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Article

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Research Article

Reproduction of urban informality in Iran: Its key factors, tools and challenges

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ABSTRACT

Due partly to neoliberal policies—especially in developing countries—and as a result of globalization, urban informality has become an indisputable part of urbanization since the 1970s. As a developing country, Iran has also dealt with the onset of this type of urbanism since the 1920s. The majority of global studies recognize the status of informal settlements and explain relevant approaches and actions. However, less emphasis is placed on informal reproduction factors; This study critically examines the factors that culminate in the reproduction of informality in Iran, namely the ominous triangle of power (government), the state economy, and knowledge-based on instrumental rationality (Technocracy) and its social, physical and environmental effects. This study seeks to evaluate the influential factors of urban informality in Iran with a critical and comprehensive view of the social, economic, political, physical dimensions and avoids an unidimensional tunnel vision. Findings show that the government policies and the economic sector monopoly play significant roles in the reproduction of poverty and informal settings in Iran. Furthermore, managerial and technical tools will act as government tools, the output of which manifests in its physical, social, and environmental factors.

1. Introduction

While metropolitan areas have experienced fundamental transformations across the world in recent decades, urban management and planning tools detached from bottom-up efforts have literally further damaged instead of ameliorating the negative consequences associated with them. Rural-urban migration, for instance, reflects one of the spatial forces that drastically altered the urban form arising from industrialization and capital accumulation, thereby precipitating social inequality. Representing inequality and the power of global Capitalism, this phenomenon became the overarching, dominant ideology (Lefebvre, 1991) that reproduced poverty. For decades, the physical manifestation of this problem has been touted under various headings from the urban slums and informal settlements to suburban enacting different ineffective policies ranging as benign neglect to elimination or forced evacuation, urban upgrading, and empowerment of slum dwellers spearheaded by international institutions, i.e., the UN-Habitat and the World Bank. In 2018, the slums proportion of the population in developing countries were 25.6% in Northern Africa and Western Asia, 20.9% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 27.2% in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, 31.2% in Central and Southern Asia, and 56.2% in Sub-Saharan Africa (UN-Habitat, 2020). In Iran, as one of the developing countries, about 30% of the urban population lives in slums (Urban Regeneration

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Corporation of Iran, 2016). As a major developing country that integrated into global Capitalism, Iran has not been an exception either. The benign neglect, forceful evacuation and dislocation of the people (1970s), the PAK public housing policy¹ housing in the 1990s, the empowerment of residents in the 2000s, the Mehr public housing projects, and urban regeneration projects over the last two decades exemplify the anti-poverty efforts (Arefi, 2018; Bayat, 1997). Most research in this period (Aladdin et al., 2011; Alizadeh et al., 2019; Babaei et al., 2012; Bazregar et al., 2014; Makerani, 2006; Safarabadi et al., 2015; Zakerhaghighi et al., 2015; Zebardast, 2009; Zouqi, 2008) has, among other things, recognized the conditions and forms of inequality, along with the policies that addressed informal settlements, but often failed the structures that reproduced poverty. This study, thus, explores a comprehensive and critical overview of the documents and sources, as well as the statistics of official institutions that attempted to analyze the causes of reproducing informal settlements in Iran. The political economy and the technological and legal tools, as well as the social, physical, and environmental implications of such policies, seem opportune.

2. The global snapshot of urban informality

As roughly about 24% of the urban population, the informal settlements' population has increased from about 800 million in 2000 to about 1 billion in 2018 (UN-Habitat, 2020). More than half of this population lives in East, Southeast, Central, and South Asia, and 23% in sub-Saharan Africa (ibid.). Furthermore, class and income inequality have widened globally (Hickel, 2017; Oxfam, 2019). From a historical and political-economic liberalism perspective, the government intervention and policy choices that aim to ameliorate poverty, time and again, turn on their head, and keep people more entangled and caught up in poverty (Blank, 2010; Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2014). In this regard, more emphasis is placed on creating market economic security rather than on rebuilding properties for the poor since their plight improves through economic development (Lomasky & Swan, 2009: 501). During the 19th century, a behavioral perspective, where poverty seemed necessary dominated the poor otherwise, they did not feel motivated to work (Townsend, 1979). However, economic development cannot be expected transformation in spontaneous urban settlements. The government has pursued comprehensive coercive methods that seek their elimination through forceful eviction and physical annihilation (Potter and Lloyd-Evans, 2014; Sheikhi & Davodondi, 2010). Among others, Turner (1977) and Abrams (1964) have criticized such policies and argued that residents of spontaneous settlements could ultimately improve their neighborhoods if granted specific orientations and motivations. The expediency and necessity of rebuilding cities after World War II and the problems arising from the selfish economic policies of the 1930s led to the formation of various institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (Nomanfar, 1996; Qaraguzlu, 2013). These organizations devise public policies that lead to the ubiquity of low-income housing (Quercia & Galster, 1997; Quercia & Galster, 1997; Marcuse, 1995; McDonald, 2011, pp. 1–12).

However, in most cases, high construction costs, inconsistency of planned houses with prevalent lifestyles, emphasizing unrealistic standards, the inability of owners to pay the mortgage, and the poor location of these housing complexes have led to the failure of such public housing policies, and the ultimate transfer of housing to people with better financial status (Irandoost, 2009).

