

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND HOUSING ENVIRONMENTS IN NORTH CYPRUS

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This article aims to explore the effects of laws and regulations on the development of housing environments in North Cyprus, with the aim of opening up some discussions on their future design and planning. Accordingly, the article consists of seven main sections. In the first two, the main and the general concepts of the article are defined, the research field is explained and the problem is specified. In the third section, the issue of housing in North Cyprus, concentrating on its historical development, starting from the British period which is a breaking point on the Island, until 1980s, is presented. In the fourth section, the legal framework, i.e. laws and regulations related to housing is narrated and discussed and in the fifth one, the development of housing after 1980s up-to-date is evaluated mainly by referring the existing legal framework. In the sixth part, some discussion points based on the problems of housing in North Cyprus are set up and finally in the concluding part, some concluding remarks are presented. The methodology followed for the purpose of the research presented in this article is mainly documentary and observative.

INTRODUCTION

Houses are the material / physical expression of society's cultural and social variables and values, and represent the personal and psychological functions connected with the concept of design and use of space. Traditionally, the concept of housing integrates and demonstrates reflections of the socio-cultural, political, and economical features of a society, since housing structures exhibit those characteristics, which are uniquely related to the particular existing environmental conditions. This implies that each traditional setting in respect of housing in general and mass housing, in particular, possesses its own particular image and identity.

There are complex forces that influence design in "house building", consequently the design and development of the associated housing

environments. With the exception of the architectural perspective, development and design of housing environments are affected and influenced by natural factors, i.e. topography, climate, water and soil conditions, by physical factors, i.e. land-use patterns, designers' approaches, and by socio-cultural factors, i.e. the demographic structure of society, user requirements, existing economic conditions within the region or country, and existing laws and regulations regarding urban policy, i.e. the legal framework with respect to urban growth and development.

This article focuses on the legal framework connected with urban growth and development as a major determinant of the way in which housing environments develop using the example of Northern Cyprus as a case study. The article will first present an overview of the legal aspect as a determinant of the development of housing environments, and then the development of housing itself in Northern Cyprus will be examined in depth, concentrating on the laws and regulations regarding urban growth and development, and the way they are reflected onto housing environments, within both historical and contemporary political contexts.

LEGAL ASPECTS AS DETERMINANT IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

At an abstract level, the environment possesses groups of objects which can be categorized into e.g., atmosphere, ambiance, or habitat. These groups can then be further sub-divided into, e.g. working environments, business environments, living - housing environments, and so on (Brand and Thomas, 2005). The environments in general, and housing environments, in particular, are not constant, but dynamic and ever-changing entities. To combat the challenges of physical, social and economic restructuring and development, which is part of the rapid, urbanization and globalization growth, housing environments require rational planning, designing and management by central and local governments, along with the participation of all actors involved, i.e. public and private investors, inhabitants, and other social groups.

When considering the physical objects, local facilities and natural resources of the environment in general and housing environments in particular, we may refer to individual buildings or groups of buildings, urban space and infrastructure, shops as commercial areas, recreational facilities or a set of social amenities, as well as air, water, soil, natural habitats and other ecological elements, which form the major components of environmental quality and consequently, quality of life. When all these objects, facilities and elements of our natural resource systems are considered as an integral part of environmental and urban quality, then policy discourse, which includes the laws and regulations on urban growth and development, which, in a way: "assign privileged rights to access to and control over portions of environment" (Brandon and Thomas, 2005, 123), must also be on the agenda. Thus the laws and regulations set up for spatial, social and economic development as part of the planning process has a great impact on and strategic responsibility for the future of our settlements.

This argument raises the question of how planning and development is managed and controlled within the decision-making process, principally in respect of the national policy-making bodies. In order to achieve sustainable living environments, a strategic planning approach, growth management and development control should form the principal tasks



Figure 1. Map of (North) Cyprus with its Location and Cities. <http://www.biglook.com/bigtravel/sehirler/kibris/haritaulasim.asp#>

of the national authorities, regardless of political alignments and cultural orientation. Focusing more on the concept of planning as the major key issue underlying the legal framework in respect to urban growth and development, one might observe various similarities and differences between the planning systems in America, Britain and in other European Union countries. As Walters and Brown (2004, 97) explains, most of the similarities occur in the professional realm, where architects, urban designers and planners in these countries perform similar tasks using similar concepts. The differences, on the other hand, are: “in the political and cultural spheres, where a deep divide exists between American attitudes and towards the sanctity of private property rights and the British (and European) propensity toward the communal good” (Walters and Brown, 2004). In addition to this, as is stressed by the same authors, “in Britain and Europe, planning and development control is a unified process in which design regulation is increasingly a part”.

All these similar or different approaches to the legal frame work, i.e. the planning systems and processes, are reflected directly on the housing environments, which are designed with the basic aim of providing liveable places and environments for people. A variety of housing typologies designed in different manners, such as the single storey house, duplex, triplex, or multi-storey - apartment / flat, apartment building / blocks of flats, studio apartments (according to number of floors) or detached / free-standing, link-detached, semi-detached / twin house / twin terraced house / terraced house (UK) / townhouse (US), back-to-back, maisonnette (according to the relationship of a residential building to the neighboring ones), can be observed in many cities and countries. The way in which these housing types and their environments are planned and designed, whether it is either in a loose, sprawling manner or in a denser and more compact manner, is a matter of planning decisions. Similarly, land-use policies, which have great impact on the housing environments, are also part of the legal framework. The existence or non-existence of master plans, design guidelines, design control policies, and so forth, either leads to outstanding environmental (physical and social) quality or falls short of excellence.

All these aspects are pertinent and relevant to the major cities of Northern Cyprus (Figure 1). The development of different types of housing and the resultant housing environments which have evolved or been created by these various housing types, has been determined and affected and influenced by several factors, which are mainly historical influences and legal aspects. This article evaluates housing and their environments in Northern Cyprus from a historical perspective in respect of the legal framework, which has been identified as one of the main determinants and influencing factors on the nature and character of the physical setting.

