

Residential Satisfaction in a Low-income Residential Community, the Case of Uraija: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract. This study is an attempt to evaluate the low-income residential community of Uraija, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia considering points of view of its residents. The study is based on a sample survey of 120 Saudi households. Data gathered through a questionnaire includes information about the sampled residents' socio-economic characteristics and satisfaction with their housing units and some neighborhood and community requirements such as services and facilities available in the area. Findings indicate that the newness of the dwellings and the community were particularly important to residents satisfaction. Exterior design and plans of houses were not appreciated by most of the sampled residents. They were also not happy with condition of streets, community location as well as with health facilities, and children play areas.

Introduction

The City of Riyadh is the capital and the largest city in Saudi Arabia. It is the political, economic and cultural center of the country. Since 1975, Riyadh, along with other major Saudi Arabian cities have experienced enormous physical, socioeconomic and demographic changes. The large scale influx of foreign labor gravitated by the tremendous demand which has been stimulated by the various development projects, on one hand, and to a lesser extent, internal rural-urban migration of thousands of nationals attracted to the capital city's range of job opportunities, services and life style on the other, have been the major facts responsible for most of the growth.¹ The population of Riyadh has increased rapidly from less than 700,000 in 1977 to over 2,900,000 in 1993 [2, p.17;3, p.4] The growth of Riyadh's population as well as the rise in national and individual incomes and

¹ Non-Saudis constituted in 1977 less than 14% of the city's total population [1, p.4] and their share exceeded 35% in 1992. [3, p. 1]

expenditures, created demand for housing which consequently led to housing shortages, and a sharp rise in rents and land prices, as demand far exceeded supply.

Study Problem and Objective

In almost every society, we know there exist rich and poor: low, middle and upper income groups. The housing character of each group (house type, design, location, facilities and services) depends mainly on the socioeconomic status of the residents. Most often, housing conditions are more acute for low-income groups as many of them live in substandard houses or shantytowns.

This paper examines the manner by which the Government of Saudi Arabia tried to solve the housing problem for low income groups in the city of Riyadh by developing Uraija residential community.

Uraija was chosen for two main reasons:

- a) It represents a relatively new experience in low income housing in Saudi Arabia.
- b) It is the largest such residential community in the country.

Thus it deserves an investigation and an evaluation since a residential area represents a social and physical entity that has an impact on both its residents and those of the surrounding areas.

The study is actually an attempt to evaluate this low income housing community considering the points of view of its residents, in order to discover the positive and negative elements in such housing program. Residents' needs which include social, economic and physical aspects, are often difficult to recognize without the direct solicitation from residents themselves. Understanding this impact and suggesting appropriate policies for better future planning of such areas justifies the present paper.

The main objective of this study can be enumerated as follows:

1. Giving a brief look at Saudi housing policy.
2. Describing the general characteristics of Uraija community and the people who live there.
3. Examining residents' satisfaction with some of their dwellings, neighborhoods and community attribution.²

Review of Literature

Housing satisfies the basic human needs to shelter. It is the biggest investment most people make in their lives. Thus the housing issue, especially in urban areas, has attracted

² Several studies have examined the socio-economic variations existing in the City of Riyadh during the 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. They have all attempted to describe and analyze socio-economic and physical characteristics and changes in the City of Riyadh. None of the researchers, however, has dealt with the issue of low income housing. [4-6]

the attention of many scholars who see it as a basic human problem facing all countries of the world, particularly in third world cities [7-9]. Among the problems discussed are squatter settlements, poor sanitation, overcrowding, high rents and lack of essential services or facilities. Although the housing problem, as well as other urban problems, affect the urban population as a whole, their effects are most evident and most serious especially among low income people. The residents are often poor, migrants of rural origin, who live on the periphery of national urban centers. Their housing developments are usually built with materials of a temporary nature lacking basic services where squatter settlements of considerable magnitude are found in such cities as Manila, Istanbul, Caracas, Lagos, Casablanca, Cairo, Amman, Khartoum, [10-12].

Provision of housing does not mean the same as the provision of satisfactory housing. In the literature, factors related to housing satisfaction include physical characteristics, locational characteristics and individual characteristics.

The housing characteristics which have been found to account for higher housing satisfaction include spacious housing [13], structure of housing [14], newness of housing [15], house type and size [16], location with respect to various facilities and quality of interior structures and location from city center [17].

Neighborhood satisfaction depends on satisfaction with housing, neighborhood appearance, and neighbors [13], and satisfaction with living environment and social relations [18], quality of neighborhood maintenance [19], as well as presence of friends and relatives nearby [20].

Results of research studies of public housing projects for low and middle income families in the United States, indicate that most residents in general were satisfied with their living environment. However, residents in subsidized housing are less satisfied than most other residents [21]. The aspects found to influence residents' satisfaction are: neighbors, appearance of development, building units and perception that living in the development represents a good economic value [22].

Such findings from studies in the United States and other studies elsewhere, should however be treated with caution in view of financial and cultural differences between countries in housing development policies and programs, as well as in type of housing and ownership status. There are also differences between studies in sample selection procedure, type of questions asked, and other methodological differences.

Research Data

The research data used in this study was primarily obtained from a sample survey conducted by the author in Uraija during the months of May and June 1990 using clustered random sampling procedure. A total of 120 questionnaires were collected. All of the respondents were Saudis. The interview schedule included questions about the residents'

socio-economic characteristics and tested satisfaction with their housing units and some micro-neighborhood requirements such as services and facilities available in the area. Also, a number of relevant characteristics of the community were recorded through a direct field observation. Statistical treatment was carried out using Phi-coefficient and Chi-square to measure the degree of relationship between satisfaction with housing, micro- neighborhood and community variables, and satisfaction with some housing, neighborhood and community attributes.³

Saudi Government's Housing Policy

Housing policy, programs, problems and achievements are beyond the scope of this research. One can only touch upon them because of their relevance and as a background to the topic of this paper. There is hardly any country in the world which does not have low- income housing project, which in a way reflects the concern governments give to the housing situation of this socio economic group. There are two main approaches to the problem of low-income urban housing in most countries of the world. One is the construction of public housing (i.e., high rise, condominium) and lease the units at nominal sums to low-income families. The other approach which is adopted in poor countries, the government provides plots of land and access to basic services and facilities, while construction is left to the residents. Some countries give subsidies for housing construction. Such housing policies, however, have not responded fully to the needs of low-income people.