The capitalist policy crises of the late 1970s failed to generate government welfare and destabilized economic prosperity, and collapsed the national economic-political policies. The decline of Keynesian theory and the internationalization of the capitalist economy, the weakness of the national government processes, the move towards small governments, and the comprehensive privatization and collapse of the Soviet Union made it possible to change the liberalist policies and gradually move towards global neoliberalism (Rahnama, 2016). During this period, the term “informal” first signified the studies carried out by Kate Hart (1973) in Ghana and the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Kenya. These studies focused on the “economic” status of low-income housing in the early 1970s and then moved gradually towards self-made and illegal housing, leading to formal/informal duality formation. At the same time, international institutions and organizations such as the United Nations Human Habitation Program (Habitat) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), along with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, acted as tools of advancing neoliberal policies (Rice, 2015; Irandoost, 2009; Potter and Evans, 2014). With its appearance as a savior of the poor and a pathological and non-radical view, global neoliberalism ultimately failed by latching on scholars' ideas, including De Soto (1989) and De Soto (2003). Different periods reflected different policies, including the self-help, place-service (with emphasis on supply Infrastructure), reformation (mainly physical), empowerment (Fig. 1), unsustainable cities, and set Millennium Development Goals (Gattoni, 2009; Matovu, 2000; Mukhija, 2001; Pugh, 2003; Sietchiping, 2005).

Al-Sayyad (2004) believes that urban informality is not just about the activities of the poor, specific employment conditions, or even the plight of the marginalized alone while still representing the organizational structure formed under the economic liberalization logic. Yiftachel (2009) conceptualizes informal settlements as gray spaces, where the created boundaries divide or separate urban groups based on their social status. This double-edged sword tends to keep gray spaces in sorts of permanent temporality, where both seem to be tolerated or condemned, always awaiting proper correction.

Roy (2012), however, has critically referred to some important concerns. First, urban growth in the 21st century predominantly happens in the developing world, while many theories of the urban functions are still rooted in the developed world and should recognize this exceptional situation—especially among planners. Second, we should go beyond the formal/informal duality and look at the informalization processes in which the political economy or the government's role lies at its forefront. Third, he views urban informality as a form of social production and management of space. Furthermore, as a framework, informality should not be limited to the poor only since informal urbanization includes spontaneous urban settlements, including prosperous suburbs legally and formally

¹ - A policy that addressed mass production of housing with small housing units. PAK policy is one of the important policies that has been adopted in housing market during 1989–1997 period. It mainly focuses on saving, development and downsizing (Sameti et al., 2014).

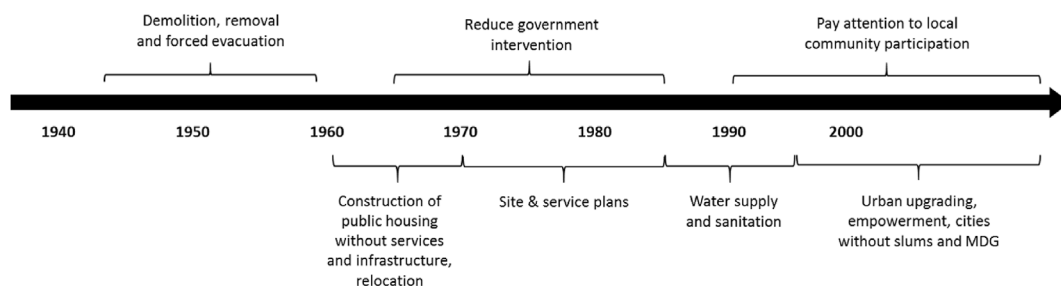


Fig. 1. The path of important worldwide approaches faced with urban informality (Source: Drawn by the Authors).

planned through government processes (De Genova & Roy, 2020; Roy, 2005; Roy, 2012).

In general, as mentioned, powers and politics under the influence of global Capitalism have marginalized the low-income groups they have sought to save and help. These international neoliberal policies have not only not helped improve the plight of the poor and the lower class but have reproduced poverty and informal living (Share The World's Resources, 2010).

Developing countries, including Iran, promote centralism and monopolize the capitalist economy, while global policies influence government policies. The following sections discuss the political economy of the public sector and the urban informality in Iran, along with the socio-spatial and environmental implications of these policy decisions.

3. Urban informality in Iran

The background related to the formation of spontaneous urban settlements in major Iranian cities dates back to the Pahlavi era. Abdul Ghaffar, in 1831 noted that 10% of the Tehran population with unconventional substandard economic conditions (rejected groups with low-paying jobs) lived in ditches (Khatam, 2002). However, Tehran's growth intensified after establishing dependent Capitalism from 1940 onwards (Ebrahimi & Mesgarian, 2008). The beginning of the Pahlavi period (1921) witnessed urban growth and the subsequent binary rural-urban migration distinction. The urbanization rate increased from 47% in 1976 to 74% in 2016. During this period, the population of dysfunctional, deteriorating, and historical fabrics within cities and spontaneous urban settlements on their outskirts in 1976 increased to about 1.5 million. This number showed a whopping sum of about 20 million people in 2016 (Table 1). This table attests to the inefficiency of past urban policies (Sarraf, 2015: 15).

