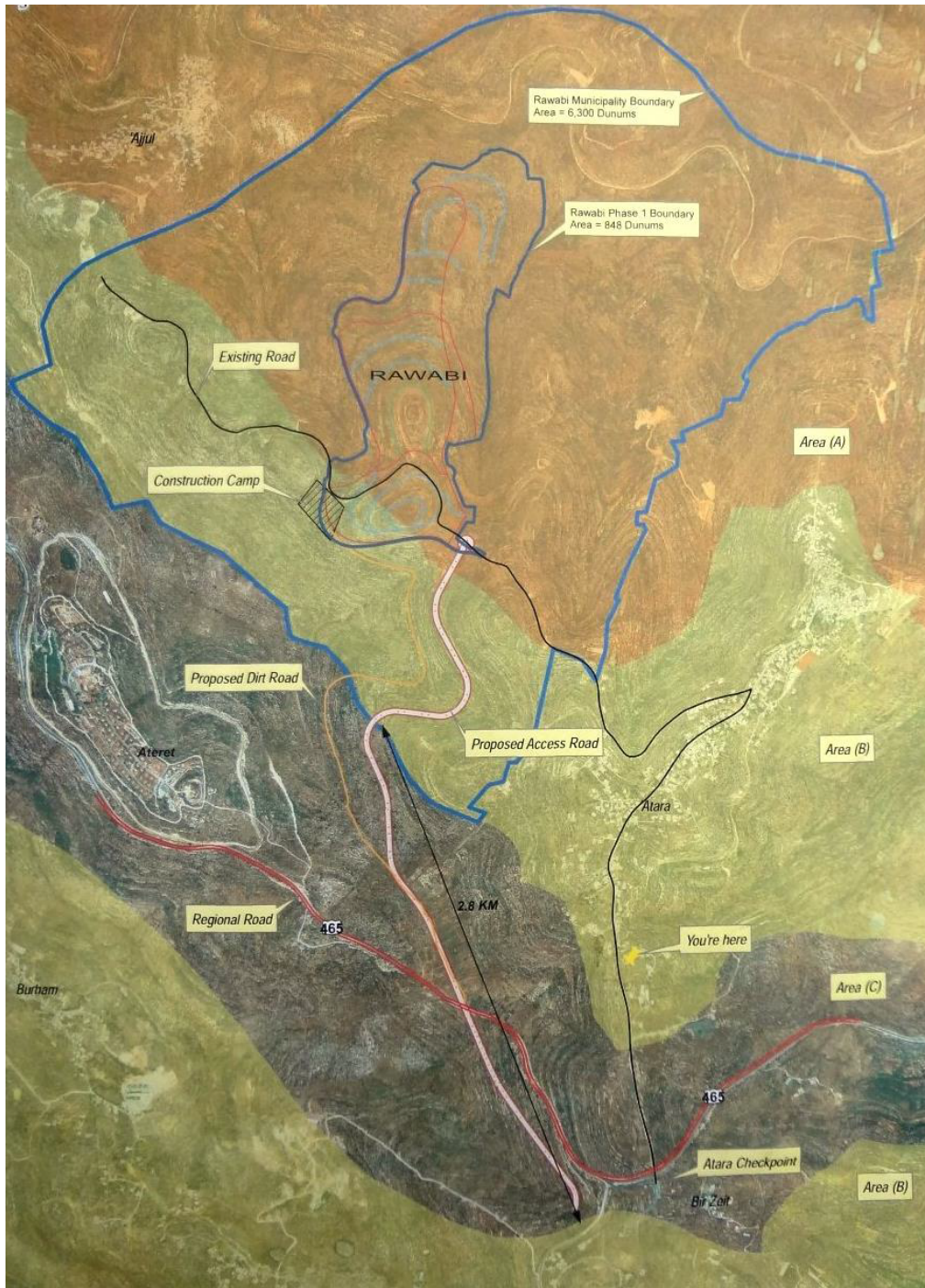


FIGURE 11. Municipal boundary of Rawabi situated in Areas A and B (Segel et al. 2014).

Rawabi is to be constructed in three phases, with the final phase to be completed by the year 2020. The first phase was expected to be complete by the summer of 2013, but the project has faced several delays, the largest being its water issue, which was

eventually resolved in 2015. Phase I sits on approximately 1,000 dunums that will consist of 5,000 residential units to accommodate 25,000 residents. Each of the 23 planned residential neighborhoods in Rawabi will consist of 10-20 buildings. Each building is between seven to nine floors with two apartments per floor, which translates to 14-18 apartments per building. Apartment sizes range from 95m² – 350m² and larger 500m² townhouses have also been built for purchase. Each neighborhood has been designed as a cul-de-sac with wide cobblestone roads to reduce and slow traffic flow.³²

Currently, two neighborhoods and over 650 apartments have been built for the first 5,000 residents. While the city is mostly vacant, a handful of the first residents moved into the city toward the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. When all three phases are complete, Rawabi will include 10,000 residential apartments to house 40,000 inhabitants. Phase I will contain: a commercial center downtown, a mall with other retail shopping, a hotel, restaurants, a 3-D cinema, an exhibition hall, a public library, a cultural center, a post office, a court house, a municipality building, several private schools, fire and police stations, medical facilities, two mosques, a church, an outdoor amphitheater, a football field, and a water park.

While Rawabi will be the first planned Palestinian city, it will also be a modern city with the introduction of new technology that cannot be found elsewhere in the West Bank. Every edition of the developer's newsletter, *Rawabi Home*, highlights the use of new technology that is being used for the project. The city's water, electricity, and natural gas lines will all be buried underground, which is a first for any Palestinian city.

³² A notable "success story" in the West Bank was the reconstruction of the Jenin refugee camp. After the Israeli military demolished the majority of the camp in 2002, the camp was redesigned with wide easily accessible roads to accommodate Israeli tanks for the next invasion (Weizman 2007). Upon observing Rawabi's roads during my site visit, it is evident that Rawabi's planners have incorporated this aspect into the city's design.

A fiber optic cable for high-speed internet will also run beneath the city. Rawabi will have its own wastewater treatment plant and its own electric grid. Even the roads within Rawabi have been designed to prevent flooding during the rainy season by incorporating a drainage system so runoff flows down into the valley. The plan for Rawabi's commercial center is to make it the largest ICT hub in the West Bank, where Masri seeks to attract international information technology (IT) firms such as Google and Microsoft as well as local IT firms (Schienberg 2014). Rawabi has additionally been touted as an "eco-friendly" or "green" city by its developer. Some of the green technologies that will be used are solar panels to provide hot water and heating for the apartments, an electric wind turbine behind the visitor's center, hookup stations for electric vehicles, a system to recycle rainwater as well as the above mentioned wastewater treatment plant (located 1.5 km from Rawabi), the use of insulation in buildings, and a public transportation system that is run on electric vehicles. Undoubtedly, the integration of all this technology is about creating a new urban modern in Palestine with the expectation that it will attract future residents and potential investors.

C. The Palestinian Village Reincarnate or a Pastiche of the Israeli Settlement?

The involvement of international firms in planning large mixed-use urban development projects across the Middle East is ubiquitous and instances of this can be found in projects like Dreamland in Egypt (FORREC/DDG) (Adham 2005), the Abdali project in Amman (Planning Alliance/Bearing Point/OGER) (Parker 2009), Solidere in Beirut (Dar al-Handasah/OGER) (Makdisi 1997), and the Bouregreg Valley project in Morocco (Foster + Partners) (Bogaert 2012). More often than not, the developers of

these types of projects attempt to create a veneer of cultural authenticity whereby merging the modern with the traditional. This is largely done through slick marketing campaigns and cultural appropriation. Once the localized features of these projects have been stripped away, what is left is a generic typology of internationalized development that is oriented toward rent extraction and other methods of capital accumulation like high-end consumption, entertainment, and tourism.³³ In this respect, Rawabi is no different. The topology of Rawabi, reduced to its most basic form, is little more than a foreign imprint of globalized capital on the Palestinian landscape, i.e. a manifestation of globalized capital reproducing itself through neoliberal urbanization.

Bayti has spent over \$20 million on an advertising campaign to promote Rawabi (Segel et al. 2004, 14), an amount unprecedented in the West Bank.³⁴ Through its marketing narrative, Bayti has crafted a hybrid-identity for the project where there has been a reimagining of the land; a duality that states Rawabi is the purveyor of modernity to Palestinians while at the same time the project is an embodiment of traditional Palestinian culture and values. This narrative can be easily observed in Rawabi's quarterly newsletter, *Rawabi Home*, and on its website. Through this discourse, Bayti has presented a narrative that romanticizes the Palestinian countryside (see figure 13). While it attempts to bridge the gap between a nostalgic peasant past and a new urban modern by creating an artificial sense of history that will resonate with its inhabitants, it is also emblematic of the earlier noted cultural schism between the new middle class and Palestinian society before the formation of the PA. In reinforcing Tamari's claim of a peasantized urbanity, Bayti does not invoke the past to advance a new development

³³ Rami Daher (2008, 60-61) calls this veneer "Disney-like" and states that the type of architecture these projects embody is "a poor and unsophisticated understanding of a mythical Orient."

³⁴ During my visit to the West Bank in 2015, not only did I see advertising for Rawabi in the urban areas, but in the villages and along side the roads as well.

paradigm, but it instead goes to what is already in the present and an inseparable part of the national identity, which is the Palestinian village. Therefore, not only is Bayti trying to compete for the residents of Ramallah and other cities in the West Bank, but it has also set itself up against the Palestinian village.

The discourse presented by Bayti in its promotional material is both contradictory and self-cannibalizing. While Rawabi emphasizes the bucolic countryside, the project simultaneously swallows up the countryside becoming the antithesis of what it says it is a part of (see figure 12). In another instance on the Rawabi website, a description of the city highlights the panoramic views of the Mediterranean coastline from its hilltops, all the while omitting the fact that the land in this view was stolen and that Palestinians are prohibited from entering it. While these are two examples of Bayti attempting to align itself with Palestinian cultural subjectivities, I will come back to examine Bayti's cultural appropriation in greater depth towards the end of this chapter.



FIGURE 12. Rawabi advertisement that says “the nicest view on top of the hill.” (www.rawabi.ps)



FIGURE 13. Examples from *Rawabi Home* using the Palestinian countryside in its marketing. (*Rawabi Home Autumn 2012; Spring 2014; Summer 2015*)

While Palestinians are sure to see through these types of discursive gymnastics, I believe it nonetheless plays powerfully in the minds of Palestinians who actively seek social mobility.³⁵ The fact that Rawabi is not a village or even a part of the countryside is not lost on Palestinians, but the advertising nonetheless helps provide a justification to themselves that they are not completely foregoing their Palestinian identity by moving to Rawabi. Ultimately, it begs the larger question of: What does it mean to be Palestinian in the contemporary West Bank? When utopian advertisements of what life can be like in Rawabi are ubiquitous and unavoidable, especially around Ramallah, the impetus for considering a move to Rawabi is indeed great.

³⁵ While I was not able to conduct interviews with middle class Palestinians living in the West Bank for this research, interviewing members of this class to gauge their perceptions of Rawabi is something that could be done in future research.

1. A Suburban (Post) Colonial Exchange



FIGURE 14. The design for Rawabi (left) was influenced by the Israeli settlement of Modi'in Illit (right) in the West Bank (*Google Earth, 2014*).

In looking at Rawabi's architectural form, Rawabi takes on a more suburban typology that is similar to the Israeli settlements situated on the hilltops of the West Bank. Indeed, it has been widely reported that Bashar Masri hired Israeli-Canadian architect Moshe Safdie, the main planner of the Israeli city of Modi'in (which extends into the West Bank and connects to the illegal settlement of Modi'in Illit), as a consultant and has taken several visits to Modi'in to study its architecture (Miller 2014). In fact, there are glaring similarities between Rawabi's master plan and the design of hilltop settlements as described by Eyal Weizman. In describing how Israeli architect Michael Boneh developed a general blueprint for settlement construction in the 1980s, Weizman (2007) states:

Boneh divided up the mountain area according to various topographical conditions, allocating a distinct settlement typology to each. In these formal codifications, which base the design of mountain settlements on distinct topographical conditions, the laws of erosion have seemingly been absorbed into the practice of urban design. The specific morphology of the hilltops on which settlements were to be designed became the blueprint for the layout of the settlement. According to this guideline, and following the principles tested by Leitersdorf in Ma'ale Adumim, the suburban layout of a mountain settlement typically follows a principle of 'concentric organization', in which the topographical contours of the map are retraced as lines of infrastructure. The roads are laid out in rings following the shape of the mountain to

create a complete circuit around the summit, with the water, sewage, electricity and telephone lines buried under them. The division of lots is equal and repetitive, providing small, private red-roofed houses positioned along the roads, against the backdrop of the landscape. (131)

Barring the red roofs, the comparison between Samach's description of Rawabi's master plan and Boneh's guidelines for settlements are explicit. Everything from the lateral rows of housing which follow the contours of the mountain, to the equal repetitive lots, to even the burying of utilities under ground have all been reproduced in similar fashion. Just as the Israelis have developed a blueprint to easily replicate their illegal settlements throughout the West Bank, Rawabi has borrowed this know-how to produce a similar suburban typology that can be mass-produced along with being financially economical. Once the prototype for the first Rawabi has been refined and perfected, it can then be endlessly and soullessly replicated on other tracts of land.

Weizman continues in his description of settlement strategies saying that:

Most often, settlement layouts aspire to create an 'ideal' circle around an elevated civic centre positioned on the summit (generally, it is the synagogue that stands at the centre of the settlement at the hilltop's highest point). But in reality, a settlement's contours are distorted by specific topographical morphology and by the constraints of land ownership [...] (131)

While its roads do not circumscribe the entire hill in a full circle, the concentric design of Rawabi is apparent. Rawabi's roads and rows of housing carefully follow the topography of the hill descending like steps. As is the case for most settlements, noted above, the contours of Rawabi are also subject to the constraints of land ownership and the topography of the hill on which it resides. The hill that Rawabi sits on is actually three conjoined hills, which makes a design for a master plan with complete concentric circles difficult to achieve. The opposite side of the hill, which faces away from Rawabi, is being used as a quarry to excavate the highly regarded "Jerusalem

stone” for the construction of the project. Instead of a synagogue located at the center like in the Israeli settlement, it is Rawabi’s commercial center that stands at the summit of the city – not a mosque. In a city built for profit, it is logical that the most central buildings are the ones that produce the most revenue.

Even higher still, on the adjacent slope that overlooks the city, is the visitor’s center. During my visits to Rawabi I was able to tour this facility. The visitor’s center is, by far, the most valuable building at this stage in the project and is central to Rawabi’s success. The state of the art center is meant to awe visitors and potential buyers alike. It is the place people first see when they visit Rawabi and it is where Rawabi’s image is on full display. It is also the site where contracts are signed and profits are made. In the center’s pristine showroom filled with models of the city there is a 3-D cinema that plays a promotional video for prospective buyers that tries to convince them that Rawabi offers the lifestyle they have been searching for. There is also an area where buyers can select the trim they want for their apartment in addition to a number of bank offices where future residents can take out a mortgage. Therefore, the visitor’s center is the lifeline for the city and it runs paramount to any other part of the project since its aim for the past few years has been to sell visitors on the idea of Rawabi even though the city has not yet been fully built.

The visitor’s center is also the place where thousands of Palestinians, Israelis, and foreigners have come to experience Rawabi for themselves. These visitors have ranged from dignitaries, politicians, delegations, businessmen, and famous personalities to journalists, students, academics, and researchers. The most important of whom have been prominently featured in Rawabi’s quarterly newsletter. The take away message for

these visitors is that the past goals of the Palestinian national movement³⁶ have now been replaced by the virtues professed in Fayyad's PRDP.



FIGURE 15. Israeli settlement near Jericho, July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).



FIGURE 16. Stone quarry on the Rawabi hillside, July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).

³⁶ The Palestinian national movement is the historical call for Palestinian liberation.



Figure 17. Back entrance of Rawabi's visitor's center, July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).

Another aspect about Rawabi's architecture is to mention how Rawabi has imitated the "optical urbanism" that is embedded in the design of Israeli settlements. Weizman again describes how the layout of settlements is conducive to maximizing the field of vision from the perspective of the settlers (131-132). In achieving greater visibility, the design of settlements seek to position the houses that are located in the innermost ring in between the gaps of the houses which make up the outermost ring (131). In addition to this, the living rooms in settlement houses are positioned facing out toward the direction of the slope of the hill so that surveillance from the settlement is focused outwards and downwards (131). Weizman states that settlement "geometric order seeks to produce what can in effect be understood as optical devices on a suburban scale" (131).

While Rawabi embraces the same typology of present-day settlements, as has been described by Weizman, it additionally uses the militarized architecture of verticality – not unlike the early Jewish “tower and stockade” settlements that could be found throughout mandate Palestine. While it is doubtful that Rawabi was intentionally designed around a military logic – opposed to a way that offers optimal views of the countryside for its residents – the architecture of the Israeli settlement has nevertheless become internalized in Rawabi’s design. An alternative explanation for Rawabi’s vertical architecture can perhaps be found in Lefebvre. Lefebvre (1991) offers his own assessment on the spectacle of verticality in urban architecture. Regarding this he states:

Verticality and great height have ever been the spatial expression of potentially violent power. This very particular type of spatialization, though it may seem ‘normal’ or even ‘natural’ to many people, embodies a twofold ‘logic’, which is to say a twofold strategy, in respect of the spectator. On the one hand, it embodies a metonymic logic consisting in a continual to-and-fro movement – enforced with carrot and stick – between the part and the whole. In an apartment building comprising stack after stack of ‘boxes for living in’, for example, the spectators-*cum*-tenants grasp the relationship between part and whole directly; furthermore, they recognize themselves in that relationship. By constantly expanding the scale of things, this movement serves to compensate for the pathetically small size of each set of living quarters; it posits, presupposes and imposes homogeneity in the subdivision of space; and, ultimately, it takes on the aspect of pure logic – and hence of tautology: space contains space, the visible contains the visible – and boxes fit into boxes. (98)

A final observation about verticality that I would like to make is to approach the built environment as a material representation of value. Harvey (2016c) lends his own interpretation to the ways in which value flows through the physical landscape of the city, where he sees the built environment as a form of value. On the basis that fixed capital is one of the central ways that capitalism produces value, then the higher the building, the more value it produces and, therefore, it ultimately becomes an expression

of capitalist power. This discussion on value is something I will return to later in the stakeholder analysis.

Rawabi's resemblance to an Israeli settlement has drawn much criticism from the Palestinian community (BDS Movement 2012). The fact that such a violent manifestation of urban architecture was used, and one that Palestinians have such an adverse relationship with, is indicative of Masri's intentions for the project. In opposition to an architecture that is more organic and indigenous, Masri has settled for a form that is associated with colonizing the hilltops of the West Bank. In this case, it is not an imperialist but a neoliberal colonization. As Christopher Parker (2009) acutely observes, "neoliberal 'invasions' thus ultimately depend on sites of occupation. And occupations signal not victory, but the onset of new struggles that in turn carve their own channels and narratives of connection" (113).

To conclude, this section has highlighted many of the ways Rawabi has embraced the architecture of the suburban Israeli settlement. Rather than attempting to blend into the surrounding environment like the traditional Palestinian village, Rawabi's form seeks to dominate it. It was by no coincidence that Masri decided upon this particular typology for the project; the people, organizations, and firms that Masri sought out and consulted with have greatly influenced Rawabi's design. It is evident that Rawabi has been inspired by the unique local context of the Israeli occupation and, more specifically, by the hilltop settlements in the West Bank. Instead of consulting with Palestinian architects or with local cultural heritage organizations, Masri chose to consult with Moshe Safdie about his experience designing Modi'in. Moreover, by contracting AECOM, a foreign international firm that has little to no knowledge of indigenous Palestinian architecture, to create Rawabi's master plan has inevitably led to

an architecture that privileges an internationalized suburban type of development over a design that spatially engages with Palestinian social reproduction. Instead, Rawabi's design tries to play into the aspirations of the Palestinian new middle class in their search for modernity and distinction.

1. A Familiar Morphology of the Palestinian Village

As described at the beginning of this section, Bayti has attempted to place Rawabi in competition with the space of the Palestinian village. Not only has it done this through its advertising, but also through claims that Bayti's planners have made. A claim that has been made by Rawabi's lead planner, Raffie Samach, asserts that the city's master plan incorporates aspects of the traditional Palestinian village. In describing his design for the master plan, Samach states that, in having to work with the challenging topography of the site, his solution was to orient "the bulk of the site's verticality along a single major road which encircles the city, [while] the rest of the master plan is organized into laterally-arranged neighborhoods which traverse the hill and simultaneously embrace and reconcile the challenging terrain" (SAMACH + SEO 2016). He goes on to claim that the neighborhoods in Rawabi have been designed to retain the feel of a small village and that the residential buildings in these neighborhoods have been designed in a way that results in a "perfect marriage of tradition and urbanization" (SAMACH + SEO 2016). In opposition to his account, the following will present a brief examination of the morphology of the traditional Palestinian village.