The government of Saudi Arabia realizing the housing shortages, blessed with the rapidly rising oil revenues, adopted a housing policy which aimed at improving living standards of its nationals, by alleviating their housing problem. The housing policy is based on homeownership of single family residential units. The main components of the policy are:

1. *Distribution of free land plots of different sizes to large segments of the population:* This is meant for especially low-income groups, senior government officials, university graduates, officers.⁴

2. *Provision of interest free loans for housing construction by the Real Estate Development Fund (REDF) established in 1975:* The government loans which cover about 60% of house construction costs have been the main instrument of housing policy

³ The phi-coefficient is used to determine the strength of association between nominal variables with two categories. The Chi-square statistics provides a test of significance of the association each such variable. The value of phi ranges from +1 for a perfect positive association to -1 for a perfect negative association between the two variables [23, pp.54-55].

⁴ Up until 1987 more than 2.5 million plots were distributed to families in different parts of Saudi Arabia. [24, p. 119].

which accelerated progress in the construction of new subsidized housing. This policy includes Loans granted to individuals to build private houses (amounts range between 300,000 Saudi Riyals to those who live in large cities, S.R. 250,000 to those living in medium sized cities and S.R 180,000 in towns and villages). These amounts are believed to cover about 70% of the house construction costs. For individuals only 80% of the loan has to be paid in installments over a 25 -year period.⁵

To encourage private investment in the housing sector, loans are also provided to Saudis covering about 50% of the housing construction costs payable over a 10 year period. Over 440,000 dwelling units were financed by the Fund up to the fiscal year 1987/1988 [25].

3. *Construction of multi and single public dwellings in major Saudi cities:* The number constructed exceeded 37650 units which are now ready for occupancy. [24, p. 158]. These units remained vacant for more than 10 years after construction due to problems of eligibility of expected occupiers for these units. Recently the government decided to sell these units to individuals who have already applied and are still waiting for government loans [REDF].

4. *Construction of housing complexes by several government ministries and agencies:* For housing of some of their employees at nominal rental rates as in the cases of Ministries of Defence, Interior and External Affairs, National Guard, national universities, national airline company and some public and private hospitals.

As a result of these policies many Saudi nationals are well housed. Nevertheless some Saudi families still live in sub-standard housing and the rise in housing construction costs makes it impossible for lower income groups to meet housing costs and secure decent housing without government assistance especially in urban areas.

Low income housing program

As mentioned above, the housing problem in Saudi Arabia faces mainly low income groups. The problem stems from poverty since low- income people are unable or cannot afford to secure land plots to apply for government loans. Application for loans from the [REDF] is conditional on ownership of a plot of land. The government recognizes fully that solving the housing problem of those people as well as Saudi nationals in general and improving their living conditions is a main concern of the government in its long term strategy. As addressed by the Fifth Development Plan (1990-1995): "Adequate housing is a basic need of every citizen and a major determinant of living standards. It contributes directly to health and productivity, which are vital for national economic growth. Also provision of decent housing for low-income groups is considered another way of reducing income inequality." [26, p.384].

5 As of 1988, 2531 settlements have benefited from government housing loans.[24, p. 15].

Realizing difficulties facing low-income groups in acquiring their own housing, the government embarked on planning and implementation of an ambitious low-income housing program. The program includes distribution of free land plots in certain parts of almost every settlement in Saudi Arabia, and the provision of interest-free housing loans to these families, as well as the provision of community services such as water, electricity, roads, health and education to these residential communities to fulfill their housing needs.

General Characteristics of Uraija

Uraija is a residential community planned and developed by the municipality of Riyadh in the past 12 years as a response to the housing needs of low income group. To its credit the municipality is the only body in a large city which devoted its attention to satisfy the housing needs of these people. In other words, had it not been for this housing program, it would have been impossible for the people of Uraija to own their present houses. The community, although having an official name "Uraija" like other residential areas of the city, is best known to the residents of the city of Riyadh as the limited income residential area.

Uraija is located on a higher ground on the periphery of the city, approximately 8 km southwest of the CBD (Fig. 1). It covers an area of 29 sq km (Table 1) and consists of 74 micro-neighborhoods, each having about 318 housing units with a total 25,758 units (Fig. 2).

Table 1. Land use pattern distribution in Uraija, 1990

Use type	Area km ²	%
Residential	10.8	27
Streets	13.05	44.4
Community/public services	4.79	17
Industrial	.48	1.6

Source: [27]

Table 2. Planned and existing public services in Uraija

Service/facility	Planned	Existing	%
Mosques	175	39	22.3
Public gardens and play areas	171	12	7.0
Schools	116	94	81
Health facilities	28	6	21.4
Post offices	26	n	n
Police	5	n	n
Fire	4	2	50

Source: [27, p. 35] .

Streets' width range between 20-60m. Commercial and other community services such as religious, educational, health and recreational facilities are grouped, arranged in a hierarchical order and located at the community, neighborhood and micro neighborhood centers (Table 2) [27].

After satisfying a set of income requirements all applicants were given land plots loans and were to choose one of 13 plans made by the city of Riyadh municipality's architects and engineers. They believed that these plans best fit the needs of low income families both socially and economically (in terms of construction costs and way of life). Granting of land plots requires that the grantee be: (a) a resident of the city of Riyadh; (b) does not own a dwelling in the city; and (c) has no income beyond his salary.

