

# The Impact of Informal Settlements on Urban Space

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## Abstract

The random housing phenomenon is one of the phenomena that have become closely related to most major cities and are widespread in them, whether on the global or Arab level, and their causes are multiple and overlap based on the specificity of each city and the lifestyle in it, in addition to the conditions prevailing in the country and society as a whole. What has been observed, as a result of many studies and academic research specialized in this field, is that the negative impact of these slum dwellings is not limited to those residing in them only, but goes beyond that and goes beyond that to the social, cultural, security ... and other structures of the urban space and society in general.

Based on the foregoing, this research seeks to present a brief view of what slums are, and their features, with the aim of moving then to a brief and exploratory presentation based on studies in this area of the effects of these settlements or neighborhoods on the social actors belonging to it on the one hand, and the city on the other hand as More comprehensive.

**Key words:** slum, city, urban space, crime, delinquency.



# 1. Introduction

The relationship between man and the environment in which he lives in general, and housing in particular, are among the most prominent connections that have marked human history since ancient times. As there is a reciprocal relationship indicated by many specialized research studies, whether in anthropology, history and archeology, sociology, architecture and others.

As the social actors have sought to translate their cultures through the dwellings in which they reside, hence, it is considered a civilized product of their representations and cultures, and at the same time, it enters into framing part of themselves and reshaping the systems in which they live.

From this point of view, it can be said based on the studies that the inhabitants are affected by the human being and affect him according to the mechanisms that overlap between them largely, and it is very difficult to study one of these two concepts or variables in isolation from the other. The specialized studies in the city and urban spaces are more precisely concerned with working on the issues of housing and neighborhoods, and how they affect and are affected by society, and by looking at them we notice that they address various aspects of social life in the city, and it is also concerned with the study of random dwellings generally present in the suburbs of the city, The impact of these areas on society, and on the social actors belonging to them.

The researchers attribute the reasons for the emergence of these informal settlements to many factors, the most prominent of which are: internal migration or what is known as internal displacement to major cities and industrial areas with the aim of improving the economic and life level of social actors, who move to major urban spaces without having the financial ability to live in Its regular neighborhoods planned by the concerned and authorized authorities.



At the same time, they differ about its name, as they use a set of concepts, which express the same housing situation despite the different names, including: fragile housing, inadequate housing, unhealthy housing, chaotic housing, slum housing ..... and others .

Descriptively, these dwellings can exist mostly according to specialists in the field in two basic forms or patterns, which are: fragile spontaneous housing, and it is called tin construction, which is a residence built with simple materials, such as wood residues, sheets of iron, gears ... And others. As for the second type, it is represented by: solid spontaneous housing, where this type of housing is built with appropriate materials and rather decent from the physical side, which are similar and somewhat identical to legal buildings, but remain random due to the lack of basic facilities. (Muzhoud, As Sadiq. 1995: 65-66)

As for the characteristics, it is noticeable that these settlements, whatever the name expressed, share a set of characteristics mentioned by FRIEDMAN, which are: It is a new population settlement according to the arrival of the new displaced.

To the city, and those who hope to find in it the means for their survival, where they build their homes by themselves, without the means (FRIEDMAN, Y.1978: 15).

Hence, the focus appears on the newly displaced to urban spaces and major cities, who seek to adapt to the new sphere based on their limited financial capabilities, by building a group of housing on their own, in which the necessary conditions for adequate housing are often absent, by virtue of it being chaotic and basically random. In its construction, it is not subject to the standards of planned urban housing.

Based on what has been mentioned above about the mutual relationship between the residential sphere and the human being, in addition to the lack of basic living conditions in slums,



the legitimacy of delving into the midst of researching the issue of the impact of this type of housing on the social actors who live in it and belong to it in particular, and in the urban urban sphere In general, in light of living in a social environment and conditions, it can be said that they are difficult to bear, but in spite of this they represent the field of daily living reality for a large segment of the population.

# **1.1. Research problem:**

The impact of slums or precarious housing units on the social actors, whether they belong to it or who are surrounded by the inhabitants of the urban sphere

Search Plan:

- Introduction and problematic of research.
- The basic concepts of the topic.
- The impact of slums on their inhabitants.
- The impact of informal settlements on the overall urban space.
- Research results.
- Conclusion.