THE ISSUE OF HOUSING IN NORTH CYPRUS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE UP UNTIL THE 1980S

Cyprus is an island in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, with a square area of 9,251 km² (the furthest distances are 240 km from east to west and 100 km from north to south). As the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia, it has a strategic location positioned as it is on the historic crossroads of trade and culture in the region (Figure 1), and has, therefore, been open to a diversity of cultures from the various nations which have colonised the island over the centuries, and thus, it became

the main target of rich and powerful ethnic groups during the time of the Helens (325-58 BC), the Romans (58 BC - 330 AD), the Byzantines (330-1191), Richard the Lion heart and the Knights Templar (1191-119 AD), the Lusignan - Frankish dynasty (1192-1489), the Venetians (1489-1571), the Ottomans (1571-1878), and the British (1878-1960). These civilizations have all left their mark on the island, and have, of course, especially influenced the formation and structure of urban and rural settlements. Being the homeland of these rich and strong civilizations in the region, Cyprus has been the home of several house forms and architectural styles, each with its own distinct identity, yet strongly linked to the preceding values.

Although the first known examples of architecture go back to the Neolithic Period, typical 'Turkish house' examples (in the form of the vernacular house and the urban house) which influence and affect the cultural characteristics of the society, date back to the Ottoman period (1571-1878). During the Ottoman period, Turkish Cypriots adopted their own systems of administration, economy and social organisation and provided the necessary structure for the creation of a new culture and architecture (Gazioğlu, 1990, cited in: Numan and Pulhan, 2001, 35). During this period, "while the traditional Cypriot house was evolving under the influence of the physical and cultural factors of the island, the traditional urban Cypriot house had also started its own evolution under this new culture, and it became one of the most identical architectural forms in the urban areas of the island" (Numan and Pulhan, 2001, 35).

The British period (1878-1960) presented an interruption to the housing developments in Cyprus, from two major aspects. Firstly, it was during the British period that some new functions, such as the hospital, the court house and similar governmental bodies were introduced into the cities which, in turn, attracted some of the island's population from the rural areas to the more urbanised centres, and in order to respond to the increasing demand for housing required to accommodate this migrating population, some 'social housing projects' for use by the British officials were implemented for the first time in certain parts of the major cities in addition to individual houses also mainly designed for the British officials. The first mass housing units were developed by the British, as a part of their political, social and economic policies. The unique examples of this are the Samanbahçe housing complex (the first known social housing example in Cyprus, built between the years 1894-1955 in the form of 72 separate units incorporated into 5 rows), and the Subsidized Workers' Housing in Lefkoşa (Nicosia) (**Table 1**), along with the CMC Workers' Housing in Lefke (**Figure 2**). Secondly, the first laws and regulations were also set up during the British period. The Streets and Buildings Regulations, Cap 96 was enacted in 1946 and is still in force to-day in the Northern Cyprus. According to this regulation, which has been revised several times between 1959 and 1989, any piece of land, which has access to a public road is eligible for development (**1**). This regulation, which will be dealt with in detail in the following section, became one of the main catalysts for rapid housing development in the following periods.

The construction sector in general and the housing sector, in particular, had no regulatory bodies prior to 1960. The first rule and plan regarding housing was introduced in 1960 with the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. As has been stated by Yorucu and Keleş (2007, 78), "the start of mass tourism on the island in the late 1960s led to a construction boom, especially in the beach resort areas of Varosha in Gazimağusa (Famagusta)

1. The consecutive dates of modification of Streets and Buildings Regulations, Cap 96 were 1959, 1963, 1971, 1976, 1984, and 1989.






Examples of Housing	Type/Region
	Samanbahce Row Houses / Nicosia
	William Caruana's Row Houses for Subsidized Workers / Nicosia
	Government Social Housing - Row Houses / Famagusta
	Private Apartment Type of Social Housing / Famagusta
	Private Apartment Type of Housing of the Private Companies / Kyrenia

Table 1. Examples of Mass Housing Units in Different Regions.



Figure 2. CMC housing district from British period in Lefke (Hoşkara and Zafer, 2005).

2. Since then the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots have been living in completely separate zones divided by the Green Line (which was drawn in December 1963 initially just to serve the capital city Lefkoşa). It has since become, unwittingly, an 'iron curtain' dividing the two communities, not only physically but also psychologically (Harbottle, 1970, 68; Northern Cyprus for Turkish Cypriots - Southern Cyprus for Greek Cypriots).

and Girne (Kyrenia)". During this period, the government constructed a number of apartments, although the majority of the construction work it was carried out by the private sector.

Between the years of 1963 and 1968, the Turkish Cypriots authorities decreased construction activities. From 1963 to 1974 Turkish-Cypriots were forced to, or, according to Greek Cypriot opinion, "chose to" migrate and form homogeneous enclaves; the Turkish Cypriots left their lands, villages, and homes, and migrated either to live in small ghettos (Sözen, 1998, 13) (Figure 3) in more secure enclaves scattered all over the island, or in other countries. In 1965, the Turkish-Cypriot administration developed a Refugee Housing project to upgrade the living conditions of at least some of the refugee families. The number of Turkish Cypriots who lost their homes and became refugees in their own country fleeing from their own villages (103 villages) to safer areas (ghettos) between 1963 and 1974 amounted to 25,000 (UN Security Council Report, 1964). The housing need which arose was supplemented by the houses which had been built for the rural migrants, who had moved into Lefkoşa, Gazimağusa, Girne, Limasol (Limassol), and Baf (Paphos). In addition to this, some were settled in other specific locations on the island. "Within six years, in 65 different urban and rural settlements, 1513 dwelling units had been built and allocated to the families who needed homes (in 1966, 130 units; in 1967, 206; in 1968, 512; in 1969, 424; in 1970-71, 241). Of these units, 247 had one bedroom, while the rest had two. The floor area ranged from 46 m² to 70 m², of the 1513 units, 503 were prefabricated, while for the rest brick was used as the construction material. At present most of these dwelling units are still inhabitable and are being occupied by low-income families. The government allocates these units to eligible families and collects no rents." (Gazioglu, 1996; <http://www.cypnet.co.uk/ncyprus/economy/econ10.htm>).