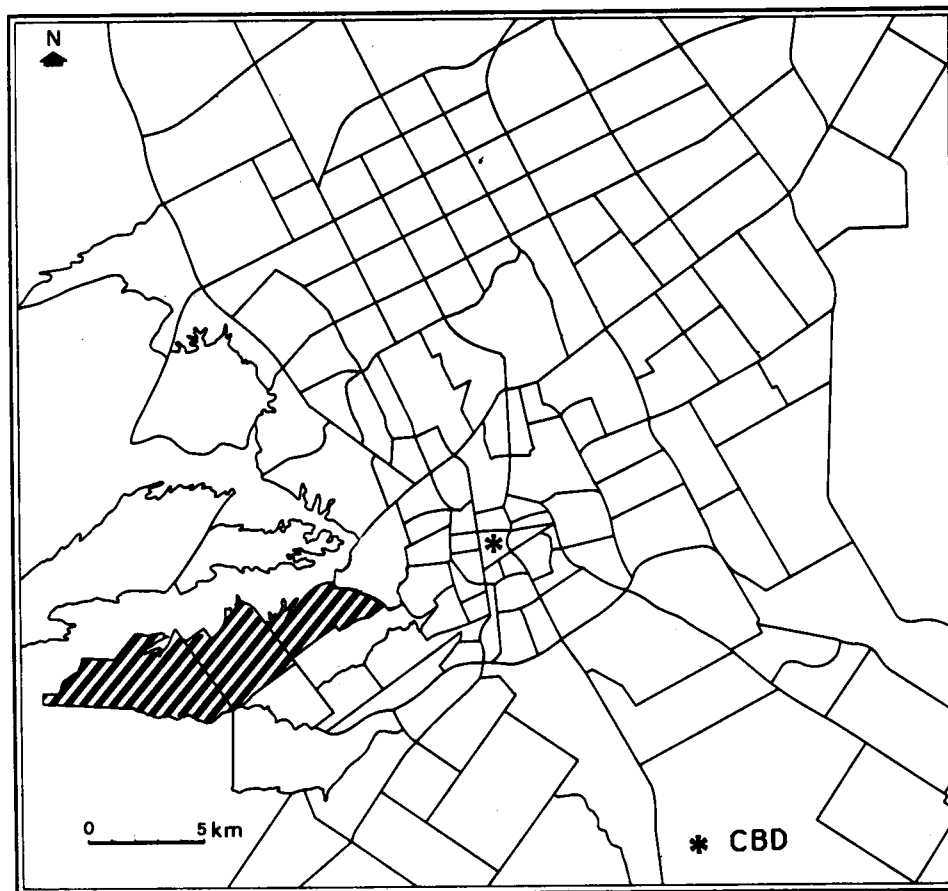


Fig. 1. Location of Uraiga.

A total of 25,758 residential land plots with an area of 400 sq.m. (20 x20m) each were distributed to qualified families.⁶ Single family dwelling units (villa type) were constructed on most of land plots distributed. As a result dwelling units were built with minimum variation in the house plan (Figs. 3,4), and design features (Figs.5,6).

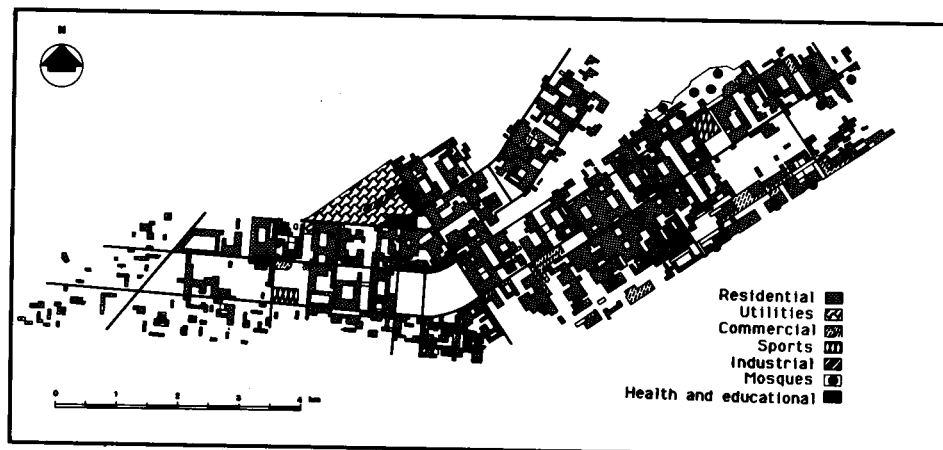


Fig. 2. Land use pattern in Uraija.

Source: Arrlyadh Development Authority, 1993.

- 6 A distinction in the granting process was made between low-income families and other families. In the former, the property title is issued upon rehabilitation of the granted land. Also, It is required that the grantee be a resident of the city where the land is located and that the grantee does not own another dwelling, inside or outside the city. In the case of other income families, the conditions stated above do not apply nor have to be met. The size of the grant is not determined by the applicant's needs, namely the size of his family. The plot area may range from 400 to 10,000sq.m. [28, pp. 9-10] .

In an interview, some of Uraija's first residents made several negative comments about the plans and designs of their houses. These were as follows:

- a) Dwellings were attached from two sides, as such the two entrances made (one for men and the other for women) were next to each other, and as a result they feel that a lot of needed space was wasted by unnecessary halls and hallways.
- b) They did not appreciate the largest bedrooms being put, in the plan, at the backside of the house and they consider some of the rooms are too small, especially men's guest room (6.25x 3.8 m).
- c) They were not happy with bathrooms being next to each other as well as with the sizes of some of these bathrooms (1.60x1.8m).
- d) For not having the choice of detached houses, residents see their houses unhealthy, for they lack good ventilation and some rooms not receiving enough light and consider them hazardous in case of fire incidents.
- e) They did not like the garden being at the back of the house where it lacked privacy as it is looked upon by neighbors from three sides.
- f) Finally, the location of the kitchen in the front side of the house was not appreciated [29].

Recently, after complaints and persistent requests by community residents, the Municipality gave permission to investors to open stores on these streets (30-60m in width). This decision has made quick and considerable changes on land values and uses in the community as many vacant land plots and some dwellings located on these streets were converted into apartments and different commercial uses.

The two-story single family Uraiya-type unit is somewhat different from other residential communities constructed in Riyadh in recent years. The unique features of Uraiya may be summed up as follows:

1. It is planned and developed for low income people.
2. Houses are built with identical designs, sizes, and internal plans. The only difference is manifested in the arrangement, number and size of rooms.
3. Dwellings have been attached from the sides (a row-housing style) while front and back setbacks range between 4-6 meters (Figs. 5,6).
4. Built-up area does not exceed 60% of the land plot.
5. Commercial uses on main streets are prohibited and so are the modification of dwellings' plans [28]. After complaints about unsuitability of plans designed by the Municipality, users' permission was given to beneficiaries of the program to make modification on the plans provided that they comply with building codes made for the community and under the supervision and approval of the Municipality [29].

Construction in Uraiya began in 1980 and the community was built gradually for over 12 years. A total of 15,907 villas or 62% of land plots distributed were constructed by 1990, with a total population estimated at 95,000. Utilities and services were provided such as water, electricity, mosques, fire, education, and health facilities. Telephone covers only 17% of the community. When all the residential plots are built the community will have around 198,000 residents thereby giving rise to a large residential community in the periphery of Riyadh [27].