Urban population distribution in Iran shows that most urban populations live in central and provincial regions that also expectedly face substandard housing problems. However, the people living in informal settlements in the Central provinces show smaller proportions than border regions. Khorasan Razavi and Khuzestan followed by Kermanshah, West, and East Azerbaijan, and Sistan and Baluchestan rank the highest in terms of the informal settlement population. Despite their locational advantage, the provincial border towns face more challenges with respect to economic activities (Fig. 2).

Different factors are affected by spontaneous/informal settlements. Delving deeper into these settlements—especially the reproduction of the cycles of poverty and their underlying cause and effects requires comprehensive, critical, and thematic insights into their political economy. As Roy (2012) argues, the government plays an important role in the political economy of the reproduction of urban informality discussed next. Sections 2 and 3 discuss the inefficiency of legal, management, and technical tools and their social, physical, and environmental challenges.

3.1. 1- The main political-economic factors of reproduction

The instability of decision-making, strategic, and operational action in the face of informal settlements phenomenon plays a key role in regard to urban informality in Iran and the influence of the global capitalist policies in each period (Table 2). Other issues include centralism and bureaucratic systems, the absence of pragmatism encouraging the actual participation of the poor residents—especially in the political election propaganda, and the existence of Rent-seeking and corruption in government and oligarchy organizations (Heidari & Arayesh, 2015, 2011; Jafari & Sharifnia, 2015; Qanavati et al., 2017).

In addition to the above observations, the state economy played a key role in marginalizing Iran's low-income population. Iran's economy consists of different sectors that exert pressure on families due to, among other things, inefficient urban management and policies, foreign sanctions, selling crude oil in foreign trade, high dependency on oil revenues, economic rents, and monopolies. Poverty, class division, unemployment, inflation, and government budget deficit exemplify the negative implications of such policies.

In this regard, for example, statistics show that: 1- the Gini coefficient has fluctuated from a minimum of about 0.35 to a maximum of 0.54 from 1977 to 2017. This trend indicates the widening income inequality gap in Iran (Statistics Center of Iran, 2020); 2-The inflation rate in different periods varies widely depending on the events related to those periods ranging from 10% to 50%. The highest inflation rate occurred between 1995 and 2019 (CBI, 2020); 3- As regards absolute urban poverty, based on the Research Center of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (2015) report, about 12.5% of the urban population lives in absolute poverty, most of whom live in Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman, Khuzestan, West Azerbaijan, and Tehran provinces; 4- when the per capita income of the entire economy (except real estate) grew by only 59% during the 1990–2014 period, the per capita income for the real estate sector increased by 231% (Raghfar & Soltani, 2016); 5- As for the other components of the housing sector, the number of vacant houses and apartments increased from 634

Table 1
Characteristics of slums in Iran.

Type ^a	Area of neighborhoods - hectares	Number of cities (studied ^b)	Number of neighborhoods (studied)	Number of populations in 2016	The average household size in 2016	Number of residential units
Middle old areas	55104	465	1000	5936377	3.5	1696000
Historical areas ^c	24141	175	600	2600719	3.3	788000
Informal settlements	61675	110	1100	12420000	3.7	3256000

^a - Slums in Iran includes historical areas of the central core of cities, old areas around the central core and informal settlements.

^b - Cities and neighborhoods that have been identified and studied by the government organization of Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran.

^c - historically important areas in the central core of the city.

Source: Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran, 2019

thousand to about 2.5 million while the marginalization trend according to the [Statistics Center of Iran \(2018\)](#) increased. In terms of household occupancy rate in the 1986 to 2016 census, the percentage of households with private housing decreased from 77 to 61% and The share of housing costs in the household cost basket increased from 1986 to 2016 with slight fluctuations, while the share of housing costs was 34% in 2016; 6- As shown in ([Fig. 3](#)) job insecurity, high inflation and high tax rates and disinvestment, and lack of support of the private sector by government in developing countries can induce economic expansion on one hand, and the informal sector on the other ([Khandan, 2016](#)); 7- During the 2012–2017 period, about 30% of the approved public funds targeted the regeneration of inefficient urban areas ([Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran, 2016](#)).

3.2. 2- Inefficiency of legal, managerial, and technical tools of government bureaucracy

Legal factors. The ineffectiveness of legal, management and technical tools of government ranges from inattentiveness toward laws and documents, i.e., the five-year development plans, enforcing the empowerment documents that anticipate informal housing and national strategic rehabilitation documents in 2003, renovation and empowerment of deteriorating and insufficient urban fabrics in 2014, to Principle 31 of the Constitution, Principle 55 of the Municipalities Law, the Law on Organizing and Supporting the Production and Supply of Housing approved in 2008, the Law on Supporting the Rehabilitation, Improvement, and Renovation of Dilapidated and Inefficient Urban Structures approved in 2010, and the comprehensive housing plan review (2017–2021), the location of some settlements outside the legal boundaries of cities, and problems related to services, and more importantly, security of tenure and the challenges of land ownership documents. The property status document on 51 neighborhoods with informal settlements located in 12 cities reports that about 23% of the properties had official documents with 69% chartered and conditions for granting ownership in spontaneous urban settlements including the facilitation office located in neighborhoods, the provision of basic infrastructure, meeting the basic educational and health superstructure service needs and the municipality demand to do the work are considered recent decisions made by the National Reconstruction Headquarters (Iran Reconstruction Company, 2020).