Figure 3. Map of Cyprus by the late 1960s (Oberling, 1982, 145).

The political division of the island into two in 1974 following the Turkish intervention led to the Turkish and the Greek Cypriot migration from the south to the north or from the north to the south (2). Population movement took place as a consequence of the Voluntary Regrouping of Population Agreement, dated August 2, 1975 and under the supervision of the United

Nations, , a transfer of population took place - approximately 65,000 Turkish-Cypriots moved to the North of the island, and an estimated 180,000 Greek-Cypriots moved to the South of the island. This event changed the housing need on both sides, because as the number of Turkish immigrants from the south to the north was less than that of the Greeks that migrated from the north to the south, the housing stock available in the north exceeded the demand, and thus, little new construction took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the northern part of the island (Gazioğlu, 1996; <http://www.cypnet.co.uk/ncyprus/economy/econ10.htm>).

It was in the late 1970s when a new demand for housing arose and thus, in 1978 the government was forced to intervene in the housing market by introducing a Social Housing Law. It was only after the 1980s that new housing developments became one of the major components of urban developments in order to answer the changing needs felt at social, economic and cultural levels. From this period onwards, housing environments have shown two different trends, mass housing and individual housing, both of which, present different characteristics and problems within the legal framework. In the next section, the legal framework related to housing in Northern Cyprus will be evaluated, and the various types of housing developments after the 1980's will be discussed in depth.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWOK RELATED TO HOUSING IN NORTH CYPRUS

The planning system in Northern Cyprus is creating an unstable and disorganized situation, which results in disappointing, low quality living environments, both in physical and social terms. The lack of the contribution of national policies and/or regulatory bodies in respect of contemporary concepts on urban growth and planning -such as sustainable development, a compact cities approach, ecological concerns, etc., as well as the lack of development control over rapid urbanization, both in urban and rural settlements, constitute the two main negative inputs in relation to the development of urban environments in general, and to housing environments in particular.

In general, the planning system, which was inherited from the highly centralised British rule, dominates all kinds of urban development (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 84) -including housing developments, in Northern Cyprus. As is also indicated by Yorucu and Keleş (2007), the new Planning (Urban Development) Law enacted in 1989 (55/89) replaced the previous one, with no essential change in its centralised structure (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 84). As has been mentioned previously, the Streets and Buildings Regulations, Cap 96 enacted in 1946 has a major impact on the physical development of the urban sectors, and therefore, the housing sectors. Consequently, throughout the northern part of the island, regardless of an urban development (master) plan, any type of individual housing construction is permitted. The only restriction in relation to this type of building is in that of the building-plot ratios. This causes development sprawl in the major coastal cities such as Gazimağusa and Girne, as well as in the Karpaz region. Individual housing projects of similar plan types regardless of location and topographical conditions are implemented without any site-plan, or master plan organization. These projects do not consider the need to design, plan and implement the use of the public spaces around in order

to integrate the building project with the environment and render them compatible together.

The Town Planning Department (TPD) is the responsible central government authority for planning in Northern Cyprus and it is in charge of the preparation of the national physical plan, urban development plans, privileged area plans controlled and supervised by planning orders under the law and all planning approvals. However, although the existing (55/89) Planning Law (Urban Development Law) has planned the preparation of the national physical plan within two years of its approval, there is still not a national physical plan for Northern Cyprus. In addition to this, the only master plan which is still in effect was prepared for Lefkoşa (from 1985 to 2000) and implemented in 2001. This master plan only represents a two-dimensional planning tool, mainly determining plot ratios for any type of building, and contains many weaknesses in respect of its effects on the quality of the environment in Lefkoşa. In terms of other settlements, the lack of master plans causes unplanned urban development and urban sprawl. The public (and more often academic) discussion about sprawl and the chaotic environment often refers to the “unplanned” environment situation. Additionally, a number of “privileged area plans” for the rapidly growing areas such as Girne, Büyükkonuk-Tatlısu, Karpaz and Bafra have been recently implemented through Planning Orders (Cabinet Decrees), which also help to shape the housing developments in a negative sense, since they somehow accelerate the rapid and piecemeal development. Section 8 in the existing (55/89) Planning Law (Urban Development Law) states that the main aim of this Law is to provide ‘a liveable environment’ in respect of both single/ individual constructions or housing estates, providing health, happiness, comfort and communal welfare. “With this goal, the TPD and Municipalities can separate some regions within the cities and follow all developments, and even guide and inspect them. Section 8 gives some power to the TPD for the implementation of temporary construction rules wherever there are rapid developments and intense urban growth problems.” (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 84).

Besides these indirect rules and regulations related to housing, the Constitution of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which forms the basis of all legislation, has also developed acts for the provision of housing. According to the 44th item of the TRNC Constitution, those families who are living in housing which does not offer or provide adequate health and living conditions, the onus is then on the government to provide housing which is in line with the law determining the social housing policy. This act is known as the 23/1978 Social Housing Law. According to the Social Housing Law, citizens of the TRNC are eligible to apply for social housing if they do not own a house and do not have sufficient financial resources to build one for themselves (3). The social housing projects are to be built by the government, cooperatives and local authorities. This housing must be of standard proportions and offer those dimensions and facilities which meet the minimum requirements for maintaining health and quality of life. The standard square areas required to meet the legislation are is between a a minimum of 60m² and a maximum of 120m². Social housing forms groups of a minimum of 40 units in order to be considered as a mass housing area.