# **1.2. Research importance:**

The importance of the research is due to the fact that it is devoted to studying the impact of studying the phenomenon of informal settlements, their spread in large cities and the reasons for their spread. And the consequences of the urban landscape of cities at the global and Arab level, and studying the health, environmental, educational and educational implications, and distorting random housing for the morphology and aesthetic form of cities.

# **1.3. Research Aims:**

- Knowing the phenomenon of the spread of informal settlements and its causes



Knowing the effects of informal settlements on urban space

The effects of informal settlements on their housing on the health, environmental, educational and educational levels

How slums contribute to distorting the morphology of cities and their aesthetic appearance.

# 2. Research Methodology

The research relied on the use of the descriptive and analytical method.

## 2.1. Basic Concepts:

### 2.1.1. Slums:

The concept of slums, despite the multiplicity of designations associated with it, as previously indicated, is one of the most prominent concepts that occupied researchers interested in the urban field, its morphology, and the impact of this change on culture and values. This concept has been closely linked with the explosive growth of cities and modern urban areas, This had an enormous impact not only on people's habits and behavior patterns, but also on thought patterns and values. It is striking that the massive spread of cities has been associated with many social researchers with manifestations of inequality and social inequality, the prevalence of poverty, delinquency and crime. It was not surprising that the first sociological studies and theories about modern cities originated in the American city of Chicago, which in the 1830s was a deserted area in which there was no life, and by 1900 it turned into an industrial city and a huge financial center (Gadens, Anthony. 2005: 597-598) and from here began serious academic studies of the most prominent problems of modern cities, foremost of which is the issue of informal housing.

ROCHEFORT believes that informal settlements are: small, fragile dwellings, often incomplete construction, and are built of bricks and bricks by social actors themselves without the help of specialists, using very simple equipment,



and its streets lack design, sidewalks and paved roads are absent, and drown In mud during rain. (ROCHEFORT, M. 1988)

Farouk Bin Attia believes that the designation of the chaotic neighborhood is the most appropriate designation for slums, which he defines as: that isolated neighborhood in the outskirts of major cities, built on a floor specially chosen on the basis of concealment and not appearing additional to secrecy and not on the basis of its urban privileges, and it is taking shape. From fragile dwellings or "barracks" that were built from wooden slabs, iron sheets. These dwellings are distinguished by their denial of potable water, electricity, city gas, and sewage, And paved roads, and they do not exist within the circle of management or concerns of local groups representing the authorities concerned. (BENATIA, Farouk. 1980: 77)

Based on this definition, the basic and common characteristics of slum dwellings, which revolve mainly around the lack of these housing units for the minimum conditions of life, are clearly clarified for us, in addition to mentioning an important existential feature that directly and noticeably affects the social and cultural values of the social actors belonging to these areas, represented by the lack of interest of the authorities concerned. Basically, random dwellings and their dwellings, and the effects that result from the invisibility and concealment of these dwellings and the residents in them from the effects on individuals and society as a whole.

On the other hand, Gad Mahmoud mentions that informal settlements are: areas within major cities and sometimes on their outskirts, characterized by the low level of the displaced naturally, and these neighborhoods are characterized by narrow unplanned and unprepared streets and old houses that are subject to collapse, and they are overcrowded with a number of residents that exceed their capacity. Even with a fraction of the modern means. (Gad, Mahmoud. 1993: 26)



Abd al-Qadir al-Qusayr also defines residential or slum neighborhoods as: They are housing complexes that have grown and expanded by placing their hold on the lands of others in the interior of cities and often their outskirts, and they appear in every way from huts or makeshift dwellings built from trash on lands devoid of services such as water, electricity Waterways also lack social and health services and are inhabited by the poorest social classes. (Al-Qusayr, Abdel-Qader 1993: 09)

As for Pierre George, he believes that informal housing has been used by many researchers to distinguish the chaotic housing that was found as a result of the overcrowding of population in the major cities of the least developed countries. The areas are prone to flooding or are slopes. These buildings were built with materials that they obtained for free from garbage, ports, and storage places, which are tin sheets or straw, and completely lack the most basic sanitary conditions and reflect a true picture of the poverty of the rural dwellings from which they came. (Muzhoud, As Sadiq. 1995: 62-63)

