

Evaluation of the Evolutionary Housing Experience in the City of Souk Ahras (Algeria)

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the housing process that had taken place in the extreme northeast of the city of Souk Ahras, through a number of quantitative and qualitative characteristics in the aspect: residential, urban and functional of this urban sector, in two temporal stages which extend over 20 years, to determine the extent of the changes that have taken place during this period, which has made it possible to better monitor and understand the effectiveness of national housing policies applied in a hand, and the interaction of inhabitants and urban dynamics on the other hand, in achieving the objectives initially set, from the evolutionary housing model that began to be applied in the mid-1990s.

Key words: evolutionary housing, housing policies, low income population, Souk Ahras.

INTRODUCTION

like governments and human societies in general, Housing issues are one of the most important problems that Algeria has known, those that have pushed the Algerian authorities to adopt many models of housing, in the framework of the national housing policy, in order to eliminate the housing crisis which has been steadily worsening since independence and which has been one of the direct causes of the proliferation of slums in all Algerian cities, which have led to many urban crises and social ills.

the Algerian government aimed to improve the living conditions of the low-income populations residing there. evolutionary housing is one of the forms of resorption which is part of the new housing policy, initiated by the public authorities and which consists in dealing with the problem of resorption as a whole by the practice of planning integrated into the scale of the wilaya or the municipality and not in a punctual way as in the past (Belarbi, 2008).

The axes of a new housing policy were approached in a pragmatic way by the Ministry of Housing in 1994 (Falak, 2006; Moussannef, 2005) , were the subject of a beginning of application and supplemented with the adoption in August 1996 of the National Housing Strategy 1996-2000, formulating the main features of the measures to be taken to reform, in particular, the production, financing and housing aid systems (Moussannef, 2005).

Among the applicable solutions, it was The evolutionary housing, which governed by the ministerial instruction number 08 of August 1, 1995 relating to the measures of improvement of the conditions of the living environment through the zones of unsanitary habitat (Belarbi, 2008), and which consists in provide households living entirely in slums with front-end housing assistance in the form of a scalable housing nucleus, with minimal equipment, on serviced land and built within the framework of building standards in accordance with regulations. The accommodations will have acceptable sanitary conditions and will include at least one bedroom, a kitchen and an expandable sanitary block.

The adoption of this type of housing in the commune of Souk Ahras, in addition to other measures, made it possible to reduce the proportion of slums in the general housing stock from 31% to 3% (Hessainia, 2002) between the years 1985 (the number of slums amounted approximately 3,919 dwellings) and 1998 (the number of slums, amounted approximately 777 dwellings).

A number of urban studies have been carried out on this type of housing across the country, but these studies have concentrated on the technical aspect of the process, and have not gone beyond the first years of the experiment, which that we have tried to avoid it by focusing on most of the elements that affect the quality of life in the Residential area and after an acceptable period of time from the date of carrying out the experiment, and thus, to judge the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed housing program in a more appropriate and authentic way.

A number of qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the study area were studied, which covered the population aspect (demographic, social and economic), urban and functional, and the recorded data (2021) were compared with those previously recorded (2001) in the diachronic study, which extended to 20 years to know the extent of the changes that have occurred in the reality of the neighborhood in its spatio-temporal dimension. This approach is necessary to arrive at a realistic assessment, based on tangible spatial facts and the interaction of multiple factors and their evolution over time.

Study Area

Souk Ahras is one of the 58 chief towns of wilayas that form the Algerian national territory. It is located in the east of the country between 36°00' and 36°30' north and between 7°30' and 8°00' east. Its population in 2008 (last general population census) was 155259 inhabitants and its housing stock amounted to approximately 27118 dwellings (ONS, 2008), and its area was about 4510 hectares (URBAN, 2021).

The study area is known as Baral Saleh, it represents the eastern urban limits of the city of Souk Ahras, extending over an area of 56.75 h and with a number of about 1267 dwellings of the evolutionary style (Hessainia, 2002) which was established as part of the resorption of precarious housing (RHP) in the mid-1990s, in addition to 100 social housing units in the form of buildings and dozens of precarious housing surrounding the sector studied.

The equipment of the study area is limited to 04 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, a post office, an urban security, a library, a sports hall, a municipal fire station, and an administrative antenna (figure 1).