Data Analysis and Findings

Data analysis are put into two parts. The first part deals with socio-economic characteristics of the sampled residents of Uraiya and in the second part, both housing and residential satisfaction are explored. Residents of this newly planned community are likely to evaluate it rather positively since it constitutes a major improvement over their previous housing arrangement.

Socio-economic characteristics of the residents

The data indicate that almost half of the sampled residents of Uraiya (49%), were migrants of rural origin and that about (62%) of them had arrived in Riyadh after 1970, and a significant portion of the residents (63%), came mainly from the southern and central regions. Those from other regions represented only (19 %) [Appendix]. The majority of the respondents (68%) were renters who moved from low- income and old sectors of the city specifically southern (30%) and central (18%) sectors [Appendix]. About 71% lived in traditional houses (built of mud brick or cement blocks) before moving to Uraiya. Of sampled residents of Uraiya, 25% have no formal education, 30%

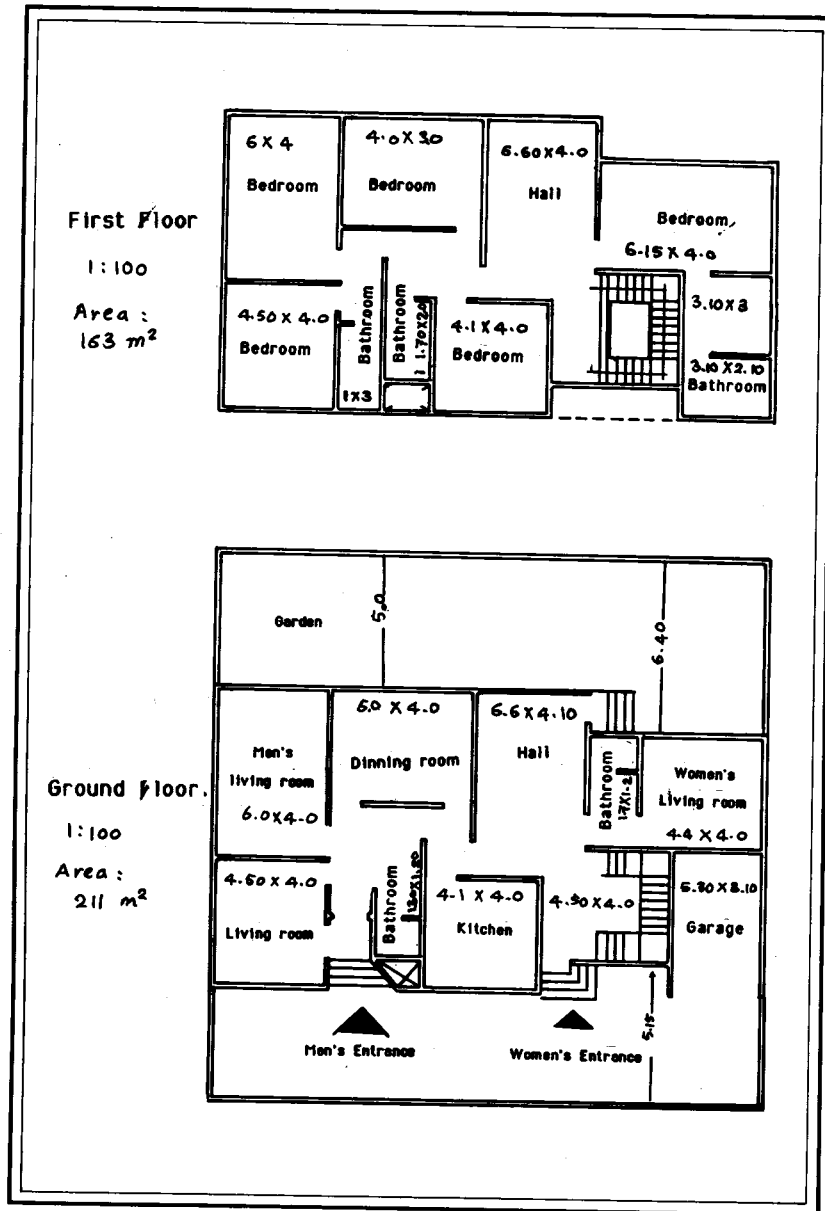


Fig. 3. House plan (No. 7). Source: Uraija submunicipality.