All these legal aspects appear to be the main determinants of the physical planning and layout of the housing construction and environments in Northern Cyprus, and they are, in a way, the major reason behind the

3. “The sanitary conditions of the present residence, the number of children and other dependents, the ratio of existing rent to total family income and similar factors are used for ranking eligible families. Finally, eligible families are required to make a deposit of 15 or 20 per cent of the cost as a down-payment. The interest rate for social housing loans has been 68 per cent. Occupants pay 20 per cent of the interest and the government subsidises the remaining 48 per cent. As of April 1993, the interest rates reached 80 per cent, of which occupants pay 30 per cent and the government the remaining 50 per cent. Occupants have the opportunity to choose from four different repayment alternatives offered by government, so loans may be scheduled over five, 10, 15 or 20 years. Those who can afford to pay more can get their title deeds sooner. Traditionally, housing ownership has been regarded as good security and immovable property as an asset in which to invest. Therefore, the occupants of social housing are willing to repay their loans as quickly as possible and get their title deeds. By 1996, 1,300 families had already repaid their loans in full and become owners of their homes” (Gazioğlu, 1996).

4. In 2002, there were a total of six universities in Northern Cyprus with a combined enrolment of 27,748 and more than 3,000 employees working in those universities (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 78).

unliveable and/ or poor -quality living conditions in respect of both the buildings themselves and the environment. The following section will present the issue of housing in Northern Cyprus, from the 1980s until today.

DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING IN NORTH CYPRUS AFTER 1980S

When the Turkish Cypriots established the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983, the inhabitants of the northern part of the island started to invest in housing in a variety of ways as part of the resultant of a more stable political and social context in respect of more secure living conditions. Besides that of investment purposes, a further reason for (the demand in) the increase in the number of houses constructed after the 1980s, which exhibited another turning point in the development of the housing climate, is the expansion of the university sector in Northern Cyprus due to “the excessive demand for higher education in Turkey” (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 78); a number of universities were established in the major settlements in Northern Cyprus, viz. in Famagusta, Nicosia, and Kyrenia, and the demand for housing and accommodation increased accordingly (4). Thus, as has been stated by Yorucu and Keleş (2007), “the university sector occasioned a major construction boom, especially in institutional and related residential and commercial building” (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 78).

As has been previously stated, in 1978 the Social Housing Law was enacted and since then, to cover the housing demand of the low and middle-income people and the students, more than 3,000 social housing units have been built by the government and housing co-operatives in the major urban centres. Consequently, from 1980 until June of 1998, after which no mass-housing projects were implemented by the government, a total number of 15,481 individual housing units and 3372 mass housing units have been constructed (Gazioğlu, 1996). 2722 of the mass housing units were built by the TRNC Ministry of Housing (now the Housing Department) and the rest 650 were built by co-operatives (**Tables 2, 3**).

“The first housing co-operative estate was designed in Göçmenköy, a suburb of Lefkoşa, in 1981, by İş-Coop (Workers’ Co-operative Development Society) and Türk-Sen (Trade Unions Federation). Between 1983 and 1989, 360 units were completed in Lefkoşa by these two organisations (**Table 3**). Four other housing cooperatives managed to build 290 units in Lefkoşa for their members during the same period. Housing cooperatives have received financial assistance and building sites at reasonable prices from the government. Many of the cooperative housing schemes suffered from inadequate supervision during construction, incompetent administration, poor design, inadequate coordination during infrastructure work, irregular progress with construction and similar problems which discouraged further housing schemes by cooperatives. Eligible families preferred the units built to satisfactory standards and delivered in time by the government.” (Gazioğlu, 1996).

“Between 1984 and 1992, the government successfully implemented three housing schemes and built 1,528 units. Government programmes have been more successful than those of cooperatives in terms of financing, the number of units built, coordination, administration, design, quality and timely delivery. Recent official announcements indicate that financial resources needed for the Fourth Phase have been made available by the Turkish government. Recently, the government has also launched a new project which provides building sites and partial credit to those who want to build their homes in rural areas. By 1996, 1,384 building sites had been allocated

Phase	Building Type	Nicosia	Famagusta	Kyrenia	Guzelyurt	Other	Total
Phase I (1984-86)	Duplex	96	80	40	32	10	258
	Apartment	40	-	-	-	-	40
	Total	136	80	40	32	10	298
Phase IIA (1985-87)	Duplex	60	80	40	32	-	212
	Apartment	48	-	-	-	-	48
	Total	108	80	40	32	-	260
Phase IIB (1986-88)	Duplex	128	56	60	-	-	244
	Apartment	56	-	-	-	-	56
	Total	184	56	60	-	-	300
Phase IIC (1987-89)	Duplex	292	116	-	-	-	408
	Apartment	56	8	-	-	16	80
	Total	348	124	-	-	16	488
Phase III (1990-92)	Duplex	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Apartment	104	88	-	16	32	240
	Total	104	88	-	16	32	240
Phase IV (1993-1996)	Duplex	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Apartment	608	336	112	64	16	1.136
	Total	608	336	112	64	16	1.136
TOTAL of 4 Phases (1984-1996)	Duplex	576	332	140	64	10	1.122
	Apartment	912	432	112	70	64	1.600
	Total	1.488	764	252	134	74	2.722

Table 2. State Social Housing Projects in North Cyprus (Department of Social Housing, Nicosia, TRNC; Gazioğlu, 1996).

to eligible families for this purpose. The aim of this approach is to encourage young couples to stay in rural areas and to prevent rural-urban migration.” (Gazioğlu, 1996)(Table 2).

Additionally, according to research conducted by Keleş (1998), compared to previous developments, the percentage of mass housing developments constructed before 1960 was 19%, whereas, it increased to 25.4% between 1960-1983 and further increased to 55.7% after 1983 (Table 4).