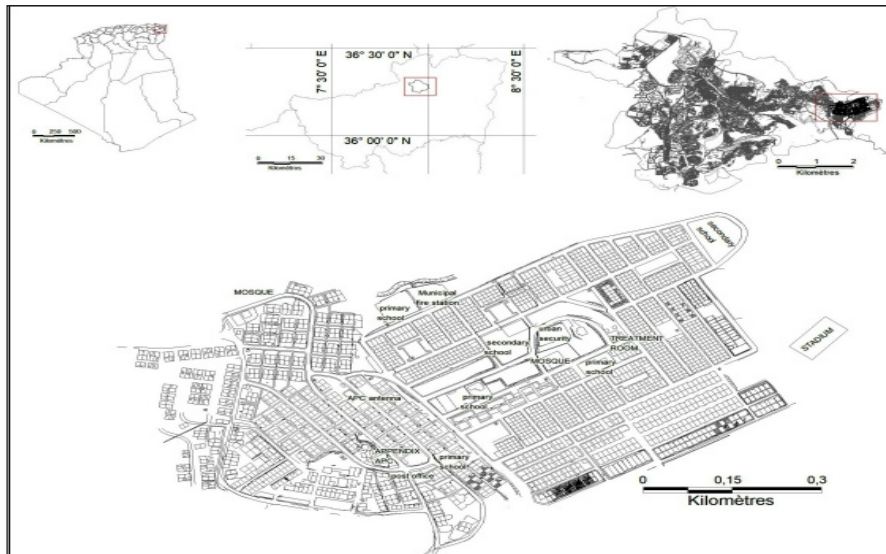


Figure 1. Location map of the study area in Souk Ahras city (Source: Hessainia Taki eddine)

Presentation of the Evolutionary Housing

We can know the general characteristics of the evolutionary model through a copy of the detailed official document prepared by the Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DUCH) “ we quote it here literally in form and content “ as follows:

« How to get evolutionary housing

Definition

An evolutionary home is a home that can expand in space and time according to the personal capacities of the “beneficiary” citizen.

Objective of the Subsidy

The State subsidy for the development of housing aims to encourage beneficiaries to access property and to encourage citizens to participate effectively and seriously in the construction of their housing.

The Basic Principles Retained in the Interpretation of this Type of Dwelling

The Category Concerned

This type of housing is aimed at the low and middle income social group, and groups who do not have sufficient resources to obtain evolutionary home direct their requests towards social rental housing supplemented by the Office of Property

Development and Management.

Terms of service

In order for any citizen to benefit from this program, they must meet the following conditions:

- * He has not previously benefited from social housing.
- * Current housing conditions.
- * bring.
- * Possibility of contributing.
- * Social status.

The selection of the beneficiary is carried out by a survey of his social and economic status by the interests of the qualified local groups, and the information is recorded in a register marked by the elements of appreciation and evaluation who carried out the survey.

The grant can only be released if the current beneficiary has a title deed for the land on which the construction will be built.

Architecture

the subdivision is carried out by the beneficiary, the release of construction is granted according to the architectural file, which includes the horizontal and vertical expansion of the housing, which is carried out on a floor area between 100 and 150 m², and the average surface area of the inhabited core is estimated at 40 m² (between 35 and 55 m²).

How to manage grants and set up programs

the realization is made by the beneficiary, who must have it upstairs.

Financial aid is released in three tranches depending on the actual progress of the work: 40%-30%-30% ».

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The statistical data were obtained from primary data sources which include survey, field observation, and questionnaire management which were processed by the SPSS software, not forgetting the specific, accurate, and diverse data obtained from starting from the fieldwork through direct questions addressed to the population and the urban analysis implemented in the urban sector which was carried out in two stages.

Approximately 192 and 141 valid questionnaires were retrieved for the years 2001 and 2021, respectively, as a simple random sample in a community of the very homogeneous study given the similarity of the urban and legislative aspect of housing on the one hand, as well as the application of very strict and regulatory standards for the beneficiaries of this housing project, on the other hand, the questionnaires included questions covering a set of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the community studied, including the demographic, social and economic aspect of the population, in addition to the urban, functional and mobility characteristics of housing and the neighborhood.