Management factors. The lack of assigned official staff who can monitor informal/spontaneous urban settlements, planning governance, and urban management, high turn out rates of the personnel who can follow temporary policies and actions have led to focusing predominantly on reporting instead of pragmatism. Insufficient literacy and the necessary specializations of several managers and their related administrative staff, failure to apply for successful national and global experiences and new approaches, disregarding residents' lived experience and bulldozing actions in some cases, rent, and financial issues, etc. Highlight some of the factors that need immediate addressing in the urban management sphere.

Regeneration and empowerment policies also signal the latest policy orientations towards informal settlements. Regeneration headquarters typically pop up at different national and regional levels with the facilitation offices and neighborhood development institutions found at target cities. In general, 235 cities and 649 neighborhoods received reconstruction approval at the national level. Furthermore, by 2018, 36 cities and 235 neighborhoods have established 135 facilitation and local development offices ([Naghsh Click International Company, 2019](#); [Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran, 2016](#)). Despite such structures, the most critical problems observed in these cities include the multiplicity of local organizations (about 25 organizations), organizational parallelism, disregarding the approval of the National and Provincial Reconstruction Headquarters, inattentiveness towards following up specific protocols, and bureaucratic interventions along with budgetary issues. Roughly 23.8% of the resolutions were not realized among 505 enactment²s in 50 sessions of the National Reconstruction Headquarters, 35% were in progress, and only 41.2% were realized ([Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran, 2016](#)).

The paradoxical practice of city managers in legalizing and providing services to wealthy occupiers in the suburbs is another issue, especially in the country's northern regions. Such a bipolar view can increase the class division and deepen the marginal mentality, which is regarded as one of the critical factors in the country's future.

Technical factors. Technical factors impose important challenges facing spontaneous urban settlements. Given the undeniable fact of their steady growth in different periods, common procedures and regulatory mechanisms still represent more or less the same

² Something that is going to turn into a law.