In contrast to Rawabi, the traditional Palestinian village should not be seen as something conceived but rather as a living form that evolves organically over space and

time. On this point, Lefebvre (1991) offers a description of peasant dwellings to help understand how space is produced in the village. Drawing from his spatial triad, Lefebvre largely invokes representational spaces and spatial practice (lived and perceived), as well as absolute space to characterize this space. On this, he states:

It [peasant dwellings] embodies and implies particular social relations; it shelters a family – a particular family belonging to a particular country, a particular region, a particular soil; and it is a component part of a particular site and a particular countryside. No matter how prosperous or humble such a dwelling may be, it is as much a work as it is a product, even though it is invariably representative of a type. It remains, to a greater or lesser degree, part of nature. It is an object intermediate between work and product, between nature and labour, between the realm of symbols and the realm of signs. (83)

In the past, the form that Palestinian villages assumed had been constructed in relation to the work and quotidian practices of the peasant. While there may be variances in the modes of production in each village there are some general features that can be observed.³⁷ For example, villages found in the Nablus/Jenin region are generally located near the valleys (not in the valleys) or on the sides of hills, near the most fertile soil where the fields are, working their way up the hillside – they do not start on the top of the hill and work their way down. Contrarily, the hillside and summits are used largely for grazing. Houses positioned higher up the hillside were usually inhabited by more affluent families. Overall, the arrangement of houses follows a more organic pattern.

On the topic of village morphology, Suad Amiry and Vera Tamari (1989) state that, “settlement pattern was determined by the scarcity of fertile lands in the hilly regions, the fear of Bedouin raids and the land tenure system which did not allow

³⁷ For example, smaller villages may be oriented towards subsistence farming while larger villages may generate commercial activity, produce cash crops, and serve as regional administrative centers for smaller satellite villages. Amiry and Tamari (1989) mention that there are also “throne villages” which took on a more political significance.

private or public building on the valuable agricultural land in the valleys or plains. The only structures built on the terraces were field storage houses (*qusūr*)” (11).³⁸ The authors continue on to say that, “today [speaking from the year 1989] the settlement pattern of Palestinian villages is very different. Neighboring villages are not as distinctly separated, and the new, fashionable houses are now built away from the village core, and spread along major routes, often linking up with neighboring villages” (11).

Moreover, the tallest, most central structure in the village is the minaret of the mosque or the steeple of the church. Homes in the village take the form of houses, opposed to apartments, and the number of floors are typically limited to just the ground floor but occasionally some will have two or three floors. Often times there is a guesthouse (*mudafah*) that serves as a place for men in the village to congregate for social activities, which dually serves as a place for guests to the village to spend the night. One last prominent feature that can be observed of villages in this region is the knee to waist-high stone barriers that demarcate property boundaries between families (owners). While some of these observable structures no longer play as prevalent a role in the contemporary village as they once had, they nevertheless still resonate with Palestinians.

While not encompassing, the rationale for presenting the above description is to exemplify the morphology of the traditional Palestinian village and to give some brief insight to how the Palestinian village has been constructed in relation to the historical space of its inhabitants (i.e. its lived and perceived space), how it has evolved organically over time, and to emphasize its connection to the land. Of course, this is in

³⁸ In this description, they are referring to the late-Ottoman Palestinian village.

complete contradiction to Rawabi's conceived space, where the project is historically, socially, culturally, and environmentally disconnected from the land on which it is being built. Therefore, this discussion hopes to put to rest the notion that Rawabi resembles the traditional space of the Palestinian village.

D. Crafting a Veneer of Cultural Authenticity

“Things lie, and when, having become commodities, they lie in order to conceal their origin, namely social labour, they tend to set themselves up as absolutes. Products and the circuits they establish (in space) are fetishized and so become more ‘real’ than reality itself – that is, than productive activity itself, which they thus take over. This tendency achieves its ultimate expression, of course, in the world market.”

-Henri Lefebvre (1991:81)

At first glance it may appear strange or even counter-intuitive to make the assertion that a Palestinian project is appropriating Palestinian culture, but what the previous sections have shown is that the space of Rawabi is antagonistic to traditional Palestinian space. As noted earlier, Bayti's advertising has attempted to appropriate the space of the Palestinian village and countryside as a way to conceal, or at least make palatable, the architecture of exploitation and militarization that is manifest in Rawabi. Therefore, the following will revisit and push this discussion further by examining how the project has crafted a veneer of being authentically Palestinian in order to advance its own interests of capital accumulation. To this end, Rawabi has attempted to do this in primarily two ways. The first has been to reimagine the countryside linguistically, while the second has been to engage in a kind of stagecraft that appropriates Palestinian culture, heritage, and identity. The following will highlight some of the ways Bayti has done this for each.

Bayti's proclaimed mission of demonstrating "that progress and heritage can coexist" (Rawabi Home Autumn 2012) has resulted in an awkward juxtaposition of Palestinian heritage and modernity as well as an uncomfortable relationship with history. In line with most new urban development projects, Bayti has reimagined the location of the project from what the land was previously. Before the conception of the project the construction site was used as agricultural land for growing olives and as grazing land for the nearby villages of Abwein, Ajul, and Attara (EIA 2010), now it has been renamed "Rawabi." This kind of rebranding is not done for the sole purpose of increasing land value, but it also linguistically separates the new project from the surrounding area's social environment as well as from what is old and unprofitable.

This type of reimagining has manifested itself throughout Rawabi in various forms. The first example I will mention is the amphitheater. This venue of play and entertainment is perhaps the most fascinating as well as bizarre architectural structure in the entire city. Its very presence lends itself to many unanswered questions. I contend that the only way it could have emerged is through a cavalier understanding of Palestinian history, which I will briefly explain. While Roman ruins dot the landscape of several Arab countries, such as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine, the Roman amphitheater in itself is not a traditional Arab structure. Granted, the spatial practices of Arab civilizations may have appropriated the amphitheaters that the Romans left behind once their occupation of the region ended, but the amphitheater cannot be considered Arab or Islamic architecture by any historical measure. Given this, my question is: how does Bayti justify replicating the architecture of past and present colonizers (Roman and Israeli), but other past colonial forms such as the crusader castle are too contentious to reproduce? For that matter, why was traditional Palestinian architecture, even

constructed superficially, not considered? I believe these are questions that Bayti needs to answer for.

While the amphitheater clearly evokes a Roman past, it has very much been built in the present-day. It is evident that the intention of Bayti was not to reproduce an exact replica of a Roman amphitheater, but rather to build a generic contemporary “Romanesque” one. Apart from the recessed lighting, fitted railings, and modern stone finishes, the construction methods that were used between Rawabi’s amphitheater and amphitheaters of the past are vastly different. In much the same fashion as similar modern development projects done at this scale, Rawabi seeks to bring the fake and ersatz to Palestinians in the West Bank.

Furthermore, the buildings around the summit of the amphitheater are where portraits of James Dean, Charlie Chaplin, Marlon Brando, Marilyn Monroe, and Elvis Presley meet Fairuz, Umm Kulthum, Farid al-Atrash, and Abdul Halim Hafiz. This display would be baffling to most Palestinians who are not avid Hollywood fans or have not previously lived in the US. While perhaps culturally perplexing, the depoliticized environment of the amphitheater nevertheless instructs Palestinians that this is a place to have fun where the occupation only comes as a second fleeting thought once the concert is over and visitors have to pass through the checkpoint on their way back to Ramallah.



FIGURE 18. View from the bottom of the amphitheater, July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).



FIGURE 19. View from the top of the amphitheater, July 2015 (*Photos by Author*).

Another linguistic sleight of hand includes renaming the valley “Wadina,” meaning “our valley.” While the name asserts that this is Rawabi’s valley, it also implies that it is certainly no longer the valley of the nearby villagers from whom it was

expropriated. Accordingly, the *Rawabi Home* 2016 winter newsletter uses the modernization argument to justify its land grab. Stating that the valley was of “limited agricultural value” before the project started, now that it has been developed it claims to be the place “where the magic of nature meets the joys of entertainment” (16-17). This reasoning parallels the Zionist narrative for the Jewish colonization of Palestine, as Gasteyer et al. (2012) explains, “Even if there was recognition that there were people who already lived on the land, the contention was that they were not using the land to its maximum potential” (457). Bashar Masri has advanced this narrative even further. When confronted by a Palestinian mayor of a nearby village to Rawabi about Bayti taking his village’s land, Masri responded:

These are lands that have been left uncultivated. So for twenty, thirty years you did nothing to develop it, and you did not expand. And you let the Israeli settlements expand, and they took from Attara’s land. And now when we come to plan for your land, you say, we took two thousand [dunums]? (Abunimah 2014, 90)

Furthermore, other acts of renaming and misappropriating Palestinian history include calling Jerusalem limestone “Rawabi stone,” and using ancient Canaanite words such as Suwan (flint), Makmata (rock), Lamar (gold leaf), and Watar (musical string) for the names of neighborhoods and building typologies with the assumption that these words somehow resonate with the Palestinian collective conscious (Rawabi Home Winter 2012; Summer 2015).

To broach the second part of this discussion, I will briefly showcase some of the ways Bayti has appropriated symbols and imagery of Palestinian culture, heritage, and tradition. First and foremost, Bayti has appropriated the symbol of the Palestinian olive tree – a symbol that immediately evokes traditional peasant life, subsistence, *sumud* (steadfastness), and peace. It is the *sine qua non* of Palestinian identity. It is also a tree

that has been actively targeted by the IOF and Israeli settlers since the onset of the Israeli occupation where more than one million have been uprooted (Chelala 2015).³⁹ Olive trees have been strategically placed in roundabouts and other locations around Rawabi mainly for the visual consumption of visitors and its future residents. In a fetishized display of Palestinian identity, a solitary olive tree stands in a field of concrete a few meters outside Rawabi's visitor's center (see figure 20). The placement of this tree serves no other purpose than a stage prop for a project that purports to be "Palestinian." What this display fails to recognize is that the olive tree is not an inherently Palestinian symbol and that it is not something that can be arbitrarily transposed to an urban area by a landscape architect without losing its meaning. What gives the olive tree its cultural significance is the social labor of the peasant in relation to the olive tree from which their livelihood is derived. It is this history and social practice that makes the olive tree meaningful and an integral part of Palestinian cultural identity. The olive tree in and of itself does not make it a Palestinian symbol.

In tandem with the above, despite its assertion that the land of Rawabi was previously of little value before it became Rawabi, Bayti has nonetheless used the olive trees that grow in the Wadina area and further outside the construction site as a staged photo opportunity to emphasize their participation in the annual fall olive harvest. In one instance of Bayti's marketing, there is a picture of Rawabi construction workers in reflective vests and hard hats gathering olives from a tree (Rawabi Home Autumn 2013). The irony in this is that Rawabi was not built to house olive farmers or Palestinians from a working class background, but rather Palestinians who make up the

³⁹ While the pretext of security is universally applied to all of the actions of the occupation, the underlying premise is to erase Palestinian history from the land. As noted in the previous chapter, what we now find throughout the West Bank are small forests of conifers dotting the landscape, typically around the settlements, to replace the olive trees.

new middle class. The construction workers in the photo will only be in Rawabi as long as the city needs building. For Rawabi's future residents, the olive harvest ultimately becomes a repetitive abstract practice that merely imitates the work of past generations since the olive tree does not play a significant role in their everyday lives and is not the source of their livelihood. Moreover, what this advertisement deceptively omits is how many olive trees had to be destroyed in order to make way for the new city. While Bayti has planted an unspecified number of olive tree saplings around the project, it had also controversially accepted a donation of 3,000 pine saplings from the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in 2009 that were planted around Rawabi (Davis 2011). While Bashar Masri stated that the pine saplings would be removed and replaced with indigenous trees, there is no evidence that this was ever done.



FIGURE 20. The olive tree in front of the visitor's center with the Palestinian flag in background (*left*) and a sculpture of a Palestinian family (*right*), July 2015 (*Photos by Author*).

The sculpture of the Palestinian family around the largest Palestinian flag, as described in the thesis' opening (shown in figure 20 above), are clear symbols of Palestinian identity that seek to reinforce Bayti's narrative of bridging the past with the present as well as the claim that Rawabi is part of building the Palestinian state. Contrasting with this Palestinian sculpture is a bizarre array of a dozen or so modernist

sculptures scattered throughout the worksite, mostly done by Eastern European artists (see figure 21). These pieces of corporate art are not only devoid of any relevance to Palestinians, but they merely serve the purpose of just being “there” as non-essential ornamentation for the city.



FIGURE 21. Modernist sculptures found in Rawabi, July 2015 (*Photos by Author*).

One last instance of how Bayti has exploited Palestinian culture for its own interests is how Rawabi has aligned itself with Palestinian popular culture. I will mention just a few of the many examples of how this has been done. One edition of *Rawabi Home* (Spring 2013) advertises Bayti’s promotion of Palestinian cinema by stating how it helped to finance the 2013 film *Omar*. In another edition (Autumn 2013), *Arab Idol* winner Mohammad Assaf is showcased with pictures of him touring the construction site. In addition to this, Palestinian singer Noor Freitekh was commissioned to write a kind of anthem celebrating Rawabi, which can be listened to on the Rawabi website. Both singers later performed at a concert in Rawabi during the summer of 2016.

To conclude, while Bayti has used symbols that are uniquely Palestinian as a way to market Rawabi to Palestinians and various stakeholders, it has only ended up

doing so in abstraction and in a way that cheapens the significance of these symbols. Instead of being a Palestinian city, Rawabi can be better characterized as being a “Palestinian themed” city. Despite its attempt at cultural appropriation, Bayti hardly pretends to make a serious effort to integrate traditional Palestinian architecture or heritage into the design of Rawabi, and this is evident from its master plan and the building typologies it employs. As this section has shown, the loose veneer that Bayti has crafted for Rawabi can be chipped away and peeled back once certain aspects of the project are directly confronted.

CHAPTER IV:

PLANNING THE MCCITY

A. Planning Utopia in Palestine

Almost inevitably a project of Rawabi's size, that of an entire city, is composed of a multitude of different spaces. The fact that we are analyzing an entire city (opposed to a particular typology, i.e. a gentrifying neighborhood, a suburb, a gated community, a shopping mall, etc.) makes deciphering Rawabi's conceived space a challenging task. Additionally, while Rawabi is a planned city, its master plan and urban form does not immediately appear to conform to any particular approach to urban planning of which it can be called an exemplar. This, consequently, also makes defining Rawabi's conceived space more complicated. Therefore, I will approach this dilemma from two angles. First, I believe it would be instructive to posit Rawabi in relation to other master planned cities of the twentieth century, where each city corresponds to a predominant architectural movement. To do this, I will profile the cities of Brasília, Brazil, Celebration, Florida, and Reston, Virginia where each embodies the architectural ethos of modernism, new urbanism, and new town planning, respectively (Scott 1998; Vanderbeek and Irazábal 2007; Friedman 2012). Each case will briefly discuss the urban movement that the city is most aligned with, describe what actually materialized once the city was completed, and finally mention some of the takeaway lessons from each case. Through this exercise, I hope to show what aspects of these movements Rawabi has drawn from and then to use these discussions as a springboard to more explicitly define Rawabi's architectural design and urban form, which is what the second part of this section will address. By engaging with Rawabi's conceived space

from these two approaches, I believe a more informed analysis on Rawabi's architecture and urbanism can be made through the proceeding sections of this chapter.

1. The Utopian Visions of Brasília, Celebration, and Reston

Despite the different historical, social, and ideological contexts in which modernism, new urbanism, and new town planning emerged, there are some common attributes that should first be mentioned before discussing each one on its own. It is important to emphasize that each of these movements embrace a utopian vision that privileges "superior" urban planning – often times accompanied by science and new technology – as a solution to all social, political, economic, and environmental ailments present in society. In many cases, the design of cities did indeed improve the human condition in terms of health, sanitation, education, recreation, and green space for the general population (Scott 1998, 125). Hence, the type of planning that has come out of these movements not only advances a utopian vision, but they are also a critique of how past cities have been built. To this end, the planners of Brasília, Celebration, and Reston each sought to create an urban environment that instructed their inhabitants on new ways to engage, behave, and interact with their built environment with the expectation that city life would be enhanced for all. Therefore, a new kind of citizen for a new kind of city needed to be socially engineered. For each of these master planned cities the only way to achieve this goal was to start from a blank slate and to build from the ground up. The centralization of the planning process and the vast plots of undeveloped land that were at the developers' disposal made this possible for each of these cities.

While new urbanism and new town planning took some degree of care to incorporate human scale into their designs as evidenced by the towns of Celebration and

Reston, modernist planning, on the other hand, provided a hostile environment for pedestrian life by attempting to eliminate it as seen in Brasília. While each city manifests a particular ideology, the fact remains that all of them were conceived by a planner with a view from above.⁴⁰ The problem with master planning, no matter the design, is that the planner can never fully anticipate how future residents will interact with their environment. That is, Lefebvre's perceived space will never be realized until after a project is completed. As this is the case, it is not difficult to imagine that over time residents may begin to reclaim spaces in the city by interacting with them in ways that were originally unintended (Harb 2013). This includes, but is not limited to, spaces that have taken on a cultural or symbolic significance or have been appropriated by informal points of congregation such as public squares, cafes, parks, streets, sidewalks, mixed-use spaces, places of political/social discontent, and so on and so forth.⁴¹

On this point, it is imperative to note that while utopian visions for society provide a mental space of hope – which I believe should not be discouraged – these three exemplar cities bring to light the limitations of utopian master planning. Up to a certain point, it becomes an exercise in futility for the scientific urban planner to try to plan slums, congestion, disease, crime, pollution, noise, class and racial segregation, and other social inequalities out of the city (Scott 1998, 125).⁴² Therefore, I contend that utopia is impossible to realize without incorporating the entirety of Lefebvre's spatial triad into the plan of the city. That is, a utopia cannot be designed but rather it is a plan that must continually be adjusted to how society lives and perceives space.

⁴⁰ This was a major critique of modernist planning that Jane Jacobs (1961) makes.

⁴¹ A case in point can be something that is now commonplace such as the proliferation of bike lanes that have taken up a portion of the street so that in many US cities cyclists now ride next to vehicles.

⁴² While Scott mentions some of these social/urban issues in relation to Brasília, they can similarly be applied to Celebration and Reston.

a. Brasília, Brazil

Built between 1956-1960, Brasília is an exemplar of what James Scott (1998) calls the “high-modernist city.” The city’s planning is the manifestation of architect Le Corbusier’s Radiant City and the guiding principles of the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) for how cities should be designed (Scott 1998, 118). Brasília was conceived to be a new administrative city and was a part of Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek’s initiative to bring fifty years of progress in five to the country. This modern state-building initiative meant moving the country’s capital from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, which was geographically more central in the interior of the country. To accommodate the construction of the new city, which now has a population of two and a half million inhabitants, acres upon acres of rainforest were leveled in order to start the project from scratch. This leveling feat was easily accomplished since the state planning agency already had full access to the site (118).

Le Corbusier, believing the plan of a city should adhere to strict scientific principles, saw the city as he saw the home: as a machine or factory for living in (Scott 1998, 115-117). The principal planners of Brasília, Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa, embraced this notion of machine-like efficiency by creating a functionally segregated city that was best viewed from the air opposed from the street level. Hence, there are exclusive areas for housing, work, transportation, recreation, hotels, embassies, and federal government buildings. A large open plaza is another defining feature of modernist architecture that Brasília incorporates into its design, as manifested in the Monumental Axis that bisects the city. Another feature is the superquadras, or huge

apartment blocks, that were created to house thousands of people in each building. These superquadras were in line with Le Corbusier's "towers in the park" concept.

Just like the master plan, the buildings themselves adopted modernist efficiency and minimalist architecture. Many of the buildings in Brasília embrace a vertical architecture with clean surfaces often in the *béton brut* (raw concrete) style. For Le Corbusier, the ornamentation on buildings, which can be seen in classical and other types of architecture, was considered to be unnecessary clutter. Hence, the superquadras where people live all appear uniform and identical. In addition to the lack of human scale, this blandness of the buildings also contributed to the feeling of anonymity in the city (Scott 1998, 126-127).