Secondary data was also collected from various departments, including the Municipality's Housing Department and the Construction and Urbanization Departments of the Souk Ahras Wilayat Planning and Construction Department, And the scientific and academic studies available on the subject of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic-Socio-Economic Characteristics

The average size of families in the study area is about 5 individuals (11 individuals as the maximum recorded), and the low value of the average number of family members who are over 20 years old, which is 0.55 individuals, indicates the relative recentness of family formation where the average rate of schooling of their children reaches about 2 pupils, which increases their economic burdens, and which in turn affects the levels of progress in the completion of housing, which for the most part do not exceed three rooms and the first level of construction (ground floor).

In addition, about 82 families share a house with additional families (bringing the percentage of families surveyed to 222 families), which are mostly "close families" of about 76% and 20% of the others are families of their son.

Table 1. General statistics variables

Variables	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Standard deviation
number of family members	2	11	5,45	1,305
The number of children over 20 years old	0	7	0,55	1,190
The number of employees of children over 20 years old	0	5	0,16	0,559
The number of children attending school	1	5	2,37	0,902
The number of children in primary school	1	4	1,58	0,659
The number of children in secondary school	0	2	0,50	0,597
The number of children in high school	0	2	0,23	0,472
The number of children in the university	0	2	0,08	0,302
The number of rooms	1	5	2,62	0,823
Number of floors	1	4	1,37	0,624

(Source: Field Surve, 2021)

Reason for Moving to the Neighborhood

The housing problem was the main reason for settling in this neighborhood (55%), then “children’s schooling” (18%) and proximity to the workplace for about 12%, followed by “looking for a job” and to get closer to it with similar proportions, this is after “obtaining housing” was the most frequent reason for moving to the neighborhood in 2001 (88%) and with equal and very low proportions for other reasons (3%) (table 2).

Table 2. The reason for moving to the neighborhood (%)

The Year	The Search for Work	Getting Closer to the Workplace	The Housing Problem	Schooling of Children	Isolation from the Previous Place of Residence
2021	8	13	55	18	6
2001	3	3	88	3	3

Source: Field Surve, 2001, 2021)

Geographical Origin of Households

Based on the analysis of the data recorded between 2001 and 2021, it is clear that most of the inhabitants of the sector studied came from all over the city of Souk Ahras and mainly from the illicit neighborhoods and shanty housing, but it is worth noting the increase in the percentage of the latter by about 37% (from 89% to 52%) (table 3), and the same for the percentage of arrivals from outside the city from 6% to 11%, as well as the decrease in the percentage of those coming from the European fabric and recent extensions that have left the sector, leaving space for new ones coming from residents outside the city, as well as those deriving from illicit neighborhoods and slums after 2001, and that all of this category (old and new ones) has not left the study area since then.

Table 3. Geographical origin of households

	Previous Place of Residence (%)	
	2021	2001
European fabric	1,35	2
Recent extensions	8,11	46
Illegal and precarious neighborhoods	79,73	52
Neighboring municipalities	8,11	60
Neighboring provinces	2,70	40

Source: Field Surve, 2001, 2021

The Nature of the Work of the Head of the Family

The nature of the professions exercised by the heads of families confirms the fragility and weakness of the professional framework and the level of income. the unemployment rate having remained high (more than 26%) and the percentage of retirees having also quadrupled so that it exceeds more than three times the national average although the decrease in unstable professional situations with almost the same difference, through the case “the day laborer” (from 81% to 24%),

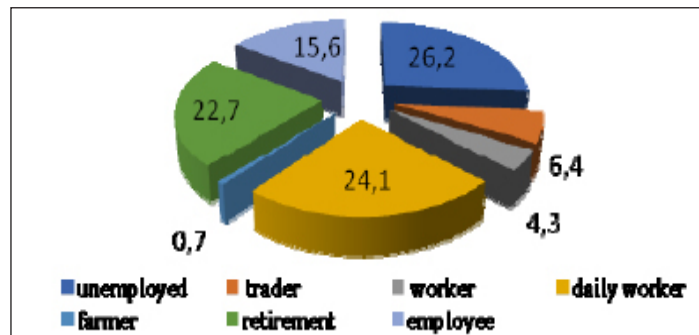


Figure 2. The work of the head of the family (Source: Field Survey, 2021)

with a five-fold improvement in the “employee” case (from 3% to 15%), which testify to the subsistence of the economic weakness of neighborhood residents (figure 2).