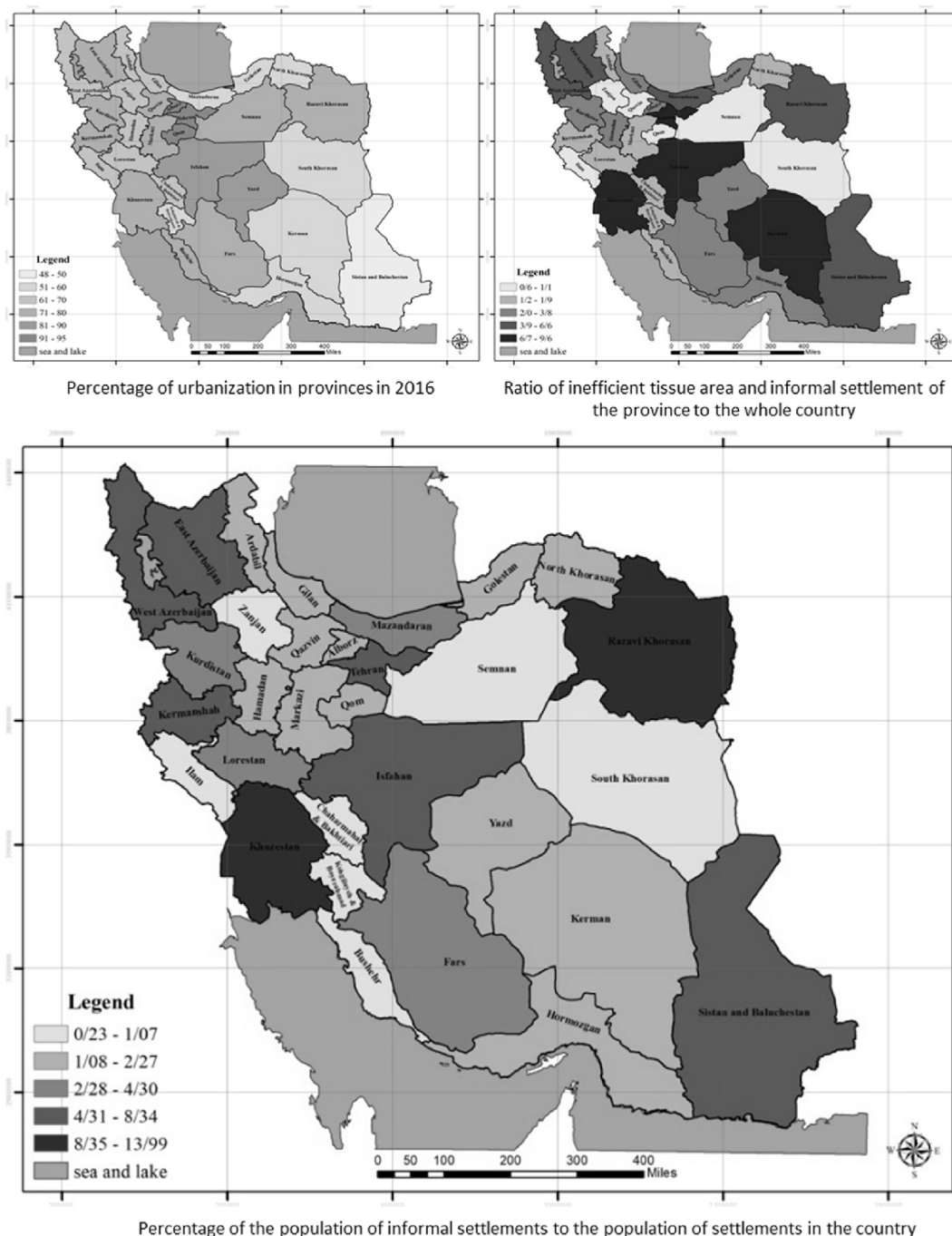


Fig. 2. Percentage of urbanization, population ratio, and area of informal settlements in provinces of Iran (Source: Drawn by the Authors).

construction and coding instructions enforced in formal/informal areas. Existence of strict, inflexible, time consuming (Fig. 4), and costly standards on engineering/technical systems (in 22 sections under the title of National Building Regulations), earthquake safety regulations (2008 standard) of 1988, and issuance of building permits and task completion by Municipalities have nothing to do with spontaneous settlement problems. On the other hand, urban development plans only describe services related to the last few decades that exhibit the criteria for physical intervention in them or do not take any action in low-income areas. Furthermore, affordable housing and specific settlement criteria remain a neglected topic in urban plans, especially the comprehensive and detailed urban projects, as if they address the needs of the middle and upper-class people.

Policies Incentive such as sale in charges makes a difference. For example, Fig. 4 displays the process of obtaining a building permit and the house task completion defined in the municipality. According to offenses such as Article 100 of the Municipal Law, low-income

Table 2

The most important political-economic developments in different periods in Iran and their effects on low-income groups.

Period	Most important events
1921-1978	The beginning of the Pahlavi period witnessed integration into world capitalism and modernism, establishing a centralized bureaucratic system of industrialization; reformed land; precipitated rural-urban migration, expedited oil autarchy, center-periphery formation, making development plans, producing urban development plans, codifying laws related to construction and urban crimes, and considering policies such as forced eviction and public housing for low-income groups, the occurrence of urban rebellions
1978-1989	Islamic Revolution experienced the Iran-Iraq war, the rapid urban growth for some reasons, i.e., population growth and migration, the discourse of supporting the poor, urban land law, and considering land policy, services, and new cities for the low-income groups
1989-1997	The Post-war reconstruction, interfacing with the International Monetary Fund, witnessed ongoing structural and economic adjustment policies and privatization, income and class gaps, rising inflation, municipal financial independence and beginning to sell density in the city and real estate trading, lack of access to informal areas and formation of urban rebellions, considering the policy of PAK housing, and preparing development plans and urban plans with strict rules and regulations
1997-2005	Concentrating on political development, starting the economic policies of the previous period, dispensing loans from World Bank and preparing a document for empowerment and organization of informal settlements, and adopting executive measures in the field of physical improvement in several pilot cities.
2005-2013	Deleting the Planning and Budget Organization, ^a not paying attention to the improvement and empowerment policies of the previous period, considering the large-scale public housing project called Mehr Housing, external sanctions and inflation record, policy of targeting subsidies, starting the studies of the comprehensive housing plan, and enacting laws to support the low-income groups.
2013-2021	Rebuilding Planning and Budget Organization, preparing a national strategic document for rehabilitation, improving, renovating, and empowering old and dysfunctional urban structures, focusing on urban regeneration policy and establishing regeneration headquarters and facilitation offices, paying attention to social housing under the title of housing of hope, re-imposing foreign sanctions on the country, inflation, and increasing the gap between classes.

^a - The Planning and Budget Organization is a national governmental organization that is responsible for budgeting and preparing the country's major development plans.

Source: Authors' elaboration

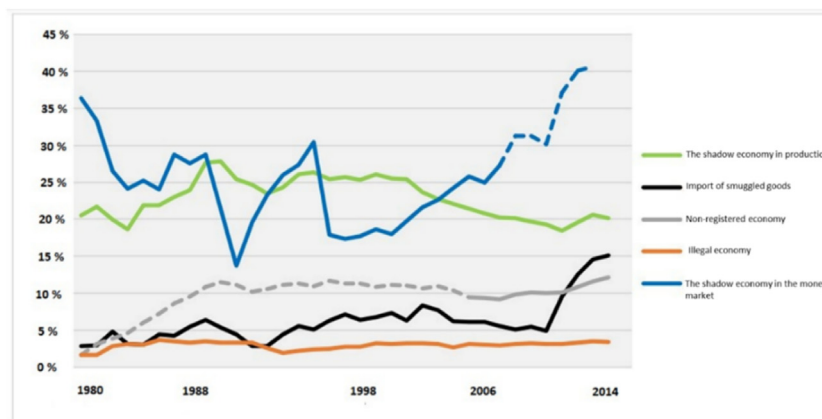


Fig. 3. Estimated index of the informal economy divided by different activities (Source: Khandan, 2016:12).

groups generally cannot afford it, and they prefer to focus on construction outside of formal planning processes.

