



## Master's Program Land Management and Land Tenure

# Urban Planning in Libya

## Analysis of status quo, problems and options for improvements- Case study of Benghazi city

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The natural growth of **Libyan** population (2.2%/year) and high concentration rates of people in urban areas (88%), coupled with serious issues including scarcity of fresh water, pollution, desertification and economic stagnation at the national level, and the shortage of public services and facilities, low supply of affordable housing, and deterioration of urban environment at the local level, have all together diminished government's capacity to realize the **planning goals** of higher access levels to the modern facilities and a better quality of life for all citizens.

This study is being conducted to draw attention on the weakness of urban planning practice in Libya. It is attempting to have a better understanding of the urban planning practiced in the country and the constraints which are hindering planning institutions from playing their role in the planning process. It also aims to bring about planning strategies that are capable to advance the planning process to be more efficient and affordable based on a better understanding of the local capacity and international experience.

### Methodology

To determine what improvements the Libyan urban planning system needs in order to play its role in developing good urban areas and regions within the constraints of a capitalist economy and democratic political system, a case study approach has been applied. Benghazi City has been used as a case representing all Libyan cities and towns. The collected data include primary data based on semi-structured questionnaires for a number of stakeholders. Secondary data depend on several documented information, and site visits. The data obtained were compared and logically interpreted, and results were used to establish the final recommendations.



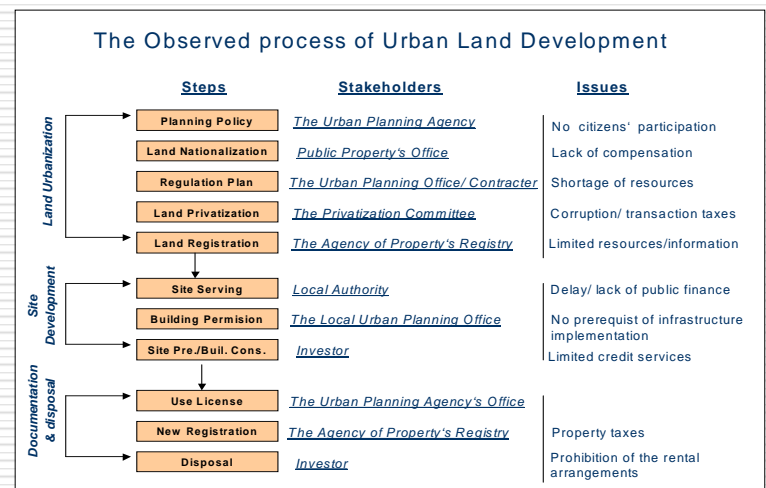
The old town- Tripoli

### Theory

- Urban development models of functional and normative theories.
- The socio-functional model of the Islamic Middle Eastern city
- Values and principles, which are considered to be of big importance to guide the planning practice in the Libyan context.
- Planning theory, which asserts how complex public decisions about city development are.

### The Libyan planning experience

The Libyan view and practice of urban planning remained by far underdeveloped, though the international progress in this field throughout the last decades. The inherent defects of the traditional planning approach, such as decision-making by the central authorities, the central role of the planners and the missed process of plan reconsidering, in addition to the hitherto stumbled economic reforms and contradictory legislations, lead to inefficient patterns of land uses and unsatisfactory urban environment. The urban planning in the case of Benghazi presents a picture of the physical city 20 or more years in the future shown by the end-state master plan, which does not represent what the community wants or what is possible. Urban planning attempted to function independently of politics and separately from the administration process. Therefore, planning was incapable to play its role in tackling urban problems such as shortage of building land, limited supply of housing, low levels of access to facilities and deterioration of the urban environment.



### Conclusion

In order to realize the urban planning objectives it needs to adapt more flexible procedures and to cover strategies of socio-economic, cultural, environmental and regional developments based on a democratic process. It is, therefore, necessary to pursue legislative and procedural reforms. These reforms should be enhanced by measurements such as public awareness, capacity building and technical and financial support.

Urban Planning is a form of social action, or a social practice, it is about intervening in the world to protect or change in it some way [...] because it is a practice, it requires, more than any thing, sound judgement 'judgement about what best to do [...], (which) draws on both aesthetic and scientific understanding [...] that is about how best to plan the environments we inhabit (Taylor, 1998, P.167-168).