

## **The Citizens' perception analysis of the phenomenon of informal settlements and their inhabitants: A Case study of Mashhad city**

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### **Abstract**

These days, informal housing has become a symbol of poverty and social harm. Relying on a qualitative approach, the present article analyzes 25 interviews with Mashhad citizens who were selected by theoretical sampling method. This research seeks to explore the perception and interpretation of Mashhad citizens regarding informal settlements and their residents of these communities. Our analysis showed that the participants had a variety of perception of informal residents. Some consider them as kind and compassionate, having simple lifestyle with low expectations, hardworking and trustworthy, while from other interviewees' point of view the informal residents are liar, lazy, delinquent, violent, aimless, and unreliable people.

Participants were aware with internal or external explanations relying on various difficulties in family, housing and infrastructure, Drug abuse, education and cultural, Livelihood and security, health and recreation, children's issues , and those related to state systems, for this purpose. They also have problems with internal or external explanations. Participants suggest that for solving or reducing the problems is not enough to rely simply on the capacity and support of state agencies, and that, addressing these problems requires participation and communication between the factors at three levels, including micro (residents of the region) middle (NGOs), and macro (government and government policy making) levels.

**Keywords:** Informal Residence, Citizens of Mashhad, Perception.

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