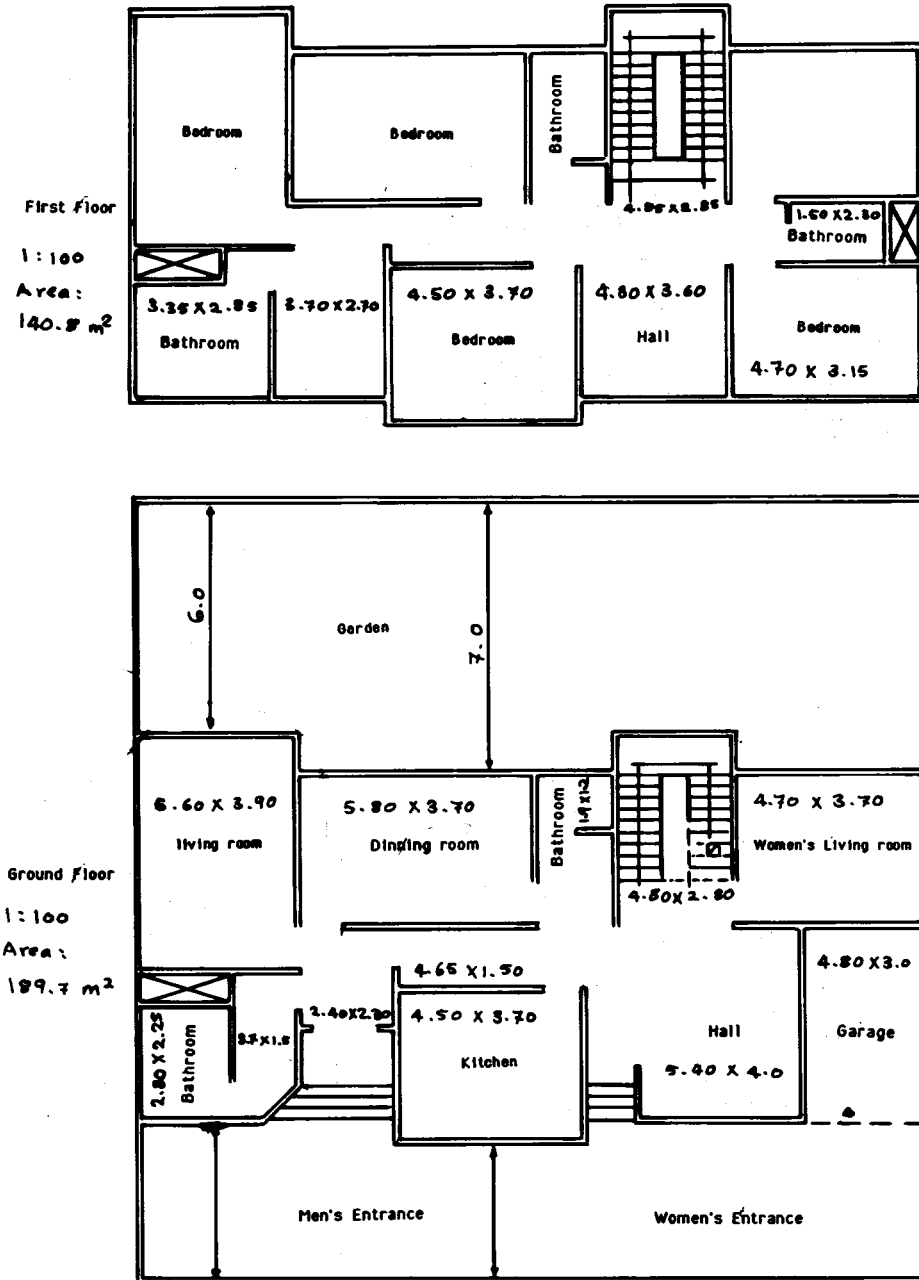


Fig. 4. House plan (No.8). Source: Uraija submunicipality.



Figs. 5, 6. House in Uraija.

have little education and only 8% of the respondents have college degrees. Those who are illiterate represented about 16% [Appendix]. As to the sample employment, most residents [82%] are government employees. It was found out that among the residents about 41% are in the lower military rank, (either soldiers or sergeants), 20% manual or unskilled workers such as office boys, 17.5% government clerks, about 11% work in the private sector, and 9.2% teachers. Income figures indicate that 47% have monthly income of S.R. 2000 to 4000 or less which is considered low, and 20% has an income of more than S.R. 6000. This is expected since Uraija is a low-income residential area.⁷ The average household size was found to be 7.8 persons, which is above the city average of 6.1, as more than 46% of the sampled residents have eight or more persons. At the time of the interview, more than 48% lived in Uraija for a period of less than 5 years. (Appendix).

Residential Satisfaction

Satisfaction with dwelling

Owners of housing units represent 78% of sampled households, while renters represented about 22%. The houses in Uraija as mentioned before are 400 sq m. each. Number of rooms per house range between 6-11 and the average was 8 including the living room. All units have electric and water utilities but only 2.5% have telephone services. Open space seems to be limited. There is not enough room for green areas, garages, and other outdoor uses. The occupants find it difficult to adjust the limited space to meet the need of varied uses. Other dwelling units of larger sizes in the city have room for extension for outside kitchen, storage, and other needs. Only 15% of the dwellings in Uraija are with gardens and 10% with garages. (Appendix). The question then is to what extent do persons live their lives as they want?

Sampled residents of Uraija were asked to answer questions dealing with their evaluation and satisfaction with the two of dwellings attributes. Most residents (86%) were satisfied with their dwellings and 89% of them, contrary to what was expected, were pleased with the dwelling size. This may be because the housing units in Uraija represent a considerable improvement to their previous housing arrangements which were mostly traditional houses ranging in size between 80-100 sq. m. It may also be due to the fact that a higher percentage (48%) of the residents have been living in their houses for a period of less than 5 years and the problem of size could arise in the future with the increase in family size. Satisfaction was, however, not so high with the design of houses, only 53% indicated that they were satisfied with the design feature of their

⁷ In this study, those with an annual income of less than 48,000 Saudi Riyal are considered low income families. In a recent household survey, annual income for Saudi workers was found to range between less

homes. The findings indicate that general satisfaction with the dwelling unit was significantly related much more to size than to design (Table 3). In the open-ended question most respondents expressed liking of ownership of their dwellings and being relieved from the burden of rent, and criticized design, especially the fact that dwellings are attached to neighbors on two sides with no space separating them from one another. Some complained of inadequacy of open space for children to play as well as for other uses. Some residents made modifications to their dwellings with the construction of extensions of rooms and kitchen (Figs. 7,8) . Therefore, the dwellings in Uraija seem not to reflect people's needs (Figs. 9-15). Thus by restricting their choices and not giving them the opportunity to select plans and designs for their dwellings, some residents of Uraija appear to have negative evaluations.

Table 3. Dwelling satisfaction relationship with size and design attributes

Dwelling attribute	Phi	Chi-square
Size	.33	13.21
Design	.22	6.13

*Significant at the .01 level

Satisfaction with some micro neighborhood and community qualities

Questions related to satisfaction with specific features and characteristics or to community and immediate neighborhood attributes ranging from quietness to socialization with neighbors were asked.

As shown in Table 4, most respondents were satisfied with Uraija community except for some problems relating to lack of playgrounds health facilities, and location with respect to work and streets conditions. Residents see the community as a quiet residential area.

Though noise seems to be an inevitable aspect of urban living, particularly in large cities and densely populated areas, but since density in Uraija is still low (less than 33 persons/hectare), and part of lands plots distributed are still vacant, noise is considerably reduced. Over 83% of the respondents were satisfied with what they considered low noise level and only those located near or on major streets complained of traffic noise.

Most respondents (79%) were satisfied with their neighbors indicating a higher social interaction and giving the impression of a friendly community. This is no surprise as Islamic principles and teachings encourage such friendliness social interaction. The five daily prayers which are performed by the members of the community in mosques facilitate acquaintanceship and add to more social contacts. Also more than 75% of sampled residents mentioned having friends and relatives living in the community.

Nearly 68% were satisfied with the availability of mosques and those who were dissatisfied with their location with respect to markets and stores represented only 38%.