For the moment, there are two interconnected observations to make on modernist planning vis-à-vis Rawabi. The first point is that modernist city planning sought to standardize the construction process through prefabrication. This is significant because once the premade building materials arrived to the construction site from the factory, all that was required was assembly (Scott 1998, 108-109). This enabled the building process to be easily replicated and done on a mass scale. While prefabrication was part and parcel of Le Corbusier inspired buildings, this process was more infamously done around the same time in the US but in the form of Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City version of modernism. Opposed to viewing the house as a machine, Wright developed a more "organic" type of architecture that sought to blend in with the surrounding environment (Boulton 2002, 14). Where Le Corbusier built up, Frank Lloyd Wright built out.

At the time of Wright's conception of Broadacre City in the 1930s, Wright was transitioning from Prairie style architecture to a type of architecture that he called

“Usonian.” It was through Usonian architecture that he began experimenting with cheaper, easily assembled, detached single-dwelling housing that was within reach of the average American family (Boulton 2002, 14). The ideas of Broadacre City and Usonian architecture became manifest in the first Levittown that was built at the end of the 1940s in New York State. This version of modernist planning, which favored cheap and easily replicated tract housing, became the blueprint for modern-day suburbia. While there are many defining features of suburban typology, two key features of these more or less self-contained communities include the wide use of cul-de-sacs and that each house is built on its own plot of land, which inevitably encourages horizontal expansion. While Le Corbusier’s and Wright’s visions of modernist planning have obvious differences, both their designs privileged the use of the automobile, sought to banish street life, planned their cities to be functionally segregated and derived from a blank slate, and, overall, they created an environment that had an alienating effect on society because their designs did not take into account the complex social interactions that occur on a micro level in the city.⁴³ With both architects being the vanguard for mass-produced prefabricated buildings, their homogenous architecture created a hollow sense of anonymity for the residents, whether they lived in the suburb or in the high modernist city.

Therefore, the second point to make on modernist planning is that the urban environment it produces often lacks a sense of place (Jacobs 1961). A critique that Scott (1998) makes about the high modernist city is the fact that its planning does not take into account the history, traditions, aesthetics, or social practices of the people for whom the city is being built (104, 119, 125). With regard to Brasília, he observes that:

⁴³ These are a few of the many criticisms Jane Jacobs (1961) raises about modernist planning.

Even if the [monumental] axis represented a small attempt to assimilate Brasília in some way to its national tradition, it remained a city that could have been anywhere, that provided no clue to its own history, unless that history was the modernist doctrine of CIAM. It was a state-imposed city invented to project a new Brazil to Brazilians and to the world at large. (120)

This phenomenon of placelessness is not just limited to the high modernist city but is also a prominent feature of suburbia. Let us not forget there was not just one Levittown, but four of them. The lack of place in Rawabi is an important issue that I will come to discuss in more detail in the second part of this section when I explicitly define Rawabi's conceived space.

b. Celebration, Florida

In turning to new urbanism, Celebration is a town that was developed by the Walt Disney Company whose master plan was designed by architect Robert A.M. Stern in the mid 1990s. Even though Celebration is not an exact manifestation of what Walt Disney envisioned in his Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT) project, the city was nevertheless influenced by EPCOT whose goal was to “showcase how a high quality of life can be achieved in the future by returning to the pre-Modernist small town as a development paradigm” (Vanderbeek and Irazábal 2007, 51). A few years before Celebration was built, a group of architects and urban planners who were unsatisfied with what modernist planning had produced the previous 60 years, formed the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and presented the Charter of the New Urbanism. Since Stern was one of the architects that had aligned himself with the CNU, Celebration ultimately became an exemplar of the principles that the CNU laid out in its charter.

Since the design of Celebration is grounded in the CNU framework, a brief discussion of the main tenets of new urbanism will later help us understand how the materialization of Celebration fell short of its utopian vision. Through its design principles, new urbanism ultimately seeks to find place in the urban environment – something that was lost in modernist planning. It presupposes that a sense of community can be engineered through an urban environment that is low-density, mixed-use, and scaled-down to human level. Hence, the opening paragraphs of the CNU charter state:

We stand for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy.

We advocate the restructuring of public policy and development practices to support the following principles: neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice. (CNU 2001)

Therefore, prominent features of new urbanist planning include a design that is ecologically and pedestrian friendly, incorporates affordable housing and mixed-use neighborhoods, reduces dependency on the automobile, contains green and public space where the likelihood of chance encounters is increased, and is democratic in the sense that input from future residents is considered in the plan (CNU 2001).

Celebration today is no longer owned by Disney and is now an unincorporated town of under 10,000 residents in Osceola County, Florida.⁴⁴ Celebration's urban form consists of a downtown area that is surrounded by multiple "villages" or neighborhoods.

⁴⁴ Disney has divested from most of its assets in Celebration except for a handful of commercial properties.

The first eight villages were built by Disney's development company, The Celebration Company, while the two most recent villages were built by outside developers. Despite Disney's divestment from the town, Celebration is still a highly privatized community; the downtown area is owned and run by a private investment company, new villages are built by private real estate developers, and the administration, operation, and maintenance of the town has been contracted to an outside company (Celebration 2016). In their description of Celebration, authors Michael Vanderbeek and Clara Irazábal (2007) discuss how new urbanism has manifested itself in the town's design by saying:

As the original developer of the town, Disney made certain that Celebration "got the full new urbanist treatment." True to form, Celebration exhibits all its design staples – abundant green spaces, centralized "Main Street" shopping, narrow streets with a pedestrian focus, varied housing types packaged in nostalgic architectural styles, pre-Modernist lot configurations (narrow frontages, back-alley garage access, front porches, narrow street setbacks, etc.), and strict building codes, to name a few. The town's spatial configurations, architectural details, and overall *esprit* were all deliberately planned to create a deep sense of history, identity and community in a place that was created out of whole cloth. They were also intended to serve as spatial symbols of a rejection of extant forms of development, particularly suburban sprawl. (51)

Apart from embracing the tenets of new urbanism, it is also worth mentioning that Celebration also got the full Disney aesthetic including *muzak* (background music) coming out from behind palm trees and fake snow that falls every hour on the hour during the winter season (Pilkington 2010).

A brief glance at Celebration's urban form begs the questions, what city and whose city? In following the tenets of new urbanism, Celebration has become less of a city and more of what its original design sought to challenge, that of a suburb. This can be observed most saliently in the downtown area, which consists largely of boutique shops that cater more to the nearby tourists from Disney World than to serve the

everyday needs of Celebration's residents. As a result, residents are forced to drive to big-box retail stores outside of Celebration to do their shopping (52). Additionally, the "village" nomenclature that is used should be seen as a clever repackaging of the typical suburban subdivision. Furthermore, like the traditional suburb, the residents of Celebration are overwhelmingly white, middle to upper-middle class, and commute to work outside of Celebration by car. The main difference between Celebration and a traditional American suburb is that Celebration's design is arguably a more controlled form of sprawl. If the new urbanist paradigm of development were to be scaled up to a national level, it is difficult to see how it would be much different from the suburban sprawl that already persists in the US.

Instead of proposing a new kind of urbanism that accounts for a growing population that is rapidly urbanizing, Celebration's utopian vision embraces a "back to the future" paradigm, not unlike the new urbanist town of Seaside, Florida that preceded it (Macy 1996). The architecture and design of Celebration hails back to a specific historical period in the US; it specifically references an idyllic colonial past that is white, Christian, and pre-modernist (Vanderbeek and Irazábal 2007, 52). This back to the future paradigm can readily be observed in Celebration's housing typologies, the perfectly manicured lawns, and the white picket fences. To maintain its anachronistic small town appearance, Celebration's residents must adhere to a strict set of guidelines that are approved and enforced by the Celebration Residential Owners Association (CROA).⁴⁵ Residents must also pay hefty annual fees, in excess of \$1,200, to the CROA for basic services such as garbage collection, as well as for the town's general upkeep.

⁴⁵ Every minute detail from landscaping, housing type, roofs, driveways, and lighting, to yard decorations, tiles, paint, doorknockers, and shutters must all be up to code and any changes to a property must first be submitted for approval to an architectural review board (Celebration 2016).

This creation and romanticization of an ideal American past is meant to sway people's imagination. As Christine Macy (1996) contends, the architecture of new urbanism, as manifested in Seaside (but is easily translatable to Celebration), plays into a nostalgia that was never actually experienced by most of its residents. On this she argues:

Seaside's "timeless" houses work powerfully on the imagination because they make one feel as if they might have been the site of a childhood experience. Yet the inhabitants of Seaside, like most homeowners in the 1980s, are a generation raised in suburbia. Few of them spent summers on Cape Cod, the Adirondacks or the beachfronts of North Carolina. The memories evoked by Seaside's architecture are not memories of places actually experienced, they are fictitious memories – constructions of the childhood memories of a privileged few, diffused through cinema and television re-runs. (437)

From this perspective, Celebration as a movie set serves as an apt metaphor for the "American appetite for the fake, ersatz, and the unreal" (Vanderbeek and Irazábal 2007, 53). Indeed, the new urbanist town of Seaside was used as an actual stage set for *The Truman Show* in the late 1990s. Macy (1996) goes so far as to claim that the entire town functions as a souvenir of a different time and place that is in opposition to the present (437-438). Ultimately, the privatized dreamscape that is Celebration was developed by a company that specializes in creating alternative utopian realities and through a superior design paradigm, a powerful homeowner's association, and creative forms of nostalgia, the "good resident" has been cultivated, instructed, and disciplined on how to behave.

c. Reston, Virginia

The last case that will be surveyed is the city of Reston. Reston came at the beginning of the short-lived new town movement in the US, which was most prevalent during the 1960s and 1970s. The predominant literature on Reston often ties the city to British and Scandinavian post-war new towns and to the earlier garden city movement

of Ebenezer Howard around the turn of the 20th century. More recent scholarship additionally points to a postcolonial exchange of vernacular architecture that occurred between the planners of Reston and the cities that were being built in 1950s India (Friedman 2012).

While the influence of new town planning pales in comparison to modernism or new urbanism, the reason I am including Reston in this discussion is because references to Reston have been made by people associated with Rawabi. For instance, Bashar Masri has on more than one occasion likened Rawabi to Reston in interviews that he has given (Schneider 2009; Rosen 2013; Inskeep 2016). Masri also has an entrenched personal connection to Virginia and the Washington, DC area; he studied at Virginia Tech as an undergraduate, he worked in DC for many years, he has extended family that lives in the DC metropolitan area, and he still owns a house in Falls Church, VA. Moreover, while I was attending the 2016 DC Palestinian Film and Arts Festival, Iman Fayyad, the daughter of Salam Fayyad, had also made the connection between the two cities of Reston and Rawabi in her keynote address when speaking fondly of growing up in Reston as a child. It is for this reason that I believe a brief examination of Reston is pertinent.

Reston was conceived by real estate developer Robert E. Simon, Jr. in 1961 (the name Reston incorporates Simon's initials). Aided by the sale of Carnegie Hall to New York City, Simon bought 6,750 acres of land 18 miles outside of Washington DC in Fairfax County, Virginia, which would become the site of his new town. The project's main financial backer was the Gulf Oil Corporation. Construction began in 1963, and

by 1966 the town of Reston was officially dedicated where it became an unincorporated part of Fairfax County. The motto of Reston is: *a place to live, work, and play*.⁴⁶

The architecture firm of Whittlesey & Conklin was hired by Simon to design the master plan, which had previously done extensive work in India the previous decade with architect Albert Mayer (Friedman 2012). The design of Reston consisted of seven villages that were centered around a town center. Each village would have a population between 10,000-12,000 residents, and each would have a village center with mixed-use shops and offices to encourage pedestrian life and chance encounters with other residents in the village (Gulf Oil 1973, 12; Friedman 2012, 562).⁴⁷ The village centers “carved out spaces of publicness and privacy less like broad European plazas, and more like the spaces of retreat, exchange, collectivity, and enclosure [...]” (Friedman 2012, 562). Furthermore, the master plan envisioned high-density “urban sinews,” mostly consisting of town houses, to connect the villages to one another (562). Though, as scholar Andrew Friedman (2012) notes, these urban sinews were never realized (562). The housing typologies were also planned to be a mix of townhouses, houses, and apartments at a ratio of 70-15-15, respectively. Ultimately, the density of Reston became more like that of a traditional garden city or suburb with 80 percent detached houses and 20 percent townhouses for an average population density of 11 people per acre (567). While the original master plan called for high-density living, only one 15-story apartment tower can be observed in the first village of Lake Anne; the rest of the housing is scaled down.

⁴⁶ During my visit to the Reston Museum the receptionist at the information desk insisted that Reston is not a city or a town, but that it is a “place.”

⁴⁷ It is significant to note that there are no chain stores or international brands in the village centers, office space and shops are locally owned.

Early on in the project, Simon was able to convince several companies to relocate to Reston, which played an important role in making the project economically viable. The biggest economic, political, and symbolic boost Reston got was in 1966 when Interior Secretary Stewart Udall announced that a \$50 million US Geological Survey headquarters would be built in the city. Despite getting government and private sector support for the project, residents were not moving to Reston as quickly as anticipated and the project was seemingly becoming less and less financially solvent. Therefore, in 1967, Gulf Oil bought out Simon's shares and fired him from the project. By forming the subsidiary Gulf Reston, Inc., Gulf took over all aspects of the project and, in doing so, was able to start turning a greater profit. In later years another oil company, Mobil Land Development Corporation, took over the development of Reston and built the commercial town center in 1990.⁴⁸

According to Friedman (2012), Simon's utopian vision set out to build the "Great Society" that could be showcased to the rest of the world as an example of American innovation and ingenuity (564). Along with this, Reston was also a social experiment that tried to create a mixed-class, mixed-race society in Jim Crow Virginia (562). In his description, Friedman continues stating:

In addition to hoping for a profitable venture and bearing a genuine interest in idealistic planning. Robert Simon saw the new town as a way to prove to an assumed audience of global observers that liberal American capitalism, technical ingenuity, and progressive consumer society could produce concrete landscapes of abundance that would serve as evidence of U.S. claims to uplifting global leadership. (564)

He also notes that a large number of early residents were government employees who wanted to be a part of this social experiment by choosing to live in Reston including

⁴⁸ The town center does include international brands and condominium high-rises, unlike the previously mentioned village centers.

people from the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, USAID, NASA, presidential aides, as well as other professionals (565).

Today Reston has a population of 60,000 inhabitants and is situated in one of the most affluent counties in the US. The median household income in Fairfax County is well over \$100,000 per year. This is mainly due to the large number of government contractors in the fields of IT, security, defense, and construction that have made their home in Northern Virginia; Google, Bechtel, and Rolls-Royce all have offices in Reston. Furthermore, while the incorporation of nature into residents' lives was one of the objectives of the original master plan, a major critique has been that Reston is now so spread out that it is unwalkable for practical use (568). Also worth noting is that, similarly to Celebration, an influential homeowner's association governs the city and is responsible for many of the municipal services.⁴⁹

Overall, Reston can be considered a success in the sense that it still persists after 50 years with a steady population increase, and this is in spite of not adhering to the original master plan. While much has been said about Reston's success, for the purposes of analyzing Rawabi I will mention four primary factors. The first is the fact that Reston was financed by major oil companies; their seemingly limitless resources allowed them to see the project through to completion. The second is that its developer was able to create a local economy early on by convincing private companies to relocate to Reston, which was aided by the public support and economic investment of the federal government. The third is that Reston serves as both a commuter town for the DC metropolitan area and is also a self-sustaining community, factors that have contributed

⁴⁹ Annual Reston Association dues are around \$700. At the Reston Museum I was told that all decisions on Reston have to go through the Reston Association and the county board.

to its endurance.⁵⁰ The last point is that because of Reston's unique location in one of the most affluent counties in the US, Reston's success should be considered an anomaly that cannot be easily reproduced elsewhere.

2. The McCity: A New Paradigm of Development

Rawabi's utopian vision, like the previously profiled cities, also advances a superior design paradigm. The modern and technologically advanced design of Rawabi has been presented as a panacea for the hardships of the occupation, through which liberal free-market principles are the prescribed mechanism to accomplish this. Given the lessons from each of the surveyed cities, I contend that Rawabi's urban form is more like Brasília and Celebration and less like Reston.⁵¹

With regard to Brasília, a few of the salient features Rawabi has incorporated into its design are its use of standardized apartment buildings that have been repeatedly replicated (see figures 22 & 23 below),⁵² its scaled-up buildings,⁵³ its use of modern architecture (opposed to traditional architecture), and the way Rawabi has been designed as a functionally segregated city. Accordingly, some of the similarities Rawabi has to Celebration are how they are both highly privatized cities, the ways in which each of these cities have been "staged" or themed, that their neighborhoods have been

⁵⁰ Reston is even connected to the DC Metro system.

⁵¹ It is clear that Rawabi borrows many design and architectural features from modernism and new urbanism, but there is little indication that measures have been taken to avoid a repeat of Brasília's and Celebration's shortcomings as previously highlighted. With regard to Reston, the only significant similarity is that both projects were heavily financed by oil and gas companies, otherwise Rawabi does not incorporate any notable features of new town planning.

⁵² Like the "cookie-cutter" housing found in suburbia or the apartment blocs found in Brasília. Inevitably, this design creates a sense of placelessness.

⁵³ While the apartment buildings are seven-nine floors, the buildings in the commercial center will be much taller.

designed as subdivisions as well as their ubiquitous use of cul-de-sacs in these neighborhoods, and they are both arguably a controlled form of urban sprawl. Finally, two notable commonalities between all three cities are their town centers/commercial centers (opposed to a suburban neighborhood that has no central point) and that their designs privilege the use of the automobile thereby eliminating pedestrian life.



FIGURE 22. Standardized mass-produced rows of residential buildings being built in Rawabi, July 2015
(Photo by Author).



FIGURE 23. Completed neighborhood in Rawabi. (Note how the tall homogenous rows of apartments and the wide roads that stretch for hundreds of meters, privileging the use of the car, have effectively eliminated the street life in the neighborhood and have contributed to an uncanny sense of anonymity and alienation.), July 2015 (*Photo by Author*).

Despite the observable similarities between Rawabi and each of the previously discussed cities, Rawabi ultimately fails to conform to any of them. Rather, Rawabi's form is emblematic of a new era of development that has only recently begun to present itself in the Arab world, a paradigm that I will call, for lack of a better term, the *McCity*. That is, it is a city that has been designed to be mass produced, cheaply made, and easily consumed.⁵⁴ Moreover, I believe this term effectively encapsulates Rawabi as the neoliberal assemblage of space that it embodies, which has been produced by transnational capital.

⁵⁴ The term *McCity*, in reference to the American way of doing business, denotes a kind of colonization that is both cultural and economic and is something that is to be replicated *ad infinitum*.

A major component of the *McCity* development paradigm is how it incorporates the concept of the *one-stop-shop*.⁵⁵ As a broad definition, the concept of one-stop shopping is the offering of multiple services where one can do all of their shopping or errands at one location without having to drive from store to store. It is part of a business model that strives to make consumption more efficient, which in turn, yields higher profits. It is not surprising then that this concept emerged in the era of the automobile and the outward expansion of suburbia.⁵⁶ As part of an urban development paradigm, one-stop-shop is where development is done at the scale of an entire city by a sole developer, i.e. the developer is in the business of city building. In adhering to the principles of speculation and consumption, the developer seeks to create a built environment where every social interaction in the city is reduced to a monetary transaction (Karaman 2013). It is for this reason that the significance of Rawabi being owned by a sole developer, Bayti, where it has a monopoly on all economic activity and planning decisions within the city, should not be downplayed.⁵⁷ This kind of development inevitably produces a planned environment that is highly surveilled, controlled, and homogenous.

While comparisons can be made to other urban renewal projects such as Solidere in Beirut or Abdali in Amman, these projects are largely meant to gentrify and

⁵⁵ Christopher Parker (2009) uses the term *one-stop-shop* to describe how the strategies of neoliberalism have been planned into the urban environment. An example that he mentions is the Beitna City project in Jordan (116-117).

⁵⁶ This resulted in the emergence of the conventional shopping mall, which began with the construction of the Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota in the 1950s.