3.3. 3- Social, physical, and environmental challenges as a result of inefficient government policies

Social issues, as well as physical and environmental problems, represent major challenges that clearly unravel and document inefficient government policies. The following section discusses some of the problems under each category.

Social challenges. Social challenges influence urban informality that mainly deals with the residents' perceptions, collective behavior, and reactions. Table 3 lists the most important related social factors.

Physical challenges. Physical factors constitute obvious problems spontaneous urban settlements in Iran face. Although the settlements observed in most places in Iran fare comparatively better in terms of their physical conditions than other countries, inadequate and insufficient infrastructure, substandard building quality, durable materials, fine-grained urban texture, and unsuitable road network remain among the main issues in these settlements in Iran. The construction quality in these houses primarily reflects their residents' economic status and affordability. Besides irregular road networks, another common problem is the lack or insufficient supply of urban public uses and their uneven distribution in spontaneous urban settlements.

Based on the General Census of Population and Housing in 2016, about 49% of the units are apartments and 51% non-apartments out of 17.5 million urban housing units. Furthermore, 33.7% of apartment units and 54.6% non-apartments are made of materials relatively with low durability. Another important point has to do with the fact that 63.5% of the residential units are less than 100 square meters.

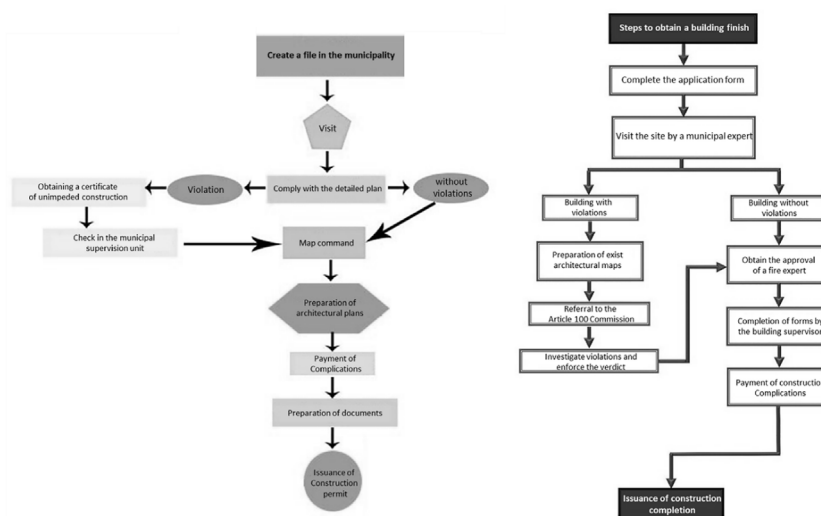


Fig. 4. Steps of taking license and construction work³¹ (Source: Drawn by the Authors).

Regarding unauthorized diversions, according to the Ministry of Energy report in 2016, about 281360 (1.8% of the total) most unauthorized urban water and sewage diversions belong to Mashhad, Kerman, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, and Azerbaijan provinces. Gharbi (Ministry of Energy, 2016) provinces show a high population and a large area of spontaneous urban settlements. Locating villages in urban areas highlights another important issue that reflects the growth and expansion of future settlements. A total of 3275 villages with a population of 3.3 million are located in urban areas. The highest number of villages located in urban areas belongs to Khorasan Razavi province, and the lowest is related to Qom province. Also, most of the rural population located in urban areas lives in Fars province (Organization of Municipalities and Rural Affairs, 2017).

Environmental challenges. In general, poverty is directly related to environmental degradation. Poor people have no choice in many cases both in the city and in the countryside and gradually destroy the environment for their survival (Piran, 2010). Regarding environmental factors, it is possible to face the unfavorable environmental situation in the settlements, especially in terms of sewage disposal and waste management problems (environmental pollution and health issues), unfavorable landscape and visual pollution, the establishment of some settlements in difficult areas with less safety. The issue of the ecological footprint of the inhabitants in spontaneous urban settlements and the destruction of agricultural lands and natural resources in some places, as well as climate change and intensification of the risks of settlements in the face of natural crises such as earthquakes, floods, and fires, are related to the low strength of the buildings of these settlements and forced migration.

Currently, in order to address the challenges of urban informality in Iran, the government has established the Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran with provincial offices as coordinators of various governmental organizations. The most important Government interventions that have been considered are establishing facilitation offices in a local and neighborhoods scale, upgrading streets, infrastructure, disposal of sewage and, establishing educational and medical centers, financial facilities for housing renovation, holding workshops for residents, etc. But these actions are limited due to budget shortages and most largely physical measures. As long as the authorities do not pay any attention to political-economic reproductions factors of urban informality, superficial Functions will not prevent informal settlements growth.