Figs. 7, 8. Extensions made for more needed space.



Satisfaction with some micro neighborhood and community qualities



Mostly men were satisfied with the accessibility of mosques and those who were
Figs. 9, 10. Streets in Uraija.



Figs. 11, 12. Shops and markets in Uraiya.



Figs. 13. Public phones in Uraiya.



Fig. 14. A mosque in Uraiya.

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Major complaint, satisfaction with street conditions represented only 43%. Problems included lack of lighting or poor lighting in some areas.



In a traffic survey conducted in 1987 it was found that daily traffic volume at the main road round to the
Figs. 15, 16. Health services in Uraijja.



Figs. 17. An elementary school in Uraija.



Figs. 18. Riyadh-Makkah highway which cuts through the community.

Table 4. Satisfaction with some dwelling, community and neighborhood attributes

Attribute	Satisfied		Not satisfied		No mention	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Dwelling design	64	53.33	54	45.00	2	1.67
Dwelling size	107	89.17	12	10.00	1	.83
Quietness	100	83.33	12	10.00	8	6.67
Neighbors	95	79.17	14	11.67	11	9.17
Mosques	81	67.50	33	27.00	6	5.0††
Market	75	62.5††	36	30.00	9	7.50
Schools	71	59.17	43	35.83	6	5.0††
Safety	67	55.83	44	36.67	9	7.5††
Location to job	56	46.67	48	40.00	16	13.33
Streets	51	42.50	61	50.83	8	6.67
Health	16	18.33	91	75.83	7	5.83
Playgrounds	16	13.33	99	82.5††	5	4.17
Average		55.90		37.90		6.2††

Since car ownership is high in Saudi Arabia, this may be the reason why it was not a major complaint. Satisfaction with street conditions represented only 43%. Problems included lack of lighting or poor lighting in some areas, poor quality or unpaved roads, no sidewalks, lack of traffic signs and dangerous intersections (Figs. 9,10). Satisfaction with safety from traffic accidents was 67%, but some residents have complained about the location of their homes directly on major streets and more were concerned about the safety of children.⁸ The journey to work seemed inconvenient for some respondents as indicated by longer distances and the time required averaged 24 minutes. Satisfaction was 47% and not as high as one would expect because of community location may be due to high car ownership.

Satisfaction with play areas and health facilities were less than 14% and 18% respectively. These low satisfaction averages indicated lack of suitable children playing areas and health facilities and a need for more play areas and health services, especially in such a residential area where children constitute a large proportion of the population. More than half (59%) were satisfied with schools in spite of the fact that many children need car transportation to their schools indicating a small number of widely dispersed schools.

Overall satisfaction

More than 58% of the sampled residents of Uraija were generally satisfied or content with the community as place of residence while about 37% were dissatisfied. It appears

⁸ In a traffic survey conducted in 1989, it was found that daily traffic volume in the two main streets in the community, Bilal Ibn Rabah and Khadijah bint Khwailed was 7930 and 17,230 cars respectively [27, p. 12].

that the sampled residents of Uraija's overall evaluation is significantly related to accessibility or location in relationship to work, safety from traffic accidents, availability and location of schools, mosques, streets' conditions, and play areas for children respectively (Table 5). Other community attributes namely friendliness of neighbors and quietness were insignificant indicating that these attributes are a common feature of most residential communities in the city and are not yet considered as important determinants of residential satisfaction.

Table 5. Overall satisfaction relationship with some community and neighborhood attributes

Attribute	Phi	Chi-square
Location to job	.48	27.8**
Safety	.42	21.32*
Schools	.37	16.21*
Mosques	.33	12.98**
Streets	.26	8.16***
Playground	.26	8.13***
Health	.25	7.3***
Markets	.24	6.96***
Quietness	.20	4.71
Neighbors	.18	3.9

*Significant at the .001-.002 level **Significant at the .01-.03 level ***Significant at the .09-.14 level

Respondents were asked very general open -ended questions about what they like most and least about living in Uraija. Although there were differences between residents, some similarities emerged including quietness, newness and good housing, low rents, wide streets, presence of relatives. Throughout the sample, negative comments were made about lack of suitable play areas for children, unavailability of telephones, rising sewage water level because of lack of sewage disposal system and the related problems such as spread of insects especially mosquitoes and flies; inconvenience and inadequacy of health facilities. Other reasons mentioned include poor lighting, safety of children and dangerous intersections, lack of municipal services especially the very low level of cleanliness and the presence of trash and litter, and poor public transportation. Few residents mentioned having unfriendly or undesirable neighbors, or complained of noise levels. Nice neighbors and quiet neighborhoods were most often mentioned.

Move plans

In order to get another perspective to residents' overall evaluation of Uraija, the sampled residents were asked whether they would stay and continue to live, or plan to move in the future. A higher percentage of residents (about 71%) said they would stay and continue to live in Uraija. This is no surprise mainly due to financial constraints for

residents to buy or rent better accommodations located somewhere else.

Those who plan to stay mentioned various positive aspects relating to housing, to neighbors, to neighborhoods and location in relation to work places as some expect the conditions of the community will improve in the future. Families who are expected to move from Uraija in the future represented less than 30% . Renters show a slightly higher degree of instability than owners. More than half (51%) of those who rent housing units in Uraija plan to move compared to 46% of the owners. Those who plan to move are looking for larger housing units in better provided areas, and also want to be nearer to their places of work (Table 5).

Conclusion and Recommendations

It may be concluded that living in Uraija represented for most residents a significant improvement over their previous dwellings and residential neighborhoods. The newness of the dwellings and the community were particularly important to residents' satisfaction. This seemed to be related primarily to the state of dilapidation of residents' previous dwellings and neighborhoods in comparison with the new houses in this newly planned residential area.

Exterior design and plans were not appreciated by most residents as they failed to reflect their needs. The community as a whole lacks play areas and health facilities. Moreover, residents were not content with conditions of streets and location of the community as most of them are located at considerable distances from their work places.

Uraija as a newly planned community could have been better. The following points seem to hinder the success of the program:

1. The concentration of large number of people in a section of a city seems to be inappropriate as it could be perceived as a class issue with segregation of socio-economic groups. It seems that the development of Uraija is probably related to socio-economic status of beneficiaries as it is designed and labeled for limited or low -income people. There is a noticed stigma attached to living there which may be a cause of dissatisfaction and the desire to move elsewhere, even if such feeling is relatively subdued.

