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# Factors, mechanisms and challenges of planning in Cyprus: a historical narrative of Limassol's urban development

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## ABSTRACT

This paper describes the factors that influenced urban development in Cypriot cities and how the Cypriot planning system evolved to address such factors. Limassol is chosen as the case study for an in-depth approach in order to come to general but precise conclusions. The paper offers an interpretive-historical narrative of the urban development of the city from the latter part of the Ottoman period to the present day in order to understand the mechanism through which Cypriot cities have grown and the role of planning in shaping their form and influencing how they function. The objective is to provide a comprehensive description of factors, mechanisms and actors involved in the emergence and transformation of Limassol, and in particular the role of planning in its historical evolution and in more recent regeneration and development projects. The narrative was constructed using a variety of primary and secondary sources, including travellers' reports, historical cartography, press articles and interviews with expert stakeholders. The paper concludes with an assessment of the current state of planning in Cyprus, its potential future directions, and remarks on the effectiveness of the narrative in interpreting causal pathways of development and evaluating the impact of planning actions and policies.

## KEYWORDS

Planning history; planning policy; urban development; historical narrative; Cyprus

## Introduction

A formal planning system in Cyprus was established through a legislative framework in 1972 (enacted in 1990), relatively recent times, though this is not surprising since the island only gained independence and became a nation state in 1960. However, the process of establishing a governmental planning department commenced earlier, during the latter part of the British administration of the island. Urban development and control was led by local authorities and the Government even prior to the founding of the Department of Town Planning and Housing (TPH) in the 1940s.

Since the latter part of the twentieth century, the urban form of Cypriot cities has developed in significantly different ways from its European counterparts. While certain trends of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the development of large vehicular ring roads, peripheral mega-structures and the provision of parking space have parallels across other European cities, urban sprawl in Cyprus is particularly acute.

This paper presents a historical narrative of Limassol's urban development as an example of how urbanization was managed and how authorities first, and the planning system later, have responded