4. Conclusion

In the urbanization era, the world faces various economic, social, political, environmental, and physical problems in cities. Comparatively though, the challenge of class division and dual formal/informal coercion turns out to be one of the most important issues. Due to the internal crisis of the capitalist and the problems of Keynesian thinking and the welfare state, global neoliberal policies based on privatization and economic adjustment and the reduction of government intervention gradually emerged since the 1970s. These policies used international organizations such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization as tools for advancing their goals. However, these policies ultimately led to the expansion of spontaneous urban settlements, especially in developing and third world (Southern World) countries, where they sought to provide solutions for non-western countries while they mainly focused on research from the developed countries. In her book, Perlman (2010) indicated that “Favela” was a marginalized mentality with critical roles in cities in the future. This fresh outlook has demonstrated the flawed and inefficient political economy mechanisms caused by the neoliberal view that reproduced poverty.

As a developing country from the Pahlavi period and integration into global Capitalism, Iran has experienced spontaneous urban settlements with marginalized residents. Along with this formation, Iran has developed numerous policies such as making nomads stay put, land reformation, development plans, preparing developing plans, structural industrialization, top-down and bureaucratic

Table 3

The most important social challenges of urban informality in Iran.

Factors	Description
Labeling marginalized residents and forming a marginalized mentality	The perception and experience of marginalized residents living in this place are not exactly the same compared to researchers, policymakers, and people (Fekouhi & Parsapjooh, 2008; Ismaili & Omid, 2012; Montazeri Khosh et al., 2014). Humiliating labels and views of the second-class citizen toward residents and the marginalized mentality due to class divisions, especially among young people, as Perlman (2010) emphasized, will cause urban crises in the future.
The issue of migration and urban-marginal relocation	The grounds for migration and displacement of a part of the population are provided with any economic transformation, whether recession or prosperity, environmental, political, or cultural change. The decade of 1995–2005 has been the peak of population and migration movement in the country. Although rural-urban migration was much more important in the previous two decades, the volume of migration between cities has been significant, and the hierarchical pattern of migration flows from small places to more significant areas (Irandoost et al., 2013). Another issue is related to the marginalization of people due to insufficient financial means or gentrification of the central fabric among cities (Azam et al., 2015; Zanganeh et al., 2012)
Lack of attention to the socio-economic typology among the residents	Lack of attention toward the typology among the inhabitants of the settlements in different neighborhoods is considered one of the important causes and a missing link in the relevant studies. Further, considering a single version for the whole settlement has resulted in less effective solutions and superficial actions, mainly looking at these settlements from a physical perspective. New immigrants from other parts of the city can be divided into small landowners who may not inhabit in the settlement, seasonal rural migrants, religious minorities, neighborhoods with high social damage, and the like due to financial inability from the point of view of typology and socio-economic classification among residents in groups such as ethnic and family relations. In this regard, each case requires its solutions.
Participation issue	Regarding participation, it is necessary to pay attention to the historical background given the continuation of historical autarchy and vigorous orientation, which results in instability, lack of civilization, weakness of civil society, and lack of real social participation among the stakeholders. Active citizens' participation requires the recognition of individuals as formal citizens (Piran, 2010). In general, obstacles to participation can include organizational barriers such as centralized planning and lack of coordination of local structures, cultural obstacles such as government against change, mistrust, disregard for mutual interests, and structural obstacles (Lahijanian and Shia Beiki, 2015).
Social traumas	Social traumas refer to a group of disorders and behavioral disorders among individuals in a society, whether individually or collectively, rooted in irregularities, inefficiencies of social phenomena and their adverse consequences, and inefficient political economy (Farjad, 2004; Sediq Sarvestani, 2007). Of course, it should be emphasized that social trauma is not limited to the informal sector and is available in the formal sector. Based on the studies, Kermanshah, Alborz, and Hormozgan provinces were among the provinces with the highest rate of social trauma in informal settlements, and addiction, alcohol consumption, and theft were among the most common causes of social trauma (Naghsh Click International Company, 2019).
Chaos and protestation	Regarding the current situation of the Iranian society, lack of attention and finding solutions or inadequacy of measures in various economic sectors have led to the protest reactions to anti-security practices. The major economic factors are inflation, liquidity, employment, people's livelihood, worker problems, and the like in the economic area, indicating that the financial management system's index and governance process are not satisfactory. There has been a large gap between income and expense in different social groups in Iran at all country levels, which has been intensified during the recent sanctions. The government will face a significant street movement without any opportunity to control or mislead while protesting by workers, teachers, the unemployed, and the hungry. Such movements in which millions of unemployed, marginalized, and poor people protest will be devastating. Some sparks of this type of protestation were observed among workers in January 2018 and November 2019 (Madadi et al., 2019).

approach, the enactment of urban laws and oil autarchy exacerbated the problem, leading to the revolution of 1979 with the transformation of the social and class bases. After the revolution, however, except in the early years, when the slogan of supporting the poor was at the forefront of affairs, the second-class citizen's view of the low-income class prevailed again in later periods by considering neoliberal policies and economic inefficiency. State monopolies increased the scope of spontaneous urban settlements. In this transition from 1921 until now, some approaches such as neglecting, forced eviction, public housing, place-services and the creation of new cities, empowerment, and recently urban regeneration to improve the situation of urban slums were enforced in accordance with global initiatives. These policies failed in practice since the government, which is the informal factor and the reason for reproducing the situation, failed to solve the problem. Furthermore, according to Roy (2012), De Genova & Roy, 2020 and Yiftachel (2009), informal urbanization does not only include low-income groups but also wealthy groups establishing illegal settlements, especially in the suburbs, while the government is legalizing and regulating their settlements.