In some countries as in the United States there is a resistance to low income housing which is based on race segregation issues and reflect a concern about lowered market values of the property and a preference for income and social homogeneity in residential areas. Our spiritual and social Islamic values and principles call for integration of all people regardless of their socio-economic status, or ethnicity. Therefore, we cannot effectively improve the living conditions of the low income people if we are at the same time attempting to isolate or exclude them from the society's mainstream. This makes Uraija a less desirable community than it should be if it were not labeled or planned as a low -income residential community.

provision of modern housing for Saudi nationals, large companies should construct houses for their employees . Such policy will hopefully improve the situation for some low- income urban dwellers in Saudi Arabian cities as is the case now with the employees of the oil companies and petrochemical industries.

v) Finally, though this study has not covered all aspects of low-income housing, it is, at least an imperial attempt for evaluation of existing residential areas to help improve planning and designing future living environments for the concerned socio-economic groups. It is hoped that planners and others concerned with the development of such communities will benefit from the recommendations introduced in this research paper. It is also hoped that this study will pave the way for more future research in this direction.

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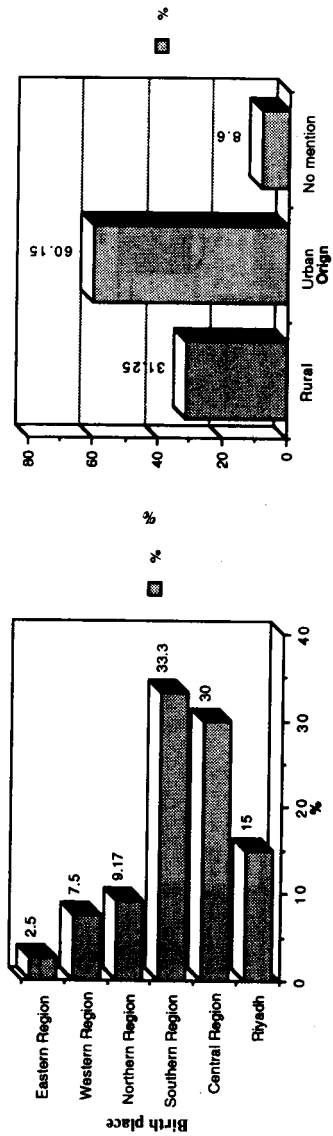


Fig. 1. Birth place of head of households.

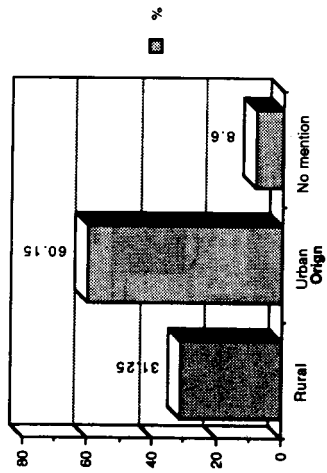


Fig. 2. Head of households area of origin.

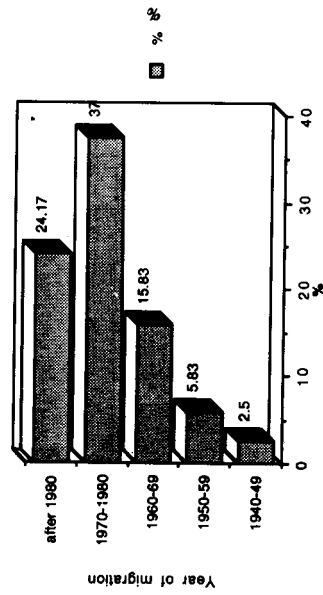


Fig. 3. Year of migration of head of households.

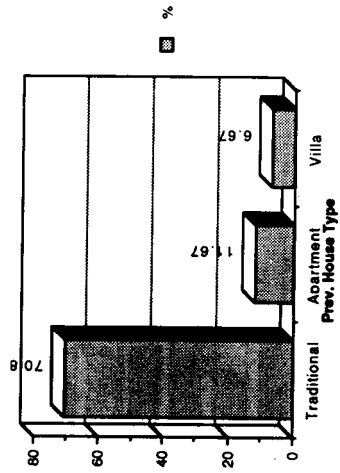


Fig. 4. Previous dwelling type of head of households.

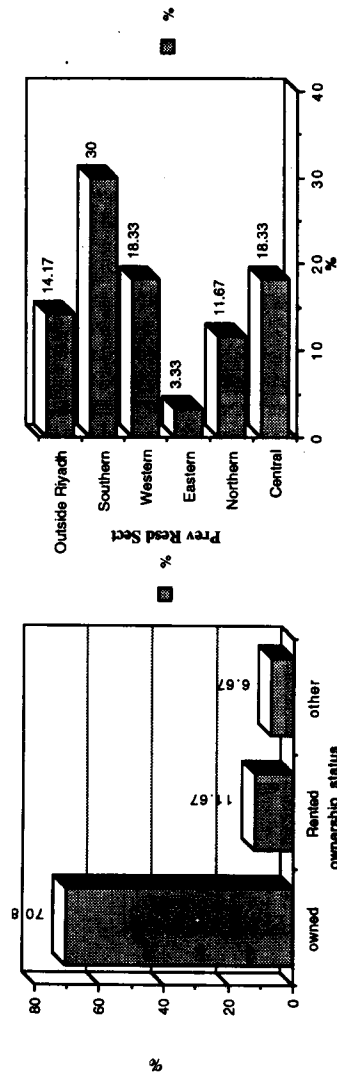


Fig. 6. Households previous city sector.

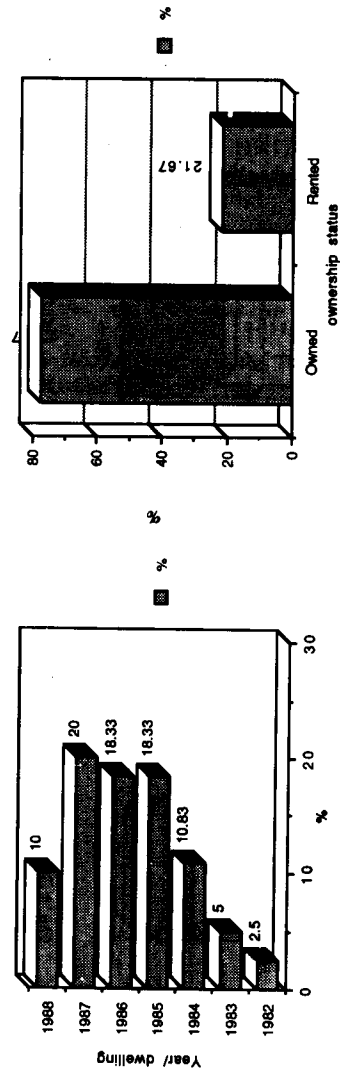


Fig. 8. Households present dwellings owners ip status.