Finally, GRANOTIER mentions in the exhibition of his research and studies of housing and slums that: They surround cities and major metropolitan areas and on their margins, and are distinguished by their connection with what are known as hot neighborhoods, as in poverty belts surrounded by large cities millions of social actors live under very harsh conditions, concentrating all their aspirations in securing Daily food for their children, and protection from the daily pursuit of them by the police. (GRANOTIER, M. 1980)

#### 2.1.2 The city or urban space:

The concept of the city is one of the basic concepts in the disciplines interested in the study of urban space, foremost among which are urban sociology and urban anthropology, According to the studies of the famous Chicago scholar Lewis Wirth, it represents a pattern of population variation. And that its growth can be viewed as a continuous historical process, as it is a permanent residence for the disparate population, and there are three variables that determine the

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character of the city, the first of which is the number of the population, the second: the density of residence, and the third: the demographic variation and the life of the community. It is also a large and dense place of residence, populated by heterogeneous individuals. (Atef, Muhammad 1983: 12)

Through this vision, one can observe the researcher's focus on the heterogeneous mix of demographics and density in the city, which distinguishes it to a large degree from others, in addition to the impact of this heterogeneity in culture, lifestyle, practices, ways of thinking ... and others on the common life of individuals. In them, and the production of values they have that are differentiated and completely different from those found in rural areas and housing complexes of sparsely populated.

The city is also considered a familiar urban aspect that can be clearly distinguished from the village, whether in its morphology, functions, or even its historical growth and development. It is distinguished as a center of population concentration, work and entertainment. (Halawani, Ahmad. 132)

We note through this definition that the researcher focuses on a set of differential features that distinguish the city from the village, both in terms of urban morphology related to the shape of the buildings and the size of their human absorption of the inhabitants, in addition to the differentiation and difference from them in functions and growth. He also emphasized that the city compared to the village is considered a center of high population density, providing both job and work positions in addition to the entertainment that the village does not provide.

The city is also known as designs based on mathematical, geometric, philosophical, ideological and symbolic formations. It expresses the development of architecture that has tried throughout the ages to highlight the aesthetics that attract people and the prestige that expresses the authority and power of rulers. (Boujemaa, Khalaf Allah. 2005: 67)



On the basis of this vision, we find that the researcher links a great deal between the relationship between power and power and its embodiment through the expressive architectural constructions, given that these structures in the city that make up its architectural fabric basically express a specific culture, embodied in the form of a group of geometric, ideological and symbolic shapes Mouthpiece for the city.

There is also a group of studies linking the city to progress, on the basis that urbanization represents part of the new environment that arose out of the spread of industrial capitalism. However, given that the city brings together two heterogeneous residents in various respects, especially the economic aspect, the so-called center and the margins have appeared in it. Where the concept of the city center or the city floor has become one of the main axes that capture the interest of social scientists in recent times. Among the issues and problems that dominate the concerns of researchers and analysts in old or slum centers in most major cities, issues related to delinquency, unemployment, homelessness, crime, drug addiction and drug trafficking, racial and ethnic intolerance, social exclusion, deterioration of public services and schools, and tension Between the citizens and the forces charged with enforcing the law and maintaining order. (Godens, Anthony. 2005: 602)

According to the vision of the urban sociologist Manuel Castells (Godens, Anthony. 2005), we find that cities in the twenty-first century are not only distinguished by their population size or geography, but by their role as major points of convergence between massive human concentrations on the one hand and the globalized economy on the other hand. These cities will be like pockets of activity, efficiency and influence flowing into them, including influences of politics, media and communications, money and production. They will (...) be like magnets that the surroundings attract to. People are drawn to large urban centers for many reasons. It will be a kiss for the forces that succeed in joining the global economic system and benefit from it, as well as for groups that do



not achieve such success. And these cities, which will be the fringes of the globalized economy, will attract many enormous segments of the people who are just struggling to survive.