The Workplace of the Head of the Family

Most of the heads of families do their work in town (97%), after 23% of them did their work outside in 2001, which can be explained according to the interviews carried out with them, that a many of the residents are ex-military and ex-police who served throughout the country, in addition to those who worked in agriculture and public works outside the city.

The Nature of the Work of Mothers of Families

Most wives (mothers) are housewives (86.5%), while the rest are distributed among low-income professional positions, such as “day laborers”, “retirees” (0.7%) and “pre-employment” at 2.8%, while the true professional positions are limited at 9.2%.

Table 4. Mother’s job (%)

The Year	Primary School Teacher	Daily Worker	House Wife	Retirement	Employee	Pre-Hire Employee
2021	4,3	0,7	86,5	0,7	4,9	2,8

Source: Field Surve, 2021

URBAN FEATURES

Net Residential Area Excluding Built-Up Areas

Through the values listed in table n° 5, which express the different technical spaces of the studied sector, starting with the general free space, which amounts to approximately 69.57% of the land space, as well as the percentages of the spaces that compose it (free space, green space, road space, parking space), we can say that they meet the conventional urban planning standards in Algeria.

Table 5. Net residential area excluding built-up areas

General free space 1 (m ²)	Free Space 2		Green Space 3		Road Space 4		Parking Space 5	
	(m ²)	1/2 (%)	(m ²)	1/3 (%)	(m ²)	1/4 (%)	(m ²)	1/5 (%)
394837	109937	28	139300	35	136600	35	9000	2

Source: (SAMIR, 2001), Urban analysis, 2001, 2021

Rate of Connection to the Various Networks

The rates of connection to the various networks recorded a remarkable improvement, which even exceeded the national averages, except for the electricity network, which recorded about 91%, compared to the qualitative superiority of the

telephone network which amounted to about 90% and which in turn exceeded the national average of around 52.6% ((radioalgerie, 2021), which almost entirely reflects High Speed Internet Access (ADSL) in Algeria.

Table 6. Rate of connection to the various networks (%)

The Year	Is Housing Connected to the Network of (%)			
	Drinking Water	The Gas	The Electricity	The Telephone
2021	91	92	91	90
2001	12	11	12	14

Source: Field Surve, 2001, 2021

Standards for the Level of Habitability and Comfort

The Domestic Spaces Availability Rate

Recorded statistics indicated that dwellings had domestic spaces (kitchen, bathroom and toilet) at percentages higher than national averages including toilets and kitchen, while the percentage of bathrooms improved to around 85,7% after being low in 2001 (53%) (table 7), because its area was used in the overall living area of housing during the first years of this district.

Table 7. The domestic spaces availability rate

The Year	Does the Residence Have (%)		
	Toilet	Bathroom	Kitchen
2021	99	86	94
2001	96	53	91

Source: Field Surve, 2001, 2021

Private Spaces Inside the Residence

These spaces reflect the level of comfort and well-being as well as the economic level that characterizes housing in general..., we note the decrease in the percentage of presence of the garden (from 18% to 11%) and the courtyard (from 51% % to 41%), which can be explained by the expansion of housing to the detriment of these spaces as well as the transfer of some of them to businesses and garages in particular, which explains the increase in the percentage of these surfaces to 2% and 12% respectively compared to the rates recorded between 2001 and 2021, Without neglecting the significant improvement in the occupancy rate per dwelling (TOL), which went from 7 inhabitants per dwelling in 2001 to 5 inhabitants per dwelling in 202, which is enormous.

Table 8. Private spaces inside the residence

The Year	Does the residence include (%)			
	Yard	Garden	Garage	Shop
2021	41	11	21	9
2001	51	18	9	11

Source: Field Surve, 2001, 2021

Functional Interdependent Relationships

School Relations

The sector studied guarantees almost all of the basic educational coverage for all students in this sector, unlike the upper levels of high school and university, which are subject to the conventional requirements of urban planning and the school map which organize the educational structures.