⁵⁷ Some authors such as geographer Peter Taylor (2000) have argued that instead of viewing global capitalist activity as a series of markets, it should be seen as a world of “multiple monopolies,” where achieving monopoly status is something that all forms of capitalism aspires towards (7). The idea of monopolies is not a new phenomenon in the West Bank; with the assistance of the PA, a surfeit of multiple monopolies run by key capitalists have flourished ever since the signing of the Oslo Accords (Dana 2014; Samara 2000, 24-25). In the case of city building, the market to corner is space itself. For Rawabi, Bayti first obtained a monopoly on space, which is seen as a zero-sum, in order to reign hegemonic over the city.

to change the character of an already existing city by making it more cosmopolitan for a globalized elite class to enjoy. Moreover, I would also caution against making a comparison to megaprojects like Lusail in Qatar or to Masdar City in the United Arab Emirates because these are also inherently different in the fact that they are both state-led initiatives that are not premised solely on consumption and returns on investment. The fact that Rawabi has chosen the site of the Palestinian countryside, opposed to a Ramallah neighborhood, makes it apparent that Bashar Masri is attempting to achieve something different. As I was told on my visit to Rawabi, the project does not want to serve as a commuter town for workers in Ramallah, seeking instead to create a self-sustaining local economy so that the residents of Rawabi also work in Rawabi.⁵⁸ Hence, Rawabi's motto: *a place to live, work, and grow*.⁵⁹ For Masri, Rawabi is not just a development project – it is a destination.

With regard to Rawabi's form as a privatized city, there are two distinguishable characteristics of the one-stop-shop to highlight. The first is how Rawabi has incorporated specific aspects of the suburb into its design, and the second is how its form embodies the latest evolutionary phase of the modern shopping mall. Ironically, these two aspects of Rawabi's design are in dialectical opposition to the sense of place Masri seeks to derive from Rawabi.

As the future construction plans for Rawabi were described to me on my second visit to the site, I was casually told that the current project being built is just phase one, and that if it is successful there will be a Rawabi 1, 2, 3, etc. While this comment may appear mundane and insignificant, I believe it reveals an important insight for how

⁵⁸ While a few of Masri's subsidiaries have moved to Rawabi, as of yet, no major companies have relocated or opened an office in Rawabi's commercial center.

⁵⁹ Note the similarity to Reston's motto (a place to live, work, and play).

Rawabi's developer envisions the project. The implication is that Rawabi is easily reproducible and that this project could have been built anywhere, just like the suburban subdivision. It is on this point that I believe Rawabi represents a global developmental shift away from the building of suburban tract housing to the building of tract cities. Therefore, if the main tenets of suburban tract housing are being used as the basis for a new paradigm of city building, which appears to be the case with Rawabi, it is then inevitable that the same mistakes of suburbia will be repeated. If any lessons have been learned from the suburban experience, it is that this model has resulted in urban forms that are ill-conceived, designs that lack creativity, building typologies that are homogenous, houses that are either shoddily built or constructed with inferior materials, and overall, little effort is made to assimilate the project into its local environment.

To cite one example of the how the suburbanization of the city has become a global trend, Canadian architect Alex Josephson (2017) also draws a similar comparison to how the recent "condominiumization" of the Toronto landscape has adopted suburban architecture. In describing this recent trend in Toronto, he asserts that "developers who once made their fortunes in low-density suburban tract housing rebranded and became players in the downtown core. But they're essentially doing the same thing as before [...] they've turned the sprawl on its side and shot it vertically into the air." This phenomenon, coupled by the fact the condominiumization of the city is solely profit-driven, leads him to remark that there is "architecture without architects."

The second characteristic of the one-stop-shop that Rawabi incorporates is the way its design manifests the most recent iteration of the modern shopping mall. While

the traditional shopping mall in the US has been on the decline since the early 2000s,⁶⁰ its consumerist concept has greatly evolved from the department stores, national chains, small cafes, and carrousel that it originally housed. The development paradigm that has proliferated in the US for the past 18 years has sought to reverse this decline through the diversification of space. Along with the above-mentioned retail, today's ubiquitous gentrifying projects now include: luxury apartments, offices, fitness centers, upscale restaurants and groceries, cinemas, spas, and other luxury amenities. If this seems similar to the rash of projects that have been built in Middle Eastern capitals in recent years, it is not a coincidence. Many of the multinational firms that are doing the gentrification projects in the US and in other Western countries are also the lead developers for these projects in the region. Rawabi has merely expanded this paradigm to the scale of a city so it now includes municipal services, places of worship, education, and recreation/park facilities as well.

In building the McCity (i.e. a neoliberal tract city) that is based on speculation and conspicuous consumption, Bashar Masri has accomplished what neoliberalism has been striving to do in cities around the world for decades, which is to wrestle away public services from governmental control and to bring them into the private realm.⁶¹

Privatization is a central feature of Harvey's rubric of accumulation by dispossession.

On this he states:

The corporatization, commodification, and privatization of hitherto public assets has been a signal feature of the neoliberal project. Its primary aim has been to open up new fields for capital accumulation in domains hitherto regarded off-limits to the calculus of profitability. Public utilities of all kinds (water, telecommunications,

⁶⁰ They are either going out of business and closing their doors or, in some cases, they are being repurposed as churches, medical centers, or colleges.

⁶¹ While similar projects may have accomplished this feat in other Arab countries such as in the GCC or in Lebanon (e.g. Mechref, Rabie, and Faqra), the point to emphasize is the scale to which Rawabi has done this and the new urban form that it embodies.

transportation), social welfare provision (social housing, education, health care, pensions), public institutions (universities, research laboratories, prisons) and even warfare [...] have all been privatized to some degree throughout the capitalist world and beyond [...] (2005, 160)

The manifestation of Rawabi, as a completely privatized city, enables Bayti to reign hegemonic over all operations, networks, modes of governance, and economic activity within the city. This is the endgame of neoliberalism. Therefore, Rawabi should be seen as the prototype for a development paradigm that will be tried and tested before being replicated throughout the West Bank. While the previous chapter has already described Rawabi's suburban typology, the following section will address the second aspect of the one-stop-shop by exploring Rawabi's capitalist articulations of space.

E. Rawabi's Capitalist Articulations of Space

As the previous chapter on Rawabi's socio-spatial analysis demonstrated, Rawabi's architecture does not engage with traditional Palestinian architecture as claimed by the project. The social relations embedded in Rawabi are indeed irreconcilable with traditional Palestinian lived space, which cannot be formally or physically reproduced. However, as sterile and abstract as Rawabi's architecture appears, it cannot be said that it is devoid of social relations. The social relations found in Rawabi's architecture and urban forms are a product of local and global actors working within the two overlapping superstructures of colonialism and a radicalized capitalism, which is neoliberalism. Therefore, I will now pivot the discussion on Rawabi's architecture by looking at Rawabi as a city that has not been built for people, but a city built for profit (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012).

The urban form of Rawabi has imposed a specific spatial order onto the Palestinian landscape. This order is the homogenizing effect of capitalist-led development. In Rawabi's case, this is largely dictated by the commanding logic of land commodification, speculation, and consumerism. The end result is a meticulously planned neoliberal tract city whose urban space has materialized in the form of evenly spaced rows of verticality that have been designed in such a way to efficiently extract the most capital. Lefebvre's previously mentioned "boxes fit into boxes" comes to mind where each box corresponds to a different price tag.

In line with the second component of the one-stop-shop that I outlined earlier, Rawabi fits into the paradigm of what Adham (2005) calls a "privatized semi-public space" (25), a type of development that has emerged in the neoliberal era. He characterizes this space as being "a fusion of consumerism, entertainment, popular culture, and tourism" (25). Rawabi is an exemplar, bar none, of this space he describes. Adham goes into further detail to describe the privatized semi-public space neoliberal development projects assume:

Despite their apparently diverse appearance, from an urban point of view there are important similarities between these emerging spaces of consumption. Whether a mall, a gated community, a theme park, or some other development type, they all provide a carefully controlled environment that is physically, economically and socially isolated from surrounding areas. They also benefit from the deterioration of the surrounding public environment through the establishment of a simulated alternative ideal. Finally, they enforce codes of behavior to uphold the utopian imagery which gives them their economic and symbolic value. For example, to establish such forms of symbolic capital, gated communities deploy various marketing strategies aimed at displaying the luxurious lifestyles that are possible there. (25)

Many villages in the West Bank face the type of deterioration that Adham refers to above. They are wholly underfunded by the municipality, lack vital infrastructure and

resources, face restrictions on growth and expansion, and least of all they are subject to Israel's colonial/spatial regime. Inherent in Rawabi's design, the city has physically separated itself from the surrounding environment in a way that plays into the notion of "island planning" (Daher 2008, 59). According to Daher (2008), the use of island planning for elitist "playscapes" only intensifies the socio-economic tensions that are already present in the city and it is a force that further divides and fragments the city's inhabitants –physically, socially, and culturally (54, 60). The use of island planning then inevitably adopts practices of inclusion and exclusion that perpetrate and perpetuate the above mentioned divisions. Lastly, Daher remarks, "while mobility may mean freedom and new opportunities for some, for others it may mean the very opposite" (54).

While there is no wall or fence that encases the entire city, other subtler means have been used to achieve separation in Rawabi. In acquiring six times more land from private owners than what it needs for Phase I of the project (see figure 11 in the earlier profile), Bayti has de facto created a boundary of separation from the surrounding villages. Then, to solidify this boundary, Bayti succeeded in obtaining municipality status from the PA where Bayti was able to circumscribe a huge municipal boundary around the project. By using the existing inadequate legal system to create a new municipality, the developer was able to effectively restrict the future expansion of the neighboring villages around Rawabi. Furthermore, physical access to the site is also restricted in that there are only two access roads that connect to Rawabi and, upon arrival to the city, one must check-in at the private security station in order to be granted entrance.

While there are physical obstacles that limit accessibility to the city, there are also socio-economic and cultural barriers that use methods of inclusion/exclusion.

These modalities of inclusion/exclusion become apparent in the use-value of the buildings that have been conceived for the project. Rawabi is composed of primarily three building types that also serve as Bayti's main sources of revenue. These main nodes of capital accumulation are derived from entertainment/tourism venues, buildings for commercial use (office space/retail), and residential buildings (apartments/townhouses/villas).

Entertainment and tourism venues in Rawabi include places like the hotel, restaurants, the cinema, waterpark, amphitheater, and football stadium. All of these places will be a potential source of revenue for Bayti. The last three places are part of a 135,000m² outdoor recreation area, which includes hiking trails, that Bayti has named "Wadina," meaning "our valley." While it is evident that Bayti is constructing the facilities for these venues, who will operate them is somewhat opaque. During my site visit in July of 2015, I was told by my guide that Bayti was in talks with Taj Mall in Amman to operate the cinema in Rawabi.⁶² So it appears that either some variation of a build-operate-transfer (BOT) will be in the works or Bayti will outsource the operations to private companies and will just offer a straightforward lease of their facilities. Since Bayti is mainly a developer and the fact that all of the commercial space in Rawabi is being rented out, makes the latter scenario more plausible. Therefore, it should not be a surprise in the future to find a Mövenpick, Hilton, or Golden Tulip to occupy the hotel site, upscale Zamn-like cafes around the commercial center, American franchises as well as more expensive restaurants in and around the city, and to see regional and

⁶² The "Taj Rawabi" cinema multiplex was later announced in 2016 (Rawabi Home winter 2016). This is kind of arrangement is also the same with the schools in Rawabi. Since the PA has so far refused to fund any part of the project as per its PPP agreement with Bayti, during my visit in 2015 I was told Bayti was scouting private schools such as the Montessori School, the Ramallah Friends School, Al Mustaqbal School, and the Lebanese International School of Choueifat to come to Rawabi. The privately run *Rawabi English Academy* was announced later in 2016.

international bands play at the 15,000 seat amphitheater. In addition to this, Bayti also offers touristic activities in the city. One company Bayti contracted with offers a “safari” to residents and visitors where they can ride around on all-terrain vehicles through the trails of Wadina. Similar types of money making touristic endeavors such as zip lining, rock climbing, bungee jumping, bike rentals, and experiencing a “traditional Bedouin Arabic tent” that is pitched on the outskirts of the city are currently being hashed out (Sherwood 2016; Rawabi Home Summer 2016).

Bashar Masri’s plan for Rawabi’s 43,000m² downtown commercial center, aptly named “Q Center” in reference to the project’s primary benefactor (Qatar), is to have it become a regional IT hub that would house multinational tech firms such as Google, Microsoft, and Cisco. In addition to this, there is also retail space that will presumably be rented out to international high-end retail brands whose products feed into the fantasized lifestyle and aspirations of the new middle class that Rawabi purports to provide. Perhaps the best real-world example to compare Rawabi’s commercial center to would be the “Beirut Souks” commercial district at Solidere. Since the planners of Beirut Souks failed to consider the societal needs of the majority of the Lebanese population, it has become something less than the vibrant market it once was before the Lebanese Civil War. Its upscale restaurants, luxury shopping, and high rents have resulted in what architect Mona Hallak calls a “culture-free ghost town for the rich” (Naylor 2015). While the Q Center has not been fully constructed and it would be trivial to speculate on its future success/failure, presently there is no reason to believe that it will not meet the same fate as Beirut Souks since they are both driven by the same capitalist logic and impetus.

The design, density, and green space of Rawabi's neighborhoods has resulted in a compromise between Le Corbusier's towers in the park and Wright's Broadacre City where they seek to produce a high rate of return while simultaneously trying to maintain a suburban-like atmosphere. While apartments were initially offered at cheaper prices early on in the project, they have now increased to where an apartment can be had for \$80,000 – \$220,000, depending on the model and trim. Therefore, an eight-story building with the most expensive apartments will fetch Bayti a return of over \$3.5 million.

It should be noted that property owners in Rawabi are being issued a “tabo” or title deed to their property. As Palestinian land registration in the West Bank sits at around 20% (World Bank 2009), the issuing of title deeds plays into a larger process of trying to register more Palestinian land so that Israel cannot confiscate it in the future over a lack of legal documentation.⁶³ Conversely, land registration also lends itself to further land commodification, which allows property to be more easily bought and sold by speculators.

While Rawabi has been advertised as “affordable” housing for middle class Palestinian families by the PA and Bashar Masri, this is a far stretch of the truth at best. The apartment prices in Rawabi do not reflect the economic situation or purchasing power for the majority of Palestinians. This fact is not lost on either the PA or Bayti, despite their claims to the contrary. Therefore, the financing for the apartments that Rawabi offers to future residents is something relatively new to Palestine: the long-term

⁶³ The irony in this is that 1,525 dunums of land were expropriated from Palestinian private owners to make way for the Rawabi project.

mortgage.⁶⁴ The details of laying the groundwork for and the promotion of a mortgage culture in the West Bank will be discussed in the following chapter, but for now it can be said that it came to fruition through a collaboration of international actors, the PA, local banks, and recent residential development projects.

So what does this mean for Palestinians who wish to live in Rawabi? According to the Palestine Monetary Authority's (PMA) annual report for the year 2014, the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip) was at \$1,735. In the West Bank it was slightly higher at \$2,265 (PMA 2015, 16). If the above-mentioned information about Rawabi's apartment prices, the annual GDP per capita for the West Bank, and current mortgage terms that are offered by local Palestinian banks are extrapolated on, a rough sketch can be drawn out for what this means financially for the average Palestinian family living in Rawabi.

One of the several banks that is taking part in the mortgage scheme that offers financing for apartments in Rawabi is the Bank of Palestine. On their website they offer mortgages for real estate purchases to both Palestinians living in the West Bank and to Palestinians living in the diaspora. The terms for each mortgage vary slightly but they follow these general terms:

- Can borrow up to \$250,000 for Palestinians in the diaspora or \$160,000 for Palestinians with a Palestinian national ID
- A mortgage term of anywhere between 10-25 years
- Interest rates ranging from 5.5% - 12.0%; for special projects like Rawabi they offer a qualifying rate as low as 4.99%
- A minimum 15% down payment
- The property for which the loan is being taken out must be located in areas A or B of the West Bank

Source: Bank of Palestine (www.bankofpalestine.com; accessed March 12, 2016)

⁶⁴ During my tour of the project, I was assured that a majority of people who bought apartments in Rawabi had opted for taking out a mortgage, even though the guide could not offer any statistics regarding this.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the average family size in the West Bank is 5.3 persons. Rounding this number down, a generalization can be made that the average family of five has an income of \$11,325/yr., which translates into a monthly income of \$944. Therefore, the financial burden a family of five will carry, at the lowest end of the spectrum is: a down payment of \$12,000 for an \$80,000 apartment, the remaining \$68,000 financed at 4.99% for 25 years would result in a monthly mortgage payment of \$397/month or 42% of the family's monthly income. This scenario, however, is unrealistic. The \$80,000 price tag is for a one or two-bedroom apartment, which is far too small for a family of five to live comfortably in and the 4.99% interest rate is only available if they qualify. On the highest end of the spectrum, a \$220,000 apartment will require a minimum \$33,000 down payment, and if the remaining \$187,000 is financed at a 12% interest rate over a 10 year period, the monthly mortgage payment would be \$2,683. This monthly payment is obviously far out of reach for most Palestinians. So this too is probably not a likely scenario, therefore these figures should only be seen as the low and high ends of a range of possibilities.

Given the above information about Rawabi's apartments, this leaves us with the question of asking who, then, are Rawabi's future inhabitants? As we have seen, these apartments are largely out of reach for the Palestinian middle and working classes. Prospective buyers in Rawabi could then include a married couple where each hold a professional job such as a medical doctor, a professor at a university, an engineer, a

lawyer, and so on. In this instance, they would likely be moving from Ramallah to Rawabi.⁶⁵

The Palestinian capitalist class is another potential demographic. They could purchase or finance an apartment to live in themselves or they could buy an apartment as an investment where it would remain empty until a future buyer is found. Another demographic that Rawabi appeals to are Palestinians that have Israeli citizenship and live in Israel proper. Financially, purchasing or financing an apartment in Rawabi is easier for this group since the Israeli economy is significantly better than the West Bank economy. Since this group's primary residence is in Israel, an apartment in Rawabi would then serve as a weekend or summer home where it would remain unoccupied most of the year. Another group that would be able to purchase an apartment in Rawabi would be Palestinians from the diaspora. If someone from this group bought an apartment it too would probably be used as a summer home or secondary residence because of Israeli visa restrictions.

Lastly, there is another potential demographic, which are Palestinians that come from the middle or working classes from inside the West Bank. This group would be heavily dependent on financing from local banks. If Palestinian banks changed their relatively conservative lending policies and started offering mortgages to this group, knowingly taking on more risk, there is a possibility for Palestinians from these classes to live in Rawabi.

While the housing situation in the West Bank is complicated and it is difficult to quantify how much of what type of housing is needed, the Palestinian Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MOPAD) had estimated a total housing

⁶⁵ The major problem that this group of Palestinians would face is the Israeli checkpoint they would have to pass through every day to get to Ramallah for work. Getting to Ramallah would be difficult, if not impossible, whenever the Israelis decide to close the checkpoint.

deficit of 75,000 homes in the West Bank by 2010, and a housing deficit of nearly 300,000 homes by 2019 for both the West Bank and Gaza Strip (MOPAD 2009, 5).

While these figures indicate that there is indeed a demand for housing, the report also continues on to state:

The private sector's speculation of real estate and unstable prices of residential units have raised the housing cost as per the broadest segment of the Palestinian society, including persons with limited or low income. Finally, supply in the housing market does not match demand in terms of quality, not in terms of quantity. Units on sale or lease do not fit persons with limited income or categories looking for residence. (6)

Furthermore, the report calls for the creation of a social housing plan to be developed in the future that will accommodate Palestinians with limited income (7). Given this, Bayti's claim that Rawabi will help shore up the projected future housing demand in the West Bank in the coming years is not tenable since the majority of affordable housing that is in most demand is for working class and low income Palestinians. Therefore, it is evident that the housing deficit that Palestinians face is not being adequately addressed by the private real estate sector and calls to attention the need for a different housing strategy.

G. An Experiment in Social Engineering

Since the onset of the 1967 Israeli occupation, the West Bank has been used as a testing ground for numerous projects. It has been used as a laboratory for Israeli weapons manufacturers, military strategies for occupation, settler-colonialism, policing, surveillance, and for economic and neoliberal policies (Lloyd 2012). Undoubtedly, the West Bank has also become a laboratory for the production and arrangement of Palestinian urban space. The fact that Palestinians lost their urban centers in 1948 means there is no contemporary indigenous model to look at for how Palestinians can or

should urbanize. With the creation of Rawabi, Bashar Masri seeks to fill this void by advancing his own conception of urbanism, which is a design paradigm based on liberal free-market solutions. As we have seen, this has presented itself in the form of the neoliberal tract city.

The high degree of planning and the modern technology that has been integrated into Rawabi will undoubtedly help alleviate some of the urban problems that other Palestinian cities face. However, other problems that are a direct consequence of the occupation such as water shortages, electricity cuts, checkpoints, night raids, and curfews, to list a few, will not be resolved no matter how great and modern Rawabi becomes. Living in Rawabi will not make Palestinians immune from the effects of the occupation, but rather residents of Rawabi will have to dually contend with a new set of social constraints and contradictions that Rawabi will create.