Depending on the foregoing, internal migration from rural areas to urban centers results either because of the decline of the agriculture on which they depend for their livelihood or because the city provides them with wide fields of employment opportunities. Poverty and scarcity of opportunity are driving huge numbers of rural people and villages to the temptations of the city. A part of these immigrants may think to stay in the city for a relatively short percentage and then return to their villages after they earn some money, and a few of them may actually return to the countryside, but the majority of them are forced to stay in the city, either because they have succeeded in achieving what they migrated from For it, or because for one reason or another they lost their relationships, roles and positions in their former communities in rural society. (Godens, Anthony 2005: 604-605)

Due to the lack of their financial resources, many of them are forced to construct random housing in order to preserve their existence and continuity, which directly affects the urban fabric of the city, whether from the morphological point of view, or in terms of cultural values and daily practices in reality.

#### 2.1.3 The effect of slums on their inhabitants:

The current reality of random housing areas, which included most of the major cities in the Arab world in particular, is characterized by a set of characteristics, and these cities can be classified into two main groups: (Al-Rabdawi, Qasim 2012: 460-461)

• A group with a large and wide random housing growth in area and population, and this is represented by urban sprawl towards irrigated agricultural lands around cities, or rainfed agricultural lands that are not

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irrigated, and sometimes barren lands, and these cities are: Cairo, Damascus, Amman, Khartoum, Beirut, Tripoli, Tunisia, Algeria, Casablanca, Nouakchott, Sanaa and Baghdad. As these cities expanded at random, and the percentage of the population living in informal housing areas is between 40-60% of the total population of those capitals, and this formed major cities, where the administrative city limits are attached to these informal areas.

• A group of cities in which the number of people living in informal housing areas decreases and the rate of urbanization is high, due to the emergence of those cities after the discovery and investment of oil, and they are distinguished by their urban planning. These cities are: Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Kuwait, Doha, Bahrain, and the percentage in them sometimes reaches Between 25-35% (residential violation areas).

Through the aforementioned, we note that all major Arab cities suffer from the problem of random housing to varying degrees and proportions, and this is due to many reasons, preceded by economic factors, internal migration, in addition to factors that differ from one city to another.

However, what can be agreed upon based on the set of definitions of slum housing, which we have previously presented, is the conclusion of a set of observable and scientific field investigation effects, as belonging to slums and living in their dwellings not appropriate for social life results in a set of negative effects on many The levels, of which we mention the following:

#### 2.1.3.1. On the health and environmental front:

An estimated one-third of the urban population of the developing world resides in crowded slums and suffers from severe overcrowding, substandard housing, and poor access to safe water and sanitation, leading to high rates of disease and infant mortality. Rapid urban growth suggests that the problems of slum dwellers will worsen in the already vulnerable cities. (Godens, Anthony. 2005: 598)



Since informal settlements do not contain the most basic health conditions necessary for a decent social life, from health centers, potable water, sanitation channels ... and others, the spread of diseases and epidemics in them is more than in other residential areas.

In addition to the large human overcrowding in it and the overcrowding that you know despite the lack of conditions for a healthy healthy environment, on its part, contributes to increasing the levels of infection and spread of diseases, which are difficult to control and limit, due to the lack of health conditions on the one hand, and the absence of neighborhood health centers to help the actors Socialists living in the area to avoid such diseases.

### 2.1.3.2. On the educational level:

The process of primary family upbringing or upbringing is one of the most important processes undertaken by the family, by which children learn the cultural norms of the society in which they are born and raised. Since this process takes place during the first years of a person's life, the family represents the main arena in which the human personality is developed. (Gaddens, A. 2005: 259)

But what is observed in slums, based on specialized studies, is that the family does not have sufficient time in order to take care of its children and ensure their proper upbringing, due to the constant preoccupation with the economic factor, in order to preserve the continuity and life of the individuals belonging to it, even by providing the minimum requirements Related to that. This is reflected negatively on the educational side of the children, for whom the random street plays a fundamental role in their formation and upbringing.