Social / mass housing was designed by the government in 1986 and built in 1989 in three different stages in different parts of Northern Cyprus. The three types of housing formed units of either 100 m², 85m² or 60m² in area according to the income of citizens in order to provide ease of rent payments. However, in these social housing developments neither the spatial nor the social and cultural demands of households were considered during the design process. Social housing units have not to date met the household demands and spatial needs, which therefore led to the owners or tenants of these houses regularly carrying out their own alterations, both internally and externally in order to change the house to meet / suit /

Name of Cooperative	Construction Period	Duplex	Apartment	Total
Is-Coop & Türk-Sen	1983-89	330	30	360
Teachers' Coop.	1983-85	136	32	168
Police Coop.	1984-86	40	-	40
Security Forces Coop.	1984-86	-	32	32
Soyak Coop.		50	-	50
Total		556	94	650

Table 3. Social Housing Projects by Cooperatives in North Cyprus - all units are built in Nicosia (Source: Department of Social Housing, Lefkoşa, TRNC; Gazioğlu, 1996).

Period	Rate %
British Period (before 1960)	% 19.0
Cyprus Republic Period (1960-1963)	% 03.8
1963-1974 Period	% 12.7
Cyprus Turkish Federation (1974-1983)	% 08.9
TRNC Period (After 1983)	% 55.7

Table 4. Distribution of mass housing by the construction periods (Keleş, 1998).

accommodate their changing needs at both cultural and spatial levels. These structural changes often rendered the social / mass housing projects with a chaotic and haphazard appearance (**Table 1**).

Being one of the major housing contributors/ providers within the cities in Northern Cyprus, the mass housing groups are located in different districts, especially in the main cities of Lefkoşa, Gazimağusa, and Girne. These houses have been built at different times (in 1963, 1974 and during the TRNC rule, mainly by the government and later by some private companies) using a variety of building types such as detached, terraced, single or double storey houses and apartment blocks. Apartment buildings are the type most frequently constructed, with a percentage ratio of 32.9% (**Table 5**). The second most commonly occurring group is the row or terraced housing, which is mainly built by the TRNC government with a percentage ratio of 34.2% (**Table 5**). Detached houses have a ratio of 16.5% (Keleş, 1998). Taking mass housing construction overall in Northern Cyprus, 41% is accounted for in Lefkoşa, whereas Gazimağusa has 21.5% and Girne 20.3% (Özderen, 2001).

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the situation in respect of housing developments changed. No other social housing projects were initiated by the government after June 1998, despite the fact that there was an increase in demand especially from the ever increasing university student population. The needs and requirements of the users and the larger society had changed. Local people started investing in second homes, to accommodate their changing needs. There was also an increase in foreign investments in the housing construction sector. In addition to the increasing number of private individual housing units, planned multiple housing developments became the major construction activity and a leading sector within the economics of the country.

Table 5. Number of housing units by their types (Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, Department of Interior - 2006 census data results).

Accordingly, the impact of the private sector on housing production also increased considerably, especially after the initiation of the UN Peace Plan

District	Total	Detached house	Semi-detached house	Row house	Subsidiary house	Apartment	Other	Unknown
Nicosia	22996	8112 (%35.2)	4139 (%18)	2172 (%9.4)	382 (%1.6)	8109 (%35.2)	61 (%0.2)	21 (%0.09)
Famagusta	18541	9538 (%51.4)	3786 (%20)	677 (%3.6)	443 (%2.3)	4046 (%22)	36 (%0.1)	15 (%0.08)
Kyrenia	16583	8980 (%54)	2974 (%18)	514 (%3)	237 (%1.4)	3819 (%23)	43 (%0.2)	16 (%0.09)
Güzelyurt	8608	5778 (%67)	1706 (%10)	577 (%6.7)	210 (%2.4)	254 (%3)	64 (%0.7)	19 (%0.2)
Iskele	5896	5100 (%86)	650 (%11)	55 (%0.9)	66 (%1.1)	16 (%0.2)	6 (%0.1)	3 (%0.05)
Total	72624	37508	13255	3995	1338	16244	210	74



Figure 4. Urban sprawl along the coastal zone of Girne (F. Özersay).

-popularly known as the Annan Plan which was first introduced by the United Nations in 2002 and named after the then Secretary General, when an “explosive construction boom”, as Yorucu and Keleş (2007) and Hoşkara and Hoşkara (2007) refer to it, most of which was housing developments, took place throughout Northern Cyprus (5). This was driven partly by domestic and partly by foreign demand, against which the existing rules and regulations remained inefficient. The Annan Plan has had a major impact on the construction sector, as well as the property and housing market in Northern Cyprus. As was also stressed by Yorucu and Keleş (2007, 78): “it has directly led to a huge investment in real estate, driven partly by foreign demand; in turn, there has been a boom in all sub-sectors of construction (residential, commercial and industrial).”

“The rapid construction activity in the TRNC has created significant social costs, including pollution of the environment and damage to natural and historical sites. The urban development boom in the wake of the Annan Plan seems to have accelerated the rate of environmental deterioration. Coastal areas with high tourism potential, natural and biological diversity, highly fertile agricultural land, and to a certain extent, protection of historical and architectural heritage are enormously affected by and urban sprawl.” (Yorucu and Keleş, 2007, 85)

As a result, major urban districts -e.g. the coastal zone of Girne, the outskirts of Lefkoşa and the Karpaz region overall including İskele, and the even less urbanized Güzelyurt district, have been heavily affected by this unplanned development. The coastal districts of Girne and Gazimağusa with their high tourism potential have especially been faced with the issue of urban sprawl (**Figure 4**).