As with the previous cities that were profiled earlier in the chapter, Rawabi's environment is instructive for how Palestinians should behave and interact with their environment, or simply put, how to be "good citizens" according to the neoliberal ethos. One pivotal way Masri has sought to cultivate the new Palestinian subject has been to introduce the homeowner's association (HOA), which is a form of privatized governance commonly found in the US, as well as in other Arab countries.⁶⁶ The HOAs will be another form of governance used in conjunction with the unelected municipal council that Bayti appointed. Accordingly, homeowners in Rawabi will be required to participate in and pay annual dues to the HOA. Masri has characterized HOAs as being "democratic" and "grassroots" (Schienberg 2014), but I believe this is too simplistic an

⁶⁶ It should be noted that HOAs in the Arab world typically function as a management tool for gated communities and have less authority over residents' property than what is commonly found in the US. In the case of the US, it has been documented that some HOAs are so powerful that they even have the authority to foreclose on a member's house if they have delinquent HOA fees (Fuselier 2011, 795).

explanation as well as deceptive. Therefore, I will briefly mention what some of the desired social effects of implementing an HOA in Rawabi may hope to achieve.⁶⁷

First and foremost, introducing HOAs to Rawabi is Masri's attempt to educate and familiarize Palestinian citizens with the corporate view of city governance. By introducing them to Rawabi I believe what he is advocating is for a new set of laws for Palestinians to abide by, where corporate governance erodes and eventually replaces the authority of the state (McCabe 2011, 536-537). In the absence of a strong Palestinian government, as well as an indistinct boundary between the public and private sectors, this kind of action will be met with little if any resistance by the PA. This new set of laws embodies the apolitical corporate mantra of law and order, good governance, and best practices.

Overall, HOAs are less concerned with the lives of residents and the overall community than they are with keeping property values high. As a result, bylaws get passed where maintaining or raising property values by various means is the primary objective; it is an added benefit if this coincidentally happens to improve the conditions of residents as well. In addition to this, HOAs also advocate the purported virtues of privatization and austerity. One important way Rawabi does this is through the privatization of public services, where Palestinians in Rawabi will become accustomed to paying a premium for these services. Moreover, I believe this experiment with HOAs will only result in the atomization and further alienation of Rawabi's residents because their very nature encourages every member to look out for their own self-interests, and I

⁶⁷ While it has yet to be seen how much authority Rawabi's HOAs will have (whether they will be structured along the lines of the US version or the version that is commonly found in the Arab world), given Masri's comparison to Reston, the fact that Masri is American, the amount of US involvement in Rawabi, and Rawabi's similarity to Celebration (in that they are both highly privatized cities), I find it likely that Rawabi's HOAs will be closer to the US version.

say this as a counterweight to Bayti’s assertion that the introduction of HOAs will foster a sense of community in Rawabi’s neighborhoods (Rawabi Home Summer 2015).

While it has yet to be observed, I believe these are some of the foreseeable ways HOAs will affect the existing Palestinian social fabric in the near future.

Rawabi has been presented as riding a wave of progress and bringing an urban modern to a landscape that is often seen as being steeped in conflict and to a people who are seen as antithetical to these ideals. This narrative speaks directly to the Palestinian new middle class. It asks and answers the question: “Despite the occupation, why can’t Palestinians have nice things, too?”



FIGURE 24. Advertisement for Rawabi that states “the best apartment...in the best neighborhood,” July 2015 (Photo by Author).

Consequently, Rawabi’s spatial order has produced a number of new modalities in how Palestinians accomplish certain things in their everyday lives. It embodies a change in Palestinians’ relationship to their work, their relationship to the market, their everyday experiences through modern extensions of the body and of nature, their relationship to each other, and their relationship to Israeli colonialism. Rawabi also offers an illusory hope of a better future for Palestinians. It is an illusion because in

one sense the Rawabi project, according to the developer's narrative, asserts Palestinian agency by giving the appearance that Palestinians are in control of their own future, something that was unattainable before the establishment of the PA. Unfortunately, this agency was only granted to the Palestinian capitalist class and political elites.⁶⁸ In another sense, this capitalist mode of urbanization leaves a majority of the Palestinian population powerless and in even less control of their lives and their environment than at any other time during the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The modicum of space that remains for future Palestinian growth in areas A and B is simultaneously being eaten away by development projects being done by Palestinian capitalists and by Israeli settlement expansion. Either way, the possibility for the average Palestinian to conceive of a new space becomes slimmer with each passing day. Instead, what the average Palestinian is left to be concerned with is how to repay their financial obligations in order to maintain a certain lifestyle that only going into debt can achieve or to merely hold onto what they already have without losing it. Therefore, while Rawabi may seem like a space of hope for some Palestinians seeking social mobility, it will ultimately become a site of conflict once its contradictions become more pronounced over time.

⁶⁸ This also is illusory because no matter how empowered the Palestinian capitalist class may become, they too are ultimately subject to the controls and restrictions of the Israeli occupation.

CHAPTER V:

NEOLIBERALISM IS A POLITICAL PROJECT: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RAWABI

A. Building a New Palestinian State?

Since the 2008 Bethlehem conference, Rawabi has been presented in various ways to the public by its developer, least of all tying it to the state-building initiative that the Fayyad government had set out to accomplish during his tenure as prime minister. The state-building narrative is a repackaging of Fayyad's and Netanyahu's "economic peace" initiative where it is easier to convince Palestinians to be willing participants in "state-building" than for them to openly accept economic collaboration with Israel. Not only does the state-building narrative open up new and larger avenues of accumulation for Palestinian and Israeli capitalists, but this narrative dually serves as a justification for the undertaking of undemocratic practices around the West Bank. The eminent domain decree issued by President Mahmoud Abbas and the approval of Rawabi's municipality/municipal council are perhaps the most brilliant examples of this to date (see appendices 1 and 2).⁶⁹

The state-building narrative is also revealing in that it came shortly after the second intifada and the subsequently annulled 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections. With the emergency appointment (not election) of Salam Fayyad as prime minister, his state-building narrative interestingly plays into the "carrot and stick" approach that the Israelis routinely use on the Palestinian population. That is, if the

⁶⁹ While the PA has not given any money to the Rawabi project, actions like the two mentioned above, the passing of numerous neoliberal reforms as outlined in the literature review, the passing of the 2011 Investment Law, and continuous vocal support for the project are all ways the PA has helped facilitate the materialization of Rawabi.

average Palestinian chooses to directly confront the occupation they will be crushed as witnessed during the second intifada. Along with this, it has been well documented that the PA security forces have played an active role in suppressing resistance to the occupation by acting as Israel's security subcontractor in the West Bank (Lunat 2010; Deger 2014; Purkiss and Nafi 2015). Therefore, Palestinians have been incentivized to debt-finance an apolitical middle class lifestyle for themselves, and it is within this political context that the Rawabi project has situated itself.

For the above reasons, the logic of the state-building narrative is counterintuitive and highly unlikely to succeed in its publicly declared mission. Furthermore, the willful omission of the occupation by this narrative only seeks to trivialize and distract from the occupation. What has resulted in the present-day West Bank is the illusion of a state, but without statehood. While the state-building initiative necessarily needs to be acknowledged because of the pivotal role this narrative has played in the PA's bid for statehood, I believe any further engagement with it beyond what I have mentioned will only result in a discussion that is cyclical and unproductive.

While I believe it would be erroneous to frame Rawabi within the state-building narrative, Rawabi should indeed be understood as being part of a larger US political project that has been unfolding in the West Bank since the end of the second intifada. Therefore, my main contention, which this chapter seeks to validate, is that Rawabi has been constructed as a node of non-productive⁷⁰ development as part of a broader strategy that allows Israel to further consolidate its settler-colonial hegemony over Palestinian land as well as to further advance neoliberalism's self-serving goal of capital accumulation in the West Bank. Furthermore, not only does this strategy align with US

⁷⁰ I use "non-productive" in the sense that the project is not socially necessary and that the project has been designed for the purposes of consumption and speculation where it does not substantially contribute to the Palestinian economy for any long-term benefits.

foreign policy interests in Palestine (whether they may be economic or geopolitical), but the US government's support for the Rawabi project is exemplary of the kind of cultural imperialism the US State Department actively promotes in the Middle East region as a whole – the aim of which is to align Palestinian cultural and social subjectivities with those of the American metropole.

Therefore, this chapter seeks to construct a theoretical and material basis that supports these arguments, which will primarily be done through a stakeholder analysis of Rawabi. Admittedly, given the multitude of political and economic actors involved with Rawabi, presenting a comprehensive stakeholder analysis goes far beyond the space available in this chapter. Rather, what I seek to do is provide a snapshot of the interactions of the primary actors who are involved with Rawabi to illustrate how these actors are operating and leveraging their interests in the West Bank through their bolstering of Rawabi.

B. Value Production in the Creation of a New City

Given the enormity of a project like Rawabi in Palestine, several important questions about the project can and should be raised. First and foremost, it evokes the larger question of value production and begs one to ask: What value is actually being produced for Palestinians in the construction of a new city from the ground up? In short, I contend that, overall, little value is being produced or at least any value that is meaningful to Palestinians and to the Palestinian economy as a whole. Conversely, it cannot be said that in building Rawabi, the project has not produced wealth because it, in fact, has the potential to produce a great deal of wealth once the project is finished. Herein lies the contradiction of Rawabi, which brings to light the speculative nature of the project that this section seeks to further explore. If it is indeed true that the project

has the effect of having relatively little value, yet at the same time produces a great deal of wealth, then what purpose does Rawabi serve and, more importantly, who benefits from the wealth that it produces? To shed some light on the answers to the above questions I will first approach value on a conceptual level before analyzing the various stakeholders. In doing this, I hope to illustrate how the *raison d'être* of Rawabi is overwhelmingly a political project.

Since value is a complex concept and difficult to measure, Harvey (2006), drawing from Marx's theory of value, puts forward some rudimentary elements to help us understand the nature of value. Firstly, he outlines three types of value: *use value*, *exchange value*, and *value*. While detailing the specifics of each type of value is not necessary for this discussion, Harvey states that each work within a dialectical tension of each other as well as in their own respective space-times (141-143). As a general definition he states that "value internalizes the whole historical geography of innumerable labor processes set up under conditions of or in relation to capital accumulation in the space-time of the world market" (142). Hence, value should be understood as being a social relation (142). Regarding this, Harvey continues, "it [value] is impossible to measure except by way of its effects (try measuring any social relation directly and you always fail)" (141-142). Therefore, the value of a commodity can only be measured by way of its relationship to other commodities in a specific space-time.

Secondly, value is a social relation that is immaterial but objective (141). It is immaterial in that value cannot be observed or appropriated, and it is objective in that money is able to serve as a material representation of this social relation as an exchange-value. As a caveat, it should be emphasized that the value of a commodity is

something separate from the monetary value that has been assigned to it, i.e. the market price of a commodity serves as a representation of its actual value at a given time at a given place. Since money is a representation of value, the monetary value assigned to a commodity can also misrepresent or betray that commodity's actual value (Harvey 2016b).

The final aspect of value that I will mention is the point of realization and “effective demand” (Harvey 2016b). While the valorization of a commodity (i.e. how value is embedded in a commodity) is done at the point of production by the necessary social labor, the realization of value is dependent on effective demand. Effective demand takes on two components. The first is that the realization of value is contingent on the “wants, needs, and desires” of people within a particular space-time. The second part is that people need to have the purchasing power to be able to afford the commodity (Harvey 2016b). Without the fulfillment of these two aspects of effective demand, a commodity then becomes worthless or without value.

Keeping in mind these basic assumptions, I will begin to explain the relationship various stakeholders (as mapped out in table 2) have with Rawabi within the context of value creation. For the remainder of this section, I will draw the focus on Diar's role and on the actors that benefit the most from the project. The rest of the stakeholders in the chart will be discussed more thoroughly throughout the remainder of the chapter.

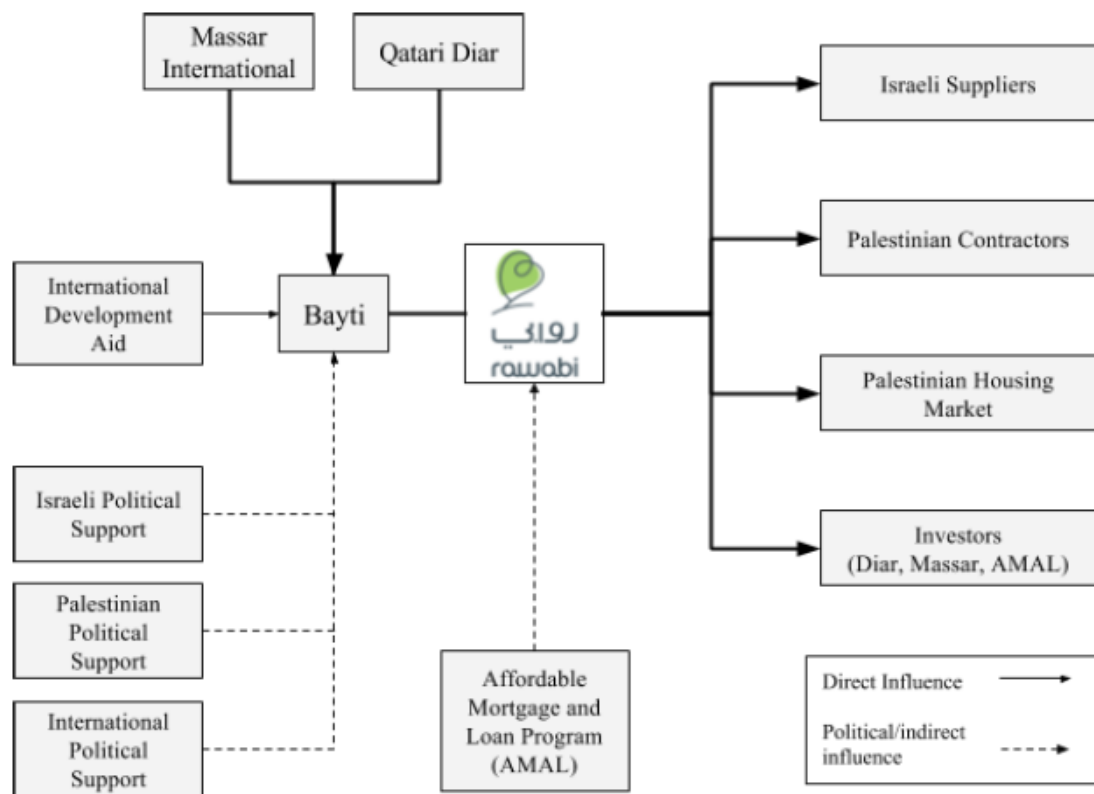
As mentioned in chapter three, Bayti was created out of a partnership between Massar International and Qatari Diar. Massar and Diar are part of the primary circuit of capital, which is involved in commodity production (Harvey 1978, 104).⁷¹ Once the problem of *overaccumulation* occurs in the primary circuit, the surplus capital from this

⁷¹ Massar is composed of 13 subsidiaries and 16 affiliates that provide a range of products and services in Palestine. Diar, on the other hand, is funded by Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority, which is backed by the production and sale of Qatar's oil and natural gas reserves.

circuit must be diverted into a secondary circuit.⁷² The capital that is directed to the secondary circuit is an investment in fixed assets (106).⁷³ This investment manifests itself in the built environment in primarily two forms: for purposes of production and for purposes of consumption. It is the category of consumption within this secondary circuit that the Rawabi project falls under.

TABLE 2.

Rawabi Stakeholder Overview



Source: Tayeb, 2017

⁷² This investment in the secondary circuit can also occur via debt financing (Harvey 1978, 107).

⁷³ As Harvey (2016c) notes, fixed capital, especially in housing and real estate, is the favored way to dispose of surplus capital since it has the potential to yield the highest returns.

Investment in the built environment is done to further advance the means of “production, circulation, exchange, and consumption” (106). This is of course done in the hope that investment in this circuit will eventually lead to greater future returns. What emerges from this type of development is an over-investment in the built environment, which eventually betrays its own crises within this circuit (112). While this investment in the secondary circuit is done to help alleviate some of the problems that are inherent within capitalism, it is done at the expense of people whose needs are all but ignored in this process (112). Inevitably, this kind of speculative capitalist-led development is unsustainable and what we get from it, as Harvey reiterates from Marx’s *Capital*, is “a conception of a society founded on the principle of ‘accumulation for accumulation’s sake, production for production’s sake’” (102).

Diar’s role as the main benefactor of Rawabi is exemplary of Hanieh’s (2011a) primary circuit for how Khaleeji Capital is invested in Palestine. In similar fashion to other Gulf states, one of the ways Qatar has dealt with its problem of overaccumulation via its oil revenues has been to embark on a real estate construction binge. Diar, founded in 2005 and capitalized at \$4 billion, has taken on numerous luxury construction projects throughout the world. The centerpiece of all its investments is the \$45 billion flagship project of Lusail City, which is to have a projected capacity of 260,000 residents by the time Qatar hosts the 2022 World Cup. While the \$1.2 billion Diar has tied up in Rawabi may be a significant injection of capital for the West Bank economy, this project is financially inconsequential for Qatar when seen within the grander scope of Diar’s investment portfolio. Moreover, Diar’s investment in Rawabi unquestionably plays a role in Qatar’s foreign policy objectives and its assertion of soft

power.⁷⁴ Needless to say, if Qatar has the political will (i.e. its investment in Rawabi is a tool of its foreign policy), Diar will see the project through regardless of its profitability.

In terms of who benefits, Israeli suppliers are by far the main recipients of the capital that has been expended on Rawabi so far. Up to ninety-five percent of materials and supplies have been imported for the construction of the project (Friedson 2015) and according to the former deputy managing director of Rawabi, Amir Dajani, approximately \$80-\$100 million is spent annually in Israel (Kershner 2013).⁷⁵ On top of this, Israel also collects import taxes on any materials that are imported from abroad.

Bashar Masri has stated in multiple interviews that Rawabi will be a boon for the Palestinian economy and for the labor market (often connecting these to the state-building narrative) (Schienberg 2014). While Palestinian contractors benefit from Rawabi, it is unclear how much of an impact the work they gain from Rawabi is actually having on the Palestinian economy. On my visit to Rawabi, I was told that the construction phase of the project would create an estimated 8,000-10,000 jobs for Palestinian workers; once the city is built, there would be approximately 5,000 permanent jobs.⁷⁶ While the project has created demand for some high-skill and

⁷⁴ While an analysis of Qatar's foreign policy is far beyond the reach of what this chapter seeks to accomplish, it can be readily observed that Qatar's foreign policy for the past two decades has primarily focused on cultural and economic projects. The launching of the Al-Jazeera satellite news channel, establishing Qatar Airways, the construction of multiple first-class museums, and investments in real estate projects around the world are some examples. With regard to Palestinians, Qatar has provided large amounts of aid to the Gaza Strip after Israel's multiple bombardments, has hosted mass weddings for Palestinians in Gaza, built a football stadium within Israel proper, has lent itself as a back channel for political negotiations, and has provided refuge for Palestinian politicians such as Azmi Bishara and Khaled Meshaal.

⁷⁵ While Bashar Masri has gone to great lengths not to disclose his Israeli suppliers, he claims he does not use any materials or products made in Israeli settlements (Miller 2014).

⁷⁶ These numbers are only the developer's projections and are contingent on the success of the project. While Masri has committed to moving his own companies into Rawabi, which is approximately 600 jobs, at the present, no major companies have moved into the city (Segel et al. 2014, 9).

professional jobs, the majority of the workers, like with any major development or infrastructure project, are temporary wage laborers. Once the city is built, these workers either have to find another project to work on or they fall to the ranks of the unemployed. With a large youth population and an unemployment rate hovering around fifteen percent in the West Bank (PCBS 2015, 5), it is in the interest of the PA to promote large-scale projects like Rawabi because of the jobs these types of projects create. Not only do they help shore-up unemployment and create taxable income but they dually function to preempt an anxious and restless population from engaging in civil disobedience or revolt.