The affiliation of these young people to random communities that are considered hot residential areas full of social ills and crime, directly affects their personality, preparations, ideas, and practices. As such practices outside the framework of what is acceptable and socially desirable in the whole



society, become for them on the basis of their continuous coexistence something acceptable and commonplace, which affects them both inside and outside informal settlements, especially during their social interactions with children They come from different regions while enrolling in education at a certain age.

Since these informal settlements do not often have educational institutions located in other urban areas, children move to schools located in adjacent legal gatherings, and this transfer represents a first step in getting out of the lived life to which the child belongs, to the world of the city characterized by heterogeneity. As already mentioned. Here, he begins to notice the large gap and the wide gap between the reality of the daily living on the one hand, and the new educational reality on the other hand, in addition to that the acquisition of new values and standards that may be distinct from the standards raised by them in slums.

#### 2.1.3.3. On the economic level:

By addressing the issue, it can be concluded that the economic status of slum dwellers is fundamentally very low, as they all live below the poverty line, and their difficult economic situation affects all aspects of social life. As their preoccupation, and their only concern is the struggle for survival and the preservation of their lives and the lives of their children.

As a result of their poor financial situation, many of them are forced to enter the world of crime and delinquency, as crime rates increase significantly in residential and informal areas (Kharasha, Atef, Ali. 2010: 142) compared to other planned and legal urban neighborhoods, due to several factors, the most prominent of which is the aspect Economic, in addition to the great degree of congestion in it.



It is noticeable, based on the results of many studies specializing in the field, that illegal economic activities are widespread in random and marginal areas, and to a large extent related to drugs, as drug abuse, sale or trade in them is recognized and almost acceptable activities in these places. However, this negative impact did not stop the inhabitants of slums only, but went beyond the neighborhoods and the adjacent areas, which directly affects the urban space in particular, and the overall community in general, which will be discussed in the next discussion.

#### 2.1.3.4. On the social level:

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It can be said, based on the previous indications, that all these effects negatively affect the social dimension of slum dwellers, as they are a result of stigmatization, and due to the difficult and realistic situation that they live daily and continuously, and they often have noticeable problems at the level of social interaction with the rest of the groups belonging to The city is outside the slums.

#### 2.2. Impact of slums on the overall urban space:

The division of the urban sphere is closely related to the level of income of individuals and the classes to which they belong. For example, CASTELLS states that urban space is a structured space, that is, it is in terms of a sign or other expression that is not organized spontaneously or resulted from pure chance (CASTELLS, M. 1977: 153)

This indicates that the city, despite the inconsistency of its components, especially the human population, is subject to the economic aspect of the individual more than others, if it is related to the level of income and the local social position achieved by this income. These two traits, according to Castells, are responsible for charting the morphology of an urban landscape.

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And since the newcomers to the city do not have sufficient income to buy acceptable housing, they depend in their construction of informal settlements on conquest or possession of an urban space belonging to the state and public ownership in a more widespread manner, by taking a group of lands that belong to state property, and from here it is Since its first founding moment, it has been built on the basis of usurpation of public properties, which negatively affects state property and the city as a whole.

This confirms Abd al-Qadir al-Qusayr's definition of dwellings or slums as: They are residential communities that have grown and expanded by placing their hands on the lands of others in the interior of cities and often their outskirts, and they all appear as a compact of huts or temporary housing built from trash on lands devoid of services such as water Electricity and waterways also lack social and health services and are inhabited by the poorest social classes. (Al-Qusayr, Abdel-Qader 1993: 09)

On the other hand, based on the definition of Gad Mahmoud that informal settlements are: areas within major cities and sometimes on their outskirts, characterized by a low level of natural displaced persons, and these neighborhoods are characterized by narrow unplanned and unprepared streets and old houses that are subject to fall, and are overcrowded with a number of residents that exceed their capacity. And it doesn't have even a fraction of the modern means. (Gad, Mahmoud. 1993: 26) It can be said that these residences negatively affect the morphological and aesthetic image of the urban space, which has other repercussions related to several sectors, foremost among which is the tourism sector.