In order to protect and maintain public order for the purpose of developing and managing cities more efficiently and systematically, public authorities are taking precautions with “privileged area plans” in order to provide a life-style in which public health, security and comfort are all adequately maintained. Privileged area plans, which are enacted by Plan Orders (Cabinet Decrees) (for several unique and special settlements and regions like Girne, Büyükkonuk-Tatlısu, Bafra and Karpaz, etc.) formulate strict building rules and regulations, which prevent certain types of construction, and provide detailed planning and construction standards. However, the

5. After several revisions based on a complex round of negotiations, the final version of the Annan Plan was put in a separate referenda for both sides (the north and the south) of Cyprus on 24th April 2004. It was approved by Turkish Cypriots who voted 65% in favour, whilst, it was rejected by 76% of the Greek Cypriots.

rules and regulations are far from being appropriate and efficient in terms of creating, sustainable, liveable housing environments, since they lack any emphasis on certain human, social, spatial and ecological aspects of urban and housing design.

Despite the aforementioned Plan Orders, in almost all regions and cities in Northern Cyprus, a variety of new houses and housing complexes which present different characteristics in terms of size, number, architectural identity etc. depending on the region, city or village, have been developed.

Considering the housing typology in general today, houses can be described as detached, semi-detached, row / terraced, apartment blocks, and so on. (Table 5; TRNC, Department of Interior, 2006 Census Data results). The following section will present an overview of Table 5, which analyses the number of housing units in Northern Cyprus according to their types. The analytical review will be conducted on a city-based approach, starting with the capital city, Lefkoşa and continuing with Gaziumağusa, Girne, Güzelyurt and İskele in a comparative manner, where appropriate.

Having analyzed the percentages of various housing types within the major cities, it can be argued that the most common types of housing in Nicosia are apartment blocks and detached houses, both having (individually) 35.2% of the total housing stock (Table 5). On the one hand, the reason for the predominant choice of apartment block construction could be the prohibitive cost of the land to supply accommodation for high numbers of people and also their affordable prices which also overall renders them a good investment. Therefore, it can be argued that apartments are also utilised by people with varying income levels. On the other hand, the reason for the preference of detached housing units can be their appropriateness to the island life style by incorporating outdoor / courtyard living with the advantageous climatic conditions.

Compared to Nicosia, the other two major cities, Gaziumağusa, and Girne demonstrate different housing preferences. In Famagusta, detached houses are in the highest percentile of (51.4%); followed by the apartment blocks (22%) and then the semi-detached houses (20%) being either designed as standing side-by-side or as very low-rise apartment style buildings. Based on the observations of the authors, it can be argued that the underlying reason for Famagusta's high percentage of detached housing is that, the local people tend to rent the houses they had been settled down after 1974 mainly to the university students, and prefer to build independent houses with a piece of garden as their 'own houses'. This is due to the fact that the houses that were given to their use after the division of the island could not be perceived as their 'own', which is clearly obvious from the state of the houses, not being cared for by any means for all those years of unstable political state.

Similarly, the detached housing in Girne, has the highest percentage (54%) followed again by the apartments (23%) which actually meet the needs and the requirements of the demand created by the increasing numbers of university students as a result of the development of universities in the region; and then, the semi-detached houses (18%). When considering

the distribution of the different types of residential buildings across the districts, it can be seen that apartments are mainly located within the city centre, and semi-detached and detached houses towards the periphery of the city. There are two major reasons behind this type of distribution: comparatively high land prices, and the laws and regulations that limit the height of a building and/ or the number of storeys which are permitted to be constructed within a particular district.

In the Guzelyurt district, the interpretations in respect of the various types of residential buildings permitted to be constructed differ considerably from the other districts. Sixty-seven% of housing construction is detached followed by the semi-detached type and very low-rise double storey apartment style blocks (maisonette style) at 20%. The rest of the construction types consist of terraced / row-housing (6.7%), and other non specific types (3.5%). Apartment blocks are rare in the district (3%) due to the fact that the land prices are low when compared to the other districts as a result of low investment rates. This supports the public's preference for detached housing since they are likely to have private gardens which lend them more to the open air Mediterranean climate life-style. Meanwhile, due to the political uncertainty regarding the district's possession-related issues, immigration from the district was a common public act. Because there was no university within the district until very recently, there was also no need for apartment's blocks. Yet, in the recent past, a new university complex (Middle Eastern Technical University - METU) was established within the district. After this university was established a sudden noticeable increase in the construction became apparent.

Finally, the most common residential building type in İskele district is the independent detached house (86 %). The reason for this can possibly be attributed to the district itself being a newly developed district, as it was formerly a sub-district with very little new housing developments appearing. Nowadays, however, it is obvious that vast building investment is going into this new district. The reason for this could be its close but separate relationship with Famagusta, which is a largely expanding university city, or its proximity to the coast and the Karpaz district.

All these new housing types and developments which can be seen in major settlements have been constructed in a very rapid and unplanned manner. The existing laws and regulations were not sufficient to control, supervise or even oppose this rapid type of urbanization, which often occurs as a result of no official planning permission along with uncontrolled haphazard and chaotic housing construction. Thus, as a result of the inadequate, inappropriate and weak existing legal framework, various problems have arisen at all levels. The concluding section of this article will focus on these problems in depth concentrating on their relation to laws and regulations, as part of the article's main objective.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE PROBLEMS OF HOUSING IN NORTH CYPRUS

Having evaluated the housing issue in Northern Cyprus both from a historical and contemporary approach, the problems of housing and housing developments can be categorised into two separate but interrelated perspectives: the internal problems of the housing sector itself, and how they influence and reflect on the social, physical, and economic environments. Since the construction sector is based particularly on

“housing” in North Cyprus, although being experienced in all the range of construction activities, these problems, both internal and reflected, are mostly applicable to housing.