Health relations

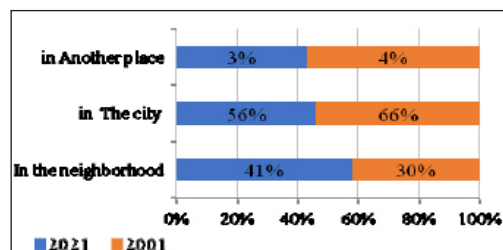


Figure 3. General Health relations (Source: Field Survey, 2001, 2021)

Despite the improvement recorded in the performance of the health function in the sector studied, but the superiority remains in favor of the city center (Figure 3), since the sector guarantees the performance of the service of supply of medicines (pharmacy) by about 74%, reducing this percentage to 52% in obtaining first aid, which rose from 4% and 58% respectively in 2001, while the city center provides high-end health services both in specialist medicine more than 82% and general medicine at 71%, due to the concentration of higher services in the oldest, most organized and most urbanized urban fabrics which are in the European urban fabric and others in the new planned extensions.

Table 9. Health relations

The Year	First Health Services "Injections, Injuries ..." (%)		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	52	45	3
2001	58	39	3
the year	The pharmacy (%)		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	74	23	3
2001	4	91	5
the year	General practitioner (%)		
	In the neighborhood	in in The city	in Another place
2021	27	71	2
2001	52	47	1
the year	A specialist doctor (%)		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	7	83	10
2001	6	88	6

Source: Field Survey, 2001, 2021

Commercial Relations

The figures recorded in the total commercial transactions showed that most of these transactions take place with the city center, but the main observation indicates the increased competition of the commercial services of the sector of study against those of downtown, which s has improved considerably over the last twenty years to reach 52% instead of the 29% previously recorded (Figure 4).

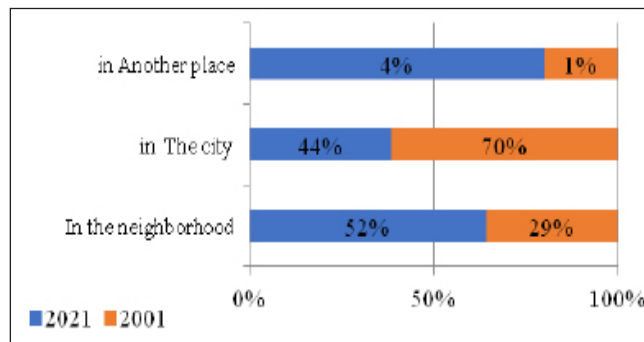


Figure 4. General Commercial relations (Source: Field Survey, 2001, 2021)

This improvement is due to the food trade, which improved the performance of the district from 66% to 91% (almost reaching sufficiency), as well as household goods and furniture, which increased from 2% to more than 74%, while that the City Center retained control over both clothing, footwear, and other items due to the value and quality of the center’s exhibits.

Table 10. Commercial relations

The Year	Where are Typically Acquired Food		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	91	9	0
2001	66	31	3
the year	Where are typically acquired Clothing and shoes		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	17	80	3
2001	1	92	6
the year	Where are typically acquired Objects and furniture		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	74	23	3
2001	2	93	5
the year	Where are typically acquired Other needs		
	In the neighborhood	in The city	in Another place
2021	24	66	10
2001	7	88	5

Source: Field Survey, 2001, 2021

Approved Means of Transport

Means of transportation approved by residents of the study area vary by reason, destination of transportation, and availability of transportation as follows:

It is logical that trips «In the neighborhood “ and its neighboring neighborhoods are done on foot (89%), and with lower percentages “ To the city center “ (8%) and “ To the Rest of the city “ (3%), which can only be explained by the weak financial capacities of this category of the population.

While the relatively high rates (60% and 68%) of taxi and bus transport “ To the Rest of the city “ and “ To the city center “, respectively, are explained by the availability of open official transport lines and the economic profitability of each of these destinations, while these percentages converge (40% and 44%) in the case of travel by personal car, and it is relatively higher in the case of “ In the neighborhood “ due to the personal nature and optional of this means of transport, and according to the choice of car owner.

As for the other means of transport, which are often an irregular car (fraud) or the car of a friend or relative, it is for destinations that do not correspond to the regular transport lines open to the city center or the rest of its parts, and in the case of family and private trips.