In general, in researches on urban informality, mainly either theoretical and critical, the role of economic and political structures has been mentioned (AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005; Roy, 2012; Yiftachel, 2009) or some of the current policies of governments in the face of informal settlements in different regions (Alizadeh et al., 2019; Babaei et al., 2012; Bazregar et al., 2014; Gattoni, 2009; Matovu, 2000; Safarabadi et al., 2015) and slums Typologies (Ishtiyaq & Kumar, 2011; Krishna et al., 2014) have been investigated. However, in this research, we have tried to investigate urban informality in Iran with a critical and holistic view using data and documents. As an important developing country, Iran's political-economic structure can help other researches to emphasize the critical view and

³ A document which municipalities give the owners when their buildings are done.

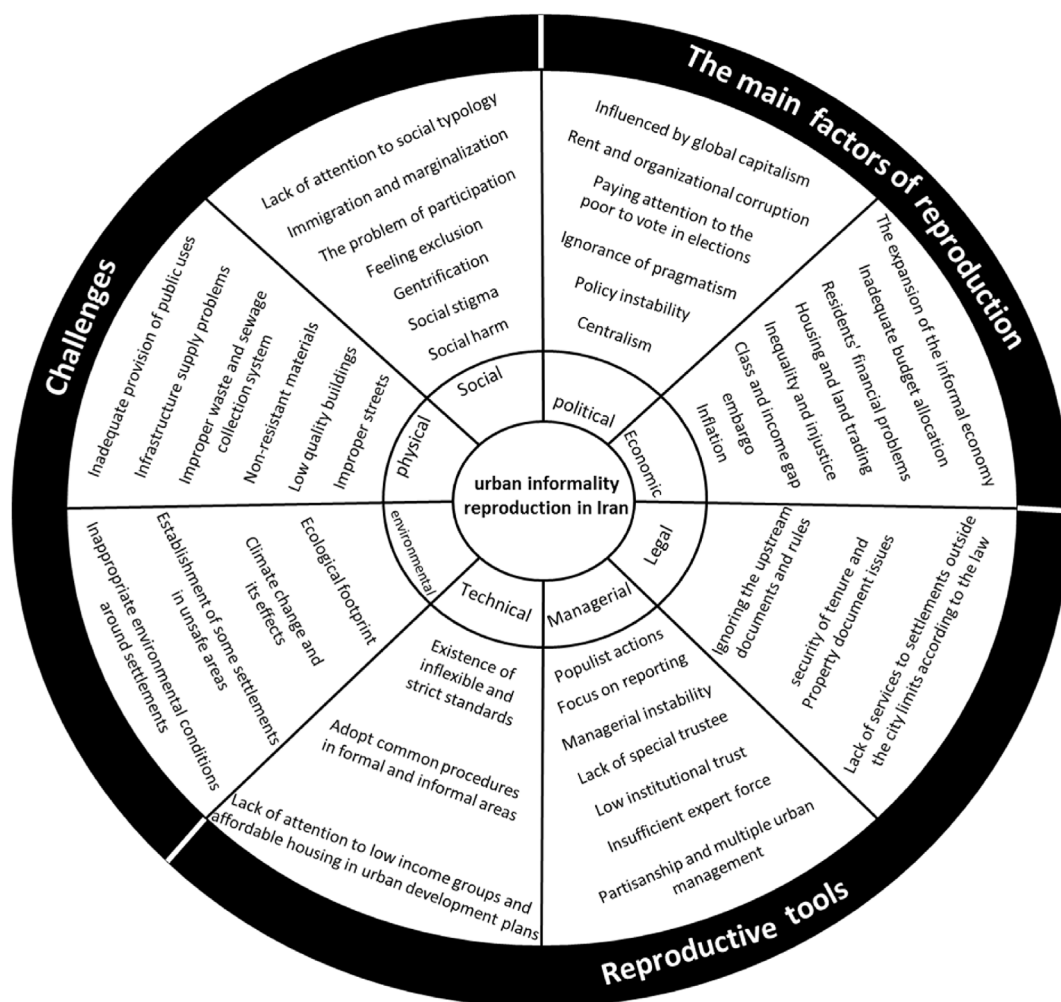


Fig. 5. Factors of urban informality reproduction in Iran.

understanding of informal urban factors and analyze their structures and mechanisms in reproducing informality in-depth. This study reproduces informal urban life, namely the manifestation of power (government policies), state capitalism (economy monopolized by the government), and knowledge-based on instrumental rationality (such as technological factors) has been considered. As shown in (Fig. 5), The results of this dysfunctional triangle appear in the form of social, physical, and environmental challenges with the increasing expansion of informal life. Finally, it should note that in order to address the challenges of urban informality in Iran, at the first political acceptance of informal life, reform of political and economic structures and reduce income-class gaps should be considered. Then, the rules, urban development plans, and formal planning tools should review to focus on the low-income groups and their lifestyle and financial affordability. In addition, the actual participation of residents (as other citizens) of informal settlements, specifying the limits of ownership and Budget allocation for organizing informal settlements (Integration with cities), should be specially considered. These transformations will not be easy and require hard and long-term decisions.

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