It is clear that the issue of piecemeal housing development within Northern Cyprus over recent years has accelerated due to the emergence of the Annan Plan. Accordingly, massive and disorganized housing projects which have neither an appropriate legal site-selection approach nor any planning permission have appeared in various locations throughout the island, but particularly in the coastal areas. As a result, this approach has generated a fragmented growth in housing environments, which has caused a continuing and extended sprawl of urban development towards the periphery of the urban areas, with no permission by the local government authorities legal in respect of land-use application or development applications. This has led to spontaneous social housing project investments that lack the determination of prioritising regions and areas by housing demand and user income profile. Besides, this piecemeal and fragmented growth has generated the unconscious and insensitive use of land and environmental resources - (energy, water, and material consumption). In other words, it has contributed to an unsustainable development.

Due to the newly developed unorganized and uncontrolled vast housing developments, land resources have been consumed by using incongruous policies and decisions in respect of housing issues. Traditional planning approaches based on zoning policies, lack of master plans, local plans and/or physical plans, archaic legal frameworks and inefficient institutional departments unfortunately do not meet today’s housing management and planning needs in Northern Cyprus; instead they only create urban sprawl and sub-urbanization.

In the meantime, Planning Orders (Cabinet Decrees) have been drawn up and released, with the expectation that they will provide solutions towards improved physical environments. However, until they become valid, it is clear that the construction sector has moved into an even more rapid phase in order to obtain as much pecuniary gain as possible in their own self-interest, until such time as the Planning Orders become viable and can be enforced, thus creating even more unplanned/chaotic environments. It can, therefore, be stated that the release of these Planning Orders makes the situation even more chaotic, since they are not applied properly, and they remain in the application process much longer than they should - that they are, somehow, never replaced by actual plans.

There is no doubt that the user profile and market policies in respect of housing supply have not been well defined in the process of housing construction. Land is consumed very quickly and unconsciously (even much faster than the growth in population), which in turn leads to the unsustainable use of resources and this issue is emerging as one of the most problematic issues in many urban regions in Northern Cyprus, such as Girne, Lefkoşa, and Gazimağusa. In addition, in economic terms, this condition creates a “more than enough construction market” for locals. The foreign consumers, who have already become citizens, particularly from England and other countries, can easily find legitimate deals in terms of buying a house. Due to this, the popular housing options for foreigners have generated a standardised cost, which is vastly increased and inflated and is not appropriate or applicable to the incomes of the local inhabitants. Thus, the affordability of housing units has dramatically

Figure 5. Recent housing developments showing similar architectural details all along the coasts (F. Özersay).



Figure 6. Some recent housing developments carrying traditional details of the past (F. Özersay).



decreased for local people. . In many project locations, empty housing units can be seen waiting to be purchased. Thus, although the housing supply has risen recently, the amount of sales transactions are not equable to the supply available, which, accordingly, leads to the specific problems of (i) a significant gap between the housing supply and housing demand, (ii) unaffordable housing options for middle and low-income groups (locals), and (iii) continuous housing constructions *vis a vis* a surplus of empty housing units.

The recent developments in housing construction exposes the differentiation in the manner of form, material, proportion, etc., but, at the same time, it is clear that they are “copied” and ‘pasted’, so to speak everywhere without demonstrating any thought or consideration for the existing environmental context (**Figure 5**). Standard housing development practices fail to provide or plan for adequate ‘green belt’ areas, recreational space and other amenities, thus reducing the architectural character of the

island of Cyprus to an 'unidentifiable state' or to anonymity -with some exceptions of course (**Figure 6**). Often, urban design quality in housing environments is left to the development and construction industry, to enact for its own market-driven benefit.

From the above discussions and evaluations, it can be deduced that housing development trends and planning implementations in Northern Cyprus are moving away from sustainable land use development practices, as well as sustainable design solutions. With that in mind urgent housing planning, management policies and action plans need to be identified and established immediately in order to emphasize the concept of compact urbanization by achieving a balance between the demand for housing, the distribution of housing supply and the demand for future growth. Master plans (and local plans where needed) should be prepared immediately and these two-dimensional plans should be linked to and integrated with design guidelines. The plans and design guidelines and legal regulations should focus on smaller areas (housing and other types of mixed-use environments) and illustrate more detailed planning and design proposals for specific sites and buildings. All these plans and design matters should be integrated within a strategic planning process in which public participation, opinion and co-ordination at both local and national levels are included; they also need to be subject to continuous updating and revision, supervision, control and accountability.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has discussed the effect of laws and regulations in relation to housing environments. Northern Cyprus has been studied and presented as a case study referring to the major discussion points regarding the subject matter. It can be concluded that, the exiting planning system, the laws and regulations regarding urban growth and development is directly reflected in the housing construction and its environment, in, both physical and social terms. If the planning system does not: become more secure, does not act more clearly in the public interest, does not promote the orderly and appropriate use and development of land, if the legal planning orders and regulations are not adequate, appropriate or sufficiently robust to guide, control and supervise any construction development, if the issues of design detail and planning are not addressed, if no national policies regarding sustainable urban development and housing construction are introduced; if planning policies, laws and regulations do not: "promote high-quality, mixed-use developments such as 'urban villages', characterized by the concepts of compactness, mixed uses, affordable housing (for locals mainly), employment and recreational facilities, access to public transport and open green spaces as well as, 'high standards of urban design (DETR, 1995)", then the development and construction of chaotic (housing) environments are inevitable.

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Kuzey Kıbrıs; konutlar; toplu konutlar; yasa ve düzenlemeler.

KUZEY KIBRIS'TA KONUT ÇEVRELERİ VE YASAL ÇERÇEVE

Yaşanabilir, kaliteli ve kimlikli konut çevreleri planlanması ve tasarımı mimarlık ve ilgili meslek dallarının başta gelen görevlerindedir. Konut çevrelerinin biçimlenmesi, doğal ve iklimsel çevre özellikleri yanında, sosyal, kültürel, ekonomik ve politik koşullarla da doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Bu makalede sunulan çalışma, yasa ve yönetmeliklerin konut çevrelerinin oluşumu üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymak üzere kurgulanmış ve konuya yönelik ana tartışma noktaları, Kuzey Kıbrıs örneğinde ele alınmıştır.

Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta planlama olgusuna bakıldığında, ortaya çıkan tablonun, çağdaş planlama anlayışlarından oldukça uzak bir noktada olduğu iddia edilebilir (Hoşkara ve Hoşkara, 2007). Ada'da Annan çözüm planının ilk görüşülmeye başlandığı 2001 yılından başlamak üzere ise, "hızlı bir yapılaşma süreci" başlamış, konut yapılarının ağırlıklı olduğu inşaat sektöründe gözle görülür bir canlılık ortaya çıkmış ve, mimari ve kentsel çevreler gelişmeye ve zenginleşmeye başlamıştır. Ancak, bu durum karşısında, Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta, kentsel ve kırsal yerleşim alanlarındaki bu hızlı gelişim ve büyümeye karşı önlem almaya, planlamanın, mevcut yasa ve yönetmeliklerin hızı yetmemiştir. Kentler, hızlı büyüme, yoğun, yaygın ve düzensiz bir gelişme ile karşı karşıya kalmış, özellikle Girne ve Gazimağusa gibi kıyı kentlerinde ve/veya Dip Karpaz bölgesinde olduğu gibi diğer doğal gelişim alanlarında, çevre tahrip olmaya başlamıştır. Bir yandan, hiç bir geleneksel, iklimsel, sosyal ve kültürel kimlik ögesi göz önüne alınmaksızın yapılan ek inşaatlarla – özellikle yeni konut gelişimleriyle – geleneksel çevreler kimliklerini yitirme durumuna gelmiş; diğer yandan yine benzer şekilde, sadece rant kaygısıyla inşa edilen yeni yaşam çevreleri doğal çevreye olumsuz girdiler olarak eklenmiştir. Bunun sonucunda, "sosyal yaşam çevrelerinin ve dolayısıyla kamusal açık alanların kalitesi, komşuluk ilişkileri, geçirgenlik, okunabilirlik, bütünlük, çeşitlilik gibi estetik değerler düşünülmeden tasarlanan bu yeni yaşam çevreleri, çağdaş mimarlık ve planlama ortamlarının gündeminde ve en odak noktasında bulunan ekolojik kaygılardan ve, sürdürülebilirlik ve sürdürülebilir kalkınma hedeflerinden uzak, plansızca gelişmektedir." (Hoşkara ve Hoşkara, 2007, 53-61).

Bu makalede sunulan çalışmanın amacı Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta mevcut yasa ve yönetmeliklerin hızla gelişmekte olan konut çevreleri üzerindeki etkisini irdeleyerek bu çevrelerin geleceğe yönelik planlama ve tasarım ilkeleriyle ilgili bir tartışma ortamı yaratmaktır. Bu hedef doğrultusunda makale yedi ana bölüme ayrılmıştır. İlk iki bölümde makalenin temel fikri yanında araştırma noktaları açıklanarak problem ortaya konmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki mevcut konut sorununun tarihi süreç içindeki gelişimi, adada dönüm noktası olan İngiliz döneminden 1980'lere kadar olan zaman aralığında, ele alınarak incelenmektedir. Dördüncü bölümde konutla ilişkili mevcut yasal çerçeve içinde kanun ve yönetmelikler değerlendirilerek tartışılmaktadır. Beşinci bölümde ise 1980'den günümüze kadar olan zaman aralığında konut gelişimi varolan yasal çerçeveye referans verilerek değerlendirilecektir. Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki konut sorunlarına bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan tartışma alanlarının saptanması altıncı bölümün kapsamında yer almaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde ise Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki konut çevrelerinin geleceğine yönelik bazı önerilere yer verilmektedir. Analitik ve eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla ele alınan bu çalışmada dökümantasyon ve gözleme dayalı araştırma yöntemleri benimsenmiştir.

Çalışma sonucunda gelinen noktada, konut çevrelerinin, varolan planlama sistemi ile kentin büyüme ve gelişimiyle ilgili yasa ve yönetmelikler doğrultusunda biçimlendikleri yorumu yapılabilir. Planlama sisteminin güvenilirliğinin artırılmaması; uygulanmasına yönelik toplum içerisinde net bir ortamın oluşamaması; düzenli ve uygun arazi kullanımı ve gelişimine olanak vermemesi; yasal planlama kuralları ve yönetmeliklerinin yetersiz olması, uygun olamaması, ya da yönlendirme, kontrol etme veya yapım gelişimini denetleme konularında hantal olması; tasarım detaylarının geliştirilmesi yönünde eksiklik; ve planlama politikaları, yasa ve yönetmeliklerinin yüksek kaliteli, toplu kullanıma uygun, çağdaş yaşamı destekleyen mekansal çözümler, kompasite, uygun fiyatlılık, iş ve eğlence tesisleri, toplu taşıma araçlarına ve açık yeşil alanlara ulaşım kavramlarıyla karakterize edilebilecek -şehir köyleri- gibi yaklaşımları özendirilmesi koşullarında, kaotik konut çevrelerinin oluşması kaçınılmazdır. Tüm bu sıralanan karmaşık sorunlar, Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki konut çevreleri için geçerlidir; varolan konut yapılarının fiziksel, çevresel ve sosyal kalitelerinin beklenenin altında ve kimlikten yoksun olmalarının önde gelen nedenleridir. Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta bu durumun tersine döndürülebilmesi, daha yaşanabilir ve kaliteli konut ve yaşam çevreleri oluşturulabilmesi, öncelikle mevcut yasa ve yönetmeliklerin çağdaş, stratejik planlama anlayışıyla yenilenmesiyle olanaklıdır.