This is the opinion of a number of researchers in the circles of the Chicago School, the most prominent of them Wirth, that living in the city represents a form of social existence that is not limited to the distribution of groups in their places of residence, work, or economic interests. The city, in its essence, represents a center of economic, political and cultural control, and a hub around

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which various groups and activities revolve without being linked by intimate personal or social ties or relationships. Such relationships may form among some ethnic groups or immigrants, but they soon begin to disintegrate and disappear with the increasing intensity and complexity of city life. (Gaddens, Anthony. 2005: 600) This significantly affects individuals belonging to slum areas and not others, from all aspects of their life, to the point of stigmatization.

In view of the pressing reality that slum dwellers live with, stigmatizing them as hot places within the urban fabric and the spread of crime and criminals therein, it becomes a threat to those belonging to the adjacent urban areas, especially if the views of theories seeking to study and interpret the relationship between crime and slum dwellings in the city are taken.

The functional school believes that the phenomenon of crime and delinquency is the result of tensions, structural imbalances and the lack of moral regulation and control mechanisms in society. If the aspirations of individuals and groups are not balanced and converge with the rewards or incentives provided by society, the flat or gap between desire and its realization may push some members of society to deviate. (Godens, Anthony. 2005: 283)

As this gap contributes to the production of what is known by Durkheim, for example, as non-standard or anomaly, which are generated among those in slum areas with loss, the inability to cope with the requirements of a decent living on the one hand, and the stigma attached to them since their birth on the other hand, which results in their aggressive tendencies towards The self and the other embodied in society as a whole.

Merton adopted the concept of anemia and modified it to become, in his opinion, an expression of the pressures imposed on the individual's behavior when the accepted norms conflict with social reality. In American society - and in other industrialized societies to some extent - prevailing values emphasize material success and its achievement through discipline and hard work. On this basis, it is those who work hard who will succeed regardless of the beginnings



from which they started. This idea is not correct or sound in fact, because the majority of vulnerable people have only few and limited opportunities for advancement, or they may not enjoy them at all. Yet those who fail find themselves vulnerable to social condemnation due to their apparent inability to achieve material progress. In such a situation, some find themselves forced to move forward, whether their means are legal or illegal. In this case, the deviation is, in Merton's view, a consequence of economic inequality and a lack of equal opportunity. (Gaddens, Anthony. 2005: 284) This expresses in a remarkable way the reality of slum individuals.

Based on the above, it can be said that a significant number of social actors heading towards delinquency, crime and drug trafficking are doing so as a result of the social inequality prevalent in the city, In addition to the difficult conditions to achieve a decent living in it. Also, stigmatizing everyone who belongs to it as a criminal and deviant has a marked effect on his life path, and on the way he interacts with the rest of the other groups in society.

## 3. Results:

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Depending on what was previously discussed in the research, the results can be summarized in the following points:

• The lack of slum housing on the simplest conditions and necessities for a decent life for its inhabitants compared to other social actors belonging to the adjacent urban residential areas.

• The conditions framed by the daily living reality of the social actors in slums affect them on a large scale, covering all areas of their lives, especially those associated with the following aspects:

1. The health and environmental level.

2. The educational level.



3. The economic level.

4. The psychological and social level in terms of stigmatization.

5. The moral level and linking them to crime and delinquency.

• The reflection of the negative impacts of informal settlements is not limited to their inhabitants, but also extends to the urban urban space in general, and society as a whole.

• The impact of slums on the morphology and aesthetic form of the city, which has negative repercussions on many sectors, especially tourism.

## 4. Conclusion:

Despite the sensitivity and complexity of the issue of slums and chaotic or fragile settlements within the urban fabric, it has received the attention of many disciplines and academic research, seeking to find possible theoretical approaches to explaining and understanding this phenomenon and the effects it has on individuals and society as a whole.

The importance of this field of research is reflected in the attempt to monitor what is related to informal settlements in order to deal with this phenomenon in a rational and systematic manner, stemming from an understanding of all its aspects, with the aim of reducing it and reintegrating it in a decent manner in the urban architectural fabric, in addition to re-establishing social interactive relations with the belonging. To them, relationships based on humanity and competence,Far from all the signs of stigmatization and the symbolic violence resulting from slum dwellers, which turns, according to what is likely and expected, to great degrees, into aggressive behaviors that threaten the safety of individuals and society as a whole.



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