In turning to Rawabi's effect on the housing market, as noted in the previous chapter, the kind of housing that Rawabi provides is not what is in most demand in the West Bank. If any attempt had been made to build affordable housing, then the use-value of Rawabi would be much greater. Therefore, Rawabi's impact on fulfilling the demands of the Palestinian housing market is negligible.⁷⁷

The last category of stakeholders that benefit from Rawabi are the project's investors. For Massar and Diar, the prospects of getting a significant return on their investment are slim to none; Masri has publicly aired his doubts about whether Bayti will break even on the project (Kershner 2013; Friedson 2015). The Affordable Mortgage and Loan program, known as AMAL (hope), is perhaps the second largest beneficiary of the Rawabi project after the Israeli suppliers. This US-backed for-profit mortgage company was created in 2008 to support a spree of sizeable housing projects

⁷⁷ According to journalistic reports on Rawabi, it appears many of the current residents are actually Bashar Masri's employees who work at Massar (Friedson 2015).

that were being developed in the West Bank, Rawabi being one of them.⁷⁸ The goal of this program is to encourage Palestinians to move into these housing projects by making mortgages accessible to them, thus fulfilling the second requirement of effective demand since most Palestinians cannot afford these homes without a mortgage. Therefore, if Palestinians are persuaded to move into these housing projects en masse, the potential earnings for AMAL's shareholders will be tremendous. Since AMAL plays such an integral role in trying to make Rawabi and these other housing projects successful, I will discuss AMAL's role at greater length later in the chapter.

By determining that the main beneficiaries of the largest Palestinian development project in the West Bank are Israeli suppliers and a foreign-backed for-profit mortgage company, I believe the political aims of Rawabi are unequivocal. As established in the previous chapter, Bayti's massive advertising campaign and stagecraft was all about effecting a change in the wants, needs, and desires of Palestinians. Therefore, by fulfilling the two requirements of effective demand, what Rawabi hopes to accomplish is to assimilate Palestinians into a new lifestyle that ultimately condemns them to a life of debt peonage.

Furthermore, Bashar Masri himself at times has seemed less concerned about the profitability of Rawabi than about his ideological inclination to be a key agent in this political project. To illustrate this in Masri's own words, at a time when Rawabi was spiraling out of budget because of delays, Masri brushes aside the fact that Rawabi will not make him very much money and states, "Above all [...] was the drive to 'set a precedent for the other projects. We want others [developers] to be encouraged to do

⁷⁸ Other projects include: the neighborhoods of Reef, Rehan, Jinan, and Al-Ghadeer. I believe these projects and other development projects such as the previously mentioned Jericho Gate project should not be seen as being in competition with each other but rather they are part of the same strategy to get Palestinians to take out mortgages.

Rawabi 2 and Rawabi 3 and Rawabi 4 and Rawabi 5. And guess what? The country needs a minimum of five projects like Rawabi”” (Friedson 2015).

These types of large development projects that Masri is advocating for contrasts with how the majority of housing in Palestine is currently constructed, which is small-scale and financed by individual families. If other major developers like Bayti are able to reverse this trend by buying up and building on large swathes of land in areas A and B of the West Bank, then the only option of housing that will be made available to Palestinians in the future is expensive upscale housing where they will be compelled to take out a mortgage.⁷⁹ Empirical evidence shows that speculative, consumption-based real estate projects done by large developers are increasingly becoming a normalized form of development (Yaser 2015).⁸⁰

In the long term, this kind of project can only benefit Israeli settler-colonialism, global capitalism, US imperial interests in the Middle East, and some key local collaborators who work with American and Israeli elites to advance neoliberal development in Palestine. Finally, the goal of locking Palestinians into a precarious cycle of indebtedness is that this will have an overall depoliticizing effect where Palestinians will effectively call off their struggle for national liberation.

⁷⁹ Doing this effectively restricts the supply of ground rent that is available to Palestinians.

⁸⁰ This process is already underway in Gaza. Preliminary plans have been drawn up by AECOM for the privatization of the entire Gaza Strip, an executive summary of which can be found on The Portland Trust’s website.

C. The Masri Family Business Group

Bashar and his uncles, Munib and Sabih al-Masri, came to Palestine soon after the Oslo Accords were signed. After decades of Israeli de-development, they, like other Palestinian capitalists from the diaspora, realized the untapped potential to exploit new fields of accumulation in Palestine. While Bashar was still living in Washington DC working at a management consulting firm at the time of the Oslo Accords, his uncles who had amassed huge fortunes through their work in the Gulf, used their wealth and political connections to lay the groundwork to become one of the most influential family groups in Palestine. It was not until a year later that Bashar returned to Palestine to establish his holding company Massar International. Therefore, to shed some light on how much influence the al-Masri's exert on the Palestinian economy, the following will chart out some of their primary businesses and assets inside Palestine.

As Hanieh (2011a) notes, Munib and Sabih al-Masri belong to his secondary circuit of Khaleeji Capital since their main base of capital, through their companies Edgo and ASTRA, is derived directly from their business dealings in the Gulf.⁸¹ Together, with other Palestinian businessmen, they formed the Palestine Development and Investment Company (PADICO);⁸² since then, it has become the largest holding company in Palestine. As shown in table 3, PADICO is invested in some of the largest companies in Palestine, particularly PRICO, PALTEL, the Palestine stock exchange, JEDICO, PIIC,⁸³ Nakheel Palestine, and Jericho Gate. According to its last annual

⁸¹ It should be noted that while Munib conducts business in several Gulf states through Edgo, he also has operations in a dozen and a half other countries.

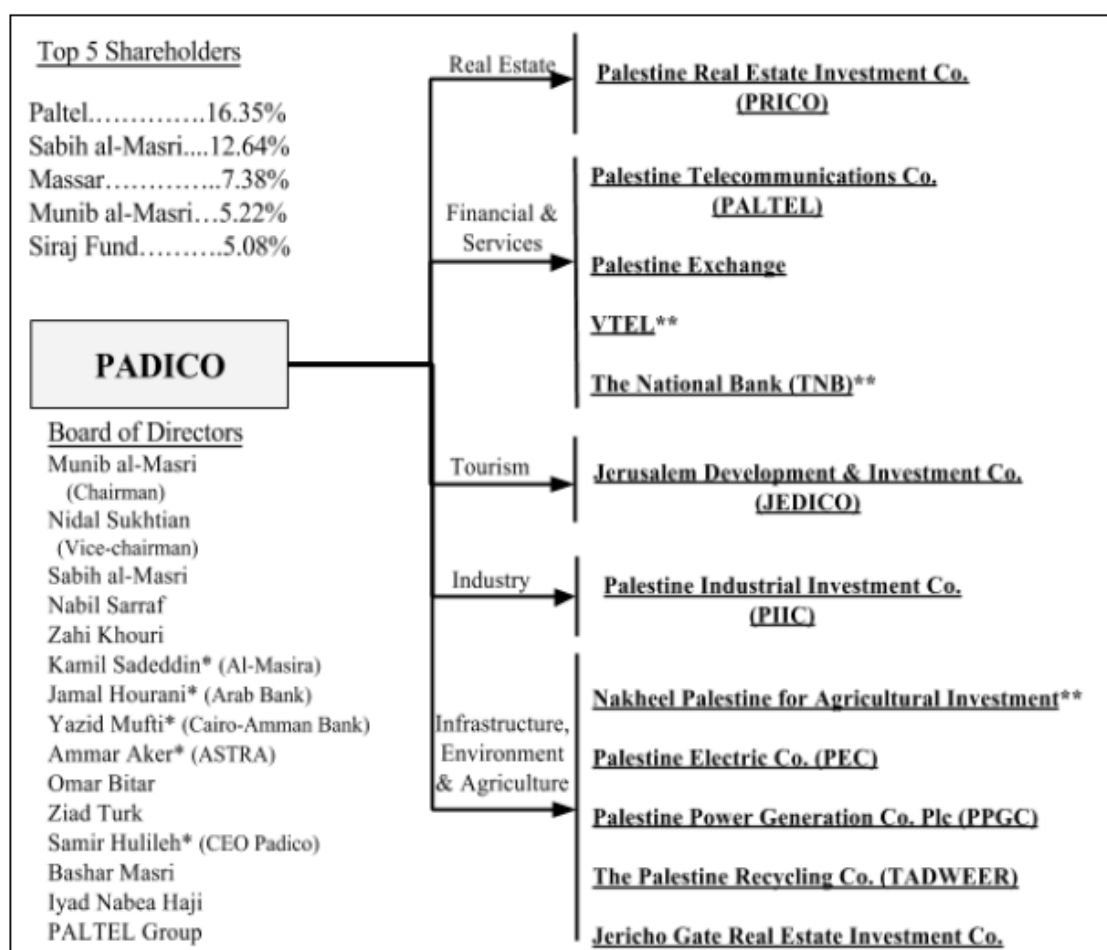
⁸² PADICO was registered in Liberia in 1993.

⁸³ It should be noted that PIIC has six subsidiary companies, which I did not include in the chart due to space constraints but they are: Palestine Poultry Company (PPC), Palestine Plastics Industries Company (PPIC), National Carton Industry, Golden Wheat Mills Company (GMC), Vegetable Oil Industries Company (VIOC), and Jordan Vegetable Oil Industries Company.

report, PADICO has \$617 million in total investments and a paid-in capital of \$250 million. Munib is the chairman of the board while Sabih sits as a board member; in 2015 Bashar became one of PADICO's newest board members. The top five shareholders are Munib, Sabih, and companies controlled by Sabih and Bashar.⁸⁴

Table 3.

PADICO General Profile



* Board members that have high positions in other Masri family controlled companies outside of PADICO.

** Companies that are directly connected to Bashar's holding company Massar International.

Source: Tayeb, 2017, adapted from [www.padico.com, www.massar.com].

⁸⁴ Sabih is the chairman of PALTEL and Siraj Fund is a subsidiary of Massar.

Bashar's holding company, Massar, is significantly less transparent than PADICO with the information it publicly provides. Apart from Rawabi and other real estate projects, Massar has significant investments in media and advertising, ICT, brokerage, consultancy, agriculture, and logistics and delivery services. Massar additionally operates a private equity fund called Siraj Fund, which I will discuss briefly in the next section. While the management or board of directors is not listed on Massar's website, some key people in the organization are Manal and Samir Zuraiq, Huda El Jack, Amir Dajani, and Bashar's wife, Jane Masri.

Apart from these two holding companies, the Masri family also commands significant influence over several banks in Palestine. For the Cairo-Amman Bank (CAB), Sabih's total ownership comes to 29.5%.⁸⁵ Furthermore, not only is his son Khalid a board member, but many of the other board members are directly connected to Masri owned companies such as ASTRA, Zara Investment Holding, and PADICO. Additionally, since 2012, Sabih has been the chairman of the Arab Bank.⁸⁶ Another bank is The National Bank (TNB). This is a newer bank in Palestine that was created in 2005. On its board are two of Munib's children (Omar and Dina), and two other board members have upper-level positions at Massar. TNB's major shareholders include the Siraj Fund, PALTEL, Massar International, and Samir and Manal Zraiqa. The last bank worth mentioning is the Palestine Islamic Bank of which Maher al-Masri is the chairman.

⁸⁵ This is through shares owned by Al-Massira Investment Company, his wife Najwa Mohammad Madi, and Sabih himself.

⁸⁶ It is worth noting that the three main banks that PADICO does business with are the Arab Bank, CAB, and the Bank of Palestine.

On a final note, I will briefly give two examples of prominent people that clearly exemplify the “revolving door” between the Masri’s organizations and the PA. Maher al-Masri was the Palestinian Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry between the years 1996-2006. During the same years he was also a representative of the Palestinian Legislative Council. And from 2003-2005 he was a board member of the Palestine Investment Fund (PIF), which is the sovereign wealth fund of the PA. During the Oslo peace talks, Maher was the main Palestinian negotiator for the 1994 Paris Protocol, an economic and trade agreement with Israel that highly disadvantaged Palestinians and served as the catalyst to liberalizing the Palestinian economy.⁸⁷ Before his career in public service, he was the general manager of the Vegetable Oil Company (a subsidiary of PIIC, which PADICO owns significant shares in). Currently, he is a board member of the Palestine stock exchange,⁸⁸ which PADICO owns a 74.7% share of, and, as previously mentioned, he is the chairman of the Palestine Islamic Bank.

Samir Hulileh is another example of this “revolving door.” While he has been the CEO of PADICO since 2008, he was also the Executive Director of The Portland Trust’s Ramallah office, which collaborated with Bashar on Rawabi in the project’s early stages as mentioned in chapter 3. Before working for the Masris, Hulileh was the assistant under secretary for the Ministry of Economy and Trade between 1994-1997. Also, between 2005-2006, he was the secretary general of the cabinet in the Prime Minister’s Office. These two examples give a glimpse into the kind of connections that

⁸⁷ In more recent years, Palestinians have called for the agreement’s abolition or renegotiation (Husseini and Khalidi 2013).

⁸⁸ Worth noting is that current Palestinian Prime Minister, Rami Hamdallah, was also the chairman of the board of the Palestine stock exchange before he assumed office in 2013. Apart from this, while he was the president of An-Najah University (1998-2013) the Masri family had made significant contributions to the university including financing the Munib al-Masri College for Engineering and Technology. Moreover, for many years, Sabih has been the chair of the board of trustees at An-Najah and Bashar currently sits as a board member.

exist between the public and private sectors and this phenomenon is something that could be investigated and extrapolated on further.

D. Palestine's Davos Man and the Politics of International Aid

Samuel Huntington (2004) coined the term “Davos Man” where he lauds the rise of a new class of transnational capitalist elites.⁸⁹ In his description of the Davos Man, Huntington remarks:

The rewards of an increasingly integrated global economy have brought forth a new global elite. Labeled 'Davos Men', 'gold-collar workers' or . . . 'cosmocrats', this emerging class is empowered by new notions of global connectedness. It includes academics, international civil servants and executives in global companies, as well as successful high-technology entrepreneurs.

[...] Comprising fewer than 4 percent of the American people, these transnationalists have little need for national loyalty, view national boundaries as obstacles that thankfully are vanishing, and see national governments as residues from the past whose only useful function is to facilitate the elite's global operations.

Bashar Masri emphatically and unrepentantly embraces the worldview of Huntington's Davos Man.⁹⁰ Just as Rawabi is a project that could have been built anywhere, Masri, as a transnational capitalist, seemingly could have hailed from any country in the world.⁹¹ While Masri is certainly not the only Davos Man in Palestine, i.e. there are Davos Men, one would be hard-pressed to find another Palestinian capitalist that has stepped into this role as publicly and as zealously as he has. And for assuming this role, he has been well rewarded by the international aid regime that exists in Palestine.

⁸⁹ This term is in reference to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual meeting that is held in Davos, Switzerland.

⁹⁰ This is despite the fact that he was named as one of the “Global Leaders of Tomorrow” in 1999 by the WEF.

⁹¹ He incidentally happens to hold US and Palestinian citizenship.

While much has been written on economic development and foreign aid in Palestine, the space in this chapter unfortunately does not permit a comprehensive discussion on it.⁹² Instead, I will briefly highlight several important observations that different authors have made. A Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA) report found that foreign aid in Palestine is dispersed in such a way by its donors that the majority of aid ultimately ends up being consumed rather than invested in a way that significantly contributes to sustainable economic growth (Sarsour, Naser, and Atallah 2011, 23, 31). Moreover, this aid is overwhelmingly based on donor's political interests opposed to reasons of solidarity (31) (see figure 25 below). The Anti-Terrorism Statement that Palestinian recipients of US aid must sign is another clear example of this (30). Furthermore, Israeli economist, Shir Hever (2016), concluded in a recent report that 78% of Palestinian aid money is absorbed into the Israeli economy, thereby covering at least 18% of the costs of Israel's occupation (11).⁹³ Finally, in the case of the US, which is the sole country that contributes the most in international aid to Palestine, the disbursement of aid to Palestinians is tied to the foreign policy objectives of the State Department and the Executive Branch of the government.⁹⁴

⁹² In this section I will forgo detailing the ways in which high-profile politicians, such as Tony Blair (Sherwood 2016) have helped move Rawabi along politically and focus more on aid flows to Rawabi and Masri's companies.

⁹³ This is largely due to the captive Palestinian economy and the trade imbalance between the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel, where 70% of Palestinian imports come from Israel and 84% of Palestinian exports go to Israel (Hever 2015, 7).

⁹⁴ Most of the aid that has come from the US has largely been in the form of loan guarantees, political risk insurance, investment in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and support to the PA's budget.

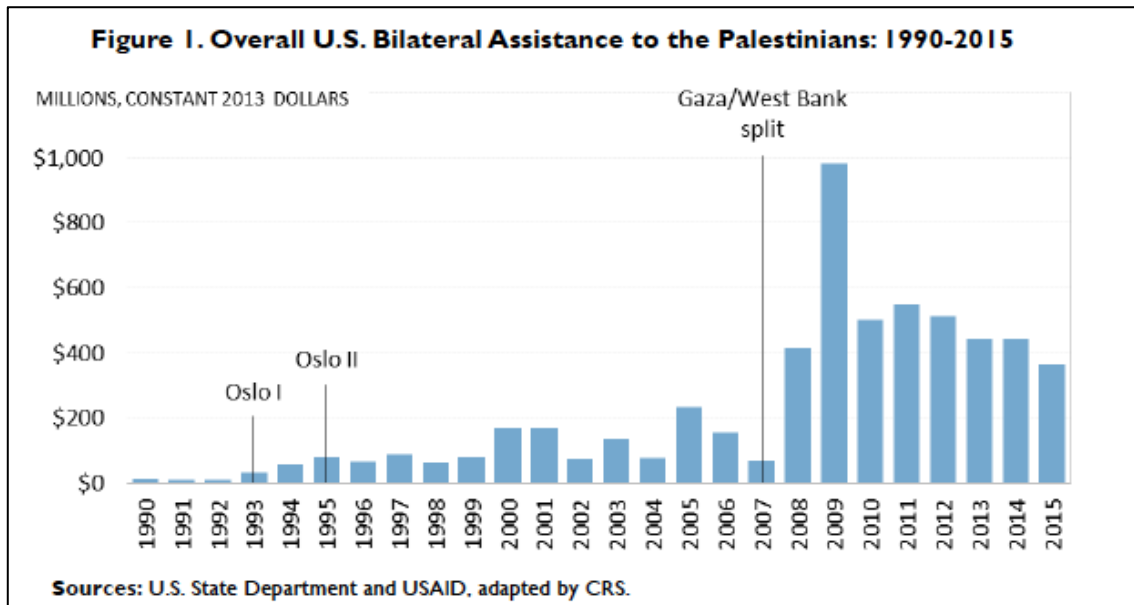


FIGURE 25. After the failed US-backed coup in Gaza and the PA’s adoption of the PRDP, both occurring in 2007, signaled an exponential surge in US aid to the PA and to Palestinian organizations in the West Bank (Zanotti 2016, 2).

I will now turn to look at the aid Masri has received from the US for his project. As mentioned earlier in chapter three, Rawabi has received funding from both USAID and the USTDA.⁹⁵ USAID paid for a retaining wall and some of the city’s internal roads at a cost of \$5 million (USAID and the USTDA has funded numerous studies for the project. These two agencies have also played a role in bringing other US-based companies to work on the project. For example, in 2010 the USTDA funded a \$413,000 technical design and road map for Rawabi’s ICT infrastructure. In the same year, the USTDA also funded a \$274,000 wastewater treatment feasibility study (Consulate

⁹⁵ Apart from directly offsetting Rawabi’s costs, over the years USAID has contracted with various subsidiaries and affiliates of Massar. These companies include: Alpha International (a consultancy firm), Massar Consulting and Technical Services (consulting), ASAL Technologies (ICT Firm), Publicis Zoom (advertising), and HD Vision (media and advertising).

General 2010b).⁹⁶ In addition to these two studies, Masri also contracted North Carolina based RTI International to create an economic growth strategy for Rawabi (RTI 2009).

Furthermore, Massar has also been the main subcontractor in the West Bank for Chemonics International since the early 2000s. Chemonics is a for-profit International Development Contractor (IDC) based in Washington, DC and is one of the largest recipients of USAID contracts.⁹⁷ The projects that Chemonics has collaborated on with Massar have focused primarily on microfinance, capacity enhancement within the PA, democracy promotion, and empowerment (Alsayed 2008, 85-86; USAID 2004; USAID 2013b).⁹⁸

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)⁹⁹ has also invested large sums of money in Bashar Masri's companies. In 2010, OPIC invested \$30 million (along with \$7 million from the Soros Economic Development Fund) into Masri's private equity fund, Siraj Fund Management Company. According to media reports, Siraj was "one of five funds OPIC approved in June 2010 to fulfill President Barack Obama's commitment to support technological development in Muslim-majority countries" (Rizzetta 2012). Siraj is capitalized at \$90 million and has investments in at

⁹⁶ USTDA contracts stipulate that awarded grants must be spent on US companies (USTDA 2010). For the ICT study, the contract was awarded to Virginia based decision/analysis partners LLC while AECOM was awarded the wastewater study contract.