Table 11. Approved mode of transport (%)

On Foot		
In the neighborhood	To the city center	To the Rest of the city
89	8	3
Taxi		
In the neighborhood	To the city center	To the Rest of the city
0	32	68
Personal car		
In the neighborhood	To the city center	To the Rest of the city
16	44	40
Bus		
In the neighborhood	To the city center	To the Rest of the city

0	60	40
Others		
In the neighborhood	To the city center	To the Rest of the city
4	34	62

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The Relationship of the Level of Completion of Housing to the Housing Situation of the Population and the Number of their Incomes

Real Estate Status of the Population

We note through the recorded figures that there is a clear correlation between the real estate situation of residents and the level of completion of their accommodation, since the proportions of the three real estate cases studied converge at the “ground floor” level, but it was clearer with the rest of the “1st floor” and “2nd floor” levels. In the case of real estate “ownership” and less so in the case of “flatsharing”, where the co-tenants can be low-income heirs.

Table 12. The relationship of the level of completion of housing to the housing situation of the population and the number of their incomes

	Legal Housing Status(%)			Number of Income (%)			
	owner	tenant	copropriété	0 (theoretically)	1	2	3
Ground floor	34	33	23	17	77	12	1
First floor	23	9	5	1	3	9	16
Second floor	3	0	3	0	1	0	0
Third floor	2	0	0	1	4	0	0

Source: Field Survey, 2001, 2021

Number of Income

The number of incomes slightly affected the ability to complete the dwelling, mainly at the “1st floor” level, while it did not affect the rest of the levels which remained dependent on income alone, and this is explained by the value of additional income due to the low level of employment of the spouse and sons in that order (table 12).

Belonging to the Neighborhood

Despite the convergence of the rates expressing belonging to the neighborhood within the three possibilities, we note the improvement in the link of the population to the neighborhood after 20 years of living in it and the various changes that have occurred during this time for increase their satisfaction rate by 10% (from 33% to 43%) and Other negative cases improved with values between 4% and 6%.

Table 13. Belonging to the neighborhood

Possibilities	Are you Satisfied to Living in this Neighbourhood? (%)	
	2001	2021
Yes	33	43
relatively	36	30
no	31	27

Source: Field Survey, 2001,2021

Examples of Visual Changes Over the Past 20 Years

Pictures show (figure 5)

(A2001), (A2021) and (B2021): an improvement in the general condition of the main entrance to the sector studied in terms of optimizing the state of construction of the roads, development of the built environment and service commercial (B2021).



Figure 5. Location map of the study area in Souk Ahras city (Source: Hessainia Taki eddine, 2001, and 2021)

(C2001), (D2021) and (E2021): Replacement of the service seats of an evolutionary style housing unit (at the bottom and center of the image in white and blue) into independent seats and transformation of the old seats in functional housing for the benefit of workers in the sector concerned.

(C2001) and (F2021): An increasing rate of construction of housing between low buildings and high buildings with two floors or more.

(B2001) and (C2021): the main and almost unique artery of life and the functional interrelations between the sector studied and the rest of the city and the outside, which highlights the spatial dynamism of this part of the city, as well as the development of means of transport between walking and vehicles prepared in 2001 (B2001) and various and regular in 2021 (C2021). the piling up of construction materials all over the neighborhood, on the sidewalks and on the roofs of the houses.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to evaluate the housing policy adopted in Algeria through an applied model of the evolutionary housing program that was implemented during the 90s in the city of Souk Ahras and in the rest of the country. The experimental and diachronic results between the year 2001 and 2021 recorded showed different values and cases..., where the urban indicators of the neighborhood studied are very acceptable in relation to national standards and levels and in comparison with the various other programs applied, however, we register a significant functional dependence of the district for the benefit of the rest of the city, in particular its center, which is explained by its un motivating spatial characteristics and its mediocre equipment, which harms its attractiveness.

However, the main point that should not be overlooked and which realistically and logically affects the reality of this sector is the economic and urban vulnerability of the population of the sector, which deeply affects the rest of the characteristics, and which in turn is characterized by relative weakness, although it remains positive overall if compared to the misery and the loss experienced by marginalized neighborhoods of precarious housing that this present evolutionary housing program has sought to improve them in a positive and radical way with a acceptable efficiency.

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