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# Urban planning and design in unauthorized neighborhoods using case studies

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## Abstract

This paper is to study the unauthorized urban neighborhoods, which cause critical multifaceted difficulties. It explores the reasons that have resulted in the unauthorized urban neighborhoods generally and in Chabahar city particularly. This paper has performed a case study to analyze the socioeconomic, spatial, skeletal, and functional effects of the illegal neighborhoods in the Chabahar city with the help of academic methods and field observations. It reviews various theoretical ideas and experiences could assist the rehabilitation and reconstructing of the unauthorized urban districts. It discusses optimal strategic regional/urban revitalization planning procedures to solve the problems in Chabahar. Finally, this paper suggests a renewal/rebuilding possible development program, including eight mother projects. The results of the renewal program will be substituted with the present informal and eroded neighborhoods in the city. The renewal program made progress in both physical features of the city and urban life quality indicators simultaneously. The model suggested by this paper will be feasible in similar regions everywhere.

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**Keywords:** Chabahar; Unauthorized neighborhoods; Skeletal development; Street axial model; Spatial planning; Green architecture

## 1. Introduction

Unauthorized neighborhoods have caused critical multifaceted difficulties in Iran generally and particularly in a city called for Chabahar. As Hölzl and Nuissl suggested the informal urban districts are a huge challenge against planned and managed urban developments (Hölzl and Nuissl, 2014). A major part of the problem is inappropriate places of the informal neighborhoods. Since the districts have been built unplanned and plot-by-plot, they emerge

as derelict holes in perspectives of cities. However, the challenge is more than an architectural and visual one and it involves many other problems as well. *The aim of this paper* is to explore the reasons for the emergence of unauthorized neighborhoods. It will analyze socioeconomic, spatial, skeletal, and functional effects of the informal districts through academic theoretical methods and a case study. This paper suggests a redevelopment program to renew/rebuild present informal and eroded areas in Chabahar city. The program suggests possible procedures to stop expansion of the unauthorized neighborhoods, to renew unplanned earlier built homes and to recover socioeconomic and skeletal troubles of the city. *This paper uses a research method* similar to what Durand-Lasserre and

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Clerc had done. Their work titled “Regularization and integration of irregular settlements: Lessons from experience” (Durand-Lasserve and Clerc, 1996). Therefore, it describes and examines the current irregular neighborhoods. It also presents a new strategy to shape the built environment and to supply homes and infrastructure services in Chabahar. Finally, it presents an innovative renewal program based on new relationships among actors of urban development and management.

## 2. Introducing the problem of unauthorized neighborhoods

### 2.1. Background of unauthorized residential areas in Iran

Unplanned and informal urban districts are a global problem. Internationally, scholars suggest theoretical and feasible solutions to the problem, i.e. Li and colleagues assessed novelty of the corresponding relationship between street network and urban life (Li et al., 2015). Newly, Li, Lv, Hijazi, Jiao, et al. suggested a comprehensive understanding of the built environment, which contributes to this problem (Li et al., 2016). Wang, Lv, et al. also proposed a supportive platform with integrated information and big data to address the problem (Wang et al., 2015). However, this paper limits its discussions to unauthorized neighborhoods in Chabahar. Haghghi (2015), Shahraki (2014), Rafiyan et al. (2015), Zayas (2015) and many other scholars discussed about unauthorized neighborhoods in Iran, i.e. (Hadizadeh, 2003) suggested the concept as follows: “Outskirt-sitting and informal housing is rooted in structural social changes, the emergence of economic crises and accelerated migration of villagers to the cities. The problem is not only a local physical and skeletal subject, but rather it derives from regional and national plans” (Hadizadeh, 2004: 3). When population increase is much more than official planned urban spaces can accommodate, the problem gets worse (Cullingworth, 2015). A sharp increase in demand has augmented the informal districts in numbers out of control. The history of outskirts siting in Iran goes back almost eight decades. Dehghani argued that the population in Iran has increased 6.3 times during recent five decades and the present urbanization rate is 70 percentage (Dehghani, 2011). The accelerated growth of urbanization causes more informal and critical skeletal expansions. It has created crowded unauthorized areas in Iranian cities. Further, the failure of land reforms, the declining of agricultural livelihoods, peripheral villages’ integration in cities, and changing farmlands to buildings caused serious

Table 1  
Number of households who migrated from villages into big cities.

Year	Households (million)	Increase of migrants
1986	1.4	
1996	3.6	39
2006	9.3	50

Reference for data: (Statistical center of Iran, 2006).

urban problems during later times; see i.e. Rustiadi et al. (2015) and Liu (2015). Table 1 reports the average number of families that have come to the major cities of Iran. The table reports the immigrant households only from 1986. Ten years later, the migration had increased 39 percentages. In 2006, the rural–urban migration numbers peaked at 50 percentages. The table shows well how the rush of migrants into big cities has increased during the past decades.

Annabestani and Anabestani (2011) studied reasons of the immigrations. They considered unemployment and poverty, drought and declining of agricultural production, attractions of urban life, and cheaper homes in informal urban districts respectively as major reasons for the migrations. As they suggested during the time studied 19 percentages of the migrants moved to the big cities because of the drought and decline in farming livelihood. Unemployment and poverty caused 39 percentages of internal migrations as a major cause. Other national observations indicate that the number of migrants and the unauthorized neighborhoods are increasing in size permanently. Several international scholars, i.e. Davis, also believe that the event is an increasing reality (Davis, 1995). The phenomenon of unauthorized urban neighborhoods harms cities in underdevelopment countries. Informal districts are features of poverty that show the fiasco of urban and regional planning policies.

### 2.2. Background of unauthorized residential areas in Chabahar

Chabahar is a significant harbor from economic, strategic, and geopolitical views. As the following map shows, Chabahar is in southeastern Iran on the Oman Sea (see Fig. 1).

In the map from the east direction, Chabahar is a neighbor to Gwadar and Karachi in Pakistan. From the west side Chabahar is close to Oman. From the south direction, Chabahar has a three hundred kilometer long border coast. Shahraki believes that the unauthorized neighborhoods in Chabahar go back to the 1970s, when the Pahlavi monarchy started big development projects like Chabahar–Zahedan corridor, Pishin dam, Konarak military airbase, and some massive housing projects, which absorbed many people to Chabahar (Shahraki, 2014:96). Fig. 2 shows Chabahar population growth from 1960 until 1995.

Chabahar’s first core was Masghatia quarter. Unauthorized districts in Chabahar have emerged almost in the form of slum dwellers made of palm straw materials. People from different ethnic groups in Baluchistan came to use the hunting potentials and commercial services. They settled in Shiriha and Korsar districts along the eastern direction of the coastline. Masghatia at the beach of Chabahar Gulf was the place to present fishing productions and commercial services. It was the place for trade of imported commodities from Dubai and other Gulf Emirates. In the 1990s, the establishment of a free economic and industrial

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