⁹⁷ Chemonics is one of many well known "beltway bandits" in the DC area whose main business is derived almost exclusively from federal government contracts. Despite accusations of squandering money in recent years (for its contracts in Afghanistan and Haiti) and criticisms that a significant portion of the money it receives goes to overhead costs, in 2015 Chemonics received an unprecedented \$9.5 billion 8-year contract with USAID – the largest in the US agency's history (Cohen 2015).

⁹⁸ While these sources do not state how much money Massar received, the total value for each of these contracts were worth millions of dollars (\$2.6 million, \$28.8 million, and \$33 million).

⁹⁹ OPIC is a US government agency that provides financing to developing countries and whose directives are guided by the US State Department. Its main tasks are to provide risk insurance for investments and investors, support loan guarantee facilities, as well as to provide loans to businesses (USAID 2015). The agency is self-funded and operates at no cost to US taxpayers.

least 10 Palestinian companies (see appendix #3).¹⁰⁰ OPIC's investment in Siraj has helped subsidize the costs of Rawabi. Despite the claim of there being a "Chinese Wall" between Massar and Siraj (Segel et al. 2014, 25), several of the companies that Siraj has invested in have also been contracted to work on Rawabi by Bayti. The chart below (table 4) is one example of how this would work.

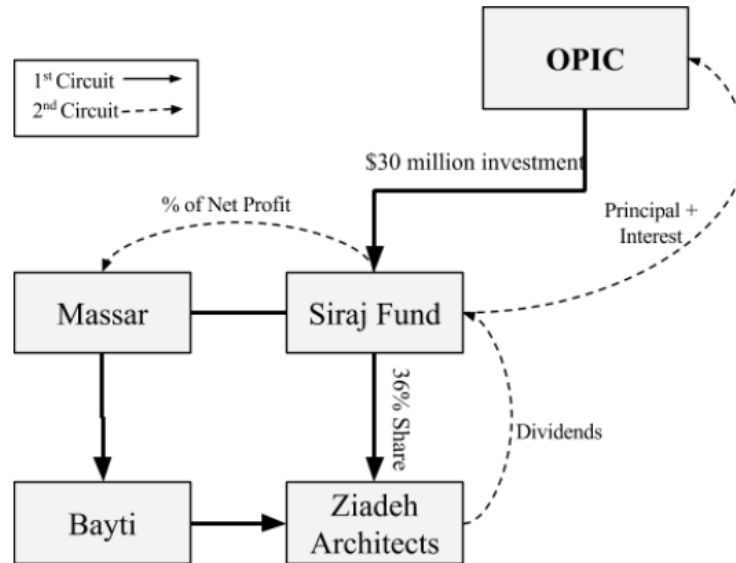
Furthermore, not only is OPIC the primary investor in AMAL (which I will address in the following section), but, according to OPIC's website, since 2007 it has given hundreds of millions of dollars to other Masri family controlled/influenced companies.¹⁰¹ To help explain this phenomenon, a recent audit of OPIC, conducted by USAID, concluded that there was a lack of transparency in how OPIC awarded loans and that in some cases OPIC did not follow its own protocols. Significantly, the audit also called for OPIC to adopt a policy of free and fair competition for access to its funds (USAID 2015).

¹⁰⁰ It is registered in the tax haven of the Cayman Islands.

¹⁰¹ These include: CAB, TNB, the Arab Bank, and Foursan Group. Foursan Group is a private equity fund based in Amman, Jordan that is run by Munib Masri's son, Leith Masri.

Table 4.

Siraj Fund's Investment in Ziadeh Architects



Source: Tayeb, 2017, adapted from [www.massar.com, www.siraj.ps, www.opic.gov]

While Bashar Masri's liberal ideology and entrepreneurial gusto may make him an auspicious candidate for receiving US funding, there are other contributing factors that can account for the prolific amounts of aid he has received. This has to do with the Masri family's Washington, DC contingent. Hani Masri, a distant relative of Bashar's but from the same generation as Munib and Sabih, lives in McLean, Virginia and has ties to Bill and Hillary Clinton (Salahi 2010). Since the mid-1990s, Hani has hosted numerous fundraisers for the Clintons and other Democratic Party candidates. According to the Federal Election Commission's (FEC) website, Hani and his wife have made campaign contributions to the Clintons and to other Democratic politicians ranging in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.¹⁰² Moreover, according to the Clinton Global Initiative website, he also contributed somewhere between \$100,001-\$250,000

¹⁰² According to the FEC, Bashar and his wife have also contributed \$95,000 since the year 2000 to Democratic candidates, primarily to Hillary Clinton's and Barak Obama's campaigns.

to the organization.¹⁰³ Seemingly, in return for these contributions, Hani's company, Capital Investment Management Corp., received \$40 million from OPIC in 1997.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, his non-profit in Nablus, Tomorrow's Youth Organization,¹⁰⁵ received a \$5 million grant over a period of three years from the Clinton Global Initiative. While there is no explicit evidence of collusion, it is impossible to ignore this pattern of campaign contributions and the receiving of US funds.

Furthermore, Randa Masri is another key relative who also lives in McLean and has undoubtedly helped facilitate Bashar obtaining US funding for Rawabi. In recent years, she has worked for the US State Department as a senior advisor for entrepreneurship and economic development, was the co-chair of the US-Palestinian Partnership at the Aspen Institute,¹⁰⁶ from 2009-2015 she was a board member of the Middle East Investment Initiative (MEII),¹⁰⁷ and she worked as an advisor for AMIDEAST operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. She is also the founder and CEO of ConnectME, an organization based in Washington, DC whose motto is: *Building Bridges Through Business*. Through this organization she has worked with all of the previously mentioned organizations as well as with USAID, OPIC, the Center for

¹⁰³ Coincidentally, Ronald Cohen of The Portland Trust also made a contribution in this range to the Clinton Global Initiative.

¹⁰⁴ This was after he had made political donations to the Democratic Party between 1995-1996 totaling \$50,000 (Hendrie 1998, 5).

¹⁰⁵ Given that Tony Blair vigorously lobbied the Israeli political establishment on Rawabi's behalf (Sherwood 2016), it is pertinent to mention that the Tomorrow's Youth Organization and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women have collaborated together on a project in Palestine.

¹⁰⁶ The Aspen Institute is a think-tank whose board of directors is composed of highly influential Washington elites.

¹⁰⁷ MEII was created in 2005 as a PPP between the Aspen Institute, PIF, and OPIC. MEII has played a pivotal role in promoting a culture of debt-finance in Palestine. As well as helping to launch the AMAL program, it is also a 15% stakeholder in the company. In 2005, it established a \$160 million loan guarantee facility for SMEs in Palestine. It also, in coordination with the Clinton Global Initiative, helped launch a political risk insurance program in the West Bank, which was funded by OPIC.

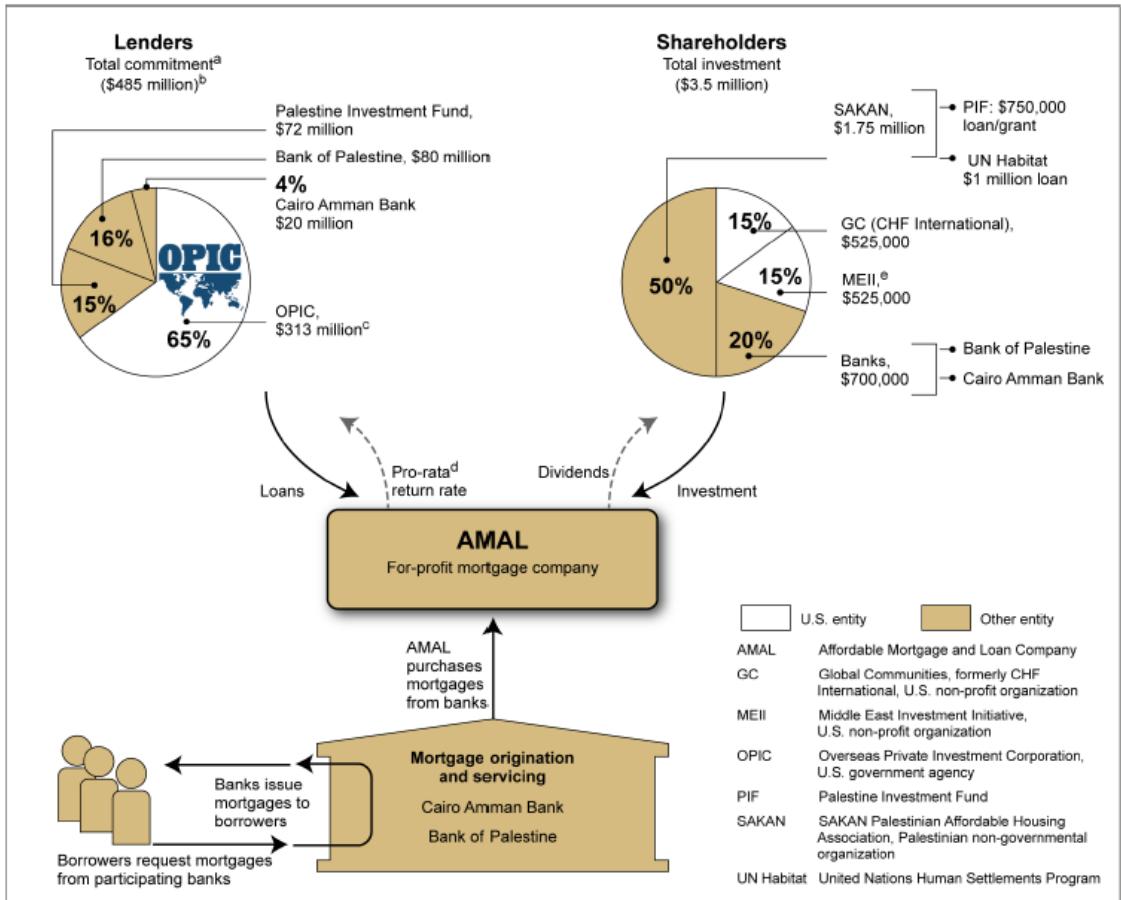
American Progress (a pro-Hillary Clinton think-tank), Chemonics, ASAL Technologies, and Rawabi. While Hani and Randa are just two people in a complex network of actors, their influence and their relationships with members of the DC establishment have nevertheless contributed to the procurement of US funding for their family's businesses in Palestine as well as in Jordan.

E. Foreclosing on Palestine's Future: The Affordable Mortgage and Loan Program

The previous sections have tried to sketch out some of the ways the Masri family has consolidated their wealth and to also give some insights into the agenda of international donors/aid agencies/organizations and the role they have played in promoting neoliberal strategies in Palestine. While both are pertinent in furthering our understanding of the background and the environment in which Rawabi has emerged, the linchpin that makes Rawabi and other new housing projects work is AMAL. It does this, as previously noted, by fulfilling one of the requirements of effective demand. AMAL is a \$500 million for-profit non-bank financial institution that involves at least a dozen separate organizations including from the US, UK, Palestine, and the United Nations.¹⁰⁸ Instead of explaining the complex structure of AMAL (as seen in figure 26 below), I find it more worthwhile to direct the discussion towards the possible consequences AMAL may have for Palestinian society if the program becomes successful.

¹⁰⁸ When looking at the diagram in figure 26, it should be noted that the \$1 million contribution by UN Habitat is actually a contribution that was made by the Clinton Global Initiative through UN Habitat.

Figure 1: U.S. Involvement with the Affordable Mortgage and Loan Company and Complex Financial Structure



Source: GAO analysis of OPIC and AMAL data; OPIC (logo).

^aThe United Kingdom's Department for International Development has committed a first loss reserve to cover the first £13.33 million (about \$20 million, based on the exchange rate as of July 10, 2013) in losses the lenders to AMAL may incur.

^bAccording to OPIC, as of April 2013, no loan disbursements have been made by OPIC or PIF to AMAL. OPIC officials stated that OPIC and PIF's disbursements under their respective financial commitments will begin when the participating banks have amassed \$10 million in qualifying mortgages to sell to AMAL.

^cThe International Finance Corporation has committed to provide a \$72 million guarantee of OPIC's lending commitment to AMAL, reducing OPIC's principal at risk to \$241 million.

^dPro-rata means the return rate is based on each lender's principal proportion at risk.

^eMEII manages its investment in AMAL through MEII Partners, LLC.

FIGURE 26. The organizational structure and actors involved in AMAL (Gootnick 2013, 6-7).

Incontrovertibly, international donors and organizations have played a crucial role in the creation of new financial institutions in the West Bank, have helped reduced legal obstacles that allow the Palestinian financial sector to grow, and they have also convinced Palestinian banks to lend with higher risk. Bashar Masri himself has also lobbied Palestinian banks to reduce the down payment on home mortgages from 25 percent to 10 percent (Schienberg 2014).¹⁰⁹ Moreover, not only is the financial sector in Palestine being driven by the speculative real estate industry, but it is also being driven by the proliferation of expensive consumer products on the market that are now being made available to Palestinians (Abunimah 2014). These should be warning signs to anyone paying close attention to the situation in Palestine.

Drawing from the second feature of accumulation by dispossession, financialization, Harvey (2005) states with regard to its speculative and predatory nature that:

Deregulation allowed the financial system to become one of the main centres of redistributive activity through speculation, predation, fraud, and thievery. Stock promotions, ponzi schemes, structured asset destruction through inflation, asset-stripping through mergers and acquisitions, the promotion of levels of debt incumbency that reduced whole populations, even in the advanced capitalist countries, to debt peonage, to say nothing of corporate fraud, dispossession of assets [...] all of these became central features of the capitalist financial system. (161)

On this note, it should be mentioned that Palestinian foreclosure laws have not kept up with the nascent, but burgeoning, financial sector in the West Bank and there are few laws that specifically address the issue of foreclosure. The two legal precedents that are presently referred to in the event of a foreclosure are Law 46/1953 and Enforcement Law 23 of 2005 where the creditor has the option to proceed through

¹⁰⁹ Based off the terms of the mortgages Palestinian banks are now offering, it seems they settled on a 15% down payment.

either the Land Department or the judiciary (World Bank 2012, 69-72). The process of eviction is not outlined in these two laws and they only address foreclosure. With that said, going through the legal formalities for foreclosure is a lengthy process that could possibly take several years to complete.

A very brief sketch of what could happen in the event of a foreclosure is: 1) that the bank would first have to give notice to the debtor, 2) following this the bank would then have to file a report with the Land Department, 3) eventually the property would be put up for auction and given to the highest bidder, 4) the bidder from the auction would eventually receive the title deed to the property (World Bank 2012, 69-72). Through this whole process there is not any mention of how the debtor should be evicted or by whom. From this, it appears that eviction is the responsibility of the new owner of the property. Needless to say, house evictions in Palestinian society are highly stigmatized, both for cultural and political reasons, and least of all because of the house demolition practices of the IOF.

While the proliferation of consumer debt has yet to have an observable negative effect on Palestinian consumers, the potential for a financial collapse should not be disregarded. While the ethos of neoliberalism embraces the “universal” values of individual freedom that can only be derived through market driven mechanisms, the contradictions in this logic are glaring (Harvey 2005). For Palestinians, the accumulation of individual debt is a double-bondage that runs parallel to the Israeli occupation.

Moreover, while nothing definitive can be stated about the social impacts of mounting Palestinian debt, there are clear indications that the accumulation of debt is having a causal effect on the relationship Palestinians have with the market and how

Palestinians socially interact with one another (Harker 2014). As history has shown repeatedly, capitalism's way of "fixing" itself due to an over investment in any one sector of the economy, is crisis. If any lessons can be gleaned from the 2007-2009 global financial crisis, it is that subprime mortgage defaults disproportionately affect the working and middle classes, which is something that should be of great concern to policy makers inside the PA as well as to every Palestinian.

CHAPTER VI:

CHANGE LIFE! CHANGE SOCIETY!

A. Envisioning a New Space of Hope through a Resurgent Politics of Recognition

“In this unending colony the truth stood naked, but the settlers preferred it hidden away or at least dressed: the Natives had to love them and all they had done, something in the way a cruel father is still loved by the children who are wounded by his selfish hands. The white élite undertook to manufacture a Native élite. They picked promising youths, they made them drink the firewater principles of capitalism and of Western culture; they educated the Indian out of them, and their heads were filled and their mouths were stuffed with smart-sounding hypocrisies, grand greedy words that stuck in their throats but which they spit out nonetheless.”

-Taiaiake Alfred, forward from “Red Skin, White Masks” (Coulthard 2014: ix)

The previous chapters have tried to illuminate the ways in which Rawabi has been manufactured materially, discursively, as well as conceptually. They have shed light on the fact that Rawabi did not emerge in a vacuum, but that it has been produced by a series of unfolding social, political, and economic processes in the West Bank that have occurred under Israeli settler-colonialism and Palestinian neoliberalism. While Rawabi adopts a pattern of urban development that is quite current globally, I have also shown how it materializes design aspects of the Israeli suburban settlement and the privatized semi-public space of the shopping mall – which combined produce what I call the “McCity.”

In addition, despite the fact that Rawabi’s conceived space is antagonistic to how traditional Palestinian space has been socially and historically produced, I have also tried to show that Rawabi nevertheless plays into the shifting aspirations of socially mobile Palestinians and of the new middle class.

Finally, as the previous two chapters make evident, Rawabi operates as a tool of domination that fits into a larger political project, which consolidates the strategies of settler-colonialism and neoliberalism through the promotion of a mortgage culture and the accumulation of consumer debt. Therefore, Rawabi is not only a neoliberal assemblage of space that is colonizing the Palestinian landscape, but Rawabi also reproduces neoliberal strategies by its multiple effects on Palestinian society, on various scales.

I believe explicitly identifying, defining, documenting, and critically engaging with neoliberalism to better understand how one of its main tools – neoliberal urbanism – is conceived and operates is a crucial first step to begin thinking of strategies on how to resist it. For an ideology that largely wishes to be nameless and faceless, neoliberalism has presented itself in many ways through its own language and narratives, as well as its own architectural and urban forms. With Rawabi, it has come in the form of the modernity narrative, the state-building and economic peace narratives, as well as a narrative that plays into the very personal wants, needs, and desires that Palestinians seek in their everyday lives. Thus, Rawabi purports to provide a sense of security and normality in an environment that is anything but normal. Moreover, while a high degree of planning and the integration of new and modern technologies that has gone into Rawabi, this technocratic vision of urbanism that Rawabi advances does little in the way of addressing the most immediate and salient social issues that Palestinians face with regard to the everyday struggles of urban life as well as to the struggles of the occupation. Furthermore, it promotes socio-spatial segregation, as well as livelihoods devoid of social interactions and encounters, such as

those found in the bustling streets and markets of Palestinian cities and towns, while reinventing a depoliticized urban history, fetishizing the Palestinian village.

Additionally, throughout the thesis I have tried to shed light on the interwoven relationship between capitalism and settler-colonialism within the Palestinian context. These two social relations are not mutually exclusive, but rather they both employ tactics that work in complementarity so that transnational capitalists and the Israeli regime are able to solidify their hegemony over Palestinians. While different, they both are an embodiment of Harvey's accumulation by dispossession. They employ a variety of strategies, namely exploiting the existing, often inequitable, political and economic networks they have at their disposal. Therefore, replacing one form of colonization (Israeli) for another (neoliberal) is not a solution for Palestinian liberation.¹¹⁰ It is for the above reasons that Palestinians must break away from both hegemonic structures and articulate a struggle that is both anti-colonial and anti-capitalist. They must develop their own language and narratives that oppose both forms of oppression, while also offering an alternate space of hope. There is no clear path on how to create a new space of hope for Palestinians, but the following will sketch some possible (albeit largely theoretical) avenues on how to strategize this.

In advocating for a new space, Lefebvre (1991) writes: "Change life!" "Change society!" (59). He states that, "new social relationships call for a new space, and vice

¹¹⁰ Despite contrary claims by Bashar Masri in numerous interviews, as the stakeholder analysis revealed, Rawabi's emergence does not defy the occupation, but is a project that is compliant and subordinate to the demands of the settler-state. In addition to Rawabi benefitting Israel economically, Masri did nothing to challenge Israel's spatial regime (i.e. urbicide, spaciocide, and creeping apartheid) or the structural inequalities of the military occupation through the building of Rawabi. For example, he built the project in areas A and B, not C, he asked the Israeli state for permission to use Jewish only roads during the project's construction, and it was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that decided appropriate more water for Rawabi as a *quid pro quo* that also gave Israeli settlements more water (Selby 2015). Apart from this, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement (BDS Movement 2012) has called Bashar's collaboration activities with Israel as "a shameless act of normalization of the worst type." At one point, Bashar even went so far as to invite Jewish Israelis to take up residence in Rawabi (Goldstein 2012).

versa” (59). What he is calling for is nothing short of a revolutionary change in the way space is produced and in the way people live their lives. That is, people must find new ways to interact with, and produce space, so it does not consolidate and reproduce abstract space. He states:

A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses. A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space (54).