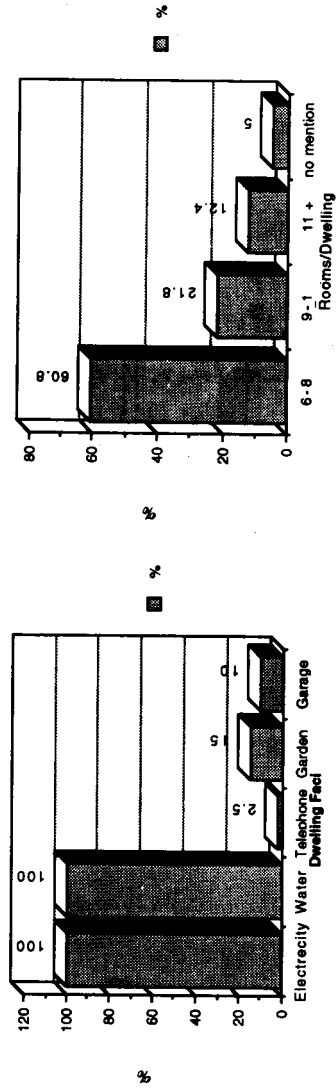


Fig. 10. No. of rooms per dwelling.

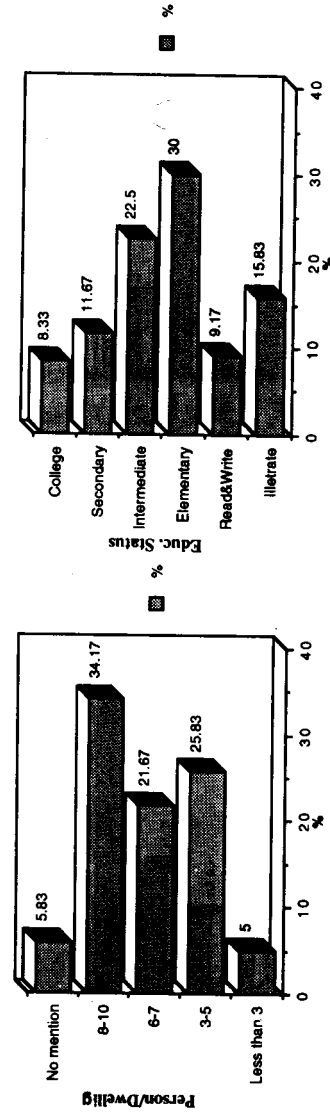


Fig. 12. Educational status of head of households.

Fig. 11. Persons per dwelling.

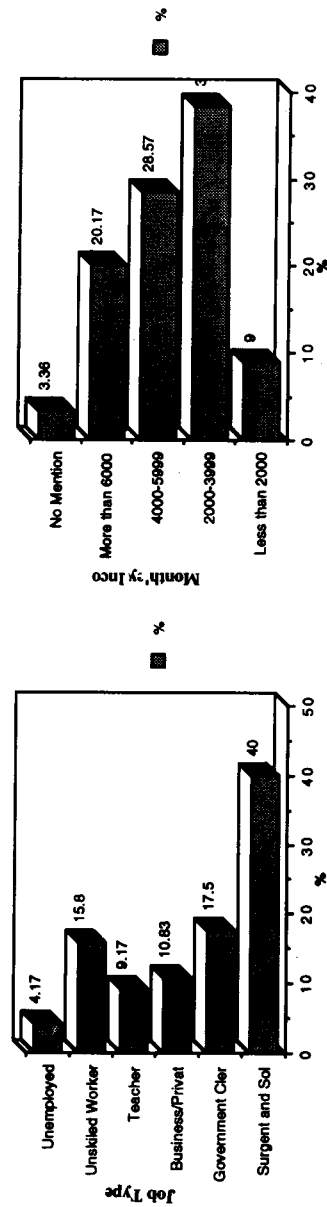


Fig. 14. Monthly income of head of households (Saudi Riyal)

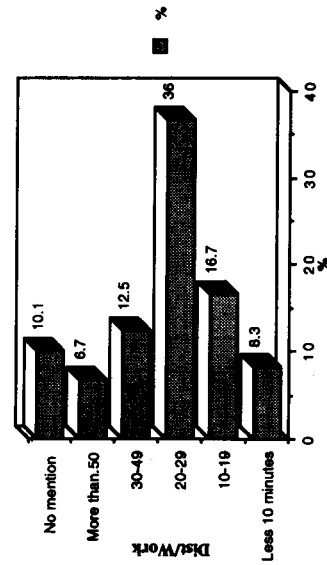


Fig. 15. Distance to work places of head of households (minutes).

الرضا السكني للنوي الدخل المحدود: دراسة حالة ضاحية العريجا في مدينة الرياض بالمملكة العربية السعودية

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ملخص البحث. تعد هذه الدراسة محاولة لتقويم ضاحية العريجا السكنية للنوي الدخل المحدود في مدينة الرياض من وجهة نظر سكانها. اعتمدت الدراسة على بيانات حصل عليها من عينة مكونة من ١٢٠ رب أسرة من سكان الضاحية السعوديين.

تضمنت البيانات معلومات عن الخصائص الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لعينة الدراسة وعن مدى رضاهم بمساكنهم، وعن بعض المرافق والخدمات المتوافرة في الضاحية. النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة أظهرت أن حداثة الضاحية والمساكن كانت مهمة في التقويم الإيجابي من قبل الساكنين. ولم تلق مخططات المساكن وتصاميمها استحسان معظم أفراد العينة. كما أبدى الكثير من المبحوثين معدلات رضا أقل عن حالة الشوارع وموقع الضاحية وعن بعض الخدمات خاصة الخدمات الصحية وملاعب الأطفال بسبب عدم توافرها أو عدم كفايتها.