While Lefebvre’s discussion is focused on abstract space, I believe that his call can equally be applied to the colonized space of Palestinians.¹¹¹ A way forward for Palestinians is to produce their own space, a kind of space that is decolonizing and anti-capitalist. Furthermore, a new kind of politics also needs to emerge out of the creation of this space, what Coulthard (2014) calls a *resurgent politics of recognition*. This politics acknowledges that colonial recognition politics is structured asymmetrically and only serves to further the interests of the colonizer and of capital accumulation (155). Coulthard qualifies the kind of governance that has emerged out of the colonial politics of recognition for the Indigenous people in Canada, as such:

A relatively diffuse set of governing relations that operate through a circumscribed mode of recognition that structurally ensures continued access to Indigenous peoples’ lands and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that coopt Indigenous people into becoming instruments of their own dispossession. According to this view, contemporary colonialism works *through* rather than entirely *against* freedom: In the “new relationship,” writes Alfred [Taiaiake], the “rusty cage [of colonialism] may be broken, but a new chain has been strung around the indigenous neck; *it offers more room to move, but it still ties our people to white men pulling on the strong end.* (156; author’s emphasis)

¹¹¹ According to Harvey (2013), Lefebvre’s *isotopic space* is “the accomplished and rationalized spatial order of capitalism and the state” (xvii-xviii). Therefore, a space that has been produced by capitalism and colonialism would be subsumed under isotopic space.

Like Indigenous peoples' experience in North America, the Oslo Accords have clearly produced a comparable outcome for Palestinians. Coulthard's resurgent politics of recognition is:

[...] less oriented around attaining legal and political recognition by the state, and more about Indigenous peoples empowering themselves through cultural practices of individual and collective self-fashioning that seek to *prefigure* radical alternatives to the structural and subjective dimensions of colonial power. (18)

The adoption of this kind of radical, decolonizing indigenous politics that Coulthard proposes will serve to be more emancipatory for Palestinians than what the Oslo Accords have accomplished in the last twenty-four years. In heeding Lefebvre's call, the resurgent politics of recognition allows Palestinians to produce a new kind of space that is created by new social relations, which do not consolidate the dominant structures of Israeli-settler colonialism and capitalism. In terms of how this space should manifest itself, this is something that Palestinians will have to look within themselves and to each other for. Inevitably, for the production of a new space to be successful, it will have to come out of a collective act of solidarity. Needless to say, what I am proposing is a long-term project that is likely to take years just to further conceptualize and strategize.

While scholarship on the "city at war" often times privileges analysis on the macro-level, Harb (2017) underscores the importance of exploring urban initiatives and activism on a meso-level that are grounded in the present and in the everyday socio-spatial practices of residents. Given this, I believe there are a handful of local initiatives that have emerged in Palestine that can be looked at for inspiration to begin thinking about how to produce the kind of space I am proposing. I will briefly mention two instances that are of relevance.

One initiative happened in the West Bank village of Battir in 2014. While the Israeli army had planned to build its apartheid wall over the land of the village, activists and local organizations were able to effectively halt the construction of the wall. Due to the village's historical character, these activists were able to get Battir listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, which eventually led the Israeli High Court to freeze the building of the wall the following year (Forensic Architecture 2017). The second episode took place, earlier in 2013, when 250 Palestinians and foreign activists in the West Bank set up tents to create the village of "Bab Al-Shams" on Palestinian land that Israel had confiscated for Jewish settlements. Palestinians were able to occupy the site for two days until they were forcibly evicted by the Israeli army – this was despite getting an injunction from the Israeli Supreme Court (Nasser 2013).

While these two instances of defiance and civil disobedience were not equally successful in their aims, they both give insights into some of the possible strategies of how space can be appropriated from the colonizer and be made into a Palestinian space, embodying what the resurgent politics of recognition advocates for. Unquestionably, the creation of a new space of hope for Palestinians can manifest itself in many different forms, and are only limited by the creative capacity of Palestinians themselves. The call to action that I am advocating for is a process that activists, academics, practitioners, communities, and others must work on collaboratively in order for this new space to become a possibility.

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APPENDICES

قرار رقم (136) لسنة 2009م بشأن المصادقة على قرار مجلس الوزراء بشأن استملاك قطع أراضي لغايات المنفعة العامة

رئيس جمهورية فلسطين
رئيس اللجنة التنفيذية لمنظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
رئيس السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية
وبعد الإطلاع على القانون الأساسي المعدل لسنة 2003م وتعديلاته،
والإطلاع على قانون الاستملاك رقم (2) لسنة 1953م وتعديلاته المعمول به في
المحافظات الشمالية،
وعلى قرار مجلس الوزراء الصادر بتاريخ (2009/03/05م)،
وبناءً على الصلاحيات المخولة لنا،
وتحقيقاً للمصلحة العامة،
قررنا ما يلي:

مادة (1)

المصادقة على قرار مجلس الوزراء بشأن استملاك قطع أراضي لغايات المنفعة العامة في
مناطق عجل، عطارة وعبوين لصالح شركة بيتي للاستثمار العقاري المساهمة لخصوصية
المحدودة لإنشاء وإقامة بلدة روابي عليها، بحيث تنزع مطلقاً ملكية قطع الأراضي المبينة
أدناه:

1. ما مساحته (1525.348) ألف وخمسمائة وخمسة وعشرون دونماً وثلاثمائة وثمانية
وأربعون متراً مربعاً من الحوض رقم (3) طبيعي من أراضي قرية عجل، وفقاً للخارطة
المرفقة.
2. ما مساحته (118.166) مائة وثمانية عشر دونماً ومائة وستة وستون متراً مربعاً من
الحوض رقم (3) طبيعي من أراضي بلدة عبوين، وفقاً للخارطة المرفقة.
3. كامل مساحة كل من قطع الأراضي نوات الأرقام (11، 12، 13، 15، 16، 17، 23،
24، 25، 26، 31، 33، 34، 35، 46، 48، 49، 50) من الحوض رقم (4) موقع

الجرس من أراضي عطاره والبالغة (95.344) خمسة وتسعون دونماً وثلاثمائة وأربعة وأربعون متراً مربعاً.
4. كامل مساحة كل من قطع الأراضي نوات الأرقام (15، 19، 20، 21، 22، 23، 24، 25، 26، 27، 51، 52، 53) من الحوض رقم (5) موقع شعب خلف من أراضي عطاره والبالغة (117.287) مائة وسبعة عشر دونماً ومائتين وسبعة وثمانين متراً مربعاً.

مادة (2)

على كل من يدعي بأي حق أو منفعة على الأراضي المشار إليها في المادة الأولى ويرغب في الحصول على تعويض أن يتقدم بطلب وفقاً للأصول القانونية إلى شركة بيتي للاستثمار العقاري للمساهمة الخصوصية المحدودة مبيناً فيه الحقوق المدعى بها مرفقاً بالمستندات المؤيدة لذلك.

مادة (3)

على أصحاب قطع الأراضي المذكورة في المادة الأولى أو المنتفعين بها أن يمتنعوا عن التصرف بها بأي نوع من أنواع التصرف وأن يبادروا برفع أيديهم عنها.

مادة (4)

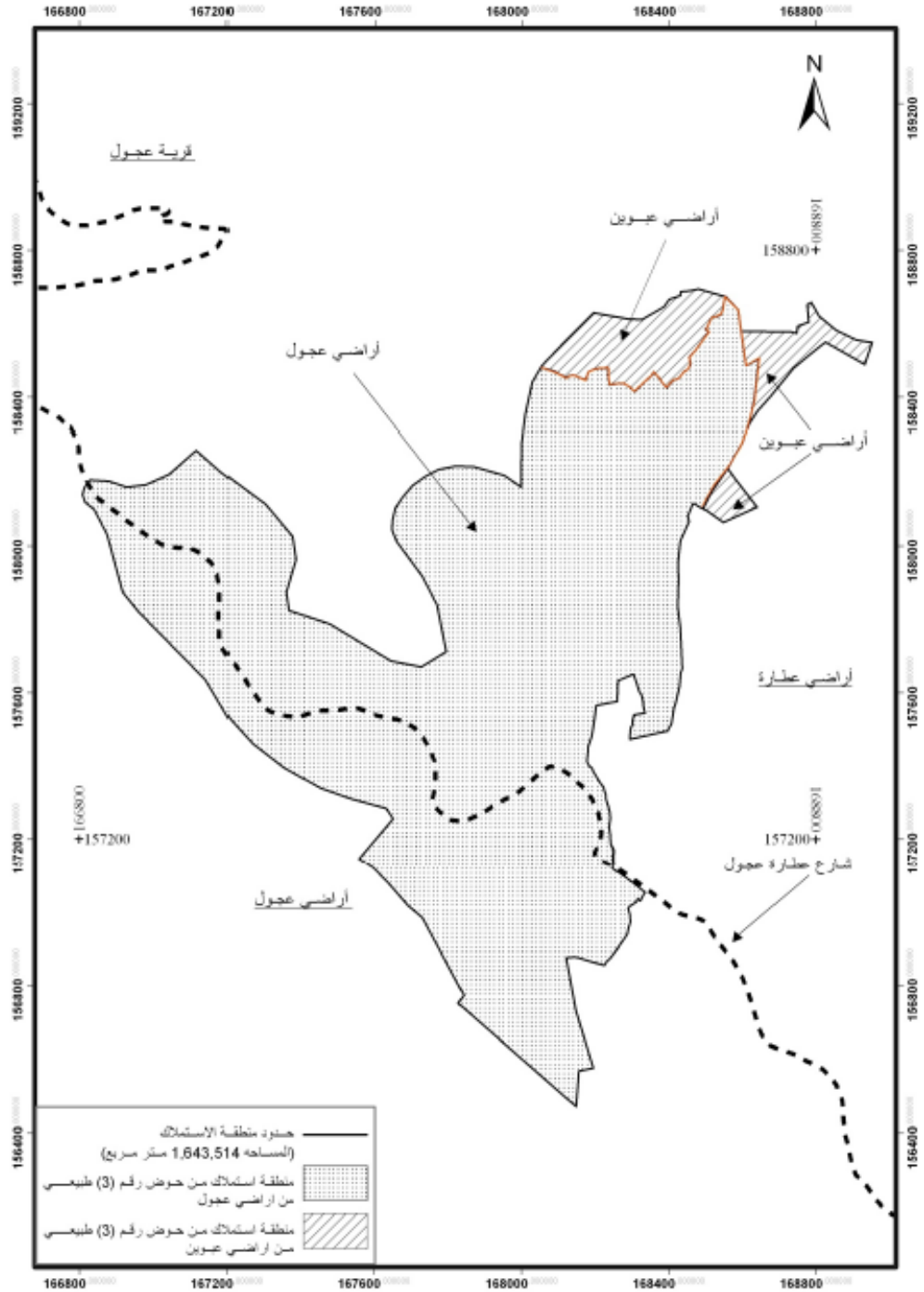
على جميع الجهات المختصة، كل فيما يخصه، تنفيذ أحكام هذا القرار، ويعمل به من تاريخ صدوره، وينشر في الجريدة الرسمية.

صدر في مدينة رام الله بتاريخ: 2009/11/15م

الموافق : 27 / ذو القعدة / 1430هـ

محمود عباس

رئيس دولــــة فلسطــــين
رئيس اللجنة التنفيذية لمنظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
رئيس السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية



Appendix #2. Rawabi Municipality Declaration.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



دولة فلسطين
مجلس الوزراء

قرار مجلس الوزراء رقم (3 /14/56/م.و.س.ف) لعام 2013م

بشأن إحداث هيئة محلية باسم بلدية روابي في محافظة رام الله والبيرة وتشكيل لجنة لتسيير أعمالها

بناءً على الصلاحيات المخولة لنا قانوناً

وتتسيب وزير الحكم المحلي

وبناءً على مقتضيات المصلحة العامة

وبعد الاطلاع على القانون الاساسي المعدل لسنة 2003م وتعديلاته؛

وعلى قانون الهيئات المحلية رقم (1) لسنة 1997م وتعديلاته؛

قرر مجلس الوزراء في جلسته المنعقدة بمدينة رام الله بتاريخ (2013/06/02م) ما يلي:

المادة الأولى

إحداث هيئة محلية جديدة باسم بلدية روابي في محافظة رام الله والبيرة.

المادة الثانية

تشكيل لجنة لتسيير أعمال بلدية روابي برئاسة السيد ماجد جمال أمين عبدالفتاح وعضوية كل من:

1. السيدة أمل المغربي	رئيسة مجلس إدارة منتدى سيدات الأعمال الفلسطينيات
2. السيدة تامي رفيدي	مركز المرأة للإرشاد القانوني والاجتماعي
3. السيد راسم كمال	عضو مجلس إدارة الجمعية الفلسطينية للسكن الملائم
4. السيد عمر زمو	رئيس دائرة الهندسة المدنية في جامعة بيرزيت
5. السيد عيسى قسيس	الرئيس التنفيذي لشركة فلسطين لتمويل الرهن العقاري
6. السيدة منال زريق	نائبة رئيس مجلس إدارة منتدى سيدات الأعمال
7. السيد باسم الريماوي	وزارة الصحة
8. السيد أيوب عليان	وزارة التربية والتعليم
9. السيد إسلام عبدالجابر	وزارة الأشغال العامة والإسكان
10. السيدة سونيا الزبيدي	وزارة الحكم المحلي

المادة الثالثة

على الجهات المختصة تنفيذ أحكام هذا القرار كل فيما يخصه، ويعمل به من تاريخ صدوره، وينشر في الجريدة الرسمية.

صدر في مدينة رام الله بتاريخ 2013/06/02م.

الثاني والعشرين من رجب لعام 1434هـ.

سلام فياض

رئيس الوزراء

Appendix #3. Overview of Siraj Investments.

Siraj Fund Management¹

Siraj Palestine Fund I Investments²

<u>Company</u>	<u>Ownership Share</u>
1) The National Bank (TNB).....	22%
2) Nakheel Palestine for Agricultural Investment.....	30%
3) The Palestinian Company for Rental & Leasing.....	49%
4) Call U Communication.....	33%
5) WebTeb.....	25%
6) Wassel Group.....	38%
7) Ziadeh Architects & Engineers*.....	36%
8) PalGaz for Gas Distribution Services*.....	100%
9) HD Vision Media Production*.....	75%

<u>Siraj Investors</u>	
<u>\$ (in millions)</u>	
OPIC.....	30
Soros Economic Development Fund.....	7
<u>Other Int'l Investors.....</u>	<u>53</u>
Total.....	90

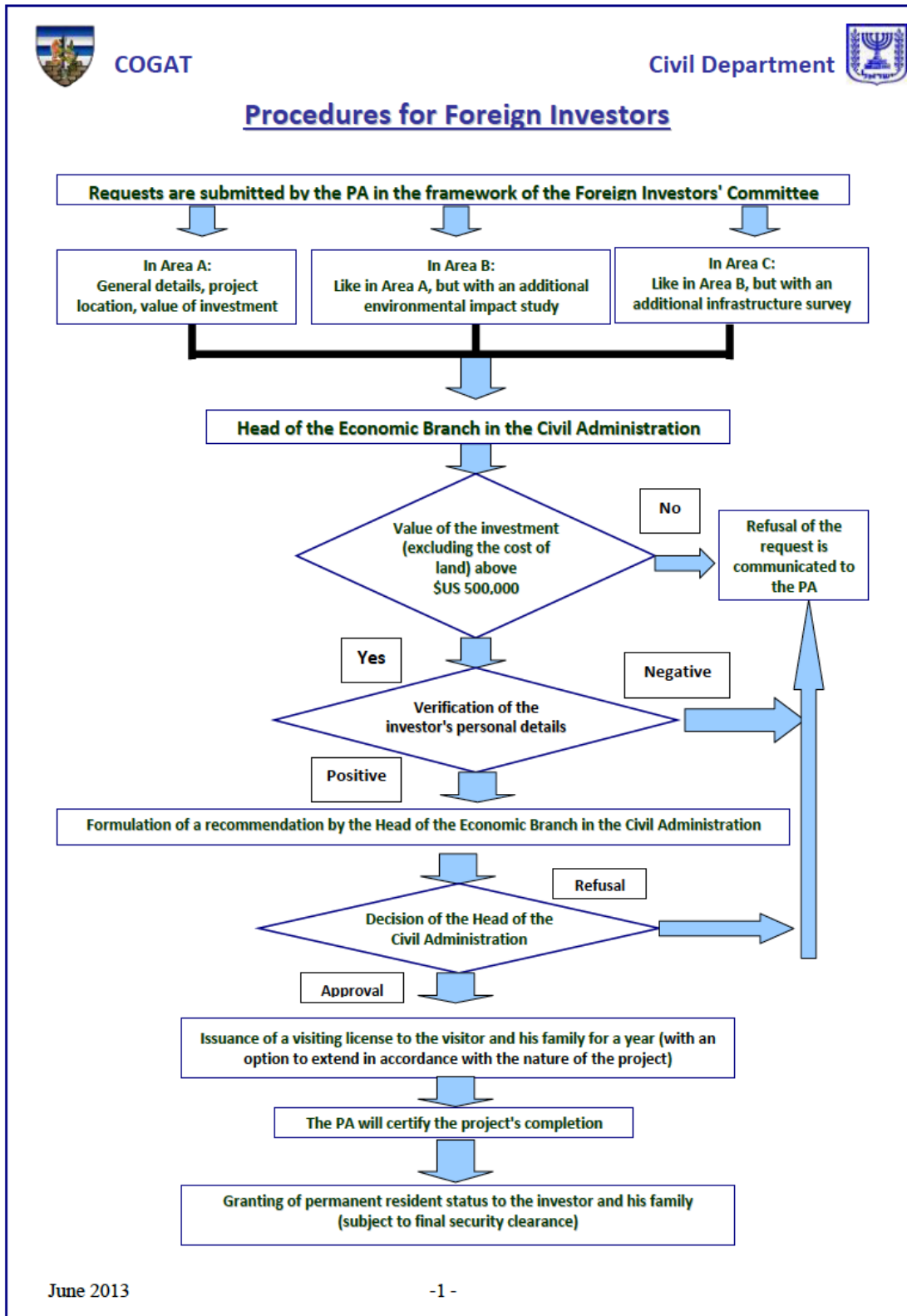
¹ Company Registered in the Cayman Islands.

² Siraj is also invested in Fuego Mexican & Tapas Grill for an undisclosed amount.

*Companies that have been contracted to do work in Rawabi.

Source: Tayeb 2017, adapted from [www.massar.com, www.opic.gov].

Appendix #4. COGAT Procedures for Foreign Investors in the West Bank.





Procedure for the Entry of Investors and the Relevant Steps

Method:

- Requests are to be submitted by the PA in the framework of the Foreign Investors' Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from the Civil Administration and the Palestine Investment Promotion Agency – PIPA, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs.
- Requests are to be submitted in accordance with the following criteria:
 - Requests for Area A – General details, project location, value of the investment.
 - Requests for Area B – Like in Area A, but with an additional environmental impact study.
 - Requests for Area C – Like in Area B, but with an additional infrastructure study.
- The minimum value for an investment is \$US 500,000 (excluding the cost of land).
- The investor must have security clearance.

Regulations:

- Time to process a request: Two months.
- The PA will be notified regarding the Civil Administration's decision.
- In case of approval a visiting license will be issued to the visitor and his family for three months, with an option to extend (1 year), in accordance with the project characteristics'.
- The PA will certify the project's completion.
- Following PA certification, permanent resident status will be granted to the investor and his family, subject to final security clearance.
- In exceptional cases the Head of the Civil Administration is entitled to authorize the granting of permanent resident status before completion of the project.

List of Potential Assistance Measures for Investors:

- Multiple-entry visiting license for three months (with the possibility to extend for 1 year).
- The investor's family will receive an ordinary license for a year (not multiple-entry).
- Visiting licenses will be extended by a year without need to leave and without a gap between visits.
- Entry permits to Israel will be granted.
- Priority will be given to the investor's entry to Israel, even in sensitive situations.
- The possibility of overnight stay in Israel will be considered.
- At the end of the project the investor and his family (wife + children up to the age of 12) will be granted permanent resident status in the region.